

مركز تطوير

Success

Palestine





Welcome to the NGO Development Center's first success story publication: **Success Palestine**. We felt that the summer was a perfect opportunity to take stock of the fantastic contribution of our partners to Palestinian society; and share with all friends of NDC the magnificent work that NGOs do for communities throughout Palestine. In this publication you will find a selection of six individual success stories. These short articles demonstrate the power of community empowerment—whether saving the life of a child, providing marginalized children with education or contributing to a more environmentally healthy Palestine.

It remains NDC's greatest honour to continue to support the NGO sector working in the West Bank and Gaza. Along with our donors (*Agence Française de Développement, World Bank, Switzerland, Netherlands, Sweden and Denmark*) we thank all of you who continue to make such a difference to the livelihood and well-being of Palestinian communities.

Your commitment to sustainable development is our motivation.

Best wishes,

Ghassan Kasabreh

*NDC Director*





“I became a strong person challenging anyone who stands in the way of my future.  
So my aspiration is this: to become a well-known musician and trainer on a world-class level”

Bara'a Assi is a viola player from Qarawet Bani Hassan village in Nablus Governorate. At just seventeen years of age she has challenged the restrictions of her social environment and committed herself to excelling as a musician.

As a young girl, village life affected Bara'a's personality and she became scared to leave her house – fearful of gossip and judgements. Nonetheless, her Mother was a constant source of encouragement and Bara'a began her musical journey by enrolling in music courses through the Women for Life society, in cooperation with the Edward Said Conservatory of Music in Nablus. She began leaving the village to participate in musical camps.

*“Because of my belief in my right to receive education, my family's support and my teacher's encouragement at the Conservatory, I became a strong person challenging anyone who stands in the way of my future.”*

Bara'a has achieved a great deal. In particular, as a trainer at the Edward Said Music Camps and acting in a film called “The Talents of the Youth on the Mountain” - produced by NDC partner NGO Sharek Youth Forum and GoalNet.

*“I feel that it [music education] has fulfilled my ambitions and aspirations and broken all norms and traditions that prevent girls from receiving education and going out to receive these courses; I was the first girl from my area who participated in such courses.”*

Her journey from local girl prevented from socializing in the village to accomplished musician, has much to do with the Edward Said National Conservatory of Music. ESNCM offers a unique approach to social development. Under a five year plan, the NGO has a range of exciting goals for the future. Whilst continuing to develop the academic programs of ESNCM branches (Jerusalem, Ramallah, Bethlehem, Nablus), outreach programs will be supported in Tubas and Salfit. ESNCM also aims to open new branches in Jericho, Hebron and Gaza. By teaching and promoting music to Palestinians, no matter their location, ESNCM is passionate about giving young people like Bara'a's the chance to utilize their latent talent and strengthen cultural identity.



The Beit Ula Cultural Center in the Hebron Governorate provides local children with the chance to develop their social, academic and creative skills. It is providing an escape for young isolated and marginalized Palestinians. The center was established in 1994 with the aim of giving youth the opportunity to achieve cultural, artistic, and literary successes. It also works to increase social involvement in voluntary work through a variety of inclusive activities and events.

Talab Taher is thirteen years old. As a baby he suffered an accident which has left him with a minor but permanent disability in his right hand. Consequently, Talab has always been very shy and anti-social. The disability has made Talab afraid to play with his friends and meet new people.

His parents visited the center with the hope that the staff may be able to provide an environment in which Talab can start to express his personality and enjoy the activities on offer. They explained Talab's problem and expressed a great desire to see him happy and integrated with his peers in the local community. Talab was

**“My participation in the club is part of my life, it is the place where I learn new things, and achieve my desires and wishes”**

registered in the art and drama workshops, and press program. Initially, he found interaction hard and his shyness meant that he wasn't active in workshops or engaging with the other children.

The commitment of Beit Ula Cultural Center's trainers to unlocking Talab's obvious potential has transformed his contribution to activities, and school and home life. Through encouragement and giving Talab responsibility, he now engages with other students with confidence and warmth. This step-by-step process is testament to the benefit of trusting in the ability of children and youth.

Staff at the center have seen a phenomenal change in Talab. He is now one of the most active members of the center – involved in all the center's activities and events, liked by his peers, and regularly asked to participate in new projects. His parents are delighted that their son is reaching the potential they always saw in him – **“we're very happy and notice the difference in Talab's personality”**.



Yousef Ahmad Abdallah Al-Muzayyan is a citizen of Gaza. Having arrived in 2000 on a short-term visa, Yousef was severely restricted in his movement and did not hold a valid passport. The outbreak of the second intifada in 2002, and subsequent construction of the separation barrier, have transformed the Gaza Strip into a highly congested, poverty-stricken and isolated region. In May of 2012, this social reality once again threatened the lives of his family.

Two of Yousef's children have already been lost to liver disease due to his inability to accompany them to medical establishments outside of the Gaza Strip. No organization had been able to help Yousef and his family has suffered the tragic consequences.

“I have no words to express my gratitude and appreciation for your intervention efforts...enabling me to receive a passport to save my sick son's life.”

On May 13<sup>th</sup> Yousef approached the Palestinian Center for Human Rights for help following another of his sons falling dangerously ill. PCHR's work is based on a conviction that a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the region and the healthy development of Palestinian society must be built on a foundation of respect for human rights and democratic principles. This includes the right to healthcare and movement. The PCHR team promised to help save the life of Yousef's young son — who at less than two years of age was suffering a severe liver condition and required a transplant as soon as possible. Medical professionals in Gaza had already referred Yousef to the only institution with the capacity to save his life — Al Hussein Medical City Hospital in Jordan.

The PCHR team was immediate in its response. An urgent letter was sent to the PA Deputy Interior Minister in Ramallah requesting the urgent issuing of a passport to Yousef on humanitarian grounds. PCHR stressed the need to act quickly — the life of Yousef's son hung in the balance. Regular and vigorous advocacy from PCHR's staff resulted in the delivery of a passport to Yousef on May 27<sup>th</sup>. In this case, the organization saved a young child's life, and his father from the anguish of losing another member of his family.

The separation barrier in Gaza presents more than just political humiliation and economic strangulation. The restriction of movement for Gaza citizens is costing lives. The Palestinian Center for Human Rights is leading the fight to ensure that the most basic of rights are provided for families like Yousef's.



The Palestinian Environment Supporters Association is leading the fight against pollution and environmental degradation in the Gaza Strip. Since 2002, the organization has been working to reduce the effect of harmful waste material on the environment, promote and implement international standards within local government and the private sector, and raise awareness of the importance of environmental sustainability through education programs in the local community.

For many children, exposure to this kind of education is changing the way they interact with their surroundings and engage with family life – particularly in the claustrophobic atmosphere of the Gaza Strip. Twelve year old Abdul-Hamid Mohammad Al Aqqad is one such child who has benefitted from the educational programs run by PESA. He has developed a range of new skills that allow him to utilize many materials that are otherwise discarded:

**“I am very happy and can make new toys and materials from things I would have never imagined – like paper, cardboard and cans.”**

For children in Gaza, access to interactive environmental education benefits both physical well-being and social communication. PESA are passionate about providing skills which are sustainable and fundamentally beneficial to society. Ultimately, the use of discarded materials in making toys and furniture develops individual ability, responds to the environmental crisis in Gaza, and connects citizens to the well-being of their community environment.

**“I’ve learnt that there’s a cycle of life, an environmental equilibrium.”**

The youth environmental education projects are also having a hugely positive impact on the behavioural skills of local children. Since Abdul-Hamid has started interacting with PESA’s activities the staff have noticed a gradual but significant improvement in his behavior and attainment. PESA activist Faten Abul-Naja has observed his transition and now believes Abdul-Hamid is one of the most exceptional and active participants in the whole PESA education program. PESA’s activities have provided this creative outlet.

The commitment of PESA to utilizing resources and disposing of waste sustainably – within the private sector and local communities – is positively impacting on the well-being of families like Abdul-Hamid’s. Furthermore, the education they impart ensures that Abdul-Hamid and his peers can incorporate green environmental practices into everyday family practices for generations to come.



The Mothers School Society in Nablus was established in 1999 to provide education to dozens of mothers who have no access to education. Focusing on adult literacy, health education, civic education and vocational skills, the Mothers School Society is empowering mothers in marginalized and rural areas. The society's projects specifically respond to the absence of resources for women who are expected to manage the home whilst fathers are working.

Nawal Idrees Al Badawi is one such mother from Oreef village. Despite her English-language diploma gained following school, she found herself detached from learning resources and had forgotten much of her education. In essence she was becoming increasingly marginalized and unable to develop herself as she wished. Nawal heard about the Mothers School Society in the town of Huwwara. She was attracted to the open style of teaching and the opportunities it could offer her. In fact, she says the course became a central part of her life.

***"I started waiting impatiently for study days to take place...I felt like I was a governmental-school student again!"***

The teachers are singled out for specific praise by Nawal. She is very grateful for their commitment to providing the women of the Nablus Governorate with educational opportunities. Furthermore, Nawal is convinced of the impact this initiative is having on the children of Huwwara. The empowerment of mothers is leading to greater interest from students in the town – their mothers are powerful role models.

**"I really hope to continue with the Mothers School Society since it benefits the society; mothers and students"**

Following her first semester with the Mothers School Society, Nawal has joined the Oreef School Mothers Council. This body is responsible for supporting the students of the village and maintaining the standard of the educational services in Oreef. In this case, the mothers educational project has reinvigorated the local government school system.

Nawal is convinced of the benefits of the project and looks forward to continuing her study. She also hopes to pass on the value of the Mothers School Society to her peers. She is now an advocate for adult education.

***"I would definitely enroll in the upcoming semester. I also gave lots of information about the Mothers School Society to the mothers of Oreef to encourage them to register for the upcoming semester."***



Mariam Abed Hasan Zbeidat is a fifty one year old mother of three and lives in Al Zbeidat village. Following her divorce she became solely responsible for taking care of her family. This strenuous task is made harder by the social conditions of the Jordan Valley within which Al Zbeidat village is located. This is an extremely isolated region of the West Bank and continues to suffer from land appropriation by the Israeli authorities and a total lack of social services. The Union of Agricultural Work Committees (UAWC) was founded in 1986 in response the economic and social fragility suffered by farmers following an increase in the occupation of land and diversion of water sources. UAWC provides a technical response to agricultural deficiencies and a socio-economic response to poverty.

Mariam applied to Al Zbeidat Agricultural Committee to become a beneficiary of their project and was subsequently selected. Despite the family having to borrow the initial

contribution amount for the new agricultural project, Mariam was hopeful that the initiative would yield results and save family members the indignity of working in settlements. Mariam and her children have cultivated a whole dunum (1000 m<sup>2</sup>) of greenhouse land and planted it with melon crops. When asked about the yield/output from these crops, she said:

*“Based on our calculations, if the price per kilogram remains 4 shekels...then this season’s revenues will be 10,000 shekels.”*

From this season’s crop alone, Mariam expects to cover the costs of seedlings and pay back her initial loan for the project contribution amount. The family’s melon field has now become a sustainable initiative able to fund day-to-day living costs and, in addition to other income, slowly lift the family from grinding poverty. Furthermore, the UAWC’s initiative is providing single women with the resources to generate income independently. This is a hugely significant success in the Jordan Valley.

However, Mariam is not relying on the melon harvest alone. A cucumber crop is planned for the gap between the melon season and she is dedicated to working day and night to ensure she does not have to return to the settlement for employment.

UAWC’s projects place the future success of any agricultural endeavour in the hands of beneficiaries – success is of their own making and participants are given ownership of their economic futures. In the face of social isolation and political oppression in the Jordan Valley, this is a priceless gift.

**“Thanks to God and to you UAWC, this project has taken place and is working! God willing, we won’t need settlement work anymore.”**





The NGO Development Center (NDC) is the largest Palestinian organization of its kind working hand-in-hand with Palestinian NGOs and community development organizations to improve the delivery of services to the disaffected, and build a more capable and responsive Palestinian NGO sector.

NDC provides a range of grants and sector development initiatives for organizations throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip through the Palestinian NGO IV Project targeting social service delivery, and the Human Rights and Good Governance Secretariat.

Partner NGOs make a huge contribution to Palestinian society and with NDC share a vision of empowered communities implementing sustainable projects.

The successes achieved by so many NGOs throughout Palestine demonstrate the potential of integrated grant giving, capacity building and sector development. NDC is committed to publicizing these truly inspiring accomplishments.

Published in collaboration with the following partner NGOs:

Palestinian NGO IV Project: Edward Said National Conservatory of Music (<http://ncm.birzeit.edu/>), Beit Ula Cultural Center (facebook—Beit Ula Cultural Center), Palestinian Environment Supporters Association (facebook—PESA), Mothers School Society (<http://www.mothers-school.org>), Union of Agricultural Work Committees (<http://uawc-pal.org/>).

Human Rights and Good Governance Secretariat: Palestinian Center for Human Rights (<http://www.pchr-gaza.org>).



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