



## Why we prioritize support to education?



*“Education makes people easy to lead,  
but difficult to drive*

*Easy to govern,  
but impossible to enslave”*

Palestinians place great value on education. Despite constant challenges posed by the occupation, Palestinians have achieved remarkably high attainment rates in literacy, basic and higher education. In recent years, however, the lack of adequate funds and imposed movement restrictions have threatened the entire Palestinian education system. Going to school has become difficult and irregular at best and often dangerous or impossible for many students and teachers, particularly in the northern

West Bank and around Jerusalem. Quality education, a challenge across all geographic regions of the Welfare Association’s (Taawon) work, is of particular concern in Jerusalem. Improving the quality of vocational training and education is also priority. At the pre-school level, services have not been able to keep up with the growing population and observers are increasingly concerned about a decline in quality of Early Childhood Education and Development in Palestine and among Palestinian communities in Lebanon. Experts also

cite a significant decline in the quality of Palestinian higher education over the past decade. The long-term economic crisis has threatened the ability of many Palestinian universities and colleges to maintain operations; continued provision of student financial support is likewise critical to ensuring that thousands of economically disadvantaged students in good academic standing are able to continue their higher education in West Bank and Gaza, and in Lebanon.

In response to such a situation and stemming from our belief in the “Right to Education” and in the role education can play in fostering self-reliance and prosperity, education has for long been a core focus of Taawon. Continuous analysis of Palestine’s situation and engagement with our different stakeholder have also re-affirmed that better education is a top priority for Palestine and Palestinians.

Since its establishment in 1983, Taawon mobilized resources, managed educational innovations and spent around \$200M (1/3 of the total spent budget) to meet this challenges. Taawon allocated around \$22M (17%) for the education program in its 2014-2016 Strategic Plan, with a focus on quality education and equal opportunities to foster creativity and critical thinking, and thus promoting socioeconomic empowerment. To sustain the Education Program, much more funding is required.

To this end, we hope that dedicated institutions and leading philanthropist will favorably



entertain the idea of creating a special endowment for Education.

#### Taawon’s vision for the education sector

Taawon seeks to enhance Palestinians’ resilience by providing them with equal opportunities to develop their creative abilities and skills towards excellence, through participation in educational programs that focus on critical thinking, problem solving, reflection, making use of technology and production of knowledge, within Taawon areas of operations.

#### Overall objective of Taawon’s support to Palestinian education

Contribute to enhanced quality of education for Palestinians at all educational levels (KGs, schools, universities, vocational and technical education).

#### Specific objectives

- Improve the educational environment for learners.
- Employ technology in teaching and learning to keep pace with the global information technology developments and their positive implications on students’ learning.
- Provide equal learning opportunities to students with special needs (gifted, disabled, slow learners, poor and orphans) in accordance with the “Education for All” and “Right to Education” policies.
- Contribute to enhancing the infrastructure of kindergartens (KGs), schools, universities and vocational colleges.

## Taawon’s main interventions in education

### 1. Sukkar

*Working for a Better Future: Early Childhood Development Program*

Sukkar targets children in kindergarten in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, 1948 Areas and refugee camps in Lebanon. It aims to improve Palestinian children’s access to quality early childhood care and education, to nurture their cognitive, social, and emotional development and to facilitate their successful transition to formal schooling. The program focuses on establishing local and regional partnerships and networks aiming for policy development and change at the ground level.

To bring about this improvement, the





As a new innovative education program, BRIDGE Palestine aims to encourage excellence and creativity among high school students and develop their English language, leadership and critical thinking skills to make them better equipped to compete globally. The program's vision is to optimize the possibilities of high achieving Palestinian students to enroll in the best universities in the UK, US and the Arab Region through developing a multi-disciplinary set of

of its kind in Palestine), introduced a flagship Robotics educational program (Logo League Robotic Education) in 9 Jerusalem schools, as well as trained more than 500 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students on critical thinking skills. Tafkeer has empowered local teachers who developed more than 50 tech-enabled and context sensitive educational tools (including mobile and iPad applications), which are being spread to schools across Palestine.

program works on developing the skills of kindergarten teachers and staff, and upgrading kindergarten infrastructures to be more accommodating and "child-friendly," so the children can have access to various activities throughout the day. Moreover, the program establishes new, high quality kindergartens with the needed infrastructure. During the last 3 years alone, Taawon worked with around 50 KGs in a comprehensive approach and managed to benefit more than 10,000 children and their families. moreover, Taawon became a member of the Arab Program for Early Childhood Development's Advisory Group, an initiative of The Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO). It is worth noting that Sukkar's professional development was highly rated as part of ALECSO's mapping study of early childhood development programs from across the region.

## 2. Schools of Excellence

### *Creativity and Innovation*

Taawon aims to improve the quality of education with a focus on "schools of excellence", through a comprehensive approach integrating the technology, critical thinking , problem solving, leadership skills, extra-curricular activities and remedial education interventions. A summary of these programs is listed below.

#### **a) "BRIDGE Palestine": Optimizing the Chances of High Achieving Palestinian Students to Enroll in World-Renowned Universities**



academic and personal development skills. BRIDGE will provide a tested model that values long-term investment in potentially successful Palestinian students in the Occupied Palestine.

#### **b) "TAFKEER": Technology in Education**

Technology's role in enhancing access to knowledge and opportunities is increasingly receiving attention around the world. Technology can play an especially important role in enhancing Palestinian's access to opportunities given their particular situation where mobility is constrained as a result of the occupation. The Tafkeer Program serves to bridge that gap in the West Bank and Gaza Strip by training teachers and developing their skills with regards to preparing technology-based educational materials. Furthermore, this program upgrades the infrastructure, both physical and programmatic, in key target areas. Tafkeer, in the last three years, has equipped more than 27 schools with technology labs (the first

## 3. University Program

### *Enhancing Capabilities & Expanding knowledge; University program*

Support of Higher Education Institutions is at the core of our programs. Investing in our nation's educators, the Palestinian university faculty members, **Zamalah** ensures a positive impact on generations to come. Through Zamalah, faculty members of Palestinian Universities are able to participate in practical fellowships at outstanding international institutions. Such exchanges will enrich the practical and professional experiences of participants and upon completion of the fellowships, faculty members will transfer the knowledge and skills to Palestinian students through, practical training, novel teaching techniques and research projects and published articles.

In addition, we are aiming to support **IT initiatives** through establishing a "Summer School" for training students and their teachers on the latest IT advancements aiming

for creating not only a culture for technology utilization, but also to create a core group of Palestinian expertise in the field.

We also offer students **scholarships** and grants, allowing them to complete university degrees in multiple fields at world-class universities.

#### 4. "Mustaqbali" and "Wajd"

*The Orphans Program; From Early Childhood Education to Employment*

##### a) Mustaqbali program

In 2010, Taawon leveraged its reach to local communities and regional philanthropists to address the pressing needs of youth and children orphaned as a result of the 2008-2009 Israeli aggression on Gaza. With the generous commitment of the Abraaj Group, the first of its kind 22-year long Mustaqbali program was created to support 1804 orphaned children by integrating them in the



society, providing them with the means for decent living, providing access to education, and helping them become self-reliant so that they are in control of their own futures.

##### b) Wajd Program

Immediately after the 2014 aggression on Gaza, Taawon launched a similar fundraising drive to cater to the comprehensive needs of the new 2108 orphans. With generous commitment of Qatar Development Fund and other donors, a 22-years

program similar to Mustaqbali called "Wajd" is just underway. Mustaqbali experiences and know-how will be utilized to the maximum to ensure a successful implementation of the Wajd program. Taawon is also in discussions with other interested donors to support Wajd program.

## Welfare Association (Taawon)



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