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The core mission of Al Fakhoora is to advocate and measurably improve the quality of education and the lives of Palestinian students living in Gaza and the West Bank. Al Fakhoora realizes that its mission cannot be fully materialized given the Israeli blockade around Gaza and the occupation of Palestine which denies students from travelling freely to pursue education.

Al Fakhoora focuses on four specific areas of intervention to support higher education in Gaza. These areas include: our flagship scholarship and empowerment program ‘Dynamic Futures’, our reconstruction and rehabilitation of educational institutes program, ‘Reconstruction Program’, psychosocial and disability program ‘Health and Wellness Services’, and our student-initiated global advocacy campaign, ‘Fakhoora.org’.

Al Fakhoora provides a solid communication platform to students in Gaza, Qatar and English-speaking audiences, to utilize online social media tools and effectively advocate for their cause and their right to education on a larger scale.

100 students have completed 120 hours of vocational training in eight different courses.
Recent Accomplishments

The wheels are certainly in motion and Al Fakhoora in collaboration with its partners continues to make steady progress in its areas of focus; student support and empowerment, reconstruction of educational institutions, health and wellness support and services for youth with disabilities.

In line with our pledge to indiscriminately affirm students’ right to education, we launched our vocational training program earlier on in the year in association with Islamic Relief Palestine and the University College of Applied Sciences. The program which was designed to empower marginalized youth selected 100 applicants to train in eight different fields. Today, the students (20 of whom suffer from disabilities) have successfully completed their 120 hours of training and are now in the second phase of the program. The new phase splits the students into two groups; 50 students in short term employment, while the remaining 50 have been awarded grants to start their own businesses. We are thrilled to see this group not only armed with a tangible marketable skill but also in control of their own future. We are equally excited to see the 20 students with disabilities integrating effectively and contributing to their community.

Another noteworthy achievement is our ongoing partnership with the Qatar Red Crescent, which over the past three months saw the completion of two projects; the psychosocial support for mothers and children with disability (p. 23) and the hearing test of over 10,000 children throughout Gaza (p. 22). Both children and their mothers relished the opportunity of integration that the psychosocial program run by the Palestine Medical Relief Society had provided. The program had brought children with and without disabilities together to participate in various recreational activities. The hearing test campaign which was carried out by Atfaluna Society in Gaza tested children age 0–5 for hearing problems. Results showed that 250 children suffered from acute hearing difficulties and will be provided with the required hearing aids.

Finally, in memory of the children who died in the war on Gaza, Al Fakhoora planted its first 143 palm tree in a plot of land provided by the city’s municipality. Work is in progress for a memorial project that will incorporate both an environmental and a community element offering a unique opportunity for remembrance.

FIG 1 //

DONATIONS PUT INTO ACTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOLARSHIP EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM</th>
<th>PSYCHO/SOCIAL &amp; DISABILITY</th>
<th>RECONSTRUCTION PHASE 1</th>
<th>RECONSTRUCTION PHASE 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$6.12M</td>
<td>$2.20M</td>
<td>$1.50M</td>
<td>$2.50M</td>
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<tr>
<td>$5.98M</td>
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</tr>
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<td>12M</td>
<td>11M</td>
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<td>9M</td>
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<td>10M</td>
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<td>10M</td>
<td>9M</td>
<td>8M</td>
<td>7M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9M</td>
<td>8M</td>
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<td>6M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8M</td>
<td>7M</td>
<td>6M</td>
<td>5M</td>
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<td>6M</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3M</td>
<td>2M</td>
<td>1M</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

AI FAKHOORA | IDB
In collaboration with Islamic Relief Palestine (IRPAL) and the University College of Applied Science (UCAS), Al Fakhoora launched a unique vocational program where 100 students have completed 120 hours of training in eight different courses. This program also provides managerial training to students enabling them to develop business plans in preparation for the second phase, which entitles 50 students to grants to set up their own businesses. Sewing and embroidery, cooking and food processing, computer programming, web and multimedia design, mobile phone maintenance, autotronics, photography and video production are amongst the eight courses offered on the UCAS premises. In addition, 20 of the students enrolled in the program have disabilities. IRPAL is overseeing the program in Gaza and General Manager, Mr. Muneeb Abu Ghazaleh said

“It is a priority for Islamic Relief to develop the skills of young people out of belief in their role as leaders in the community. We must make full use of their potential and help them to take charge in shaping their future. This program not only provides the required environment to launch their careers, but is also an opportunity for integration.”

The inclusion of 20 students with disabilities in the program has been the distinguishing element in the program’s design. “It has been phenomenal to watch the development of these students and the integration process has been seamless, with students stating that they have not at any point felt any differences between them and those suffering from disabilities” said Manhal Ashour, Program Coordinator in Gaza.

Five Gaza based civil societies nominated 280 students. 100 were selected considering certain criteria such as economic status, disability, social status as well as availability and commitment to complete the training program.

Upon completion of the training, students were required to submit a feasibility study that envisioned the creation of their own business in their new field of specialization. 50 students will be given grants to set up their own businesses, while the remaining 50 will be provided with short term working opportunities to back them up with work experience.

"Gaza’s youth are resourceful and eager. The program has managed to positively impact the students and we are proud to have been a catalyst that brings about change and implements tangible development.”

Faroq Burney, Al Fakhoora Director.
25 year old Nahla Shamalakh was born with a disability that affected her mobility. She was hit by a car when she was a child and the injuries resulted in further regression in her movement.

Nahla lives in Shaikh Ejlien area with her six siblings and parents. Following the war on Gaza in 2009, their land was destroyed along with all their crops.

Despite her limited mobility Nahla, went on to study education. After earning a diploma in education, Nahla could not find a job. Known for her love and skill in embroidery, she was contacted by her college and nominated for the youth empowerment program.

“‘You can’t imagine how excited I was to start communicating with people and learning again. I have always been so grateful for the blessings I do have; I can see, hear, learn and think.” Nahla opted for short-term employment, as she needs to financially support her family. “I see people look appreciatively at my work and it encourages me to do more. The Fakhoora program has changed my life. I dream of seeing more people buy my work and then I can tell them I am handicapped, but I can still make beautiful things.”

Added Nahla

Fayroz Radie is a 31 year old from Beit Lahia, north of the Gaza Strip. She studied Social Rehabilitation at the University College of Applied Sciences. Fayroz suffers from a neurological disorder that affects her speech and movement. The disorder has had a strong psychological affect on her. Since her involvement in Al Fakhoora, she has not only bettered her skills, but the integration aspect of the program has left her feeling grateful that she can at least express herself.

“I find it fantastic that regular people and people with disabilities are working together.” She said.

Fayroz has always enjoyed cooking and was thrilled when she was nominated for a youth empowerment program. She has been trained in making different foods such as pastries, sweets and meals. “I would love to open a shop in the future.”

To read the stories of Hayfa Naeem and Muhammad El Kahlout and to view more photos, visit our website: http://fakhoora.org/100-extraordinary-people-4-extraordinary-stories

What’s next?

Following the completion of the training program, the students requested additional hours of managerial training that would enable them to draft their feasibility studies. Six hours were offered to the students to help them to methodically outline their visions. The studies were then reviewed according to market opportunities, operations management and financial viability. The evaluation also took into consideration the student’s performance during the vocational training as well as their demonstration of responsibility and commitment.

We hope to shadow the students and document this exciting and unique journey.

As for the 50 remaining students entitled to short term employment, IRPAL tapped into its employment database to measure vacancy and capacity and to determine relevant and interesting fields of work.

Finally, 15 institutions were selected and prepared to host the beneficiaries.
Dynamic Futures Scholarship Program

The Dynamic Futures program currently provides a full academic grant for a student’s period of degree-level study. We continue to develop our empowerment program to ensure that our students are characterized by a unique set of skills in advocacy, leadership, communications and social media proficiency.

Al Fakhoora seeks to identify unique partnerships with innovators in these fields, which are unfolding on the ground to great effect!

Using online resources or face-to-face sessions; the Dynamic Futures international team pool their talents, skills and knowledge to create a varied and colourful program of lectures, activities and experiences for our students.

The advocacy element of the program incorporates classes in leadership skills, media, film, writing, online discussions with international friends, human rights and English language classes.

Once they possess knowledge of their human rights, good understanding of others and the skills of clear communication and expression, these activities instil a sense of power for the students.

FIG 2 //

DISTRIBUTION OF SCHOLARSHIPS OVER SPECIALTIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPECIALTY</th>
<th>NUMBER OF STUDENTS</th>
<th>COST PAID TO DATE IN US$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MEDICINE</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGINEERING</td>
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<tr>
<td>SCIENCES</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHER HEALTH STUDIES</td>
<td>34</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCIAL SCIENCES</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>$47,592</td>
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<tr>
<td>LITERATURES</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>TECHNICAL STUDIES</td>
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<td>LAW AND SHARIAA</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>POLICE STUDIES</td>
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<td>$6,663</td>
</tr>
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<td>TOTAL STUDENTS</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>TOTAL $570,311</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MALE STUDENTS 128  FEMALE STUDENTS 158
International Masters video project

This project aims to record the experiences of the students from Gaza, while they are living and studying abroad. In this year’s intake, five post-graduates made their way to Europe, with four residing in the UK, whom effusion, our communications agency in London, plan to visit for the first video diary sessions.

The video diaries are being filmed in London, Brighton, York and Norwich by acclaimed filmmakers Remigiusz and Anna Sowa. The film will take in the day-to-day experiences of life and study in a western culture, using footage of the surrounding community and interviews with the students on their experiences.

The film will also include footage from, and co-operation with, a number of Gaza filmmakers to incorporate archive and current footage from the region.

We hope that we can reflect accurately the students’ UK experiences of the trials of hard study and the tribulations of living with access to all the resources to make study possible. Aside from this, their determination and dedication to study is admirable and we’re keen to convey and celebrate this too!

When complete, we hope to feature the footage on the Al Fakhoora website, to inspire other students in their academic aspirations and as a celebration of this fantastic experience. In years to come, these records will be wonderful to look back on and will serve as a reminder of Al Fakhoora’s accomplishments!
Meet Basma Awad
Al Fakhoora Volunteer

Basma Awad, 22, lives in Abasan, a village east of Khan Younis, in the Gaza Strip. Leaving her family in the UAE, Basma arrived in Gaza in 2009 to study Laboratory Medicine at Al Azhar University. She returned for the experience of studying in her homeland. “Studying in Palestine is definitely less expensive than studying in the UAE, but it’s an opportunity to be back in Gaza; living and experiencing life under siege. I wanted to contribute and give back and I want to be part of the rebuilding process” said Basma.

Basma’s father left Gaza 30 years ago in search of a safer place to raise his family and more promising work opportunities. With rising living costs, the family of eight, found it more challenging to live abroad as the children started getting ready to go to college.

Moving to Gaza was not easy. Basma lived far from the university campus and commutes were tough. “The daily journeys are exhausting, because the roads are decrepit, but there really is no alternative at this point. The infrastructure in Gaza cannot be upgraded or maintained due to the blockade” Basma added.

The tightened blockade on Gaza has amplified the challenging life conditions in Gaza. However, this vibrant young lady has unearthed a passion for writing. She began to blog in 2009 about her “exciting life” in Gaza as she describes it. “I wanted to share my experience, especially my poetry, I think poems are best to express what’s inside us. In the absence of my family, I felt the blog reflected my sorrow as well as my happiness in Gaza.” Basma said. After joining Al Fakhoora as a volunteer in 2012, she began to actively participate in the advocacy program. “I think students, should be empowered to play greater roles in talking about Palestine, about their own personal experiences and the daily challenges of student life here. I think there is plenty to tell and the voice of the youth is what truly matters” she added.

With one more year to go at university, Basma is trying to think ahead, and is currently interning at a lab at a health center. Basma is concerned about her future and that of her family especially since her father is not employed and one of her brothers is about to go to university. “I truly hope to one day run my own laboratory so I can support my family, however if I am not able to get a job in my field, I will work hard to contribute to the health development sector in the Gaza Strip” she said.

To read Basma’s blog visit: http://poetssspotlight.blogspot.com

Living and Studying in Gaza is an extraordinary experience. It’s challenging but it’s worth it

– Basma Awad
Advocacy and the Empowerment Program
looking back at the academic year

Looking back: the Virtual Majlis

As students are currently in summer break, our partners took time to review the work that was done over the course of the academic year. In this issue of our quarterly report, we thought it was a good time to look back reflect and evaluate the unique work we do with the World in Conversation Project (WinC) in the Virtual Majlis, More Than Words and Ghost Writers programs.

Virtual Majlis

In February 2011, Al Fakhoora approached the World in Conversation Project (WinC) to create a forum in which students in Gaza and students from Penn State University could learn from each other through online dialogue. The weekly conversations dubbed Virtual Majlis (VM) were conducted to foster critical thinking and cross cultural exchange and awareness between the participants.

To ensure clarity of the conversations which used the online video conferencing service Oovoo, the first pilot sessions were facilitated by an Arabic/English translator from the US. As Al Fakhoora and WinC identified incredible potential in the conversations and willingness from the students to learn more, partners at WinC, Dr. Sam Richards and Dr. Laurie Mulvey, created an academic course entitled International Dialogues; offering students a multi dimensional perspective of the conflict between Israel and Palestine. Students taking the course took turns as either participants or observers of the conversation over the semester. During the conversation, students observing the dialogue would tweet or post their question to Facebook. Over time, these questions cued students in Gaza to blog and provide deeper insight into their views and opinions.

Preparing Fakhoora Students

A fundamental goal of the VM is to create student leaders. As WinC follows a well established dialogue facilitation methodology, a basic curriculum for training student facilitators in Gaza and Qatar was developed and conducted over a 15 week period. Using Skype, three facilitator trainers taught the basic skills of dialogue facilitation. The theory was put to practice by running “mock” dialogues between the students and the trainers. 19 sessions were scheduled, however only 11 were conducted due to power cuts in Gaza.

The Virtual Majlis (VM) also aims to increase cultural understanding. The forum provided a safe place to challenge and confront stereotypes. Students on both sides were surprised by how alike they were and how the media had significantly altered their perceptions of people in the United States and Palestinian. Students were struck by how similar their views were on topics such as family values, appearances, aspirations and hopes.
In a report produced by WinC, Dr. Laurie Mulvey said, “Using the Socratic method of asking and answering questions from various and sometimes opposing viewpoints, Penn State students were being offered ways to think more critically about what they believe and what they have been taught in relation to the topics of dialogue. As a result, Penn State students felt that,

“This dialogues] really made me think of how much I had just accepted the status quo in my life. It also made me question where else am I just accepting the status quo? This semester also made me think about my own opinions and how I formed them.”

On the other hand, by using the Socratic methodology of questioning all perspectives, students in Gaza realized that they were forced to develop answers to questions surrounding the many facets involved in the Palestinian and Israeli conflict. During the VM, Palestinian students articulated thoughts and feelings about the conflict in Gaza and its effect on them. According to students in Gaza, the VM was the first time students were asked to articulate such thoughts. As a result, students in Gaza became inspired and empowered to begin and meet amongst themselves to have conversations, practice communication skills, and develop responses to more effectively communicate their thoughts and feelings.

A central facet of the video-dialogues was posing questions to students from both regions that challenged and expanded their sense of the role they play in both the conflict and the solution. Questions like, “What responsibility do you have in the Israeli/Palestinian conflict?” and “What can ordinary citizens actually do to create peace,” asked students from both regions to think critically about an unfamiliar and sometimes taboo topic. Two particularly challenging questions for Gaza students were: “What compromises are you willing to make in order to reach peace?” and “What role does each of your governments play in this conflict?” These questions were difficult to answer, but yielded a great deal of discussion and reflection on both sides. The students left these conversations without answers, but with many more questions to evaluate their position in the world.

The Virtual Majlis will return in September 2012
It is generally safe for Americans to visit Arab-Muslim Middle Eastern countries

I have a pretty good understanding of the conflict between the Palestinians and Israelis

When I think of Arab-Muslim nations in the Middle East, I think of violence

Many Arab-Muslims are closed minded about other peoples ideas and ways of living

Have a positive understanding about Arab-Muslim counties or people

Have a neutral understanding about Arab-Muslim counties or people

Have a negative understanding about Arab-Muslim counties or people
Working with the Palestinian Solidarity Campaign to bring the VM to students in London

In March and April 2012, Al Fakhoora students from Gaza and Palestine Solidarity Campaign in the UK organized seven Virtual Majlis sessions between Palestinian and UK students. These were held once a week, every Thursday, with the UK students gathering in Westminster University. The UK students were mainly drawn from London universities, in particular Westminster and Imperial College. However, there were sessions which were attended by students from Bristol (in the west of England). Rania Al-Najjar, an Al Fakhoora student studying at City University, London, also attended some sessions, and brought other City students with her.

“Today’s chat with Gaza students… made me realize…it’s our duty to spread the message to the world!”

Despite technical difficulties experienced on both ends, students were keen to take part in the conversation. One of the London students wrote this on Facebook after the first session:

“Waiting for the conversation to begin was a little tense because we had some technical issues to deal with on our end. However it didn’t compare to their difficulties as they only have around 6 hours of electricity per day so we weren’t sure if they’d even be there on the other end of the line especially considering Gaza had been bombed the weekend before. As their image flickered onto our screen it felt pretty unbelievable that we’d actually managed to establish a connection with one of the most unreachable places in the world. It was so special to hear their stories first hand.”

It is clear that the UK students gained increased knowledge of the siege and its impact on the right to education from the VMs and were inspired to increase their activism in support of Palestine and the right to education. In a debriefing session held in May between Amena Saleem of Palestine Solidarity Campaign and the UK students, the students were hugely enthusiastic and keen to get involved in further VM sessions in the next academic year, and also to organise events on their campuses about Palestine. They discussed organising public meetings at which they would talk about Gaza and the denial of proper access to education, using information learned from the VMs, and of the possibility of linking up to Gaza via Skype during a public meeting. They also agreed on the necessity of producing more written material based on the knowledge gained from the VMs.

The students in Gaza told the UK students during the VMs how much they appreciated their support, and what a difference it made to them to know that there people outside Palestine who support their struggle.
More Than Words

Fakhora student, Musallam Abukhalil and his MTW partner from PSU meet face to face for the first time

More than just a practical exercise aimed at improving English literacy and confidence; the More Than Words (MTW) program is designed to achieve two main goals related to student led advocacy. One is to expand students’ perspective of the world by offering them an opportunity to build a relationship with and learn with someone who lives in a different part of the world and in a very different culture to their own. The other goal is to create collaborative international partnerships between students to generate stories and other texts that express their personal narratives, experiences, dreams etc, and by using social media.

These main objectives are achieved through pairing students from Penn State University (PSU), with university students in Gaza over video conferencing platforms for verbal exchanges. In addition, written work, videos, and other collaboratively created content are shared and developed using social media. Over 12 weeks, 15 students from Gaza met their PSU counterparts, twice a week for 50 minutes. In addition to the virtual meetings, students from PSU were required to reflect on and continue with those discussions across social media through sharing links and blogs, and through creating content. PSU students were also required to complete weekly surveys and to maintain a weekly journal to document what was worked on and any insights gained from the interaction. Topics of the journals varied greatly, including education, Islam, the treatment of women, home life and more.

The ongoing challenge to the program has been the power shortage affecting Gaza on a daily basis, making it particularly difficult for students to schedule their online meetings. MTW will return at the beginning of the new academic year this September.

This past July, one of the students from Gaza taking part in the More Than Words program, Musallam M. Abukhalil, travelled to the United States and met up with some of the people he had spent the last semester speaking to online.

From left to right, Trey Cody, Mohammed Rezeq and Musallam M Abukhalil met up in person in Washington DC after being first introduced virtually through the More Than Words program

Msallam and I talked every week for about 16 weeks and got to know each other on a comfortable level.

A few weeks ago, when Msallam told me he was en route to America, I knew I had to seize the opportunity to see him. Yesterday, I drove down to Washington DC with my cousin to meet him for the first time. Getting in touch with him once I made it to the city was hard. It was about 30 minutes later that I was looking out the window of the restaurant at the busy street outside and knew right away that the man walking with two bags in his hand toward the hotel we had just walked out of, was my friend Msallam. I cut myself off mid-sentence and ran outside. I yelled “Msallam!” and when he stopped and turned, I knew right away that I was seeing my friend in person for the first time.

Advocacy and Empowerment >>
700,000 Palestinians were displaced in 1948 in what became known through Palestinian history as Nakba or Catastrophe. The Nakba day is observed annually on May 15th, one day after the Israeli Independence day.

As almost 80 per cent of the residents of Gaza come from Palestinian families displaced during 1948, Al Fakhoora students chose to commemorate Nakba Day by reminding the world of the names of their fallen villages. Students were photographed around Gaza holding a white sheet of paper with the name of their village written on it. The villages no longer carry their Arabic names but instead were officially given their biblical names in 1993, in an attempt to erase their history.

Students shared stories narrated to them by their grandparents on the events of that date back in 1948.

To view the photos and some of the stories visit: www.fakhoora.org/nakba
Remembering the children killed in the War on Gaza.

During Farooq Burney’s recent visit to Gaza, Al Fakhoora launched a tree planting project that will see the replanting of palm trees in the heart of Gaza City’s Al Rashid Street.

138 palm trees were planted in a four-meter by two-kilometer beachfront property, where each tree will bear the name of a child killed during the 2008/2009 war on Gaza. The 22 day war claimed the lives of 1,419 people; 252 of whom were children below the age of 16 years old.

“After the war on Gaza, Al Fakhoora commissioned the collection and documentation of the names and stories of the children below the age of 16 who were killed during the war. We were exploring the best possible way to honour the victims and planting trees in memory of each child seems befitting.” said Burney.

Al Fakhoora’s representative in Gaza, Shadi Saleh said “The beach road is currently undergoing construction and contributing to the greenery and forestation of the area will have a great impact on the community as a whole. We also hope this project will encourage more youth led initiatives in community development as well as environmental awareness.”

Burney added that he recognized the potential for the international community to want to participate in preserving the memory of the children and simultaneously contributing to Gaza’s green initiative. “We are in the process of bringing the opportunity to an international platform through a website that will allow contributions and fundraising for this cause.” confirmed Burney.

Families of the children participated in the planting, most notably, Salah Al Samouni, whose family name is synonymous with tragedy in Gaza. The family lost 48 members; mostly women and children.

“Much of our (Palestinian) agricultural land has been leveled and trees are always being uprooted. This initiative sends out two messages; that our children’s names are not forgotten and that we the Palestinians will always stand tall on our land.” Salah said.
‘We sat in the restaurant for 3 hours talking about everything and anything we could think of. He told me he was in the middle of Ramadan, we talked about our class, his country, my country, and retouched on some of the conversations we had last semester about our personal beliefs, culture, and family. It was nice to do all of this again and not have to worry about a bad Skype connection. When it was time to say goodbye, or “Peace, En Sha Allah”, I walked away realizing that even though Msallam and I live in different countries on different sides of the world, grew up in different cultures, speak different languages, and have different religious beliefs, we are not so different at all.”

Andrew Luettgen, Student at PSU

“Trey is one of our good friends from the Penn-state University that we were interacting with through the MTW program. From only Skyping and Facebooking to being one of the people I got the opportunity to meet with face-to-face; we have made it possible for us, no matter where we are, to take advantage of our current circumstances and make the program truthfully more than words!!!”

Musallam M Abukhalil

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**Ghost Writers**

The Ghost Writer initiative is a concerted effort to improve the English language skills of Fakhoora students in Gaza, as well as facilitate and inform their ability to communicate to a Western audience.

Born of the Virtual Majlis, the Ghost Writer initiative is designed to empower students to advocate using social media and the Internet as a carrier of their stories; which can’t be done without proper command of the language or guidance in selecting relevant topics that can support someone’s view on the reality of Gaza. The past 18-months have seen the Arab Spring bring social media, blogs and bloggers to the forefront of mainstream media as relevant, trustworthy sources of news and exposition.

The core objectives of the program are to increase English language proficiency, develop effective writing techniques for communicating to a western audience, cultivate critical thinking skills, encourage regular and consistent blogging on cultural topics, and increase cross-cultural understanding.

These main objectives were achieved through the selection of 30 English proficient students in Gaza who were required to produce one blog entry on any topic every three weeks, which would then be edited by an individual fluent in English and familiar with best blogging practices.

Building on the experience from the previous semester, additional programmatic structures were implemented to assist them in completing blogs on time. Additionally, more attention was given to training students on what to write about and how to write it. Finally, there was additional instructional assistance concerning the protocol for posting blogs – including the creation of an instructional video and a system to give more direction to the Ghost Writers, including mining and responding to questions from the Virtual Majlis.
Some of the challenges facing the program have been the continued electricity shortage that severely limits the ability to plan and schedule conversations and discussions, as a result of this, more conversations between the editors and the Ghost Writers were spontaneous, taking place whenever students became available online, or via email. Additionally, there was an issue with a lack of submitted content (30 submissions compared to a projected 130) from the Ghost Writers, in spite of repeated attempts at contacting the students. Consequently, structure was implemented to remind and facilitate the creation of content relevant to the Virtual Majlis meetings. After each meeting, the Ghost Writer and the facilitators would meet to come up with three questions to address subjects that were discussed in conversation and encourage critical thinking on behalf of the writers. These questions were then posted to the Al Fakhoora Virtual Majlis Facebook group, with sub-questions posted underneath to clarify and provide additional direction.

However, students who did blog consistently improved the quality and content of their pieces throughout the year. This is perhaps most evident in the piece “Fighting back...My Destiny” by Zudhi E-Franji. In this blog, Zudhi articulates his personal position on “fighting” in a way that is accessible and convincing. More than that, the blog calls attention to the fact that nobody can control how everyone reacts, and it is up to each one of us to react as we see fit. This is an extremely effective appeal to a Western audience as it uses a logical as well as a personal appeal – a significant improvement from Zudhi’s initial blogs.

See pg 20 “Fighting back...My Destiny”

Moving forward, our plans are to integrate the practice of blogging with the other programs running in Gaza such as Virtual Majlis and More Than Words – this provides students on both sides the value of reciprocal exchange and increases their understanding of one another through sustained interaction. So far, dozens of blogs have been submitted and continue to populate the edublogs website. As more blogs are collected from the students and the blog website fills with content, it will be made available through the Fakhoora home page.
Zuhdi El Franji is a medical student who has been enrolled the blogging program. We share with you his entry

Fighting back...my destiny

Many people think that the perfect way to serve their country is to fight – and that’s what I believe in. However, where others believe in guns and violence I believe in my mind and the power of my words.

Self actualization is the first step on the way to freedom; to influence others with our words, we must realize the extent to which we are capable of making change. When we realize that we are more than just martyrs and victims, we can show the world the same.

Similarly, I will live as an example: I will graduate from my university and work to show the world the determination and scinerity of the Palestinian people – to remove the blight placed on us by the rest of the world. This is how I will fight back, not with violence.

This doesn’t mean that all of us should, or will choose that path, however. There are numerous ways to fight back, including violence, words, minds, and hearts. The only true story is the one that realizes that all of these ways of fighting back are necessary and real to different people.

I have made my choice to fight back with my mind and my education, but that doesn’t mean I am not tempted to lash out in other ways. One of the hardest things about the choice I have made is that Israel has not made the same choice. Though they will target me with violence and bloodshed, I must not respond with acts of aggression. This does not mean that I will be tolerant of these acts, and live under their thumb – their occupation of our land. Instead, it means that I will live as an example of peace and education – spreading the word and fighting the battle on a different front.

Even still, I can have this taken from me as well. My education, and my words could be taken from me – as they have been from my peers when they are killed in the streets on their way to school. This is why ALL of us must fight back in our own ways.

People have asked me, “Is education really fighting back?” Of course it is! How can we hope to have an influence on the world as Israel does without educating ourselves about it? How can we bring about change, without the imagination to envision it?

I have been called selfish for these things. I have been told that I am only thinking about myself, and not about my country – but I understand what many of us do not: I must care first about myself in order to care about my country.

We can not hope to truly fight back without understanding how the rest of the world sees us, or without being able to communicate to it about what we want.

Without education we couldn’t do anything, we couldn’t help the patients lining our hospital beds, we couldn’t improve the electrical grid to withstand the bombings, and I couldn’t show the world that we are human.

Zuhdi E-Franji
With the blockade crippling movement into and out of Gaza, fakhoora.org is of vital importance to link blockaded students to the outside world. Fakhoora.org is fuelled by Effusion, a UK-based social media and advocacy consultancy that develops, designs and creates platforms for students demanding a global voice. This partnership ensures that students across the world are given the tools to take action to defend education, and ultimately end the illegal blockade that has deterred the natural progress of the youth in Gaza that strive to claim their place in the global arena.

Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Flickr, are used regularly to support and allow advocacy in the communication of ideas and thoughts, and the promotion of new and ongoing projects as well as to support various campaigns.

Regular news updates keep the content on the website fresh and relevant to returning site visitors, while clear descriptions of our various projects communicate our ethos, work and goals succinctly.

We produced an eye-catching and evocative piece of print work with Effusion, which we distribute at events, and we are in the process of planning and designing further web and print work to support our campaign.

We also understand that we must maintain an eye-catching brand identity, with modern functionality online to ensure our work is given the attention that it needs in a global sphere, and Effusion’s consultancy is vital in delivering this and keeping our site visitors loyal.

FIG 4 //

SOCIAL MEDIA STATISTICS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FACEBOOK</th>
<th>TWITTER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APRIL 2012</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIKES</td>
<td>FRIENDS OF FANS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,339</td>
<td>437,685</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUGUST 2012</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIKES</td>
<td>FRIENDS OF FANS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,554</td>
<td>507,366</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Health and Wellness Services**

*An update on infrastructure and expertise development in our projects which tackle learning difficulties*

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**Atfaluna hearing screening tests 11,182 children in Gaza**

In collaboration with Qatar Red Crescent and Atfaluna Society in Gaza, Al Fakhoora launched a hearing screening campaign for children aged 0 – 5 years. The campaign which aimed to screen 10,350 children, was designed to detect any hearing impairments and provide the necessary medical intervention.

Launched at a seminar with officials and representatives from the Ministry of Health and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), and local rehabilitation societies and community service organization, Atfaluna stressed the importance of early detection and asserted the necessity to include hearing screening services within the Primary Health Centres.

The screening activities were carried out by qualified technicians registered with the Palestinian Ministry of Health. The campaign took place in four different areas of the Gaza Strip exceeding the targeted number of children and reaching a total of 11,182. Tests showed that 2886 children suffered from hearing problems. These cases were then referred to ENT follow up at Atfaluna Society, where staff provided families with an overview of the screening process and supporting reading material.

Advanced hearing tests confirmed that 250 children had suffered from permanent hearing loss. The campaign however, will provide the children with free hearing aid devices. Furthermore, intervention services providing individual educational sessions, mother-child trainings, sign language training for mothers, home visits and group and individual counseling, will all be available to assist families in providing the necessary care. Mohammed Salouha, a hearing screening technician said “The campaign was designed to detect any hearing problems and consequently provide the supporting services. Children were also referred to speech therapists to assess their speech abilities.”

Mahmoud Abu Mohady is father to one-year old Abdel Rahman. He had noticed that his son did not respond to calls or clapping. Atfaluna’s screening found Abdel Rahman to suffer from severe hearing loss and was provided with a hearing aid.

“I am delighted we received the proper testing and am hopeful that he will be able to hear me.”
Psychosocial support program for children with physical disability

In Khan Younis and Rafah, Al Fakhoora partnered with the Palestinian Medical Relief Society (PMRS) to provide psychosocial support services for children with disabilities. This seven-month project brought together children with and without disabilities, through entertainment and educational activities designed to provide an opportunity for integration.

A workshop covering psychosocial (PSP) and psychodrama topics was conducted for the project staff to ensure an efficient methodology was implemented. Around 400 children with disabilities and their mothers took part in 60 psychosocial sessions.

Prior to the launch of the initiative, PMRS held community meetings in Rafah and Khan Younis, south of the Gaza Strip, to assess the needs of the families in those areas. PMRS also tapped into its own database of families with children suffering from disabilities and invited them to participate.

Upon completion of the PSP sessions, the 400 students were joined by their siblings, bringing the total number of beneficiaries to 800 children. Qualified social workers were selected to carry out the program.

Awareness sessions were held for the mothers of the children with disabilities in a range of topics such as classification of disabilities and their types, growth and development of children and methods of integration within society.

The mothers were extremely pleased with the project and its various components. In some of the rural areas, social stigma had prevented the children from leaving their houses or participating in community activities. They noted seeing a significant change in the behavior of their children and a willingness to go out of the house as opposed to their previous aloof behavior. One mother noted that seeing other children with disabilities had made her child feel like he was not alone and there were others like him. The mother also stressed the importance of the activities, and is eager to see similar activities planned in the future.
The right to education is not the exclusive right of one person over another, and it is unrelated to physical or mental capability. In our pledge to service all the youth in Gaza with access to education, we are committed to providing students with disabilities with access to our programs. Our efforts for social integration have led us to partnerships and collaborations with NGOs and entities that have ‘on the ground’ experience of empowering the disabled and providing them with essential services.

The $5 million program, will benefit 50,000 people suffering from disabilities. Moreover, 11 organizations that provide services to this category will benefit from the scope of the projects thanks to improvements in training, equipment and construction.

The scope of the work includes:

- Upgrading the physiotherapy department at the University College of Applied Sciences and Al Ahli Hospital
- Establishing a new rehabilitation department in Al Amal Hospital
- Capacity building of physiotherapists within specific specialties
- A psychosocial support program for 8–14 year olds at the Palestine Red Crescent Society Play Center
- Capacity building of staff working as mental health professionals
- Audio-logical screening of pre-school students and plans for ophthalmological services
- Research into the current status of disability in the region

**Facilities and staffing for physical disability**

**Upgrading the Physiotherapy department at the University College of Applied Sciences and Al Ahli Hospital:**

The project includes equipping a new state of the art physiotherapy lab to be available for physiotherapy students of the college. The project is making steady progress and a biomedical engineer is overseeing the technical components of the project to ensure the technical specifications requested are achieved.

**Establishing a new rehabilitation department in Al Amal hospital:**

The 12-month project will deliver reconstruction work and provide medical rehabilitative equipment, furniture, IT support and staff training. Upon taking on this project, Al Fakhoora’s implementing partner has conducted field visits to further understand and evaluate the needs of the hospital. Hospital staff and patients have been interviewed to evaluate the future impact of the project and its sustainability potential.

**Capacity building of physiotherapists within specific specialties:**

In association with the Palestinian Physiotherapy Association, Al Fakhoora will select 20 physiotherapists to receive a local introductory ‘TOT’, or ‘Training of Trainers’ session. Eight of the participants will then participate in an advanced training course. Upon completing their training, the qualified trainers will be assigned to groups of 10 physiotherapists to be trained in eight specific specialties.

The 20 physiotherapists assigned to the first level of training have been selected, and have completed their training. Simultaneously, training institutes in Egypt have been visited to help identify the best offers. The trainers are expected to begin their training in Egypt this April.

Steady progress has been made to provide medical equipment, furniture and medical disposables to establish a high quality diabetic foot center at Al-Wafaa Hospital. This will include an in-patient department and two daily clinic units. Furniture requirements and medical equipment bids have been determined and contracting is expected this month.
Facilities and staffing for psychological support

Psychosocial support program for 8–14 year olds at the Palestine Red Crescent Society Play Center in Gaza:

This project includes a center where entertainment and skill-enhancing activities are provided. Children will have access to a theatre where they can watch animated movies and relax. The Play Center will also house a library and a ‘sports corner’ activity area. Al Fakhoora has pledged to cover the center’s running costs for one year.

Al Fakhoora and the Palestine Red Crescent Society are working on implementing a PSP contingency plan that will act as a guide for emergency action and response when needed. This will offer clear instructions on the roles and responsibilities of various actors and articulate the needs of vulnerable categories during emergency situations. As its implementing partner on the ground, QRC conducts frequent filed visits to evaluate progress and trainee satisfaction on behalf of Al Fakhoora.

Capacity building of staff working in mental health and PSP services:

43 medical staff, including doctors and nurses, and 42 psychosocial workers have been selected to receive training for a mental health and psychosocial support program to partner with the Gaza Community for Mental Health Program (GCMHP). The program will build capacity in two major areas.

Two 60-hour theoretical training sessions will provide 60 professionals with 3 months of training at GCMHP centers. Three partner NGOs will then provide the trainees with supervised access to 100 severe cases to be transferred to these centers.

40 recent graduates of medicine and nursing will be trained to detect mental health problems, treat mild to moderate cases, and be able to refer patients to more specialized services if needed. Following 60 hours of theoretical training and 18 practical assessments, with case discussion and supervision, the trainees will also receive the World Health Organization’s Mental Health Global Action Program manual.

Research into the current status of disability in the region

Commissioned by Al Fakhoora and supervised by QRC, the Palestinian Central Bureau for Statistics will conduct a survey to collect data on the numbers, needs and conditions of disabled individuals in Gaza.

This project has seen the establishment of a steering committee of stakeholders in the field of disability, which includes local governmental and non-governmental bodies, as well as international organizations such as the WHO, ICRC and Handicap International (HI).

The steering committee has held meetings to launch the project officially and determine the role of the committee. PCBS’s action plan has been reviewed by the committee, and has also assessed the collection tools proposed.

Personnel conducting the survey will receive the required training in May. The training will cover the definition and classification of different types of disability and the appropriate methods of data collection. The database will include information on distribution, services available, and gaps on an individual and regional basis. This will allow for rational planning in the field of disability and will provide a much needed baseline for evaluation of future disability programs. Upon its completion the results will be disseminated and made available to the public.

There has been no such study conducted in Gaza before and we look forward to gathering this data and using it to inform the most effective and needed advances in the region.
Moving forward with our Reconstruction Projects

Spanning seven different colleges, the universities benefiting from this reconstruction program include Al Azhar University, Al Quds Open University, The Islamic University of Gaza, Al Aqsa University, College of Science and Technology in Khan Younis, Palestine Technical College in Deir Al Balah, College of Ability Development in Khan Younis and University College of Applied Sciences.

We have targeted these institutions most affected by the wars on Gaza, and have also incorporated institutions with various specialities to enable excellence in multiple disciplines.

These projects involve the reconstruction of buildings and the delivery of educational materials such as scientific lab equipment, IT technology, books and other basic infrastructure items such as furniture and relevant teaching resources.

Our reconstruction work remains ongoing and we remain on track with the below timelines. Given the situation in Gaza and with all infrastructural development in Gaza, there must a contingency built in to account for possible political or physical disruption to the supply chain inventory and or raw material.

**FIG 5 //**

**RECONSTRUCTION TIMELINES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PHASE I</th>
<th>Phase II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>· Reconstruction Assessment</td>
<td>· Al Azhar I &amp; II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Islamic University of Gaza</td>
<td>· Al Quds I &amp; II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>· Islamic University of Gaza I &amp; II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>· Khan Younis I &amp; II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>· UCAS I</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PHASE III</th>
<th>PHASE IV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>· UCAS technical workshop</td>
<td>· Palestine Technical College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Al-Quds Establishing electronic library</td>
<td>· Al Quds: establishing labs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Al Aqsa: establishing a central library</td>
<td>· UCAS: IT facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Al Azhar University: build conference hall</td>
<td>· Khan Younis: Lecture Hall</td>
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</table>

**FIG 6 //**

**PROJECT STATUS**

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Name</th>
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<th>Phase II</th>
<th>Phase III</th>
<th>Phase IV</th>
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<td>COMPLETE</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>R-302</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R-303</td>
<td>Al Azhar I</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R-304</td>
<td>Al Azhar II</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R-305</td>
<td>Khan Younis I</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R-306</td>
<td>UCAS I</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>R-307</td>
<td>Khan Younis II</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>R-308</td>
<td>Al Quds II</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R-309</td>
<td>IUG II</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Al Fakhoora begins reconstruction work in Al Quds Open University

The 14 month project will establish a two floor building on an area of 850sq meters in the newly allocated area west of Khan Younis. The structure will be used to house academic and administrative departments for the University’s Khan Younis Branch. QRC is overseeing the project on the ground and engineers are currently redesigning the project to include infrastructural work for roads, water and electricity supply.

Reconstruction and maintenance for the agriculture college buildings and facilities at Al Azhar University continue

The University will benefit from resorted and equipped facilities replacing the destroyed structure of the agriculture faculty in Beit Hanoun. The $2.5 million project will provide rehabilitation of the old campus in Gaza and preparation of the infrastructure of the new campus (including the new agriculture college building) in Mughraga, south of Gaza City.

Al Fakhoora has made solid progress with its project which will benefit the school of Engineering and Information Technology at Al Azhar University

The nine-month project will deliver eight new engineering and IT labs to the school, provide computers, main servers, accessories and furniture to the facility.

Upgrading and construction of the College of Ability Development

In collaboration with the Palestine Red Crescent Society, Al Fakhoora has begun construction work on the College of Ability Development in Khan Younis.

The new structure will establish three classrooms, four supportive facilities rooms and an external wall. The college will also house a new library, new equipment for the computer lab and provide a 100kva electrical generator.

The original building which was built in 1975 was vulnerable and could not withstand extra development; it was therefore determined safer to construct a new building instead of restoring the old structure. This will also allow future extension for the growing college.

The University College of Applied Sciences is currently undergoing construction work that will provide its technical workshop building with a much-needed additional floor. Work on this project kicked off in Feb 2012

The University College of Science and Technology in Khan Younis, has experienced flooding problems as a result of rainfall.

Al Fakhoora had pledged $250,000 to fully equip and revamp the conference hall at the college. However, to ensure that the hall does not incur future damage, infiltration wells to prevent flooding have been built. This will ensure that the furniture, lighting and audio-visual equipment and air conditioning that will be installed in the hall will not be damaged.

Al Quds Open University

65% of the work has been completed at the Al Quds Open University electronic lab, which has received 103,000 US$ worth of computers, printers, network and office equipment and furniture. The project is expected to be completed in April.
Partnerships

Al Fakhoora operates with vital and generous support from a number of partnerships, which continue to evolve and grow. Take a look at our existing projects, as well as new developments, with our dedicated partners.

We would like thank Islamic Development Bank (IDB) for their generosity and support. IDB continues to show steadfast commitment to the betterment of the lives of Palestinian Youth and continues to explore methods for their economic empowerment.

As of 2012 we have 300 students enrolled in BA and BSc programs specializing in over sixteen degrees from education to medicine, and our students are enrolled in eight different academically acclaimed universities in Gaza.

Our strategic partnerships with key organizations such as the Islamic Development Bank, UNDP, Qatar Red Crescent, and most recently, Islamic Relief and UCAS, allow us to contribute to the education sector with wider scope, through reconstruction and rehabilitation of education institutions, youth empowerment and psychosocial services.

Over the next ten years Al Fakhoora will focus on providing an additional 1,000 scholarships (100 annually) to students in Gaza in order to pursue higher education both in Gaza and abroad.

FIG 7 //

154 FAMILIES EMPOWERED BY ECONOMIC INTERVENTION PER SECTOR

- AGRICULTURAL 25%
- COMMERCIAL 25%
- INDUSTRIAL 42%
- SERVICE 8%
Abdul has tried his hand at doing different jobs but these opportunities have been irregular and far between. Over the course of ten years, he found hardly any work. He was unable to provide for his family, and his health began to deteriorate to the point where he was diagnosed with high blood pressure and diabetes.

Abdul Halim and his family survived solely on social and humanitarian assistance “I was not able to secure basic needs for my family; I could not even help my kids get to college. We literally live from day to day on whatever we can get. For years I felt trapped and destitute” Abdul Halim said.

Things took a different turn late last year, when Al Fakhoora and the UNDP’s Poor Families Economic Empowerment Program, DEEP, identified Abdul Halim’s household as a potential resource for development. The program identified one of his previous jobs selling vegetables, as a starting point to help him get back on his feet. However, he still needed

Meet Abdul Halim Abu Jarad
Al Fakhoora, UNDP/DEEP
success story

Abdul Halim Abu Jarad lives in Beit Lahia, North of the Gaza Strip with his four sons and four daughters. Abdul Halim was born with a disability that affects his mobility and has limited his chances of securing a job.

I feel empowered and in control of my own life now. The best part has been feeling confident again in front of my kids

– Abdul Halim
help understanding how to maintain a business. At the same time, one of Abdul Halim’s daughter’s Samar had just finished secondary school, and it was her father’s wish that she enroll in university.

Al Fakhoora’s Dynamic Futures program awarded Samar a scholarship to study in the field of education. Her father speaks of her proudly and feels that the burden of paying for her education has been lifted off his shoulders and he can now concentrate on providing for the rest of his family. “Al Fakhoora’s support has helped Samar a great deal and I am hopeful for her future, especially as the job market seeks out educated young women for their dedication.” Abdul Halim pointed out proudly.

The Al Fakhoora / UNDP partnership program has offered the family a grant to set up a small grocery store which opened in November 2011. Abdul Halim was supported by the UNDP staff who showed him the ropes and coached him through the initial stages. Today, his income reaches 350–400 USD a month. “Personally, this money has a different taste. I feel empowered and in control of my own life now. The best part has been feeling confident again in front of my kids” Abdul Halim added.

Abdul Halim’s health has seen much improvement over the past few months and a recent visit to the doctor’s confirms he’s recovering well. “My eldest son helps me in the store from time to time. We feel this is a family project and he tries to share the responsibility.” Looking around the store, he smiles and says “My life is really changing”. 
Who we work with

Educational Institutions

Thanks to partnerships with educational institutions in the region, we are able to offer grants for study, use of facilities for the empowerment strand of our Dynamic Futures program and the opportunity to build valuable relationships with like-minded organisations.

We are pleased to think that our connections encompass a variety of colleges and universities so that we can offer a thorough range of facilities, experiences and support to the young people of Gaza and the West Bank.

Al Aqsa University

Al-Aqsa University consists of seven faculties including the Faculty of Arts, Sciences, Education, Media, Fine Arts, Physical Education, Administration and Financial Studies and is the sole academic institution in the vicinity that is able to offer bachelor degrees in the fields of media studies, fine arts and physical education.

Al Azhar University

Al Azhar aims to offer human resources in scientific research and sustainable development, with a constant focus on the use of modern technologies and techniques, combined with the originality of Palestinian, Arabic and Muslim heritage.

An-Najah University

An-Najah specializes in scientific subject teaching, preparing young people with the skills and attitudes to tackle an international job market and realize their potential in a scientific industry, as well as support the Palestinian community.

Al Quds Open University

With a focus on the philosophy, principles and methods of open education, Al Quds maintains a freedom of thought and expression while avoiding ideological or political conflicts. The university offers MA and BA qualifications, delivering teaching using a mixture of printed, visual, audio, computerized and electronic resources.

Birzeit University

Supervised by a board of trustees, Birzeit University endeavors to excel in higher education, scientific research and service to the community. The university operates in an atmosphere of liberalism, alongside an emphasis on Arab-Islamic heritage.

University College of Applied Sciences (UCAS):

This college focuses on applied sciences with a dream of equipping Palestine and the rest of the region, with highly qualified and skilful professionals to build a modernized state.

Islamic University of Gaza

This university offers a wealth of qualifications in all kinds of subjects and disciplines; drawing researchers and teachers from all areas and always offering well-planned programs.
Empowerment Program Partners

We have a number of international friends that offer their time, expertise and support to our Empowerment program, within ‘Dynamic Futures’; in various ways.

**Cisco**
Generously work with us to provide the technology that we need to communicate with groups in Gaza, and also to facilitate the Virtual Majlis sessions.

**World in Conversation**
This online communication organization aims to create a dialogue about social and cultural issues that expand perspectives and invite greater understanding between groups.

**Penn State University**
This multi-campus university provides teaching, research and service to a diverse western collegiate. We continue to foster good relationships with members of the student body, particularly within our Virtual Majlis program.

Financial Support

We are endlessly grateful to a number of kind donors and benefactors, some of whom prefer to remain anonymous, that support the work of Al Fakhoora.

**Islamic Development Bank**
We work with the IBD and continue to appreciate their dedication to the economic development and social progress of member countries and Muslim communities.

**Practical Support**
Partners with a more practical function ‘on the ground’ in Gaza are crucial in providing that all-important ‘hands-on’ support, service or research during the occupation and within the blockade.

**YMCA Gaza**
As the oldest and largest youth charity in the world, YMCA are an established and trustworthy organization that we rely on for safety, shelter and support for the young people of Gaza.

**Qatar Red Crescent and Palestinian Red Crescent**
The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is the world’s largest humanitarian organization; providing assistance without discrimination at all times. We are working closely with this organisation both in Qatar and Palestine, to monitor the development of Palestinian universities in our Reconstruction Program.
Healthcare Providers

We have links with a number of hospitals in Gaza, and with the majority of citizens in Gaza living in refugee camps; hospital care is absolutely crucial, as well as sought after. These institutions also cooperate with Al Fakhoora in our Disability and Psychosocial Program ‘Health and Wellness Services’.

Al Ahli Hospital Gaza
Established for well over 100 years, this hospital became an Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem in 1982 and continues to provide medical and surgical care to the Gaza Strip.

Al Amal Hospital Gaza
This similarly busy establishment aims to serve the area with high-quality healthcare despite the difficulties surrounding the occupation and the pressure of a crisis on resources and staff.

Atfaluna Society Palestine
Al Faluna is an organization that provides support, treatment and practical aid for victims of hearing loss and impairment in the region. The bombings in Palestine have affected huge swaths of residents and Al Faluna is a crucial component of the healthcare provided in Gaza.

The Palestinian Physiotherapy Association (PPTA)
The Palestinian Physical Therapy Association (PPTA) is a national non-profit organization representing all Physical Therapists working in the Palestinian territories.

Gaza Community Mental Health
The GCMH is a knowledge-based institution that strives to empower vulnerable children, women and torture survivors by developing local resources and health services. The GCMH also aims to combat the stigma attached to mental illness.

Medical And Wellbeing Organisation

Aside from healthcare providers operating in the region, we rely on the work, advice, guidance and partnership that advisory organizations lend to our work.

Palestinian Medical Relief Society
This is a grassroots community-based Palestinian health organization that seeks to aid the fractured and damaged health service in Gaza and the West Bank by educating and empowering Palestinian people using national health programs. This non-profit and voluntary organization is one of the largest health Non-Governmental Organisations in Palestine.

Islamic Relief Worldwide
Founded and based in the UK, IRW is an NGO of consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council and is a member of the Islamic Council for Relief. Islamic Relief works to help and empower the poor, regardless of religion, ethnicity or gender, with programs focused on extending emergency relief, contributing to sustainable development and investing in child welfare.

Islamic Relief Palestine
IRPAL is an affiliate of Islamic Relief Worldwide and has responded to emergencies, supported the poor, and invested in sustainable development since 1998. They are dedicated to eradicating poverty, alleviating suffering in Palestine and respecting the humanity and dignity of Palestinians. They provide relief, development and child welfare services.