

## Cultural & Educational Centre

**Preamble:-**

**Project title:**

**Jalazone Cultural & Educational centre**

**Project location: Jalazone Refugee Camp - Ramallah**

According to Human Rights Watch, Palestinians are the world's oldest and largest refugee population, and make up more than one fourth of all refugees. More than 13 thousand Palestinian refugees, nearly one-third of them children under the age of 16, live in the Jalazone refugee camp in the outskirts of the West Bank city of Birzeit. The lack of available resources, poverty and high density are detrimental to the development of critical thinking among the youth of the camp. The educational system has suffered greatly from the 40-year-old occupation, and the curriculum has not yet caught up with the long overdue and necessary development. As the numbers of Palestinians living inside the Jalazone camp - initially built to house only 4 thousand refugees - increase daily, the Palestinian youth face more burdens and challenges than ever before, especially in the fields of education and youth activities.

Many youth have clearly exemplified signs of distress, fatigue, trauma, and anxiety as a result of living in chronic poverty, overcrowding, and other critical conditions that challenge their livelihood on a daily basis. Such problematic manifestations naturally prevent the youth from getting their fair academic chances, opportunities, exposure and tools for improvement.

### **Center Vision**

This program aims to provide specialized educational and cultural activities for the youth of the camp, otherwise difficult to find elsewhere in the camp or its neighboring villages. The center was established to hold several useful activities, provide assistance and help in enhancing all aspects of proactive and participatory youth educational and cultural development.

## **Project objectives:**

- 1- Provide additional educational courses and hands- on training that enable the students to benefit from the many different types of sources of learning.
- 2- Provide a unique place in the camp where both sexes meet and interact and learn within a rather restricted and conservative environment.
- 3- Create self-learning opportunities for the children and enhance their skills towards exploration and comprehension of scientific phenomenon.
- 4- Support for the curriculum through the provision of relevant sources of learning methods and assisted e-learning.
- 5- Provide the students with skills and tools to make them more able to adapt and take advantage of the rapid developments in information systems, languages, multimedia, creative designs and audio visuals.
- 6- Help teachers in the exchange of experiences and cooperation in the development of educational materials.
- 7- Meet the needs of individual differences.
- 8- Enhance the students ability to utilize information from various sources.
- 9- Create a foundational literacy course for those who missed the opportunity in formal education.

## **Location:**

The center has already started its operational activities at a rented apartment in the camp as a start aiming to become the first such centre in the area. The Cultural & Educational centre (CEC) coordinates its activities with all other effective institutions and centers in the camp, in

addition to a number of other institutions that deal with educational issues all over Palestine.

The Center's rented apartment occupies one floor of a two-story building. The second floor is still vacant.

The Center is legally registered and has already obtained all the necessary licenses for its operation.

### **The planned activities will include:**

#### **• Cultural and educational development**

- 1-** Hold study courses related to school topics and computer science by coordinating them with different institutions in the camp.
- 2-** Raise interests about social and cultural studies by using modern methods like film projections, reading stories, music, group activities, etc.
- 3-** Provide access to other people's cultures through the study foreign languages such as French and English both for comprehension and conversation and also for professional use.
- 4-** Literacy courses for those who missed the opportunity of formal education.
- 5-** Hold combined workshops for the youth (boys and girls) in many subjects introducing and covering such issues as tolerance, accepting and understanding the other, peace considerations, problem solving, democracy, human rights, ....etc.
- 6-** Develop leadership skills among youth.
- 7-** Training youth to work cooperatively and voluntarily.

### **The mechanism to achieve the goals of the centre:**

1. Renting an appropriate place for teaching courses and trainings.

2. Establishing a computer lab, to train students and their educators on utilizing various computer programs and the Internet.
3. Hiring qualified teachers in all school subjects.
4. Buying furniture, materials & equipments needed for the centre.
5. Activate non-curriculum activities by holding summer camps, tours, and library use workshops, while encouraging youth to continue in creative skills enhancement such as painting, writing, story telling, making short films, music, games. Etc.
6. Contacting local and international trainers and specialists to lecture in various subjects.
7. Establish a number of activities and projects that would engage the camp's youth and the camp's population. Such projects can be a local low power FM radio station, Wi-Fi network to provide wireless internet and connectivity to as many homes as possible, possible link to nearby Birzeit university broadband internet feed, multimedia lab complete with a few digital cameras, editing suites, audio and music editing, program streaming, closed local networks that provide educational materials, games, community programs, children library, computer lab and computer training facilities, language lab, satellite reception and children programs, film projection and possible small theater, etc.

### **Needs of the centre:-**

The most important challenge of the Center is to ensure its sustainability and continuity. This implies first and foremost to make certain that the Center premises are owned by the Center instead of paying rent continuously.

Also, since there is such a need and demand for the Center's activities by the camp population, the present space of one floor apartment is far from enough.

It is best to acquire the whole two-story building. The total cost complete with some necessary finishing is of the order of US\$ 60,000 (sixty thousand Dollars only).

As the situation stands now, there is a great need to get funding for the centre to cover its costs and to obtain the needed equipment and tools for its operation and proposed projects. These are summarized above and an estimate of the costs for each activity can be made.

We therefore urge you to visit us and observe the situation and the potential of such a center in such a deprived area. We look forward to your support and encouragement to improve the situation of the youth at the Jalazone refugee camp..

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