



Dear Friends,

Greetings from Caritas Jerusalem to our friends across different continents and countries.

We are delighted to bring you news of some of our projects for the young and the old, those seeking employment and those starting their own business supported by Caritas Microcredit program. The needs are great with high unemployment especially among the youth, deepening poverty and ongoing violence in Gaza, parents struggling to pay school and university fees for their children, some even lacking the basics of adequate food and clothing.

Caritas works in all these areas of need through immediate social relief, different medical, educational and social projects and by giving employment in the implementation of these various projects in the West Bank and Gaza.

Pope Francis, speaking of Charity and Service says that “The compassion of the Gospel is what accompanies us in times of need, that compassion of the Good Samaritan, who “sees”, “has compassion”, draws near and provides concrete help (cf. Lk 10:33)” This sums up the mission of Caritas Jerusalem. Thank you, our friends and supporters, who share this mission with us.

Sr Bridget Tighe FMDM
General Director

The Power of Youth



On the 5th of February 2018, Caritas Jerusalem’s youth department in cooperation with Young Catholic Students (JEC) concluded the first phase of the “*Social and Pastoral Commitment Development*” project in the Gaza Strip by distributing certificates to 33 participants who had completed the course. Sr. Bridget Tighe Caritas Jerusalem’s General Director, Fr. Mario Da Silva the Latin Parish Priest in Gaza, and Mr. Ameen Sabbagh Caritas Jerusalem Administrator in Gaza, as well as family members and friends were present.

Sr. Bridget welcomed everyone and congratulated the new graduates: “*This is a significant achievement for each of you who have devoted your time and energy to study, discuss and do voluntary work during the past weeks. A deeper understanding of Palestinian*

Christian Identity and the Church's Social Teaching will give you the confidence to take your place as Christian leaders in society."



The first phase consisted of three modules for a duration of 72 hours. Each module was comprised of different subjects: Catholic Social Teachings, leadership skills and Palestinian Christian identity. Through this programme Caritas Jerusalem aims to address the needs of the community's youth by developing their skills and encouraging them to be involved in charitable works and community service. Part of the training included voluntary work where trainees volunteered in 15 local institutions providing support for the sick, the poor, orphans and children with disabilities who are the most vulnerable and marginalized people in the society.



"We all worked in the spirit of teamwork, felt like one family and the trainers were like our brothers. I really

had a great experience which gave me the opportunity to gain information and life skills" Said one of the trainees.

This is a three-year project funded by our partners Caritas Spain.

Caritas Jerusalem's volunteers programme started in 2005 with the objective of preparing young people to play an active role in an independent and democratic Palestine. We encourage the youth to become leaders of their community, inspired by the spirit of social justice and tolerance. We also give them tools to succeed in their professional life in a difficult economic environment.

Honoring our senior citizens



Caritas Jerusalem's medical center in Gaza has concluded the project entitled "Health and Human Rights for Elderly (HHRE)". This project was implemented in Al Shati` Camp on the outskirts of Gaza city and in Khoza'a, a marginalized agricultural area near the Israeli border in the south. It treated 1,030 beneficiaries both male and female aged 60 years old and above. The aim of this project was to raise awareness of the rights of the elderly and give them the needed medical treatment and nutritional care.

Through this project, beneficiaries were screened for chorionic diseases, provided free medicines and attended workshops on health and nutrition.

In February 2018 the staff conducted workshops for community leaders, caregivers, and senior citizen who were beneficiaries of the project, to raise awareness of the human rights and needs of older people in the Gaza Strip. Among the attendees were Sr. Bridget Tighe Caritas Jerusalem's General Director, Fr. Mario Da Silva the Latin Parish Priest in Gaza, Mr. Ameen Sabbagh Administrator of Caritas Jerusalem in Gaza and the project staff. Sr. Bridget welcomed the participants and thanked the senior citizens for their participation. Speakers included senior citizens themselves, religious leaders, a social worker who works with the housebound and Dr Jihad El Hissi Caritas medical consultant.



These workshops were a major part of the project where discussions were held about ways of treating the elderly, the problems they face in Gaza where resources are limited, and especially in giving the elderly a voice. Many expressed their appreciation for the project: *“My blood pressure is regular now after having the right treatment by the doctors in the medical center and also I am more aware now on how to prepare healthy meals.*

Thanks to Caritas Jerusalem, I feel healthier” said one of the beneficiaries. Others asked for the project to continue and expand to other areas. Sr Bridget listened to their concerns and said that Caritas will try to respond to their future needs. .



This project had a very positive impact on the community where all the beneficiaries were grateful and hoped such projects would go on.

Thanks to our partners Miseen Cara and OBOS who believe in and promote the rights of the elderly. Without their generous financial support Caritas Jerusalem would not have been able to carry out such a wonderful project.

Creating opportunities

Every journey begins with a single step and a little support. People have ambitious dreams for their future but they lack the opportunities needed to achieve their dreams and goals. Caritas Jerusalem through its Microcredit program strives to make people live in dignity and purpose by helping them to develop their own income generating small projects.



In November 2017, Samer and Samar, brother and sister received a loan from Caritas Jerusalem in order to develop their own businesses which are located beside each other in Bethlehem; one is a small eatery and the other is a coffee shop. Both applicants are married and have children who attend private schools. They live in rented houses and have part time jobs. They intend to improve their economic situation and have a better quality of life.

Both applicants rented the places and renovated them but couldn't complete their business ventures due to lack of cash. The loan helped them in purchasing the necessary equipment and they were able to start their businesses.



After overcoming some challenges, both businesses are doing very well and they have a constant flow of customers.

Caritas Jerusalem believes that enabling individuals to have a sustainable income empowers families

and offers better future for their children.



Caritas Jerusalem's Micro-Credit Department focuses on loans for education, emergency needs, house renovation and business development.

Fighting Unemployment

Palestine Youth Unemployment Rate latest value is 46.90 percent, it is ranked as the 3rd world's highest youth unemployment rate.



From the 1st of May 2015 to the 31st of December 2017 Caritas Jerusalem implemented a project to empower socially disadvantaged women, students and graduates in Palestine.

581 women were trained as admin assistants, cooks, hotel managers, tour guides, fashion designers, graphic designers and hairdressers.

The vocational trainings included internships in order to combine theory with practice. 46 women who excelled in their studies and had the qualifications in starting their own businesses were granted starter kits.

Nancy and Safa were classmates in beauty therapy; now they are co-workers, they work together in a small room beside Nancy's house. Safa is good at facial wax and makeup and Nancy is good at hair dressing, so they complement each other. "This small project has helped us to make a living in dignity." They say. "We have big dreams, we want to develop ourselves, expand the business and become famous!" they add.



971 students from 30 secondary schools and 2 universities received training in career counseling to be better prepared to enter the labor market. Sessions included self-confidence enhancement, setting goals, career planning, CV writing, interviewing skills, listening skills, time management, presentations, communication skills, team work, problem solving and creative thinking.

Luay, a Birzeit University student in engineering says "It was my final semester when I read about Caritas Jerusalem's training course on facebook. I was getting very anxious about finding a job at the time and

ending up unemployed or working in other fields like most of my friends."

"The workshop gave me a lot of skills which I lacked; currently I am employed in a big company and am doing what I was trained to do. I also advise my friends how to put together their C.Vs. and how to act professionally in job interviews."



According to the PCBS in the 4th quarter 2017, the unemployment rate for males in the West Bank was 19.5% compared with 43% for females.



Social campaigns against discrimination regarding employment of women were conducted using various media platforms.

Leaflets were distributed on discrimination and the status of women in the labor market, 7 radio discussions were held, two radio spots were prepared and broadcasted for 60 days,

a round table discussion was held with representatives of employers and local authorities on the topic of employment of women on the local labor market.

This three year project was funded by The Czech Development Cooperation and implemented by Caritas Jerusalem in partnership with Caritas Czech Republic.

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:

Bank Name: Arab Bank

Swift Code: ARABPS 22110

Account number: 457793/0/510 USD

Credit Account: Caritas Jerusalem

Branch No: 9110

At Arab Bank in Al-Ram

P.O.Box: 2445-Al-Ram