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**Urgent need for health education for teenage girls
Ahmad Salim, Ramallah**

Professor Sumayah Sayej, a lecturer and researcher at the University of Jerusalem, has completed his Ph.D dissertation which is titled: *An evaluation of the impact of education on the opinions and beliefs of the adolescent females.*

Professor Sayej proposes that public health education should be based on a careful identification and assessment of needs. She also emphasizes the importance of retraining those who offer education related to physical, psychological and social public health.

Professor Sayej emphasises that her dissertation represents experimental research and that a study of this kind is rare in Palestine. The study includes a survey of 92 open questions and multiple choice. The sample study included 264 high school students in four schools in Ramallah district, Al Bireh, and Beitunia. The aim of the study was to evaluate the physical, psychological and social needs of adolescent Palestinian females with an aim to improving the health education curriculum. The results of the survey reveal that most girls are in need of education with regards to the physical changes that occur in the beginning of their adolescent years. Such education can promote their sense of responsibility and increase their awareness of their sexual/physical growth, its dimensions and its psychological and social implications. According to Professor Sayej the responses of the participants reveal a sense of discrimination based on gender inequality and social injustice. The following samples of the answers given by the participants reflect the problems that girls face in their families and societies: *"People around us want us to act like grown up women and be ready for marriage," "My family prefers males to females,"* and *"My brother is responsible for me."* Sayej points out the double standard society uses for adolescent females: girls are considered adult women in terms of being ready to carry the burdens of marriage, but they are treated as children in terms of decisions about their own lives.

Sayej states that such treatment has an impact on adolescents' feelings and perceptions of themselves. This is revealed in their answers, which portray a high sense of inferiority and shame, as they perceive themselves as unworthy and valueless. Most participants selected the responses, *I hate being a female* and *I am ashamed of something.*

Sayej indicates that this study suggests the need to create an educational program that addresses sudden changes that occur in the different facets of lives of adolescent girls and their impact on behavior and personality.

The study divided the participants into four groups. The first group was asked to complete the survey, then given the educational program, then given the survey a second time. The second group was only given the survey; the third group was only given the training and the fourth was only given the survey.

The results of the first group revealed a greater sense of awareness, self-acceptance, and understanding of relationships with family and society. The educational program tackled issues relating to the physical and sexual changes that accompany adolescence. Such changes, according to Sayej, have an impact on the mind and emotions and in turn on social behavior. The training also introduced the participants to ways to deal with and accept these.

Researcher Sumayah Sayej said that there is an urgent need for professional educators to provide health educational programs that adequately address our society's needs -- especially the needs of adolescent girls.. She notes that such health educational programs are very rare and that ideally adolescent girls should participate in developing educational programs that are appropriate to their needs and interests. This would increase the effectiveness of the programs and make the information more accessible to participants, ultimately having a positive impact on the relationships and behavior of adolescent girls, and on our society's perception of women.

**Review: *My Dreams Don't Know Any Limits*
Imteyaz Al Masri, Ramallah**

My Dreams Don't Know Any Limits portrays the suffering of daily life in Palestine. The Palestinian woman serves as a focal point in the story, symbolizing the captured and raped homeland.

We met with the director of *My Dreams Don't Know any Limits*, Raeda Ghazaleh and asked her about the content of this work. Ghazaleh said that the play is an adaptation of a poetic drama written by Mu'jin Bseiso. The drama focuses on the life of the revolutionary Ernesto Che Guievara. Those involved in Palestinian theatre are always searching for symbols that embody the reality of the Palestinian people. However, Ghazaleh says, the theatre group didn't choose Mu'jin Bseiso's work, but Bseiso chose the group when he chose the Palestinian woman to be the central symbol for the Palestinian land and life in this play.

Ghazzalleh points out that the play opened first in Bethlehem and was performed in a couple of other Palestinians towns. However, roadblocks prevented in the team from reaching their other destinations. She says that the group will not give up because she believes that their message should reach every Palestinian female and male. Meanwhile, Ghazzalleh points out that many in the audience came from far away places despite the roadblocks and difficult roads.

Ghazzalleh indicates that the suffering of the woman in the play represents the suffering of the Palestinian society. The role of the woman in the play is not restricted to that of a housewife or mother. The Palestinian woman is capable of pursuing a leading role in society; she is capable of working side by side with Palestinian men and at times she can perhaps endure more than men can.

Actor Khaled el Maso states that the play represents the struggle against oppression and a call for revolution against oppression. He adds that every person is called upon to participate in the revolution on different levels.

When asked why he chose to play the role of the rapist, he answered: "My right to live a normal life is violated everyday on the roadblocks, and theatre provides me with the space to express this oppression."

We interviewed Nicola Zureiqi and asked him about the character that he played and the message that he wanted to convey to the audience. He answered that his character is an old farmer who was protecting Palestinian youth from the revolution, thinking that the revolution would not change the situation, until his son was killed by a mine in the village. He then decided to join the revolution against oppression.

We met with the actress Ruba Subhi who played the role of Mariana in the play. She said that life of Mariana represents the lives of Palestinians, especially of women who bear the biggest burden in the current situation since she is the core of the family.

The play was successful in representing the reality and suffering of the Palestinian woman under the Israeli oppression. The play also portrayed the negative impact of the occupation on the Palestinian women and society.