

Summary:

- With Magic for Smiles into its third year, magic shows motivated by the kid's smiles continue to grow with the cumulative total number of shows standing at 207 (including 29 private parties or public festivals).
- The total number of NGOs now involved is 90 in addition to 15 festival and party planners. Around 3200 kids mostly refugees benefited from the humanitarian shows.
- Events have been spread over the first half of 2018 with 17 new organisations working with kids getting involved across Lebanon and 4 new public festival and party planners.
- Activities continued steadily through the winter months and peaked in June with the start of summer. There are always new exciting connections being made.
- Fundraising remains a challenge with one event being held in the UK. Private parties and public festivals have increased and help to subsidise the humanitarian work.

Growing humanitarian concept behind Magic for Smiles:

- The fundamentals behind the use of magic with vulnerable and traumatised children is increasingly validated. As well as providing entertainment and de-stressing for these kids, there is ample evidence of additional potential benefits such as increased cognitive skills, concentration levels, interaction, imagination, creativity and even self-confidence. The more exposure to magic however the better.
- Academics and institutions have been approached for providing advice on developing the knowledge on the use of magic especially within psychosocial support – although no funding is yet in place for formal research, every show is evaluated for impact.

Sharing the mystery: Magic stimulates the curiosity of kids – this boy from Steptoe together for special needs children rarely smiles. Jamie is also seen here explaining the magic in an Akaar camp with Ahla Fawda.



Magic is comedy: Kids need to laugh and the shows stimulate lots of laughter - here producing eggs in Ramallah UNRWA school in Shatilla camp, talking about how not to burst balloons with needles with Bunat el Hadara, Bar Elias, and a boy watching a show with Loyac in Faour,



Magic shows - big and small: the smaller the show the more interaction and benefit but there are so often too many kids so that everyone attends. Here all of Ramallah school in Shatilla camp attended, and Al Jana organised amazing days out for deprived kids this one in the Tripoli park.



Rabbits always bring smiles - the kids always especially love the live animals and which also appeal to the sense of touch especially for special needs kids. Here in Mar Elias camp with the Palestinian Red Crescent, and in an Akaar camp with Ahla Fawda.



Puppets and masks provide happy characters – kids love Tiko the dog puppet as they identify with his funny personality and kids love to wear masks to identify with animals (as well as engage with the magic rope!) – here in PARD centre in Tyre.



Entrancement and concentration: time and again often very wild kids are enthralled increasing their concentration levels – here in Bedawi Palestinian camp with Kanafani Foundation, Bunat el Hadara school for Syrians in Bar Elias, and PARD centre in Beirut.



Festival and private parties: hundreds of people watching the show with the International Theatre, Zeitouneh Bay in Beirut during Eid el Fitr, Twinkle Star put on a show for Mother's Day in their day care centre in Zgharta, and lastly a birthday party in Kfarshima with a rabbit!



Looking ahead – priorities include registration in the UK, increased diversification of services offered including more tuition, establishment of more ongoing partnerships, and substantial media coverage.

Sincere thanks to all for any support and interest in Magic for Smiles to date. And incase convenient, here is the crowdfunding link: <https://www.gofundme.com/humanitarian-magic> – still open for business!

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Established in early 2016, Magic for Smiles was set up to provide magic entertainment and experience for and with vulnerable children, especially but not only refugees, in Lebanon and in due course the region. It is run by Jamie Balfour-Paul using the stage name Jamie Jibberish due to extensive use of nonsense or magic language.