



Dear friends,

Caritas Jerusalem cares for empowering the local community by implementing different projects that serve the society as a whole. We attempt to build a better life and reserve the dignity and the rights of our beneficiaries.

This month we were able to launch a project in the Gaza strip targeting five governorates to integrated Health Care and Protection Services for the vulnerable groups.

We also conducted a meeting to raise the awareness of the people with disabilities in the Bethlehem governorate by providing ten centers with educational and medical equipment and train their staff.

We aim that our projects will make life easier for the needy, the sick and the poor. We thank our donors and partners for their support, care and trust.

Fr. Raed Abusahlia
General Director
Caritas Jerusalem

Integrated Health Care and Protection Services for the vulnerable groups in Gaza

On the 1st of October 2016 Caritas Jerusalem launched one of its comprehensive projects in the Gaza strip targeting the five governorates of Deir Elbalah, North Gaza, Gaza, Rafah and Khan Younis.

This integrated, multifaceted approach towards the issues faced by the most vulnerable in the Gaza Strip will provide quality primary health care services, psycho-social and protection support with special attention given to children, women and people with disabilities.



Children who reside in refugee camps are more anaemic than their counterparts who live in urban areas; Caritas Jerusalem will provide fortified milk and treatment to these children.

Pregnant women and the new-born that live in marginalized areas such as Al Sawarha, Al Mawasi and Shokat will be provided with antenatal, postnatal care and child healthcare; these areas are far from government and UNRWA services and are mostly neglected and underserved.

In addition, we will provide patients with non-communicable diseases with antihypertensive and anti-diabetic drugs and assistive devices to patients with disabilities.

Finally, the project will provide protection support for the community leaders and much needed psychosocial assistance to women and children integrated with training for child and women rights issues.



All these interventions will be carried out by raising the capacity of the medical team and the centre through targeted trainings, improved equipment for the Care Centre and mobile units and the renovation of the Centre.



This project is funded by the Belgian Development Cooperation implemented by Caritas Jerusalem in cooperation with Caritas Belgium.

Caritas Jerusalem has the honour to host a very talented volunteer from Poland



Volunteers can increase the quality of services or programs that a charity provides. By volunteering, people can give something of themselves and make a valuable contribution to the community.

Agnieszka, the volunteer from Poland is carrying out three activities in the Bethlehem Governorate: she is working as a midwife in the Holy Child Hospital in Bethlehem four times a week; teaching iconography to 15 students twice a week and doing artistic work with children twice a week in the Latin Patriarchate School in Beit Jala and in the House of Peace in Bethlehem.



As a midwife, she has already helped in delivering over 30 children, she also joins the mobile clinic/outreach program occasionally where they go to the periphery to reach the Bedouin community and treat the pregnant women there. She is helping out in the delivery room, gynaecology department, in the care of women and new-borns during the postpartum period and women's health prevention.

As an iconographer, she is giving training courses for 15 students twice a week and demonstrating different gilding techniques.

She is also conducting interdisciplinary art workshops for children from troubled families using various techniques and genres of visual art. Over and above, she is studying Arabic and making friends with the local community.

She is truly making a lasting impact with the children and her work in the hospital and with the community alongside the local people is making a lasting difference.



“When I first arrived in Palestine, I was afraid but now I feel at home and very comfortable here. During break times in the hospital we eat together share our food and have a few laughs together. People are very kind and generous and I am very content in being here and experiencing life in the Holy Land. It is a real privilege!”



This Project is co-financed by the Polish development cooperation program of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland and implemented by Caritas Jerusalem in cooperation with Caritas Poland.



Getting together



The disabled are the most neglected segment in the Palestinian community. They face discrimination, lack of access to school, lack of health care services, lack of employment opportunities and they also suffer from poverty. A huge number of them are unaware of their rights, unable to take part in the society or even make a living.

Caritas Jerusalem in partnership with Caritas Poland and co-financed by the Polish Development Cooperation Program of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland has implemented a project to fill the gap in this sector and help these vulnerable people to have a better life.



On the 23rd of November 2016, Caritas Jerusalem held a meeting at the Child Care Society in Bethlehem in attendance of Fr. Raed Abusahlia the General Director of Caritas Jerusalem, Dr. Sami Al Basha from Palestine Ahliya University, Mr. Awad Abayat from the Palestinian General Union of Persons with Disabilities and ten centers who directly work with the disabled in Bethlehem Governorate to launch a social campaign to raise awareness of their rights and privileges.

The meeting had started with the Palestinian national anthem which was performed by Al Shurooq School for the Blind. Then, each center introduced its work, activities, missions and goals in the disability field. They also thanked Caritas Jerusalem and Caritas Poland for implementing such a project by providing the needed medical and educational equipment and trained the staff of the ten centers and they hope what Caritas has started will be continued by the local government.



Fr. Raed Abusahlia talked about Caritas Jerusalem's mission and activities in general and the project in particular; he mentioned that the project had three main components; providing medical and educational equipment, train the staff of the ten centers and launching a social campaign. *"It is our human, social and religious duty towards disabled people to build them a better life. We should also encourage the government especially the ministry of social affairs to integrate at least 5% of the disabled in the labor market"* said the general director



Dr. Sami Al Basha from the Palestine Ahliya University in his speech insisted on the rights of the disabled, updating the current law for disabilities and holding a quarterly meeting with the centers to discuss different issues and exchange experiences. *"Where governments do not go, we go"* Said Dr. Al Basha

Whereas Mr. Awad Abayat talked about disability in general, he also mentioned that several educated and qualified people with disabilities suffer from discrimination while applying to job vacancies at public institutions. *"We should work on changing the mentality about disability"* *"Don't call me disabled, call me blind, call me a person with difficulties but not disabled"* said Mr. Abayat



The meeting came into its conclusion by evaluating the current project and discussing future plans for the coming years. The participants of the ten centers expressed their enthusiasm and desire to follow other training programs with more practical theories. They also shared their successful stories, concerns and needs.

Caritas Jerusalem would like to thank Caritas Poland and the Polish Development Cooperation Program of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland by giving us the trust and the opportunity to help our people.

*An interview with one of the centers
Al-Basma Center*

On the 28th of November 2016, a visit was made to Al Basma, a rehabilitation Center for disabled in Biet Sahour that provides special care and training in life and work skills to 33 disabled adults.

Basma Giacaman – the director, who worked hard to give this center a meaningful name; her own name “Al Basma” which means “Smile”. The name itself reminds us that the center exists to create a smile on the faces of disabled young people and their families.



Could you tell us about Al-Basma Center's mission, goals and activities?

Al-Basma center was founded in 1987 by the Arab Women's Union in Beit Sahour. It started by serving five disabled adults and then it has grown to serve 33

young adults aged 12 and over. Our main goal is to make life better for the disabled young adults who are socially neglected and their rights to live are ignored. I believe that our young beneficiaries are smart, clever and willing to learn. They package products for sale, recycle paper and compress them as blocks for heating, weave rugs and carve olive woods. They also do Christmas cards and olive oil soaps.

How do you achieve your goals?

We achieve our goals by encouraging these young people to accept themselves, to love their spirits and to work hard on themselves. We teach them that all of us are brothers and sisters and there is no difference between them and their peers. We try to build bridges of peace between the handicapped and non-handicapped in the community by providing educational services and professional skills.

You have been chosen to be provided with medical and educational equipment from the “Prevention of isolation and social exclusion of people with disabilities in the Palestinian Authority” project which was funded by the Polish development cooperation programme of the Ministry of

Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, how do these equipment effect your work?

It had positive effects on the staff, beneficiaries and the visitors too. For example, when we had a group visiting our center, we couldn't grab their attention to listen because we did not have a sound system or a laptop to present our activities. Moreover, our aim is to make the day useful for our students so by having special machines, they can be productive. For instance; it is very necessary to have wool to weave rugs as we have four students who only love to work on the looms machines. In addition, having the mixer eased the work of the recycling paper in a short time.



One of your employees has attended the training course about how to deal with the disabled; how does it help her at work?

Yes, Jamla, our executive assistant had the chance to attend the course and she benefited a lot as she will tell you;

Jamla: this course has given me the chance to meet with the other centers that work with people with disabilities, we built a professional network, friendship and exchanged experiences. It also helped me to change the ways of working with the students. For instance, I had a student who used to run away five times a day and I used to punish him by making him stand in the corner but I changed the way of punishment by not allowing him to work on the weaving looms which is his favorite and as a result his behavior greatly improved. Finally, I would like to thank Caritas Jerusalem, Caritas Poland and Mrs. Basma, my director for giving me such a great opportunity to refresh my information and gain new learning skills.

Basma, what is your message to the local community and the world?

I would like to tell them to accept people with disabilities as a vital part of the society, to stop being ashamed of them, to help them integrate in the labor sector, maybe even to open a small workshop of their own. People with disabilities should be treated with dignity, equality and respect.



How can you help?

Support our activities

Your support is essential to provide long-term assistance to our beneficiaries.

Please see below our bank details to make a donation:

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