

*The Diyar Consortium*  
THE DIYAR CONSORTIUM

2008 Annual Report

Dear friends,

Salaam from Bethlehem. Another year has passed. It started with lots of high expectations of being the year in which a Palestinian State would be launched, and ended bitterly with the Gaza war. Yet we at Diyar do not believe in “Peace Talkers”, nor do wars deter us from our vision, that our people shall have life and have it abundantly.

2008 was a special year where new initiatives were launched, tested and started to blossom:

Dar al-Kalima College graduated its first class of students from the documentary film production and glass & ceramic arts programs, and watched as the new facilities on the Dar al-Kalima campus rose to the height of 5 stories! The Health & Wellness Center is also looking forward to expanding into its new facilities on the same hilltop campus.

A new “Dar” was born in Beit Sahour, called Dar al-Balad (“the house in the center of the city”), which houses an artiana and a restaurant with outdoor sidewalk seating for the warm summer nights.

Three new programs were launched at Dar Annadwa, including a Youth Leadership group which meets monthly to discuss issues facing young people in Palestine today, the “Palestinian Christians: Strengthening Identity, Activating Potential” project, which began training young leaders from Christian communities all over Palestine, and the Church & State colloquium, which began with a conference in December, attended by representatives of NGOs and academics from 12 countries.

These come in addition to our ongoing projects, which touch the lives of children through the Bright Stars program, young couples through the Azwaj Program, and elderly through the Ajyal program. In this same year came the first docudrama, the first book from Ajyal, the first catalogue by The Cave, and the first training of social workers in trauma ever to be conducted in the West Bank. These ministries continue to attract people from all around the world, who come here to see what “humans” are doing for each other, but also what God is doing here and now.

I express my deep gratitude and appreciation for all our supporters, both organizations and individuals, and here in Palestine and abroad. It is your help that sustains us and allows us to keep providing life-giving programming to our community.

Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb  
President, Diyar Consortium





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## DAR AL-BALAD

# AD-DAR EVENTS



2008 was a year of remarkable growth for Ad-Dar. Audiences totaling 15,998 persons attended the 85 events held in the Ad-Dar facilities in 2008, the highest number so far since Ad-Dar's opening in 2003 and an increase of about 40% in both the number of events and the number of audience members in 2007. This increase is due both to the ingenuity of the event planners and the work of Authentic Tourism in bringing groups.

January was a delight to yoga students and teachers as spiritual masters Shri Prabhujii and Siddhartha Krishna (below) from India gave a rare and special lecture entitled "Yoga and its 6 Traditional Significances".



February witnessed the MEATRC-sponsored International Center of Bethlehem's Leadership Conference, where young leaders representing different Bethlehem and Jerusalem-based organizations met to do a needs assessment and define the issues that the young people see as most relevant to their development as youth leaders. Easter in March brought with it the lovely sounds of the

Al-Raja' Choir, and the powerful monodrama of "Abu Halima", a theatre performance about a character returning from exile and searching for a Palestine that he cannot find (below).

April was a month not to be forgotten by the children of Bethlehem, as it brought live on stage the famous character of Foxy in a children's theatre play.

May had the second highest number of crowds of all year as Ad-Dar hosted the Palestine Festival of Literature. In solidarity with the Palestinian people and spearheaded by the famous Egyptian writer Ahdaf Soueif, a group of writers and event organizers (mainly from the UK) participated in this literary event in order to boost local morale and break the cultural isolation which Palestine and its population are facing. In Bethlehem, the famous El-Funoun Palestinian Popular Dance Troupe gave a free public performance while writers including Roddy Doyle, Suheir Hammad, Nathalie Handal, Pankaj Mishra and Andrew O'Hagan gave public readings over a 2-day period.



The launch of a book written by Ms. Faten Nastas Mitwasi, Chairperson of the Visual Arts Department at Dar al-Kalima College (a sister organization under the Diyar umbrella), on one of the most famous Palestinian artists, Sliman Mansour, took place in June. This event was very unique and was attended by many artists, because this is the first book and initiative that is dedicated solely to one Palestinian artist. Previous works have focused either on Palestinian art in general, or categorized of a group of artists under one genre.

July was a month of great music events. It kicked off with the International Center of Bethlehem's Dandanat Music Festival (next page), now in its 4th year, as Swedish and Palestinian music and dance groups electrified the stage over a 3-day period with their rich sounds and





artistic dance movements. Next was a recital by young students from the Pineland Suzuki School in Maine, USA, followed by the young participants of the International Center of Bethlehem's Bright Stars Summer Academy celebrating their program finale through music and dance performances. With the Palestine Festival came the melodic sounds of Taisir Masrieh and the Maram Oriental Ensemble, and it was only appropriate to end the month with Jackie Salloum's documentary film "Slingshot Hip Hop", a film that narrates the stories of young Palestinian rappers living in Israel, Gaza and the West Bank and how they employ hip hop to overcome the oppression caused by poverty and the Israeli Occupation.

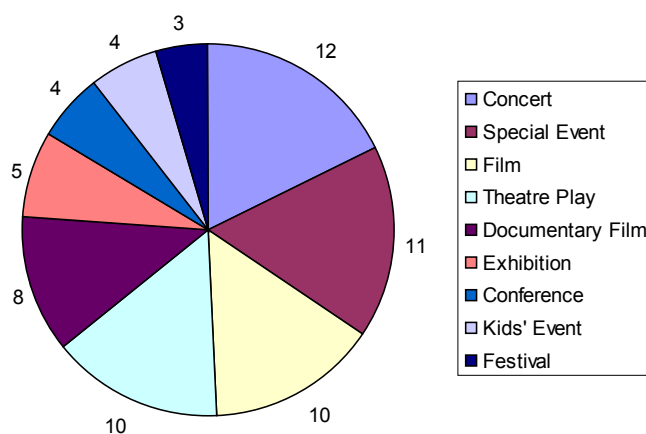


August was also a busy month for Ad-Dar, with the Layali al-Balad Festival (left) in full swing, among other activities. This month also exhibited the importance of networking between different cultural organizations, as we all work for further promotion of the arts and culture in the area. In light of this, throughout the month

of August, Ad-Dar offered its facilities for stage rehearsals to Al-Hara Theatre Group, as they worked on their new theatre play entitled "The Metamorphosis" (right).

The long-awaited Egyptian film "Hasan u Morcos" was screened at Ad-Dar Hall in September. The film's significance stems not from its featuring the biggest stars in the Egyptian or world cinemas, as both Omar Sharif and Adel Imam starred in it, but because of its dealing

Events by Type (excluding rentals)



with an important issue, that of Muslim-Christian relations in an Egyptian context. Other films were screened during this month, including the film projects of the Dar al-Kalima College's documentary film students.

Murad Sweity, one of the finalists on the widely viewed television competition show "Super Star", the Arabic equivalent of "American Idol", performed live at Ad-Dar during October. Murad Sweity is originally from Jericho, Palestine.

The European-Palestinian Hip Hop concert tour had a huge turn-out in November, where more than 400 young men and women came to see four Palestinian rappers who traveled from their adopted home countries in Europe to tour the West Bank. They were German "Massive", British Shadia Mansour, Danish "Marwan" and Swedish Behrang Miri "Rap-Tor". Other local Palestinian rappers also joined in the concert tour.

As the events cycle drew to a close, the month of December turned out to be by far the busiest and most well-attended month of the year. An art exhibition by the famous Palestinian artist Taleb Dweik graced the lobby of Ad-Dar, where gallery-goers feasted their eyes on remarkable paintings gathered under the theme of "Pride". Other events were also held, including Christmas concerts and dances, theatre plays, film screenings, and educational activities.



For more information on Ad-Dar events, please see our extended report here: <http://www.annadwa.org/en/media/pdf/events2008.pdf>

# BETHLEHEM MEDIA CENTER (BMC)

Speaking out to Palestine, Christians all over the Middle East, and the entire international community, the Bethlehem Media Center (BMC) is one of the leading media outlets for documentaries, short reports, and new in 2008, televised talk shows and drama. The BMC is an alternative media outlet in a number of ways: not only do they seek to bring out the “good news” of a living culture in Palestine, to counter the all-too-common images of violence and destruction in the mainstream media, but they also seek to create programming for audiences besides high-income-earning young men, the main target group for commercial media. In working toward these objectives, the BMC completed 19 productions: 3 short documentary films, 9 short reports (6 with English subtitles, for international audiences), 3 promotional videos, 2 live church service broadcasts, 1 docudrama, and 2 episodes of a new talk show.



The aim of the BMC is not only to show Palestine to the outside world, but also to show Palestine to itself. The short reports produced by the BMC are the stories of people: in a series on disability, the reports showed active and successful disabled people, as well as the institutions whose purpose it is to help the disabled to live their lives to the fullest and dissolve the stigmas and stereotypes that society holds against them. Other short reports were produced on elderly artists and artisans in Bethlehem who are working not only to preserve their traditional crafts but also to sustain themselves through their art, and on issues surrounding the interaction between church and state in the Palestinian context.

The BMC’s first docudrama, “Lesh Sabreen?” (“Why Are We Tolerating What’s Happening?”), was produced in 2008 by Muayad Alayan, a young Palestinian filmmaker. Through dramatic narrative, the film depicts the hopes and fears of Palestinian youth living in Jerusalem. Following on a tradition started by the debate shows in 2006 and 2007, 2008 saw the beginning of a new talk show for Ajjal, Diyar’s elder care program. This talk show (below) presents information for the elderly on



Documentary films in 2008 explored the situation of the elderly living in Palestine, documented Palestinian and Swedish youth sharing their talents and cultures at the Dandanat Music Festival, and addressed the importance and challenges of tourism in Palestine. The “It’s PalesTIME” video (top right), created by the BMC to promote Diyar’s Authentic Tourism Program, is available through the Diyar website, at <http://www.diyar-consortium.org/films/PALESTIME.mpg>





health, nutrition, and fitness, features honest discussion on topics like economic and socio-cultural issues affecting the elderly, and shines a spotlight on active seniors who are giving back to society.

The BMC also produced three promotional videos for the Diyar Consortium, and assisted in the broadcast of the Confirmation and Christmas church services, live on Arabic satellite station Sat7, as well as a simulcast service with the Bethlehem Chapel at the National Cathedral in Washington, DC (below). The simulcast Christmas service can be viewed here, on the National Cathedral's website: <http://video1.cathedral.org/wmv/Bethlehem081220.wmv>



An additional aim of the BMC is to provide practical training for the filmmaking students and new graduates of Dar Al-Kalima College, providing them with the opportunity to apply their learning and to learn professional methods for working in the audiovisual media sector. During 2008, eight students had the chance to train at BMC (below).



### ***BMC Highlights Elderly in 2008***

It is the mission of the BMC to “give voice to the voiceless”, and promote the right to abundant life for those who may be marginalized in Palestinian society. One of these marginalized groups that the BMC is now bringing attention to is the elderly. The BMC, in cooperation with the Ajyal Elder Care Program, seeks not only to raise awareness about their situation, but to empower the elderly to build networks of their own, and become more socially and physically active in the community.

Three BMC projects focused on the elderly in 2008. The first was a documentary film called “The Age of Stone” (an Arabic phrase similar to the English “Golden Years”), describing the situation of the elderly in Palestine, and the lack of dedicated facilities and services for them. The second was a series of short reports about elderly artisans and the challenges they face in preserving Palestinian artistic heritage and also trying to make a living from their work. The third and largest project is the new 14-episode talk show, which began taping in November. This is the first ever program in the Arab world produced especially for and about the elderly, and it will be broadcast on pan-Arab satellite channel Sat7.



The aim of the show is, first, to help seniors think more proactively about their lives and goals, when society is telling them that there is no life after 65 worth living, and second, to help those with elderly family members to think about ways to more fully integrate them into the life of the family. The program also seeks to publicize the success of the Ajyal Elder Care Program, to encourage other organizations to adopt the Ajyal model in their own communities.

It is the hope of the BMC that their work can contribute to a better social situation for the elderly of Bethlehem, and of all Palestine. Through education, awareness, and discussion, social barriers can be overcome and society as a whole can flourish.

# AL-KAHF “THE CAVE” ARTS & CRAFTS

## *The Workshops*

The Al-Kahf Arts & Crafts Workshops are home to 43 artisans working in different kinds of crafts and producing more than 600 different art items in 2008. Of these artisans, the overwhelming majority (85 %) are women. For these women, their art represents economic freedom and empowerment, personal growth through the workshops and master-classes we offer, and an avenue for self-expression that was not open to them a generation ago.

During 2008, Al-Kahf Artisans were given the opportunity to take classes in a variety of art techniques through the continuing education courses offered by Dar Al Kalima College.



- Suzan King, a ceramic artist from Freedom Arts College in the UK, visited from July 25th – August 6th. She gave a lecture on contemporary ceramic artists, and held a practical workshop for clay throwing (beginner level) for 16 practical hours. Two artisans participated.

- Janet Auman, an artist from the USA, visited the College in February for a multiple-day workshop (15 hours total) in glass bead making (above). Three artisans participated.

- A course in jewelry design helped the artisans create new designs in jewelry and improve the quality of their products. Two artisans participated.

In addition to the professional artisans who use the workshop space, Al-Kahf hosted the students of Dar Al-

Kalima College and helped them sell their products. The students not only received commercial experience from this cooperative venture, but they also earned money, which many chose to plough back into their continuing education.

Ajyal members also found a creative outlet with a financial bonus at Al-Kahf. In an effort to revitalize traditional artwork that had lost popularity in recent years, Al-Kahf encouraged them to make special figurines of Bethlehemite women with their characteristic “coin”-covered conical headdresses, and figurines of the Holy Family on their flight to Egypt (right).



Al-Kahf artisans occasionally receive commissions for custom work. In 2008, two special olive wood products were commissioned: one was a special wedding party favor, a camel with the names of the bride and groom on it, and the other was the “Sharing Jerusalem” logo, with the symbols of the three monotheistic faiths carved together inside a peace symbol (below).





## Artists Building Careers Through The Cave

One other special commission came from a woman who visited the gift shop in early 2008. The Al-Kahf Gift Shop coordinator recalls explaining to her about the mission of the gift shop, and how they sell the products made by the local artisans so that they might earn a living by their craft. She also mentioned that the artisans can make any design in stained glass or ceramic.

About a month later, the visitor sent an email saying: "I have given away all the pieces I brought back. They've gone to Congo, Uzbekistan, Kenya and Ghana so far, as well as a few places in the US.

I wonder if maybe you all might help us design one - as an "official" gift." The design she requested was the logo of the Presbyterian Church in the USA (left).



Laurice (below), one of the artisans working in the Al-Kahf Workshops, is particularly known for being thorough in her work and

paying attention to detail, and the gift shop coordinator also knew she needed a bit of income to help pay her tuition fees at Dar al-Kalima College. Laurice prepared a sample of the stained glass item requested, and sent it for approval; on the day of the Dar al-Kalima College graduation ceremony, Laurice received an order for 100 of the crosses she had made! It was a great surprise, a wonderful graduation gift, and a fantastic start for Laurice on her career as a professional artist.



## The Gift Shop

One of the highlights of 2008 for the Al-Kahf Gift Shop was the inauguration of the Gift Shop Website ([www.cave.annadwa.org](http://www.cave.annadwa.org)). Launched in conjunction with the new 2008-09 Gift Shop Catalogue, the gift shop website marks a new era of outreach and income generation for the art workshops in Bethlehem. Items from all categories of artwork (glass, ceramics, silver, embroidery, and more) are displayed for convenient online browsing. Items can be ordered, and will be directly sent, from Al-Kahf in Bethlehem. Over 30 skilled artisans create items sold in the Al-Kahf Gift Shop, and it is our hope that by expanding our market globally, they will be able to maintain a livelihood and support their families from their work. Ordering instructions, product information, and approximate shipping costs and timeframes are included on the website.



The Al-Kahf Gift Shop sells items for all occasions, and for special occasions throughout the year. Jewelry and gifts for Valentine's Day, a special Easter collection including hand-cut and -carved Jerusalem Stone works, a Spring collection of stained and fused glass to catch the sunlight, Olive Harvest products like the silver olive leaf jewelry and special olive wood designs, and special Christmas gift packages in different sizes. One of the gift shop's most popular items this year was the "Bazaar in a Box" package, which allowed congregations and community organizations to purchase a pre-selected array of Al-Kahf pieces to sell in their holiday bazaars. The most popular individual items in 2008 were, as always, the classic stained glass angels and peace doves; silver olive leaf earrings in a variety of designs were also among the most-purchased items.

Items from the Al-Kahf Gift Shop are always in demand at exhibitions and bazaars, including the Jerusalem Ex-Pat Bazaars at Christmas and Easter, and the Olive Harvest Market in Manger Square. Al-Kahf items have also been presented as gifts at a number of conferences and gatherings this past year, including a silver olive leaf in an olive wood box for the Palestine Investment Conference in Bethlehem (right), a stained glass angel for the Sat7 Network Conference in Nicosia, Cyprus, and olive wood ornaments for donors to the Wheat Ridge Ministries in St. Louis, USA.



### *The Gallery*

The Al-Kahf Gallery creates a platform for artistic expression in Bethlehem. Exhibitions allow for meetings of cultures and ideas among local and international artists and visitors. For Palestinian artists, it is a chance to deliver their messages in their own context to an international audience; for Palestinian audiences, it is a chance to interact with art and ideas from countries it is difficult to travel to, due to restrictions on movement imposed by the Israeli occupation.

Fifteen exhibitions took place in the Al-Kahf Galleries in 2008. The exhibitions included a variety of media such as oil and water color paintings, mixed media, drawings in Chinese ink, digital art, installation art with one short film. The year-end exhibition for Dar al-Kalima College (below) featured works in glass, ceramic and mosaic.

### *Embroidery Group*

Using traditional Palestinian embroidery methods and patterns, the embroidery group has been busy creating items ranging from stoles and chasubles to mobile phone cases and laptop covers. Orders for embroidered stoles have continuously been coming by e-mail, and stoles have been sold in the shop, with total sales of 86 stoles in 2008. One highlight was an order from the Lund Cathedral in Sweden for 12 stoles for their Christmas exhibition. The four ladies of the embroidery group worked for most of the summer to fulfill this order.



Cooperation exists on many levels between the Al-Kahf Gallery and the Dar al-Kalima College. To enrich the education of the students at Dar al-Kalima College and expose them to local and international exhibitions and artists, special arrangements are made so that students can be present at exhibit openings and interact with the visiting artists. The experience of attending gallery shows is an important one for any growing artist, as this helps them to get new ideas and cultivate their artistic talents for their own future exhibitions.

The exhibitions “Black and Why” by Mirna Bamieh and “Memory of Childhood” by Nasr Yousef Jawabre, a teacher at DAK, started deep discussions among the students about how to interpret art – what the artist wants to say, and how the audience can perceive the message.





Another success was the exhibition by Ahmad Abu Hania, “Palestinian Prisoner’s Pain and Freedom” (below). Ahmad created all of his pieces during his two-year imprisonment in Israel under “administrative detention”.

A highlight of 2008 was the group exhibition “Art and Social Change”, curated by Professor George Rivera. Prof. Rivera gave an art workshop to the college students, inspiring them to engage with the local community by making pieces of art and hanging them in the street (above and below) and then interviewing passersby on the issue of peace, and what that means in the context of their personal role in society.



There were very few visitors when the exhibition was about to open, but following Ahmad’s advice we waited a few more minutes, and all of a sudden we had more than 100 people in the gallery, mostly young Palestinians but also many international volunteers, all his friends. Many had never been to the ICB before. After the opening, the audience came up to the lobby for the opening of a second exhibition entitled “Four Walls” by Gazan artist Muhammed Harb, who was prevented from being present himself by movement restrictions placed on Gaza by the Israeli occupation.



“Mary in Palestine” - Afaf Takateka

“Mary in Palestine” - Rania Andon



# BRIGHT STARS/ECP

With clubs in graphic design, music, filmmaking, and a variety of sports ranging from table tennis to karate, the Bright Stars and Extra-Curricular Programs (Bright Stars/ECP) provide after-school enrichment for around 500 school children between the ages of 6 and 16. In addition to regular academic-year programming, the Bright Stars Summer Academy welcomed 220 children and youth for 4 weeks of recreation and personal development, and special Bright Stars events at Christmas and Easter attracted 400 local children to Dar Annadwa's Ad-Dar Hall for musical theater performances.



The Bright Stars/ECP approach is one of encouraging children to identify and explore their own interests and talents, and offering them opportunities to improve their skills and abilities under the guidance of professionals in the fields of their choice. Through the clubs and activities, Bright Stars/ECP strives to promote self-expression, foster self-confidence, and develop leadership capacities in Palestinian young people.



Children of all ages enjoy the year-round swimming clubs offered by Bright Stars/ECP. The Bright Stars clubs in drawing, karate, swimming and ballet meet once a week and are open to children from all over the Bethlehem district, while the ECP offers after-school activities 4 times per week to students of the Dar al-Kalima Model School. Kids in grades 1-5 can choose from clubs in storytelling & drama, arts & crafts, swimming, music & singing, and games. Older kids in grades 6-11 have more options, choosing from sports like table tennis, basketball, swimming, volleyball and football, music clubs in guitar, piano, violin and general music, and multimedia clubs in graphic design, painting & fine arts, filmmaking and electronic magazine production.

## ***Bright Stars Summer Academy***

The 2008 Bright Stars Summer Academy theme, “Khale Helmak Iyser Hakeke” (“let your dreams come true”) attracted the attention of the multitude of kids who came to enjoy the variety of clubs on offer this year. Each participant could choose to participate in six or seven out of the forty different clubs, in fields such as Arts & Crafts, IT & Communications, Sports, and Performing Arts & Music.

The Summer Academy took place over four weeks, from June 23rd to July 17th, at the Dar Al-Kalima Model School and Dar Al-Kalima Health and Wellness Center. The Academy met from 8:30-12:30, five days a week, with day-trips around the Bethlehem area on Thursdays. Around 220 kids, aged six to sixteen years, participated in the Summer Academy.



**Rami (staff)**

This is Rami's first time working as a Summer Academy trainer. He studied in Greece and is a specialist in basketball and dance aerobics, and currently works as a trainer at the Dar al-Kalima Health & Wellness Center. Rami says, "it was a wonderful and excellent experience."

**Nardeen, 17 (volunteer)**

Nardeen is a Bright Stars alumna, having participated in the Summer Academy when she was younger and now working as a volunteer. She says, "I am trying to do my best in working and helping teachers. I can say that I have developed my talents and used them in a good way which benefits me in my life."



*Summer Academy Stories:*

**Nicola, 13**

"I lost my arm during the second Intifada, but I can still do whatever I like. I like swimming, animation, basketball, self-defense, and computers."

**Amani, 12**

"I heard about the Summer Academy from the organization I am belong to. I was really happy in doing such wonderful and useful activities. The best things were the outdoor activities and computer lab classes. I hope I can join the Academy for the next year."



For more information about the Bright Stars Summer Academy, you can read the 2008 Annual Report, available online here: <http://www.annadwa.org/en/media/pdf/bssa2008.pdf>



# LEADERSHIP GROUP

The Leadership Program run by the International Center of Bethlehem (Dar Annadwa) brings young people together to support one another and learn together in a Christian context the skills and ways of thinking that will serve them as young leaders in Palestine.

Participating in the program are 26 men and women between the ages of 21 and 30, most of whom, having finished their undergraduate or graduate studies, are now looking for work in a difficult job market. Dar Annadwa chose this age group as a pilot group for leadership training because many of them are at important transitional times in their lives. Rather than leaving them to find their own way, we prefer to invest in young people and guide them as they grow more exposed to outside influences and more aware of their place and purpose in the world.

The Leadership Program seeks to identify, motivate and equip the next generation of Palestinian Christians to assume the future leadership of Palestine's public, private, faith-based, and non-profit sectors. Its approach is unique and holistic, using weekly gatherings and fellowship to connect and establish support networks among the young people. These weekly gatherings feature

training and educational activities in personal growth and development or civic education, with appearances by real Christian community leaders working locally and internationally in a variety of sectors. Participants in the leadership program strive to become well-rounded individuals, taking on cultural learning assignments (reading, art, music, film, etc.) as well as community service opportunities, and enjoy intercultural exchanges with visiting groups of young adults or on trips abroad (below).

In 2008, Leadership Program participants had opportunities to learn from accomplished entrepreneurs and academics, receive training in professional writing and stress management, debate the meaning of beauty and the power of positive thinking, and attend intercultural meetings and music festivals. Topics for the coming year's meetings include politics, theology, the media, the economic crisis, and society and development.

With 57% of the population of Palestine under the age of 19, the need for programs like the ICB's Leadership Program will only increase. Currently in its pilot stage with these 26 young men and women from the Bethlehem area, the Leadership Program seeks to be the first of its kind to provide systematic, sustainable and ongoing leadership training for the future Christian leaders of Palestine.





# RELIGION & STATE CONFERENCE

In Istanbul from December 14-17, the International Center of Bethlehem, with the support of the Olof Palme International Center and in cooperation with the Center Party International Foundation, held a regional conference on the issue of “Religion and State”. This meeting in Istanbul was essentially a follow-up conference to the 2007 Intercultural Conference at Dar Annadwa in Bethlehem on “God’s Reign and People’s Rule”, which was attended by over 75 academics and intellectuals from 12 different countries. Unfortunately, because of travel restrictions imposed by Israel on people from the Arab states, no one from the Arab world was able to attend, even though the issue of religion and state is a key political issue all over the region. For this reason, a regional conference in an accessible location was convened, and attended by 33 individuals: 23 from Middle Eastern countries, and 10 from Sweden.



Conference participants were intentionally chosen to represent a wide range of opinions and political and religious sensibilities. Twenty directors & CEOs of Middle Eastern institutions working in the field of civic education were invited, and 14 were able to attend. In addition to the 15 directors (14 plus Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb of the Diyar Consortium), 3 academics, 2 journalists, and 3 ICB staff-members participated in the conference. The Arab participants came from 5 countries: Palestine (7+3 staff), Egypt (5), Jordan (5), Lebanon (2), and Syria (1). Around 1/3 were female, and over half were Muslim, with 9 Sunni, 1 Shiite and 1 Druze. Among the Christians were 4 Orthodox (Greek, Armenian & Coptic), 5 Protestants (Lutheran & Presbyterian) and 1

Catholic. Some were liberals, others more conservative; some were religious, others were with no religious affiliation whatsoever. Some were closer to the ruling parties in their respective country while others were in the opposition. The Swedish delegation represented three political parties, and two of the delegates were Muslim, bringing to the discussion the unique perspectives of European Muslims.

After introductions by Rev. Dr. Raheb, Mr. Jens Orback, the General Secretary of the Olof Palme International Center, and ELCJHL Bishop Rev. Dr. Munib Younan, the conference comprised 5 main sessions. The first focused on church-state relations in the pre-Christian, post-Constantinian, and Islamic periods, while the second dealt more with how the political dimensions of religion manifest themselves in contemporary Arab contexts. The third session focused on the theological concepts that define the relationship between Religion and the State. The fourth and fifth sessions were meant to provide a summary of major issues that are crucial for a new relationship between religion and the state in the future Middle East, including constitutional politics and women’s rights.

Even more important than the presentations, however, were the formal and informal discussions that followed them. Individual and institutional networking is important in creating a framework for future dialogue and cooperation among civic leaders, and the scenarios for positive relationships between religious and state organs that were outlined during the conference will be very valuable in developing materials that advocate a common vision, which may be discussed and implemented in countries all over the Middle East.



# PARTNERSHIPS & PROJECTS

## *Palestinian Christians: Strengthening Identity, Activating Potential*



The Christian presence in Palestine is as old as Christianity itself, but since the Nakba in 1948, the Christian population in Palestine has decreased from 20% of the total Palestinian population in the 1900s to 7.3% in 1948, and from 4.1% in 1967 to 1% in 2005. Due to the religious, historic and cultural importance of Christians existence in Palestine, a land sacred to all three Abrahamic faiths, this dramatic decrease over time in the Christian population of Palestine is of critical concern, and must be addressed. A strategy must be developed to help Palestinian Christians not only to survive in the Holy Land and maintain their historic presence, but to thrive and grow as a living community.

The “Palestinian Christians: Strengthening Identity, Activating Potential” (PC:SIAP) project aims to build this strategy from a grassroots approach that includes and involves Christian communities all over Palestine, including “the ‘48”, referring to present-day Israel. The project’s current activities follow several parallel tracks,

but began with a mapping exercise that started in early 2008. Before a strategy to strengthen the Palestinian Christian communities could be devised, it was first necessary to find out where the active Christian communities are based, how they are organized, and what kinds of services or institutions they have to meet their physical and social needs. The results of this study are available in a comprehensive report, available online here: <http://www.annadwa.org/en/media/pdf/christians.pdf>

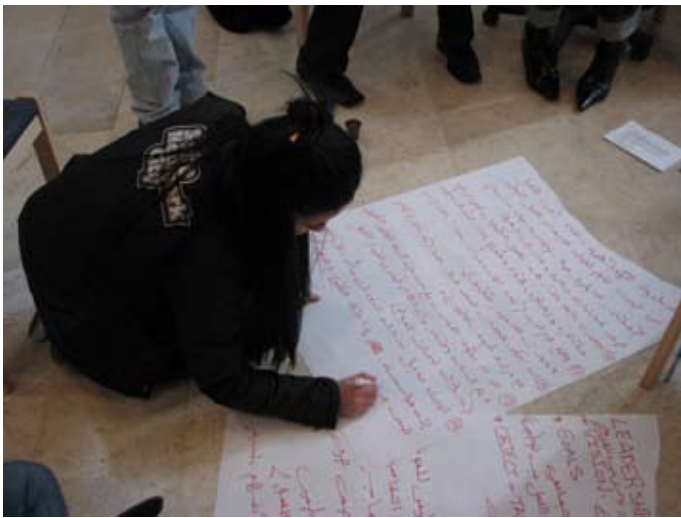


After this initial mapping activity, two parallel tracks of activities began. The first track, “Strengthening Identity”, focuses on building a shared, comprehensive, ecumenical strategic vision for Christian engagement in Palestine. Through a series of conferences and working meetings involving Christian leaders from throughout Palestine, this track aims to produce a document outlining this strategic vision, which would then be published and distributed to Palestinian Christian communities. Activities on this track began in November when the results of the mapping project were shared with the public at a symposium at Ad-Dar. The discussion that followed should provide a base for future discourse on the building of a comprehensive strategy to strengthen the Christian presence in Palestine. Two youth focus groups also met in Bethlehem and Ramallah to discuss the findings of the study.



The second track, “Activating Potential”, aims to prepare young people from Palestinian Christian communities to become more involved as community leaders through skills training and exercises in creative problem-solving. Beginning in September, 17 youth from all over the West Bank (1 from Bethlehem, 1 from Je-





rusalem, 2 from Beit Sahour, 3 from Taybeh, 3 from Aboud (a village near Ramallah) and 7 from Zababdeh (in the northern West Bank, near Jenin) gathered for intensive sessions in leadership, communication, theology, and proposal writing and budgeting. After this cycle of training sessions ends in April 2009, the next stage will be to grant each participant \$3000 to implement a project in their communities, pending approval of their proposals. Projects vary depending on the needs of the community. A second cycle of young leaders will begin the same process of training sessions, proposal writing and project implementation in June 2009.



## *Wings of Hope*

Children and young adults in Bethlehem, and indeed in Palestine at large, are growing up in a context of uncertainty, against a background of Occupation, siege and Intifada. Experiencing conflict first-hand, especially during the formative years of childhood, has lasting effects on the psyche. Recognizing and dealing with psychological trauma is a relatively recent development in Palestine, and at the forefront of this endeavor is the psychotherapy clinic at the Dar al-Kalima Health & Wellness Center. In order to expand and improve available treatment for child psychological trauma, Dar al-Kalima and the German Wings of Hope Foundation instituted a training course for teachers and social workers from throughout the West Bank. The three-year training course, which teaches psychotraumatology and trauma-related counseling and pedagogy, began in April 2008. Participants who complete the course will receive an academic certificate from Dar al-Kalima College.



The aim of the project is to help teachers and social workers who work with children to understand the symptoms of child psychological trauma (most often post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), triggered by exposure to armed conflict) and the feelings of helplessness and distrust that create psychological barriers for the children who are affected. To reframe the symptoms of psychological trauma as normal responses to an abnormal situation, instead of as “acting out” or “misbehaving”, will be an important first step in addressing child trauma in Palestine.



# AUTHENTIC TOURISM

The Authentic Tourism Program offers meaningful, genuine tour experiences for individuals and groups who, instead of “running where Jesus walked”, desire a more in-depth encounter with the people and places that make up Palestine today. Pilgrimages, fact-finding tours, educational tours, youth tours, and cultural exchange programs are all organized through the Authentic Tourism Program, which is based at the International Center of Bethlehem. In 2008, 35 groups made their arrangements through the Authentic Tourism Program, the majority of whom came from the US, but also from Germany, Scandinavia and Japan.

The Authentic Tourism Program offered travelers the opportunities to:

- Visit the ancient stones, while listening to authentic, personal narratives from the local communities
- Engage in the spiritual life of present Palestine
- Experience living cultures
- Witness local Christian ministries of healing and hope
- Join in servant opportunities for work and prayer
- Explore the original context of the Bible
- Support economic development in Palestine



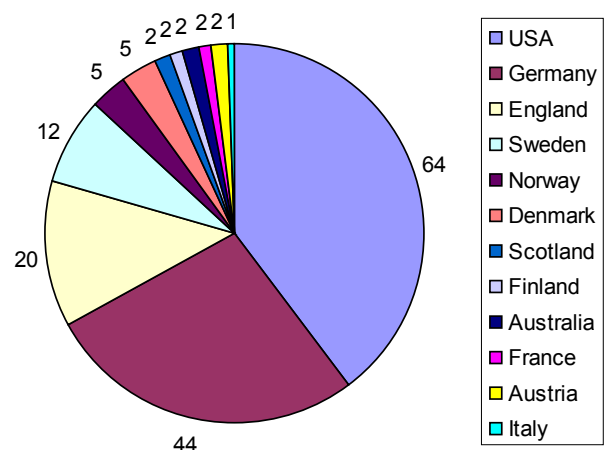
When devising the itineraries for visiting groups to Palestine, meetings with different representatives of society were included, especially the most marginalized, in order to demonstrate the richness and diversity of experiences within Palestine and give voices to those who are usually not heard. Aside from groups who were offered customized, week-long itineraries, hundreds of visitors



to the Holy Land were given opportunities to attend lectures and presentations on the valuable work of Diyar ministries, Palestinian Christians and contextual theology; take advantage of on-site accommodations in Bethlehem at the Abu Gubran Guesthouse; enjoy traditional Palestinian cuisine at the Il'Iliyah Restaurant and Dar al-Balad Restaurant; relax with fresh drinks and traditional refreshments at Al-Kuz bar and coffee shop; purchase arts and crafts items made by local artisans at the Al-Kahf Art Workshops and sold at the Gift Shop; attend cultural evenings and activities held at the Ad-Dar theatre; and benefit from guiding services both locally and nationally in different languages.

In addition to making arrangements for accommodation and travel, the ICB and Authentic Tourism Program have also partnered with other tourism-related organizations to draft a code of ethics for both visitors and the Palestinian tourism sector, helping to ensure that local culture is respected and helping to increase tourists' feelings of trust and security during their stay in Palestine.

Visitors to ICB by Country



# DAR AL-KALIMA HEALTH & WELLNESS

## THE HEALTH CLINICS

### *Audiology Clinic*

A major achievement of the audiology clinic in 2008 was the fitting of 607 hearing aids for needy children in the south and central West Bank through the Ra-feed Project, sponsored by USAID. The clinic currently serves 1627 patients from the Bethlehem area and 1036 patients from the Hebron area, down from 1350 last year. The clinic has also managed to maintain the same volume of work despite the opening of several audiology clinics in the area, though patient referrals from areas now being served by other audiology clinics, such as Hebron, have dropped slightly. Furthermore, the clinic has been serving UNRWA patients for 5 consecutive years, and plans to continue in this partnership.

In addition to fitting hearing aids, vertigo assessment and hearing testing via the brain-stem evoked response (BSER) method accounted for the majority of referrals to the audiology clinic.



### *Endocrinology Clinic*

The endocrinology clinic at Dar al-Kalima only operates one day a week, but it is responsible for a large part of the treatment of patients with thyroid disorders presenting to physicians in the Bethlehem region. Recent estimates indicate that nearly 90% of the clinic's case load is thyroid-related, while diabetes management accounts for most of the remaining 10%. The reason for this distribution in caseload is not because thyroid disorders are much more common in the Bethlehem area; rather, there are a number of dedicated diabetes care clinics operating in the Bethlehem area, and the other main endocrinologist in Jerusalem who dealt with thyroid disorders recently emigrated to Europe.



The endocrinology clinic served patients in 713 appointments on 42 working days, and gained 210 new patients during the year. 30 individuals signed up for a diabetes care membership, which allows them to receive regular blood glucose checks and health counseling for a fixed monthly charge.

### *Nutrition Clinic/Fit for Life*

The nutrition clinic at Dar al-Kalima works in conjunction with the Fit for Life program, providing health education and nutrition counseling to participants. Fit for Life is a wellness program targeted towards women of all ages, with the goal of promoting healthy lifestyle adoption and supporting healthy lifestyle changes through individual counseling and group discussion and exercise sessions. In 2008, Fit for Life helped 220 women from central Bethlehem and neighboring villages to manage stress, make healthy choices, and improve their well-being through nutrition, exercise, and social support. Participants in the Fit for Life program have access to the fitness facilities at the Wellness Center.



In addition to targeting women on the individual level, Fit for Life also has a community health promotion component, which included a 20-episode radio show that aired weekly and featured discussions on health topics of interest to the community. In addition, several lectures were conducted at various local organizations on topics such as chronic disease prevention, healthy nutrition, and stress management. Fit for Life also sponsored several open health days, which included BMI measurements and diabetes and blood pressure screenings. In 2009, Fit for Life hopes to expand to include radio and TV social marketing spots, worksite wellness components, and an internship program targeted towards students who plan to work in local health services.

### *Psychotherapy Clinic*

Ninety-two men, women, children and senior citizens benefited from the services of the psychotherapy clinic in 2008. These services included individual and group counseling sessions, yoga sessions for the members of the Ajyal Elder Care Program (below), the Fit for Life Program, and Wellness Center staff, and training sessions in psychotherapeutic methods for local social workers and mental health care professionals.



From March to November, a weekly meeting was held for mothers and families together to help them to improve family relationships, to enhance the emotional and cognitive development of children, and to promote the use of relaxation techniques to deal with stress. Group sessions for men and for women were held at the Mustaqbal al Mushrag in the town of Al-Khadr, south of Bethlehem, on the enhancement of personal relationships through changing perspective (for men) and through education (for women). Individual counseling sessions also are an important part of the work of the psychotherapy clinic. In 2008, the clinic helped many people to find the emotional healing they needed.

## THE WELLNESS CENTER

With Bethlehem's only year-round swimming facilities, fitness classes every day of the week, and an exercise room with 9 treadmills, bikes, ellipticals and stair-steppers, the wellness unit at the Dar al-Kalima Health and Wellness Center promotes individual and community health through sport and wellness programs to attain three aims:



- Psychosocial support through fitness and wellness activities
- Introducing an active and healthy lifestyle to the Palestinian community
- Reduction of stress through engagement in fun and healthy fitness practices

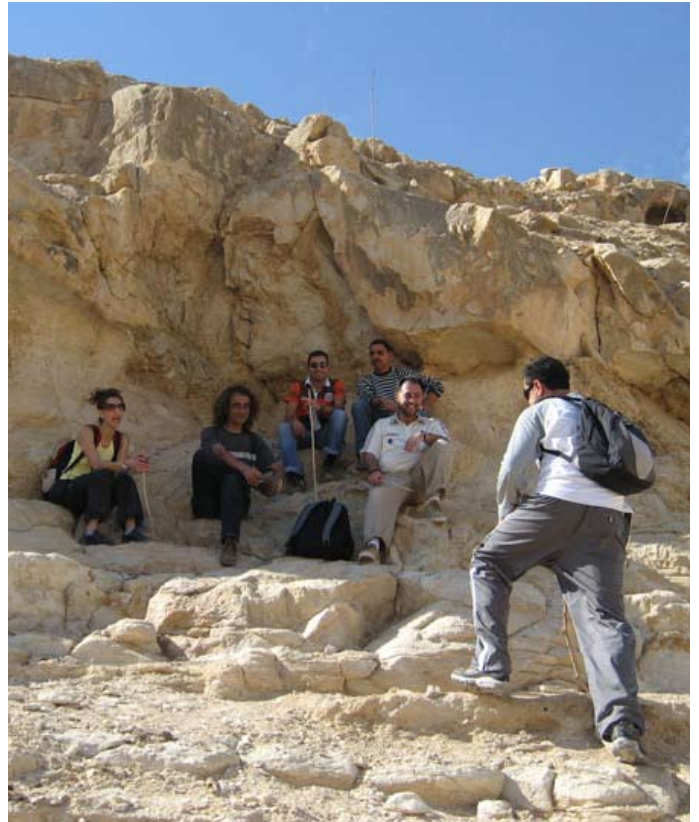
Between wellness facility memberships, day passes, Fit for Life and class memberships, massage sessions, and the children from the Bright Stars and ECP clubs, the Wellness Center served an estimated 2400 people in 2008. Among these are 15 newly certified lifeguards and 15 new Ergosoma practitioners. These kinds of training programs not only help create jobs in new sectors, but also enrich the professional lives of the people who participate in them.





# AZWAJ

The Azwaj Program for young families encourages the development of stronger and healthier family relationships by offering support and education for young parents, and nurturing social, spiritual and psychological awareness in families. The emigration rate for young people is the highest in Palestinian society, so Azwaj seeks to foster the bond and the sense of belonging between families and their country by helping families to network within their local community. Azwaj also gives families the opportunity to enjoy recreational time together and give back to the community through volunteer projects. 25 families registered for Azwaj in its pilot phase, and following a period of evaluation the program may expand to include many more.



In addition to these community field trips, Azwaj families also enjoyed days of recreation at the Dar al-Kalima Health and Wellness Center, and traveled to Jericho for a day of hiking in Wadi al-Qilt for the adventurous (above) and a day of fun at Bananaland for the kids and those who preferred a day of relaxation. The Azwaj coordinator reflects: "It was an outdoor activity which we Palestinians rarely do. The participants enjoyed it greatly, despite their suffering muscles the day after. The weather was perfect for such a trip (mid-November), and the families felt they got closer to each other through the long 4-hour walk, being in the beautiful nature, sharing food, and simply enjoying a wellness day away from the daily reality and stress of our life, and the depressing fact that we live in a prison behind the occupation wall."



Around 20 families were consistent participants in Azwaj activities in 2008. Some of the planned activities were field trips to community organizations, like the Mehwar Center for battered women in Beit Sahour (right), the Creche Orphanage in Bethlehem, and the St. Nicolas Elderly Home in Beit Jala. Getting to know these organizations and having the chance to interact with people who may be marginalized in society had a tremendous impact on the Azwaj members who went on these trips. In modern Palestinian society, with busy schedules and less reliance on traditional family and community structures than in previous generations, even simple awareness-raising activities can renew a sense of community integration. Discussion was encouraged about the issues these visits raised: domestic conflict and abuse, the challenges of raising children in a context of continuous conflict, and how society treats and cares for the elderly.





# AJYAL

Ajyal has grown from 14 members in 2006, to 160 at the end of 2007, to 276 at the end of 2008. The Ajyal Rural Outreach Program that serves elderly people in Bethlehem area villages currently has an additional 180 members, making a total of 456 Ajyal members in all.

The Ajyal program is truly holistic, with activities focusing on all aspects of health and wellness. Weekly meetings have either a medical, spiritual, recreational, or social theme. Health education seminars are given on topics ranging from nutrition and diabetes mellitus to breast and cervical cancer (as the majority of Ajyal members are women), and members able to get their vision checked, their risk of having or developing osteoporosis assessed, and their blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar tested during health screening days. Once a month, a clergy member from one of the area churches leads a discussion on spirituality and theology, and these meetings conclude with a celebration of that month's birthdays and anniversaries.



Highlights of this year for Ajyal included the completion and launch of “Kitabuna” (“Our Book”), with an evening of songs and dramatic sketches from everyday life to celebrate a year of creative effort from the 25 women who worked on producing the book (above). Income generation for members was identified as a priority for this year for Ajyal, since there is no national pension system and, due to high emigration rates among the younger generations, many elderly find themselves without the traditional means of support through their families. In light of this, Ajyal celebrated the opening of Dar al-Balad, a new restaurant and artisans in Beit Sahour, where several Ajyal members are employed as bakers of breads and pastries (below).



Yoga and meditation sessions for Ajyal members (above) are led by resident psychotherapist Beate Niedermeier, and an instructional poster showing some of the favorite exercises is currently in production for members to take with themselves and practice at home.

The most popular events are still the group meals followed by Bingo and other recreational activities, which bring over 200 members together in the Il'Ilyeh Restaurant at Dar Annadwa. The Ajyal members also gather to celebrate Christmas, Easter and Mother's Day, and a special dance party and dinner were organized for World Elderly Day on October 1. In addition to their activities in Bethlehem, Ajyal also ventured north to the Galilee twice, staying overnight in Nazareth on one occasion, and visited the town of Jefna, near Ramallah.







Interest was great among Ajyal members for personal development, so classes in English, First Aid (above), computers (below), yoga, and Bible study were offered this year. Outreach to elderly in the community expanded in the form of a 14-episode TV show, which features interviews with guest seniors and social and medical care professionals, discussion and meditation segments, and resources for the elderly.



The Ajyal Rural Outreach program (right) continues to serve elderly people and provide family support in 10 villages in the Bethlehem area. In addition to group activities at village community centers, featuring health education lectures, health screenings and group meals, the mobile nurses also offer home-based care to those in need. Basic nursing care, diabetes and blood pressure screening, massage for arthritic joints and immobile limbs, and access to hygienic items and mobility aids are all available through the Ajyal program. Over 700 visits were made to rural elderly by the mobile nurses in 2008.

### *Member Stories:*

Amneh, from Nahaleen, is 81 years old and lives with her mentally handicapped 41-year-old son and her divorced 35-year-old daughter. Amneh suffers from hypertension and kidney problems, and used to spend her whole day in bed after a stroke severely weakened her body. Majeda, one of our community nurses, visited her and taught her daughter how to change Amneh's position every two hours and offered her a supply of adult diapers. The greatest change for Amneh is the wheelchair that Ajyal helped to get for her, which allows her to go out and enjoy the warmth of the sunlight, and to be part of the community again.

Olga, a 73-year-old widow, lives by herself in Bethlehem. Before joining Ajyal, she felt lonely and depressed. Aside from some health problems (hypertension, cholesterol, and impaired vision), she still feels the emotional trauma from when her granddaughter was killed by Israeli soldiers. It took some persistence to convince Olga to join an Ajyal gathering, but gradually Olga became an active member of the group. Olga now takes an English course through Ajyal and enjoys the group yoga sessions. Through Ajyal's medical activities, she now has information on how to control her blood pressure, and she is taking better care of herself since the health screenings for blood sugar, cholesterol, osteoporosis and vision have made her more aware of these health issues. Overall, she says, the Ajyal activities give her the feeling that there is someone who cares for and loves her.



# DAR AL-KALIMA COLLEGE

Highlights of 2008 include the graduation of the first class of students in the Documentary Filmmaking and the Glass and Ceramic Arts programs, and the accreditation of two new programs in Music Performance and Palestinian Tour Guiding.

Graduates of Dar al-Kalima College this past August included 5 from the Glass and Ceramics program and 11 from the Documentary Filmmaking program. These graduates were empowered with skills, new ideas and horizons, as well as ways to think creatively. Their talents were honed while enrolled in the College and they were exposed to the new technologies and needs of the market. 15 out of the 16 graduates were able to find good job opportunities directly after graduation.



Additionally, the College granted continuous education certificates to 27 local guides, with 10 languages (Greek, Russian, German, French, Polish, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Romanian, and Swedish), where 23 of them received a local-guide license to work in the Bethlehem governorate. As such, the College introduced new local guides who can guide in 10 languages other than English, some of which are new to the market (e.g. Polish), thus responding to the needs of the Tourism sector.

An Internship Program for Graduating Students was implemented in 2008, through which 7 students were employed by the Bethlehem Media Center, Dar al-Kalima College and Dar al-Balad, thereby providing on-the-job training for recent graduates to allow them to gain the professional experience necessary to compete in today's job market.

In 2008, the College was accredited by the Ministry of Higher Education for two new programs, the Music Performance and the Palestinian Tour Guides Programs (below), whereby Dar al-Kalima provides new educational opportunities within the higher education system.



Additionally in 2008, a Quality Assurance Unit was established at the College through a joint program with Talitha Kumi Community College, funded by the World Bank. As part of the project, training workshops will be funded in 2009 that are geared towards raising the administrative capacity of the College.

Students come to Dar al-Kalima from as far north as Ramallah and as far south as Hebron, with the majority being from the Bethlehem governorate. In the first half of the year, almost all of the students in the film program were recent high school and university graduates and all were full-time students, but in the glass and ceramics program, the majority of the students were adult women students seeking new careers, with few of them studying on a part-time basis. In the academic year 2008/2009, the majority of the incoming students were under the age of 25, who applied and got accepted in the different visual arts programs. However, in the tourism programs the ratio of adult students to recent high school graduates is 37 to 14. Of the adult stu-





## Students

Between January and August 2008, Dar al-Kalima College had 76 students (35 female and 41 male):

Program (Winter and Summer 2008)	1st Year	2nd Year	Continuing Education	Total
Documentary Film Production	13	11		24
Glass and Ceramics	10	5		15
Glass and Ceramics (Continuing Education)			10	10
Palestinian Tour Guides Program (Continuing Education)			27	27
Grand Total	23	16	37	76

Beginning in September 2008, the College began 2 new diploma programs: one in the Visual Arts department (Jewelry Design and Production) and the other in Tourism Studies (Palestinian Tour Guides Program).

Program (Fall 2008)	1st Year	2nd Year	Continuing Education	Total
Documentary Film Production	12	13		25
Glass and Ceramics	5	10		15
Jewelry	2	0		2
Palestinian Tour Guides Program	24	0		24
Palestinian Tour Guides Program (Continuing Education)			27	27
Jewelry, Glass and Ceramics (Continuing Education)			7	7
Total	43	23	34	100

dents, several have a first and even a second university degree (one student has an MA in medical engineering). The majority of students are male (43 to 8) and Christian (37 to 14, the others being Muslim).

Furthermore, our students contributed to local society by working on voluntary bases as part of their required practical training. Some of them helped a visiting artist to complete a ceramic relief for a college in Bethlehem, while others taught glass for youth at schools and cultural institutions. A few students also worked as assistants in some projects at the Bethlehem Media Center, ICB, including a simultaneous transmission of a church service from Bethlehem to the television station Sat7 in Cyprus.

For more information about Dar al-Kalima College, please see our extended report at: <http://www.annadwa.org/en/media/pdf/college2.pdf>



# DAK COLLEGE CONSTRUCTION

In order to serve the expanding needs of a growing student body and faculty at Dar al-Kalima College, a new facility is being constructed on the Dar al-Kalima Campus, which sits atop Mt. Murair in southern Bethlehem. The DAK College construction project is one of the largest construction projects in Bethlehem since the first Intifada, and when it is completed, the College building will house 5 levels of classrooms, workshop spaces, computer labs, and performance spaces. These dedicated facilities will allow the College to grow into a truly first-rate institution of higher learning.



Construction on the DAK campus began with a groundbreaking ceremony in April 2007. The commencement of the construction work was delayed until January 2008, but progress has continued without any major interruptions since the excavation work and foundation pouring at the beginning of the year.

Since the new buildings are built into a hill-side, hundreds of tons of rock and dirt had to be excavated. By the end of March, the foundations were well on their way, and later that month the walls started being built. By May, the outline of the buildings became clearly visible, making it easier to imagine the finished product with students and teachers moving from place to place. The backdrop of Bethlehem and Beit Jala, with the Holy City of Jerusalem in the distance, makes the site a prime location to “see and be seen”. The levels of the buildings began to rise out of the foundations in July, requiring truckloads of steel and concrete. Later that month, trucks began showing up with piping and electrical conduits for inclusion into the buildings.

In September, the exteriors of the two “walk-out basement” levels of the College building, featuring large windows that will overlook Bethlehem and the Hebron Road, were finished with the white stone facing that gives Palestinian buildings their distinctive look. In November, the shells of the upper floors of the main classroom building were completed, and the walls on the lower floors went up, allowing the interior work to begin. By December, the skeleton for the new buildings was nearing completion, and the exterior finishing work was progressing well.

The decision was made to halt construction at the 5th floor rather than extend it through the 6th floor as the plans originally showed. This was due mainly to the fall in the US dollar in late 2008, causing the rate of exchange to push the original estimated costs beyond the budget limit, and the current economic crisis. By eliminating the top floor, construction will still be within budget. The roof will maintain enough integrity to allow the final floor to be completed at a later date should that be decided. The current 5-story structure is on schedule to open in September, for the beginning of the 2009-10 academic year.





# DAR AL-BALAD

The newest addition to the Diyar Consortium is Dar al-Balad, a beautifully restored family home in the center of the old city of Beit Sahour. Sida (the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency) contributed to the renovation costs of the building, and the French Consulate donated funds for its gracious furnishings. The building that became Dar al-Balad was delivered into the administration of Diyar in early 2008, the restaurant and artisana celebrated its opening on June 16.



The aim of the center is to bring the Diyar philosophy of “having live and having it abundantly” to the old city of Beit Sahour. Already Dar al-Balad is helping to revitalize the area, which had been abandoned and isolated in recent years. Since the opening of Dar al-Balad, other shops and restaurants have re-opened in the neighborhood, giving new life to the old city. In addition to this revitalization of the town, Dar al-Balad has also given the economy of Beit Sahour a boost, in creating 15 new full-time and 80 part-time jobs.

Dar al-Balad promotes traditional Palestinian food and crafts through its restaurant and artisana. The concept of the restaurant is to create an experience where visitors can enjoy special Oriental (that is, Middle Eastern) food in a traditional Oriental environment. In addition to the usual salads served at most restaurants, like hummus and babaganoush, Dar al-Balad is bringing back several salads that locals remember from their mothers’ tables, like the yogurt and couscous salad. Even the bread is baked in-house using traditional methods.

The artisana is a place where artists gather to practice their crafts and learn from one another. They can also display and sell their work in the Dar al-Balad gift shop. To encourage local people to visit the center, a number

## *A Vision for Dar al-Balad*

Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb, the President of the Diyar Consortium, explains how Diyar developed the vision for Dar al-Balad:

“We chose the name ‘Dar Al-Balad’ for our fourth institution because the word Dar is our trademark that unites all the institutions of the Diyar Consortium. Dar al-Balad has a special meaning in Beit Sahour, because it is the term used by people who have moved out of the Old City into the newer parts of town, to refer to their old homes in the city center.

“But Diyar doesn’t believe in weeping over the ruins of the past, or going back to the old days; instead, our mission is to create life in the cities that are lifeless, to transform the old, dark alleys into bright spaces for tomorrow, and to offer our people a new vision for the old houses. By offering modern services in the ancient city center, we are creating a new approach to preserving and cherishing our heritage.”



of workshops were organized in glass art, drawing, and silver jewelry making. The artisana also receives commissions for artwork, recently refurbishing a set of old lamps and creating a glass façade for a local building.



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## THE DIYAR CONSORTIUM 2008 ANNUAL REPORT

