



Direct Aid
Association



ANNUAL REPORT 2023



Hospital School



Psychosocial Service



Patient's Family House



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Editorial

by Liana Sanamyan

As the year 2023 comes to its end it's time for DAA staff to sum up the services, support and guidance provided to our beneficiaries as well as outline the accomplishments, challenges and achievements. The year was full of positive and negative emotions. As always all the details of DAA's year are provided in the reading below. In order to illustrate our work and give a flavor of what DAA team does on a daily basis, we have decided to provide some extracts describing our routine.

1. A 13-year-old boy forcibly displaced from Artsakh (Nagorno Kharabakh), with multiple gunshot wounds. After the surgery, when the condition was more satisfactory, the doctor referred the boy to a psychologist. During the consultation the psychologist accompanied him to visit the hospital school room. In the beginning, the boy was involved in the educational process through conversations, then also through educational games. While working with this patient everyone on team worked in close cooperation: the psychologist, hospital school teachers and the medical staff. As a result of the work, the boy was discharged in a rather satisfactory mood. He also started to communicate, talk, and tell about the difficult events that happened to him.

2. A girl who arrived from Nigeria with a diagnosis of sickle cell anemia. She was accompanied by her mother and sister who would be her donor for a bone marrow transplant. Both the child and her sister were very anxious because they were in a foreign country, in a new environment and uncertain of what to expect. The younger sister was afraid of the transplantation process itself. Our Dino /a big soft therapeutic toy/ came to the rescue, with the help of which we implemented the "role-play" method with the child. The child became the doctor and Dino became the patient, that is to say her. Through the game we explained everything that was going to happen to her and her sister. Thus, the child developed confidence in the procedures that awaited her sister and herself. The kid and Dino became friends. She saw a friend in Dino, a figure she could trust, so her fears gradually disappeared, giving way little by little to determination and confidence. She also developed a positive desire to get better - this optimism contributes to the vanishing of the fear of pain. The treatment and transplantation went well. According to the tradition established in the hospital, she rang the bell to signal the end of her treatment, toured the wards of the children undergoing transplantation and treatment, announced the good news of her treatment, wished everyone a speedy recovery and finally hung her picture on the traditional tree of children who have overcome cancer.



To give a full picture of all the activities (the extracurricular ones as well) this year we would like to introduce a special event organized in the hospital school.

On February 8, 2023 an event dedicated to the Day of the Armenian Army (celebrated on January 28) was organized with the title "I love my homeland, I am grateful to my soldier, I want peace".

We invited many guests: the representatives of various organizations, the Arabkir MC administration and the medical staff, the director of the Hematology Hospital, the mothers/relatives of the soldiers who lost their lives in the war, the military hospital administration as well as the soldiers-survivors of the war. The hospital school teachers organized a competition among children – to write poems about the motherland Armenia. The best ones were recited during the event. The hospital school volunteers actively participated in all preparatory works. The hospital school pupils together with the volunteers Anna and Rowen made wallpapers: "Peace, War and Me". During the event, our volunteer Anna performed – she played John Lennon's "Imagine" on the guitar, and one of our pupils sang along. The event was very educative for the children on the topics of History and Geography as well as the Motherland. It was extremely emotional from the beginning to the end.

DAA main partners are Arabkir MC&ICAH with Arman Babloyan, Manoushak Yeritsyan and Nina Arikyants, and of course all the medical staff. We were strongly supported by our long-term partners and friends among whom we would like to mention Kinderhilfswerk Himalaja, Claude and Marianne Ruedins (SAAT Foundation), Children's University Hospital Zurich, Christine Walser and Hans Ulrich Bucher. Special thanks to Ernst and Christina Leumanns who continued to be with us over decades in any situation we face here in Armenia. We would also like to mention our friend and supporter Amalia Van Gent who despite most difficult situation in Armenia always finds a way to stand by our side.

Hospital School

Basic Schooling and Extracurricular Activities

In 2023 DAA hospital school has fulfilled its mission by ensuring the continuity of education through educational services for the hospitalized children while they are on treatment away from home and school. The children of pre-school and school age are involved in group sessions, 1:1 teaching and extracurricular activities. The hospital school teachers worked hard both as individuals and as a team to serve the needs of the children as devotedly as possible and guarantee a personalized approach to every child. The educational process is organized through a broad spectrum of activities and tasks, thematic units and educational-developmental games. The school activities also include handicraft workshops, IT lessons, celebration of national holidays, educational festivals as a revision tool, excursions and outings to different sights and parks, cultural program and visits to museums, to name just a few. DAA hospital school staff also helps the children to overcome the fears and difficulties related to being sick, in the hospital, away from their usual surrounding. All the above-mentioned activities also support the positive mood.

In 2023 there were 951 school children in the urology and nephrology departments, 297 patients in the general pediatrics department of Arabkir MC&ICAH. In the dialysis department the hospital school teacher worked both with the school age children and the young students. In the pediatric department of the Haematology Hospital there were 881 (counting also returning patients) children with different haematological issues.

The hospital school teachers had weekly team consultations where they worked on different topics related to the educational process. In DAA hospital school the educational process is based on and is conform with the revised state curriculum. Thus, the daily thematic planning for grades 1-9 in the subjects taught in the hospital school was in the center of attention. DAA teaching staff also participated in trainings when possible in situ and online.

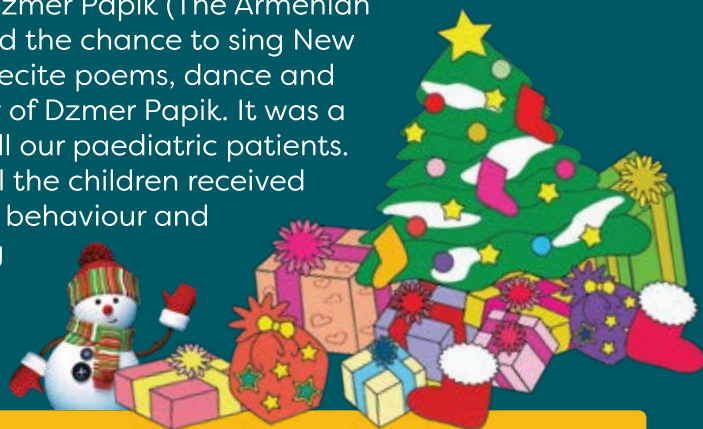
As the need increased, the hospital school teachers continued with their supplementary responsibilities: they worked with and



supported the children of displaced and refugee families having educational needs.

Christmas and New Year Celebrations

As every year the hospital school teachers organized the New Year celebrations for the children who were at the hospital during the holiday season. Dzmer Papik (The Armenian Santa) visited the Hospital School and the children had the chance to sing New Year songs together with him, recite poems, dance and play games in the company of Dzmer Papik. It was a very happy moment for all our paediatric patients. At the end of the day all the children received presents for their good behaviour and school progress during 2023.



Summer Camp

In 2023 the patients' summer camp was organized in three 2 weeks' sessions each including 30 children. DAA hospital school teachers organized the visits as well as the summer program with outings and day excursions. The outings in 2023 also included a winter excursion and a visit to the theatre. Many children profited from the summer program and luckily had a chance to participate in outdoor activities.



Foreign Language and Computer Courses for Children and Adults

DAA carries out computer operating and language courses in English, French and German for the medical staff of Arabkir MC&ICAH and ArBeS, students as well as children. These courses have their importance both within the DAA educational program and for raising awareness about DAA projects.

The language courses for the medical staff serve two main purposes teaching/learning a foreign language and exchanging information about the participants' institutions as well as discussing problems and possible solutions within the group.

The courses are organized from Elementary to Advanced levels and help to develop skills in reading, writing, listening and communication as well as computer operating. The courses are organized both in situ and online.



Specialized Handicraft Workshop

The handicraft workshops are an important part of the hospital school program providing an opportunity for the patients to learn skills while being on treatment, socialize with healthy peers, be engaged in common handicraft activities, temporarily being away from the hospital routine. The sessions are organized according to the age groups (5-18), the skill level and the interests of the participants. During 2023 165 in- and outpatients attended the handicraft atelier for different duration, some of them participated in more than one workshop. They learnt knitting, sewing, beading, macramé, gobelin, making puppets/dolls, quilling.

One of the most important outcomes of the handicraft sessions is the fact that the skills and knowledge learnt can be put to practice by the participants in the daily life.



Special Educators' Club

During the first meeting in January 2023 while planning for the year was done it became obvious that some members couldn't join the Club meetings on a regular basis due to a number of different issues: transportation in winter from the regions, general situation in Armenia, etc.

However, it was evident that the outreach sessions worked very well and the participants gladly joined the meetings.

It was decided that the first outreach session will be held in Shirak Regional Pedagogical-Psychological Support Centre in Gyumri (RPPSC). It was a success and there were 43 participants. After the session, the director of the Center (also a long-term Club member) asked for more sessions to be organized in Gyumri where the participants from the whole region would attend the meetings. The program was bilaterally agreed and starting in November monthly sessions were organized in Gyumri. The outreach sessions are organized by DAA special projects' leader K. Andreasyan accompanied by the hospital school teachers with their respective topics. These sessions were attended by numerous participants with very active discussions and hands-on activities.

L. Sanamyan continued working in close cooperation with the Club participants and DAA long-term partner Christine Walser. In the online session in late September with Christine Walser and DAA hospital school teachers it was emphasized that this cooperation and exchange was very important for the DAA hospital school. Planning ahead: DAA hospital school teachers will prepare three cases to be discussed in the context of the curriculum adaptation and expansion in a common workshop with Prof. Judith Hollenweger Haskell from Zurich University of Teacher Education. The workshop will be open for all the Club members. The timeline to be further discussed due to the situation in Armenia and the availability of the Swiss experts.



DAA Volunteers

As of 2022 DAA hospital school cooperates with the European Solidary Corps volunteers. In 2023 this cooperation was once again very productive. We would like to thank all our volunteers, namely: Eva Raniolo (Italy), Mia Eger (Germany), Anna Szychulska (Poland), Anna Schorrer (Germany) and Rowan van der Wens (The Netherlands) who added a special flavour to DAA hospital school activities and our educational program.

They have learnt at the same time contributing to the daily work at the hospital school.

One of the volunteers' parents visited the hospital school during her stay and upon his return to Germany Clemens Schorrer, Anna's father, wrote a long appreciation letter to the hospital school staff for what we do. Within the cooperation, the project coordinator Kristine Andreasyan participated in the ESC coordinators' meeting in Gyumri held on October 27-29.



Mother and Child Program

The “Mother and Child” being an essential program that DAA staff has been implementing for over decades. For many years the implementation has been possible thanks to the continuous support and generosity of “SAAT” Foundation. The program interconnects all the three DAA core institutions. The beneficiaries: parents, usually mothers, facing the difficulty of having a sick child, have an exceptional opportunity for psychological support and relief as well as engaging in an activity with their children. The numerous sessions provide them with a chance to be away from the hospital routine. During the workshops the participants learn skills that can be used in the daily life. DAA staff work in close cooperation for providing efficient services and scheduling the sessions so that the beneficiaries can move from one workshop to another.

The chart below reflects the number of the participants in the workshops during 2023. The high interest and the positive feedback of the participants, DAA staff reports and the success stories once again emphasize how important the “Mother and Child” program is. All the participants benefited greatly from the program.

N	SERVICES / WORKSHOPS	TOTAL I-XII month
1.	Psychosocial Support Group Arabkir Hospital	48 33 190
2.	Computer Courses	56 4 252
3.	Knitting Haemotology Hospital	59 2 257
4.	Knitting Arabkir Hospital	69 0 290
5.	Sewing Haemotology Hospital	61 0 262
6.	Sewing ArabkirHospital	69 0 304
7.	Educational Games Arabkir Hospital, Nephrology Department (school age)	347 4 351
8.	Educational Games Arabkir Hospital, Nephrology Department (pr-school age)	350 10 354
9.	Educational Games Arabkir Hospital, Urology Department	434 1 437
10.	Educational Games Arabkir Hospital, General Pediatric Department	327 7 336
11.	Educational Games, Haematology Hospital	342 4 350

Legend: **number of participants**, **number of returning participants**, **number of workshops**

This year the program was fully implemented and DAA dedicated staff worked well to accommodate the needs of the participants and to involve all the interested people during their stay in the hospital.

In 2023 the children and mothers of the displaced and refugee families from Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) on treatment in Arabkir hospital were involved in the “Mother and Child” program (as during the recent years).

We would like to express our cordial gratitude to SAAT Foundation in Switzerland for the continuous support to this exceptionally important program.

Patient's Family House

In 2023 there were 42 families from all the regions of Armenia in the PFH having no other accommodation possibilities or means to rent a place in Yerevan. The accommodation was provided for different periods based on the request from the treating doctor verified by Dr. N. Arikants, the medical director of Arabkir. There is an increase in the number of the families accommodated in the Patient Family compared to 2022 (though still smaller than before the pandemic) despite the fact that DAA still has only two rooms (temporary location) under this

service. However, as last year the services were provided to a significantly greater number of families on the wards of the hospital entitled to PFH services: schooling, psychological and social support, food and other essentials while on treatment.

All the PFH services namely accommodation, schooling, psychological and social support, food and other essentials were provided to the full extent, in many cases within the hospital setting. All the service listed above are free of charge to the pediatric patient and one care provider. When accommodation is provided in the PFH, the adult in charge: usually the mother has some duties e.g., housekeeping, helping in cleaning, washing and other minor tasks. The mothers also support each other to overcome the common difficulties of having a sick child and being away from home and family. The PFH staff pays close attention to make sure that the services provided correspond to the set standards.

The feedback of the PFH services' beneficiaries (guest book) is always very positive and appreciating.



Psychosocial Service

For In- and Outpatients and Their Families

The psychosocial service being a department of the hospital for many years now remains an integral part of the DAA services. The service is supported by DAA both financially and professionally. In 2023 the psychosocial team provided services to 160 pediatric patients aged 4-18 through individual and group consultations and therapies. The team provides services also to the families when needed. The annual report of the psychosocial department in Arabkir MC&ICAH contains detailed information on the service activities.

The psychosocial team members actively participate in professional trainings, workshops and meetings, e.g. “The Basics of Pediatric Psychotherapy”, “Overcoming Childhood Psychological Traumas”, “Sand Therapy” to name a few. They also cooperate with local NGOs, healthcare institutions, professional associations, and state agencies such as the regional centers of social service, district council of Arabkir, medical and social expertise commission.

In 2023 DAA continued the implementation of the special social program with the ongoing support of Ernst Leumann and the Foundation of the Children with Congenital Diseases. The program is carried out by DAA for certain pediatric patients on treatment in Arabkir MC&ICAH. As always, the program was implemented in the close cooperation with Arabkir MC&ICAH medical director Dr. N. Arikyants and the chiefs of the corresponding departments. Alongside with the special social program DAA carried out social support for the patients on treatment in the hospital who were not entitled for the support within the above mentioned program as well as for the displaced families from Artsakh being on treatment in Arabkir.

The year 2023 was a year of accomplishments and achievements but also a year of new challenges. We had a new wave of displaced families due to the situation in Artsakh (Nagorno Karabakh). The work in the hospital school requires quick reactions, precise decisions and well thought out solutions. It is important to mention that DAA team carried out its activities with all the necessary modifications and once again covered even wider spectrum of services. Our team

continued providing additional services for the displaced and refugee families from Nagorno-Kharabakh. At DAA we once again proved that we can fulfill our duties and realize our projects successfully thanks to the full dedication of our staff and the very close cooperation among DAA members while providing services to the beneficiaries. We must emphasize that all of the above mentioned was also possible thanks to the kind will and generosity of our supporters.



Our Team

Board Members

Varuzhan Avanesyan	-----	DAA Board President
Nina Arikants	-----	“Arabkir” Medical Director
Manoush Yeritsyan	-----	ArBeS Center
Maria Khakhmalyan	-----	“Pokrik Ishkhan” Director
Mariam Mkhitarian	-----	DAA

Administration

Hasmik Tadevosyan	-----	DAA President
Liana Sanamyan	-----	Consultant
Mariam Mkhitarian	-----	Admin. Assistant
Liana Martirosyan	-----	PFH Administrator
Liza Abgaryan	-----	PFH Administrator
Voskehat Ghalayan	-----	Book-Keeper
Armen Sanamyan	-----	Cashier

Hospital School

- **HS** - Hospital School Arabkir
- **HSS** - Haematology Hospital School

Kristine Andreasyan	Special Projects' Leader
Ani Hovhanissyan	HSS Teacher
Anahit Baghdasaryan	Dialisys Teacher
Karina Tadevosyan	Pre-School Teacher
Yelena Tadevosyan	HS Teacher
Mary Abrahamyan	HS Visiting Teacher
Gayane Haroutunyan	Cooking, Baking and Sewing

Board Memembers

Donara Aghasyan	Coordinator, German Teacher
Hasmik Lalayan	English Teacher
Svetlana Hairapetyan	French Teacher
Hayk Sanamyan	Computer Teacher, Technical Support

Psychosocial Service

Varvara Avakimyan Psychologist
Hasmik Amiryan Psychologist

House Service

Liza Abgaryan Guard
Anna Gevorgyan Cleaning Woman

Volunteers

Gayane Davtyan “Dino” Kindergarten
Rowan J.S. van der Wens The Netherlands
Anna Schorrer Germany
Anna Szychulska Poland



A more detailed report on separate projects and sections is available at DAA office and can be provided upon need.

Please, contact DAA office

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Annual Report
2023



“The most important aim of the hospital school is the continuity of education: **providing educational services to the hospitalized child while he/she is away from his/her school.** Needless to mention that hospital school has also other aims: the hospital school teachers help children to overcome the fears and difficulties related to being sick, in the hospital away from their usual surrounding and support the positive mood.



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