

# Clowns without Borders

## Camp Kasmieh



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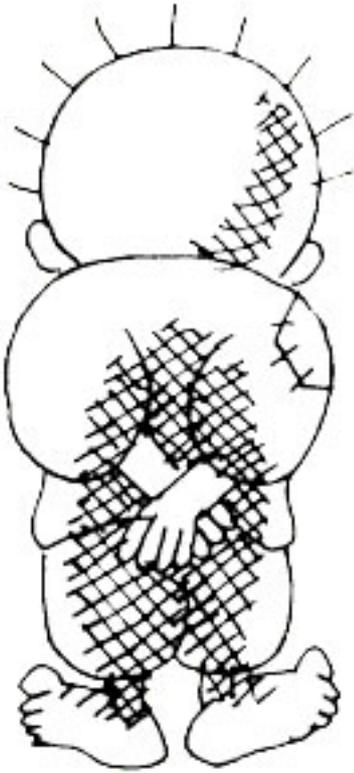
## Camp Kasmieh

Back on the coast road southbound with views of the aqua sea. The usual stop at Abraham's coffee shack for our morning shot of cardamon coffee. We arrived at Camp Kasmieh where we were met by Rihab, a social animator for the General Union of Palestinian Women, who is responsible for organising youth activities in the centre where we were to perform.

We quickly set up for the show as the children were already arriving, and sang David Bowie songs to warm up our voices as we got into costume.

There were 120 children in the audience; 25 Palestinian Syrians, 8 Syrians and the rest Palestinian Labanese. I chatted with Rihab after the show and she told me that the children wanted to see more as it made them very happy except for one 3 year old girl who had to be taken out as she was afraid! Our colourful parade entrance playing music can be a bit overwhelming for the little ones.

After a quick break we ran a workshop with 10 teenagers aged 12-14 years - 4 boys and 6 girls. Dan led the warm up and myself and Helen played some games: ball games, duck duck goose and grandmothers footsteps. They knew grandmothers footsteps, they call the game 'handala' in Arabic named after the cartoon character who stands with his hands clasped behind his back created by cartoonist, Naji Al-Ali. He created cartoons that depict the complexities of the plight of Palestinian refugees. Handala, the refugee child is present in every cartoon and is a symbol of the struggle of the Palestinian people.



The group were well practised and very good at the game; Helen introduced some new elements that make the game more tricky and we hoped they would use these and add their own when passing the game on to friends or younger children. Donal finished the workshop with an African call and response song from the Congo called Za mena mena. A lovely way to end the workshop with the whole group singing and clapping together.

The teenagers were great fun and we left the camp with high-fives, wide smiles and bright eyes.