



Supporting Palestinian communities

Involving people in development



The European Union (EU) seeks to promote a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. A strong and active civil society has a vital role to play in ensuring democracy, social justice and human rights in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) as well as developing links with civil society actors from Israel and in the region to promote long-term peace. To this end, the EU supports many Palestinian and European non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that are engaged in areas as diverse as healthcare, human rights and democracy, peace building and culture.

Providing essential community services

Launched in 2007, the *Non State Actors* Programme builds on many years of successful collaboration between European and Palestinian NGOs. These organisations provide a range of essential services to the community such as healthcare, job creation, women's empowerment,

human rights advocacy and education. Five grants worth a total of €1.8 million were allocated in 2008.

Building democracy and human rights

The EU is committed to assisting the Palestinian Authority (PA) promote the principles of democracy and respect for human rights in Palestinian society. In 2008, the EU allocated €5.5 million through the *European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights* to 20 Palestinian projects that work to strengthen the rule of law and to promote the rights of vulnerable groups in Palestinian society.

Supporting the peace process

The *EU Partnership for Peace programme* supports the long-term peace process by strengthening civil society relationships and by increasing cooperation between Palestinians and Israelis and the Arab minority in Israel.

Gaza families help themselves

Mona El-Aer, 43, is a mother of seven who lives in the Moghraga area of the Gaza Strip. Her husband is ill and unemployed, and in the past the family struggled to feed and clothe their children. Three years ago, Mona joined the *Atfaluna Work from Home Programme*, co-funded by the EU and the German NGO *Christoffel-Blindenmission*, and she enrolled on the embroidery unit of the programme. Mona now has a sewing machine at home and is the main breadwinner for her family. Following counselling sessions at *Atfaluna*, Mona's husband has begun treatment for a mental illness. "I am very proud of myself. For the first time we feel financially secure, and my husband is getting better every day," says Mona. 250 deaf and needy individuals are now able to provide for their families thanks to the *Work from Home Programme in Gaza*. www.atfaluna.net



Civil Society

Promoting Palestinian culture

The EU's cultural activities programme aims both to promote and preserve Palestinian culture and to bring about intercultural dialogue between Palestinian, EU and Mediterranean



Reviving ancient traditions

The **Mosaic Centre - Jericho** seeks to revive the rich and ancient traditions of Palestinian mosaic art. The centre works closely with local communities to educate them about mosaics and to pass on the skills of mosaic making to the next generation. In celebration of Jerusalem as Capital of Arab Culture 2009, the mosaic artists are recreating ten mosaics from Jerusalem's Dome of the Rock and Al Asqa mosques as part of an EU-funded programme. These technically complex and beautiful mosaics form part of an exhibition that will travel to various cities in the West Bank and in the Middle East. Osama Hamdan, project director, sees this work as just a beginning, "We are reviving mosaic techniques that have hardly been used since the 12th century and it will take many generations to complete this work."

<http://mosaiccentre-jericho.com>

partners. The EU funds a range of cultural activities such as dance, music, film festivals, theatre, exhibitions and training workshops.



Hope in the Hebron hills

At-Tuwani is a small village with a population of just 200 in the South Hebron Hills. The village has no running water and erratic electricity supplies. Close by there are a number of illegal settlements and outposts, whose violent members make life very difficult for the local population. Volunteers from the Italian NGO **Associazione Papa Giovanni XXIII - Condivisione fra I Popoli** are bringing new hope to the At-Tuwani area. Volunteers document and report on violent incidents by settlers against the villagers. They accompany farmers to their lands and shepherds to graze their animals. They help ensure that children can make their way safely to school. Local villagers have established a Non-violence Committee to empower the population to manage the conflict in non-violent ways.

www.apg23.org

Rehabilitating victims of torture

Fatin, a mother of seven, began therapy at the Treatment and Rehabilitation Centre for Victims of Torture (TRC) in 2008, to try to recover from the trauma of over three years spent in an Israeli prison.

TRC is a non-governmental non-profit organisation that provides psychosocial services to survivors of torture and organised violence in the West Bank as part of an EU-funded project.

The TRC team of psychologists are working with Fatin and her children to help rebuild their family bonds and their lives. Life is slowly improving for Fatin, "I feel I can admit my real feelings and fears here. I can admit that I am weak, and that I am suffering. There are people here who can help me and whom I can trust."

www.trc-pal.org

