

Dear friends,

I've recently returned from Rome where I attended Caritas International General Assembly, an event that takes place every four years with representatives of all 146 Caritas organisations from around the world. In his address to the Assembly Pope Francis invited the 465 delegates present to reflect on three keywords that inform and inspire the mission of Caritas: *charity, integral development, and communion*. What we must never forget, the Pope reminded us, is that *charity* has its origin and its essence in God Himself (see *Jn 4: 8*); charity is the embrace of God our Father to every person, especially to the least and the suffering, who occupy a preferential place in His heart. The second phrase is *integral development*. The poor are first and foremost persons, and their faces conceal that of Christ Himself. We must aim at the promotion of the whole person and of all people we serve so that they may be the authors and protagonists of their own progress. The third word is *communion* that is central to the Church and defines her essence. It is communion in Christ and in the Church that animates, accompanies and supports the service of charity both in communities themselves and in emergency situations throughout the world. Pope Francis encouraged and challenged us to live this mission in our service of the poor and marginalized.

In this Newsletter we report on of some of our educational, income generation and food security projects in the West Bank that promote human development and self-reliance. These relatively small projects touch many lives and make a significant difference to the recipients by enabling them to increase their income and become

financially independent. The little boy in Gaza who cried because his toothache was gone is representative of too many innocent children who, due to poor diet and lack of dental care, suffer disproportionately from dental problems combined with malnutrition, intestinal worms, anaemia and other consequences of extreme poverty.

These services of primary health care, helping with school fees to provide children with a good Christian education, and development projects that enable the poor to become financially independent, embody Pope Francis's vision for Caritas services throughout the world as he put before us in Rome: "It is communion in Christ and in the Church that animates, accompanies and supports the service of charity both in the communities themselves and in emergency situations throughout the world."

Thank you for making possible, and sharing in, these work of charity through your prayers and donations.

Sr Bridget Tighe FMDM.  
General Director

### Dental Care for children in Gaza



*Nurse Asia conducts an oral health awareness session*

A combination of poverty and malnutrition among children in the Gaza Strip leads to poor dental health and multiple dental problems and other complications in young children.



*Nurse Asia conducts an awareness session in another school*

Caritas Jerusalem in partnership with Trocaire implemented a project in 4 coeducational schools in Gaza where more than 500 students received oral health education and hygiene kits with dental treatment when required.

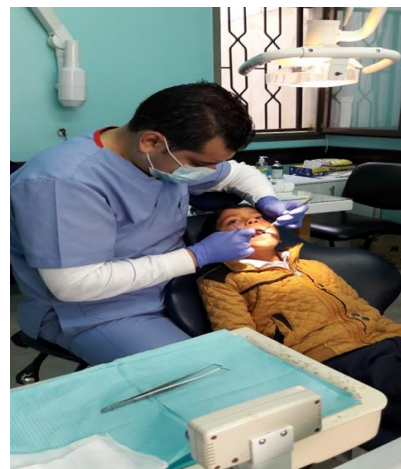
In Gaza, dental care is a low priority for parents who have to worry about other urgent needs, and in most cases it is a luxury that the majority of Gazans cannot afford. Our dentist visited the schools and examined the children while our health educator instructed the children in oral hygiene and diet taking into account the reality of life in Gaza. Children who needed dental treatment were given appointments to attend the clinic where the same dentist would treat them. When the children came to the clinic they already knew and trusted the dentist and nurse.



*Nurse Asia during one of the sessions with younger children*

One young patient is representative of many who benefit from this project: Youseph is a 13-year-old boy from Gaza. Unlike his school mates and friends, Youseph rarely went out to play because he suffered from constant headache and dizziness and difficulty in breathing.

His parents took him to a doctor to diagnose his illness, but all the tests were negative. The doctors could not diagnose the reason behind his constant headache and dizziness.



*Youseph with the dentist*

After our dentist and nurse visited Youseph's school his parents brought him to our health center. He was crying so much from pain that the dentist could barely understand him, but the dentist calmed him down and Youseph explained his problem. Our dentist found that Youseph had severe infection with pus under his teeth and began the treatment. After he finished, Youseph was still crying so the doctor asked if he still felt pain, but Youseph explained "No, I am crying because there's no pain anymore. I can't believe it. Now I'll be able to play with my friends outside without any worry. Thank you".

## Microbusinesses in Jenin Area



*Newly delivered beehives in Jenin area*

Jenin, the northernmost city in the West Bank is enjoying an economic boom in recent years due to its strategic location, but the rural areas in Jenin are still under-developed. Many small landowners lack the financial resources to develop their land or to start microbusinesses to meet the rising demand of local markets.

Caritas Jerusalem in partnership with Caritas Spain, Caritas Belgium and Caritas France is implementing phase two of a project entitled “Strengthening a sustainable and diversified rural economy in the countryside of Jenin Governomate.” Part of this project entails providing financial and technical assistance to farmers to start up or develop sustainable, income generation projects. So far, we supported 6 beekeepers from 4 different villages in Jenin area with 80 beehives and installed or rehabilitated 23 greenhouses.



*Sister Bridget Tighe, Director of CJ, during a field visit in Jenin*



*The Pigeon barn in Beit Qad*

In Beit Qad village (located 5km from the city of Jenin), we provided a farmer with the materials needed to start his pigeon barn. “Caritas Jerusalem has provided me with everything I needed. Thanks to them I was able to improve my barn and have plans to expand it” said the barn owner.

In another village Arraneh (located 2km from Jenin) we were able to support a project where women use the Aloe Vera plant to manufacture cosmetic creams.

Through these and other projects in the area Caritas Jerusalem aims at strengthening a sustainable local rural economy by encouraging farmers to become self-sufficient and self-reliant.

## Caritas Training Center



*Women training in the center*



Caritas Training Center (CTC), established in 2014, provides training in dress design, sewing, types of fabrics, tailoring and embroidery. It aims to promote women's employment and decrease the participation gap of men and women in the labor force. So far more than 90 women from 21 villages and towns around Ramallah have benefitted from the training and 20 women were able to start their own micro businesses. We interviewed some of the women who will graduate in June.



*Iqbal drawing a dress she designed*

**Q:** Is this your first training course in sewing?

**A:** Iqbal -34 years old-: “No it’s not my first course, I took other sewing courses previously. But none were like this one. Here -in the center- I have developed my skills and gained knowledge more than before. I even discovered that I like fashion design, never in my life have I thought that I could draw, or I am talented enough to be a fashion designer but now thanks to this course I have discovered my hidden talents”.



*Huda doing Embroidery*

**Q:** Is the course just as you expected?

**A:** Huda -40 years old-: “It is more complicated than I expected. But I love it, I am planning to open my own micro-business when I graduate or at least work in this field”.



*Afaf sewing a shirt*

**Q:** Why did you enroll in the course? Was it as you expected it to be?

**A:** Afaf -50 years old-: “I am a housewife; I spent most of my years raising my children and I never had time for myself. I decided to pursue my passion, which is sewing. So, when I heard about the center I joined on the spot. It is one of the best decisions that I have ever made, I gained lots of knowledge here, it was more than what I expected”.



*Sally drawing*

**Q:** How did you know about the center? Why did you enroll?

**A:** Sally -25 years old-: “My mother was one of the first graduates of the center. She encouraged me to enroll since I was always passionate about fashion design. This is the first step to achieve my dream and become a fashion designer”.

For the first time we have male students who wanted to do the training, and this is their story:



*Ibrahim on the sewing machine*

**Q:** Why did you come to the center?

**A:** Ibrahim -19 years old-: “I always loved sewing and after I finished school, I searched for centers that teach sewing so I could pursue my passion. When I heard about CTC I joined without hesitation. It is complicated, but it becomes easier if you love what you do. So, I encourage anyone who loves sewing to come to the CTC and learn.”



*Fadi drawing a dress he designed*

**Q:** Why did you choose sewing and the training center?

**A:** Fadi -25 years old-: “I work as a fashion photographer. Coming to the center was very challenging for me. I love fashion design and that’s why I am here. But it is harder than what I expected. If you don’t have patience you won’t succeed”.



*Hanneh in her shop in Ein 'Arik*

We visited one of our graduates who opened her own business in Ein 'Arik. Her name is Hanneh, she studied for two years in Caritas training center. As part of the Caritas mission to support the graduates, we provided her with two sewing machines that enabled her to open a micro-business in her hometown. “I opened the shop last year; it provides me and my family with good income. In addition to sewing I do Palestinian embroidery and sell it from time to time”.



*Palestinian embroidery bag done by Hanneh*

This June, 22 students will graduate from the center, all are qualified enough to get a job or open their own micro-businesses in the future.

### **Education is a Key to a Brighter Future**



*Mr. Ricardo Alen Sani, Ambassador of Chile to Palestine with Sr Bridget Tighe Caritas Jerusalem General Director and representatives of Christian schools.*

Caritas Jerusalem in cooperation with Fundación Palestina Belen 2000 helps hundreds of Christian students each year by covering part of their tuition fees. This year alone, scholarships were granted to 700 students attending 20 Christian schools in the Bethlehem governorate.

The event took place at the Latin Patriarchate School in Beit Jala on the 16<sup>th</sup> of May in the presence of Mr. Ricardo Alen Sani, Ambassador of

Chile to Palestine, Ms. Rocio Traeger, Consul of Chile to Palestine, Ms. Vivian Ghojar, the representative of Fundación Palestina Belén 2000, Sister Bridget Tighe, General Director of Caritas Jerusalem, Ms. Mervat Naber, Head of the Social Services Department of Caritas Jerusalem and the schools' directors, social workers and representatives.



*Father Hanna Salem Beit Jala Parish Priest*

Father Hanna Salem, Beit Jala Parish Priest, opened the ceremony with a prayer. He stressed the importance of the project that enables hundreds of students in need to get an education in a Christian school and alleviates the burden of school fees on their families



*Ambassador of Chile to Palestine*

"I'm happy to be here and witness this important event. Education is the key to development, and a weapon to success. This project gives the opportunity to everyone to get good education" said Mr. Ricardo Alen Sani the Ambassador of Chile to Palestine.





*Granting the scholarship cheques to school representatives*

Nelson Mandela said that “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” We have to make sure that our children have the opportunity to get a good education in order to have a better future for them and for society. Thus, Caritas Jerusalem tries it’s best to invest in education for students in schools and universities. One recipient of a BELEN 2000 scholarship is D.S, an 11-year-old girl from Bethlehem. She and her two siblings live with their parents in a small house. Her father has psychological problems and degenerative disc disease so he cannot work. Her mother works as a caretaker in a school, but her salary cannot cover the basic necessities of life. Through this project, we were able to cover part of D.S’s tuition fee that enables her to go to a Christian school.



*Sr Bridget Tighe, General Director.*

Sister Bridget Tighe said, after thanking all the attendees for joining the ceremony: “I’m delighted that Caritas, through the generosity of BELEN 2000 project, is able to give scholarships to 700 children, pupils of 20 Christian schools in the Bethlehem governorate. It is so important for Christian children to attend Christian schools and I thank the Chilean Ambassador and the people of Chile who make this possible”.

The event came to its conclusion with the distribution of cheques to school Directors who apply the scholarships to the previously selected students.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Fundación Palestina Belen 2000 and the people of Chile for their great generosity that eased the financial burden on 700 families.

### **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