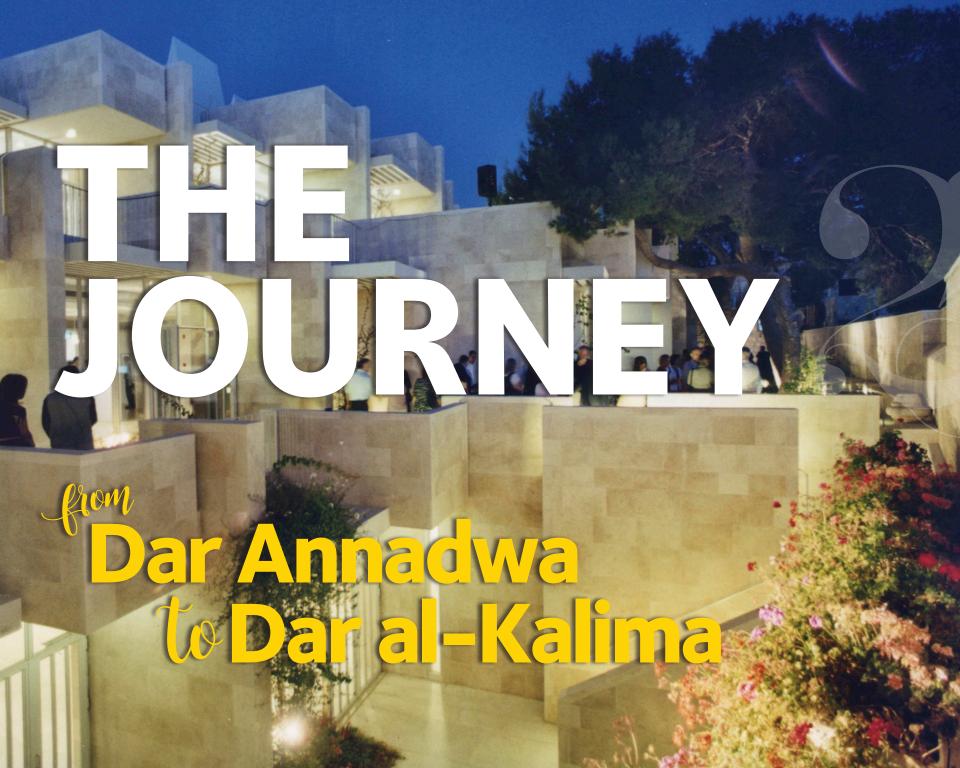


Dar al-Kalima University





A Model of **Social Entrepreneurship**

Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb

The story of Dar al-Kalima, if it had happened anywhere in the world, would easily be labelled a story of success. For such a story to emerge from Palestine despite seven wars that took place over that period of time (1995–2020) is nothing less than a miracle. Who would ever have thought that a vision as small as a mustard seed would grow to become a magnificent tree, deeply rooted in Palestinian soil, engaging so many people, and with programs that have branches spread throughout the Middle East, Germany, Europe, and North America? If anyone would have told me in 1995 that twenty-five years on, we would be a university with a such a fabulous campus, accomplished staff, unique programs, and such a wide outreach, I would have laughed in disbelief. This article looks back in time at the major milestones of this twenty-five-year journey to chart the path that led us to where we are today. I will also try to analyze this journey in the hope of identifying the secret of its success.





THE BEGINNING

I still remember that day in May 1987 when I returned to my home town of Bethlehem from Germany, after handing in my doctoral dissertation at the University of Marburg. I was not yet 24 years of age, full of theological concepts and ideas of things I wanted to change in my home church and community. Just six months later, the first Intifada broke out and clashes were taking place around our church and parsonage. I have to admit, I was not prepared for such a challenge. To experience the brutality of the Israeli occupation versus the creative resistance of our people changed me forever. Before opening my mouth to preach, I had to listen to the cries and needs of our community. This process took several years and it became clear to me that the church cannot remain within its four walls, but must reach out to society.



In 1992 this conviction was translated into the first program with the opening the Abu Jubran Guesthouse and the launch of the Authentic Tourism program. At that time people thought we were crazy. Who would think of opening a questhouse when the whole country was in uproar, when tourists were avoiding Palestine, and in a location where daily clashes were taking place? Yet our idea was to attract international factfinding missions and justice-oriented groups to come and see things for themselves. This was a niche market that I believed was appropriate for the church to handle: the church as an instrument for advocacy. By 1993 and following the signing of the Oslo Accord, Palestine was again in the spotlight. The talks gave the world the impression that peace was on the horizon. This new atmosphere enabled us to implement several youth exchange programs, mainly with Germany. Young Palestinians and Germans cleaned out the church basement and revealed four rooms that had been abandoned over the years and used for dumping garbage. Thanks to a generous grant from the German Youth Stamp Foundation (Stiftung Deutsche Jugendmarke) of 220,000 German marks we were able to renovate these rooms in a new way by blending the old stone walls with modern designs. In my inaugural address, I referred to this:



" This land and its people under occupation for the past three decades have suffered from a lack of infrastructure and services. Despite the obstacles, today we see this onceruined building transformed like a bride dressed in her finest embroidery. The new life that has come into this building is symbolic of the new life among our people and in our Palestinian land. The Palestinian minds that have planned, the hands that have designed, and the arms that have constructed this center are the same minds, hands and arms that will be able to rebuild our country. "

The new center was inaugurated on September 29th, 1995, and became a model for renovating the old city and rehabilitating Palestinian cultural heritage. The opening of the center signaled a new era. In attendance were Im Jihad, Mrs. El Wazir, the Palestinian Minister for Social Affairs, a Palestinian returnee, and Mr. Kobler, head of the newly opened German Representative Office in Jericho. The first newsletter published in November 1995 declared the center's mission thus:

"New life and new hope, a vision for the future, can be seen through Palestine's new window "Dar an-Nadwa al-Duwalia." We have named our Center "Dar an-Nadwa al-Duwalia", which in Arabic means "the place where people meet for dialogue." We purposefully used "Duwalia"



(international)
because we believe
in the necessity of
establishing links
between Palestine
and the rest of the
world. As Bethlehem
was heaven's window
to earth, we want
this center to be
Palestine's window to
the world."

This first newsletter outlined our first program for Authentic Tourism:

"Each year, thousands of tour groups visit the Holy Land. Yet, only a few experience something of the real life of the people who live here...We want our guests to become acquainted with the beliefs and culture of the people of the Holy Land, thus we have developed and provided an alternative tour program...This is your invitation to come to Bethlehem and experience the life and ministry in a deep and profound way. We will organize and plan programs according to your interests and within your time frame. Our offerings include: lectures, Arabic meals, alternative tours, guest house accommodation, dialogue, and exchange."



This Authentic Tourism program launched back in 1995 is still running. Our slogan throughout the years has been "Hospitality is our Spirituality" and the meals served by Chef Bassem have been testimony to this. The impact of the Authentic Tourism program on our community cannot be overestimated. Over twenty-five years, the center has hosted thousands of church groups, political delegations, intellectuals, and scholars, presenting them with a Palestinian face and narrative. Until 1995 the whole Palestinian tourism sector was led by an Israeli military general. The construction of hotels in the West Bank was close to impossible. Israel wanted full control of the narrative told to tour groups. Palestinians were not allowed to become tour guides. In a study conducted in 1996, we found that of 4,000 certified guides, only 60 were Palestinian and the rest were Jewish Israelis. Even worse, all sixty Palestinians had gained their license during the period of Jordanian control and were close to retirement.



With the Palestinian Authority taking over the tourism sector in 1995, we felt that there was an opportunity for change. We started a training program for Palestinian guides, coordinated by Andreas Kuntz. Today there are over five hundred licensed tourist guides, and over half of them are our graduates. That same year we published a first of its kind, coffee-table book: *Bethlehem 2000* with a foreword by President Yasser Arafat.



The impact of our work was apparent by 1997 when we received the TODO!96 Award for Socially Responsible Tourism. Out of twenty-three applying institutions from seventeen countries and five continents, Dar an-Nadwa was chosen to receive this award at the International Tourism Fair in Berlin in March 1997. It was the first time that an institution from the Middle East had received such an award. The criteria for the TODO! contest required that the interests of local people be taken into consideration in the planning and implementation of tourism projects; that local people be involved at all levels; that the local culture is upheld and enhanced; and social and cultural damage minimized.

The German Parliamentarian who gave the laudatio stated: "The International Center showed in which way one can foster dialogue, understanding and social justice in a politically very sensitive area." The extent of our success can be seen in the number of Palestinian organizations and tour operators who have copied our philosophy and started alternative tourism groups, rapprochement centers, and Palestinian tour programs. Over the years, we educated the first female Palestinian guides, trained Palestinian Bedouins to guide tours through the desert, developed hiking routes, published tourist guidebooks, and certified people from around the world to lead tours in Palestine. It is no exaggeration to say that Dar an-Nadwa has made a lasting imprint on the Palestinian tourism industry.

We started Dar an-Nadwa with five staff responsible for five departments: Rana Khoury at the Department of Women's Studies; Viola Raheb at the Department of International Relations and Adult Education; Rifat Kassis at the Department for Faith and Development; Daoud Nassar at the Department for Alternative Tourism; and Jihan Hawwash at the Department for German-Palestinian Exchange, in addition to Nader Nassar as an accountant. Women have been at the heart of our work. Of the first five staff, three were women, two of them with a master's degree and the other a graduate. All three had been awarded their degrees from European and American Universities and were better educated than their male counterparts. It became an important feature to have women in leadership posts. From our work, there emerged the first female superintendent, the first female tour quide, the first female soccer team, the first female dean of a university college, and the first female minister of tourism. Gender issues have been a consistent thread visible from the second international conference held in 1997 on "Women and Political Culture in Palestine and Germany: Experiences, Strategies and Perspectives", to the 2019 international conference on "Middle Eastern Women: The Intersection of Law, Religion and Culture".





ARA TOOL FOR SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

In 1997 we added a new topic that has grown in importance: the arts. We entered a partnership with the Edward Said National Music Conservatory and opened on our premises the first music school in southern Palestine. One year later, the Reintegration Program turned the center into a hub for all young Palestinians who had graduated from international universities and returned to their homeland in the expectation of peace. Here, they were able to meet colleagues with similar experiences abroad and similar struggles back home to discuss their experiences, but also to dance *dabke* together. The center became the home for a choir made of locals and international volunteers. In 1998 we added an art program when a new Palestinian graduate, Faten Nastas, and a German volunteer, the late Jan Peter





Hempel, started training for young people in painting, ceramics, and glass fusing. A year later we opened The Cave, a unique gift shop selling handmade Palestinian art crafts. We also launched the Vision Art Network as a platform for young and rising Palestinian artists. The first art gallery in Bethlehem was inaugurated that same year and started to exhibit the works of Palestinian and international artists. Over twenty-five years, hundreds of exhibitions have been hosted here and in 2020 we will inaugurate a brand new professional gallery to house the valuable collection we have acquired over the years.

These years were full of hope and excitement. Palestinians were naïve enough to believe that by 1999 they would have their own state. Bethlehem was preparing for the millennium celebrations with mega infrastructure projects. The Palestinian Authority and the UNESCO set up an Emergency Action Plan for the Bethlehem area with some hundred worthwhile projects. One of these was the Dar al-Kalima College.







The Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland (MFA) joined the Bethlehem 2000 Program by financing the construction of an extension to Dar an-Nadwa. We envisioned two campuses: a performing Center for Music and Art, located in the downtown area of Bethlehem, and a School for Art and Intercultural Studies, located outside the old city on the Mureir mountain. This mountain was purchased in 1878 by a German missionary and until WWI was under the control of the church in Bethlehem. It was then confiscated as German property by the British and became state land. With a lot of research, lobbying with the Palestinian Authority, and a very convincing concept, we succeeded in obtaining a section of the mountain for the sole use of the Dar al-Kalima Academy. In January 1998 President Arafat and myself, in the presence of many dignitaries, broke the ground for this project. In November 1998, we signed an agreement with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland to finance the construction of the ad-Dar Cultural and Conference Center at al-Madbassa Square. Furthermore, the Church of Sweden mission pledged to finance the renovation of art workshops and an art gallery on the same site.

With such expansion, the mission statement had to be revised to read:

"The Center is not only concerned with resurrecting buildings, but the Palestinian community as a whole." A commitment to engage the local community to assume a proactive role in shaping their future is at the heart of the Center's work. Through empowering the local community, training future leaders, and developing human resources, the Center actively promotes the building of a civil society in Palestine. As a cultural center, the International Center is committed to strengthening the Palestinian identity, cultivating artistic talent, and facilitating intercultural encounters. Thirty years of Israeli occupation, the daily struggle for one's bread, and the existence of a rigid educational system focused on memorization have all suppressed cultural creativity among Palestinians. The Arts and Crafts program aims to address this problem by reviving the local community's sense of beauty and strengthening Palestinian identity by cultivating local artistic talents. The Arts and Crafts program recognize that a culture is made up of much more than its language and infrastructure. Rather, much of what makes up a culture cannot be seen, it is alive in the spirit of the people and in their outlook on life. The rebirth of Palestinian society thus involves both a spiritual and a "practical" component – it involves changing both the world in which Palestinians live as well as the perspective from which they look at that world. Neither is complete without the other -- a reborn Palestinian society with brand new streets, improved living conditions, and hordes of investment, but without a rebirth of the spirit, a rebirth of dignity arising from pride in one's past and enthusiasm for the future, is not a resurrected Palestinian society at all. Art, by representing different ways of looking at the world, both reflects and influences the spirit of a society. Art may not be the only vehicle for the rebirth of the spirit, but it certainly has the potential to be an important and unique one. In addition to supporting creativity among the Palestinians, the various workshops of the arts and crafts program aim to provide job opportunities for some of the locals in a society that struggles with high unemployment, to preserve Palestinian tradition that was suppressed under the Israeli occupation, and to improve the quality and variety of art in Palestine."

To cultivate art, we had to start with the Palestinian children had been children. exposed to violence and fear during many years of Israeli occupation and the Palestinian Intifada. They were also stifled by a school system that relies on memorization and lacks innovation. Children had few options for after-school activities and generally spent their time either watching TV or playing in the streets. For this reason, the center organized the first summer school with a focus on art in 1998 to develop the artistic, creative, aesthetic, and physical potential of the children. It introduced children to self-



based learning, which enables them to discover their creative strengths, talents, and interests; allows children to express their thoughts and feelings in various ways; promotes self-confidence by acknowledging a child's work; and contributes to the individual development of each child. This was an earlier version of the Diyar Academy for Children and Youth.

By 2000, Dar an-Nadwa was one of the most important addresses in Palestine and was visited by dignitaries from all over the world, including the German President Johannes Rau, the Finnish President Ahtisaari, Mrs. Suha Arafat, Mrs. Carter, the Mayor of Cologne, and Cardinal Martini of Milan, to name a few.

















The Second Intifada

Shortly after the visit of Pope John Paul II to Bethlehem, and after the collapse of the Camp David Summit and Sharon's provocative visit to al-Agsa Mosque, the second Intifada erupted. This second Intifada was marked by violence. The invasion of Bethlehem and of many other Palestinian cities, the total collapse of the tourism industry, an unemployment rate of over 75%, the traumatization of children and adults, and above all, the lack of a light at the end of the tunnel of the vicious circle of violence, all presented big challenges to our lives and work. On April 2, 2002, the Israeli invasion of Bethlehem caused much destruction to our compound and to the International Center of Bethlehem (ICB) building,

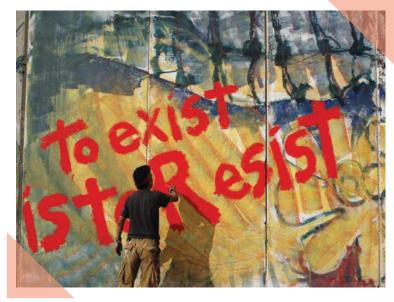


furniture, and equipment. As a statement to the community, we hung a huge black banner on the destroyed entrance of Dar an-Nadwa with a statement written in bold, white letters stating: "Destruction May Be...Continuity Shall Be".

The world-renowned Palestinian artist from New York, Samia Halaby, who was present in Bethlehem during this second Intifada, described the situation:

"In June of 2003 in BeitLahem (Bethlehem), I presented a short course on creativity. Nine artists of various ages participated. BeitLahem was then under Israeli siege and violent military attacks on civilians occurred intermittently. Publicized Israeli withdrawal in July of 2003 was nothing but media misinformation. The siege was tightened even more bringing to near standstill life in BeitLahem. Israelis were also stealing the land all around the town and building an electrified wall to make the siege permanent. The whole is of horrific proportions. You see the electrified wall between us and the settlement in the distance. This settlement was built on the stolen land of Mount Abu Ghuneim (Har Homa). Notice the imperialist nature of its fortified architecture. Thus it was that my teaching concerning creativity in art was being conducted among townspeople suffering the severe effects of a merciless siege. Palestinians are resisting this Israeli terrorism by trying to continue conducting life as fully as possible. The intention of my teaching was to encourage self-reliance in artistic decision making, to encourage intuitiveness, and to encourage innovation in the selection of art materials. The project was posted in advance on the web. The advance response to my posting was very moving and indicative of the devastation of the siege. I am proud of their heroic Soumoud (Steadfastness) and both honored by and grateful for their beautiful hospitality."





Creative resilience and resistance became an important feature of our approach. A visible expression of this was a project entitled "Defacing the Wall" when we invited three Mexican muralists to visit Palestine. Over three weeks in autumn 2004, Alberto Aragon Reyes, Gustavo Chavez Pavon, and Erasto Molina Urbina responded to our invitation to work in collaboration with local artists, art students, and internationals from Denmark, Sweden, Germany, US, England, Holland, Spain, and New Zealand to paint murals on the ugly wall surrounding the Palestinian cities in the West Bank. The paintings were very expressive and reflect the suffering, the pain, and the wounds that afflict oppressed people worldwide. For the record, it should be noted that we were the first to draw murals on the separation wall ten years before Banksy.



Responding to the **Second Intifada**

The second Intifada, the separation wall, and increased Israeli state aggression pushed us to respond with the launch of two new programs. In 2003 we launched the Bethlehem Media Center to be the

Voice of the Voiceless. Tamara Kharoub, a young Palestinian and graduate from the US, was selected as the director. During the second Intifada it was obvious that the world media had failed miserably to tell the story of Palestine in a way that allowed better understanding of the situation. Thus, the ICB took on the responsibility to communicate the everyday life of Palestinians to people around the world. A good deal of our work became dedicated to advocacy through a variety of means that included newsletters, many of which were distributed during the Israeli incursion into Bethlehem; articles and lectures published both locally and internationally; and numerous international lecture tours by our staff. Although this work required a great deal of strength and time, it was extremely rewarding. The positive responses we received from around the globe and the "why didn't we



know about this" message that we heard repeatedly made it clear that such work is not only vital, but fundamental to the work of the ICB. We received many responses by email, telephone, fax, and in person from different parts of the world, expressing concern for the people living through this new reoccupation. These messages came from countries including Argentina, Australia, Botswana, Canada, Egypt, Fiji, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, India, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Lebanon, Nigeria, Northern Ireland, Norway, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, The Netherlands, Uganda, UK, and the US.

Once the Intifada had ended, the Media Center saw an important opening to address the needs of the Palestinian people by creating a forum for debate. In 2004 a production unit (Buthour) of the Bethlehem Media Center produced a series of televised debates, collectively called *Shu Ra'yak*? (What is your opinion?). The debates dealt with issues crucial to the Palestinian people such as education, health, elections, unemployment, and the separation wall. As an example, on December 11th, 2004, representatives from various political factions discussed issues important in the upcoming election. The groups represented included Fateh, the People's Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the People's Party, and Hamas. The debates were conducted in the Ad-Dar Hall at the ICB, filmed on three cameras with high-quality audio and visual equipment, and broadcast on the Ma'an network via ten local Palestinian TV stations to an audience of around two million people throughout Palestine. Some of the shows have been so popular that they have been rebroadcast three times on the same stations. The Media Center produced several shows, sitcoms, documentaries, and reports on Palestinian Christian heritage. These were aired on the Sat7 satellite channel, reaching viewers in the Middle East, North Africa, Europe, Asia, and Australia. Over a period of ten years, thousands of minutes of polished television and film were produced in 10 different genres and broadcast on satellite channels reaching millions of viewers in Arabic, English, and Spanish.

New **Facilities**

The suffering, trauma, and stress of the second Intifada left its toll on children and adults alike. On September 5th, 2003,

we inaugurated the Dar Al-Kalima Health and Wellness Center with local and international guests that included our friends Rich Bimler, Gregg Smith, and Herb Schmidt from Wheat Ridge Ministries in the US. Adopting a holistic approach to health and development that aims to broaden the concept of wellness in Palestinian society, the Dar al-Kalima Health and Wellness Center runs programs in prevention, education, and healthy living. Dr. Nuha Khoury, another returnee with a PhD from the US, was chosen to head this center. The medical facilities in the Health and Wellness Center comprised several clinics



and a multipurpose room for health awareness meetings, workshops, and training sessions. In addition, the Health and Wellness Center was equipped with a swimming pool, the first indoor pool in southern Palestine. In 2006 three new clinics



were opened in the health unit (endocrinology, nutrition and psychotherapy), a public health program was launched, and the AJYAL ("generations") program for community care for the elderly was established. The Center's concept of health and wellness is groundbreaking in its innovative programs that perceive and deal with health and wellness in a very different way and motivate people, both as individuals and as a community, to proactively become responsible for their physical and mental health. Ghada Araj and Raeda Mansour were the two female managers instrumental in leading these programs and they continue to be on our staff.

Another important component at this stage was a leadership training program started in 2004 by Anette Klasing. Every week, the Youth Leadership Team gathered for meetings and discussions on topics to help young Palestinians to understand the sociopolitical contexts in which they live, and to grow together in support and fellowship. The Leadership Team aimed to provide a holistic and integrated system of human resource development for the creation of committed, pro-active and creative Palestinian leaders.

The highlight of 2003 was undoubtedly the inauguration of the Ad-Dar Cultural and Conference Center on September 1st, attended by over 500 Palestinians and members of the international community. The celebration was under the patronage of H.E. Ms. Paula Lehtomaki, the Finnish Minister of Foreign Trade and Development, and H.E. Dr. Nabeel Kassis, Palestinian Minister of Planning. I addressed the guests thus: "At a time when a wall of separation and apartheid is being built around Bethlehem, we are here investing in people who dare to cross boundaries. At times of bombing and shelling, we set new tunes, play new songs of freedom, justice, reconciliation and compassion...What we are celebrating today is more than a



building. We are investing in a community. We are creating a cultural movement."

Ad-Dar became the cultural hub of Bethlehem and the magnet for cultural productions, hosting hundreds of cultural events every year. These events were managed by Carol Michel. When ad-Dar celebrated its tenth anniversary in 2013, more than 100,000 people had been reached through the different programs, putting Dar an-Nadwa at the heart of the cultural pulse of Palestine.

With such a state-of-the-art facility, Bethlehem was to become a destination for further cultural tourism and international conferences. To that end, in 2002 we gathered twenty scholars to plan a series of international conferences focusing on

"Land, Peoples, and Identities". Over a ten-year period, we wanted to take an interdisciplinary approach by looking at an issue that is important not only in Palestine, but in many other contexts where native people are subjugated to a settler colonial project. The proceedings of these conferences were to be published and made accessible to a wider audience. To this end, a small publishing house was established in 2011 with over forty publications in Arabic and English published to date. All the English titles are made available on





Amazon and Kindle platforms. Through these conferences and publications, I feel that we have been able to have an impact on the theological landscape, especially in the US, Scandinavia, and the global South. Palestinian contextual theology has become a topic for master's degrees and doctoral dissertations, and an important theme at global conferences, with a growing number of publications.



ns with Palestinian Roots

Ветнгенем A WORLD HERITAGE



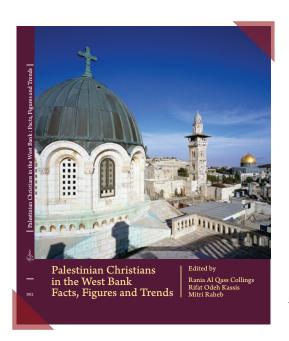
Within the first ten years (1995-2004), over ten million dollars were invested in infrastructure and the number of staff grew fivefold from five to twenty-four people, in addition to three staff who were sent broad to study for master's degrees.

Dar al-Kalima College Diyar Consortium

A major milestone in our journey was the newly opened and accredited Dar Al-Kalima College in 2006. Beginning with official accreditation by the Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education in February, and continuing with the commencement of the teaching term in September, 2006 was a banner year that marked the transformation of the informal Vocational and Art Training programs at the ICB into formal academic programs carried out by the DAK College under the leadership of Dr. Nuha Khoury. Hanna Musleh and Saed Andony were instrumental in conceptualizing the film program. The DAK College programs of study fall into four fields (Arts, Multimedia, Communications, and Tourism Studies), and the College offered two-year associate degrees in Glass and Ceramics, and Contemporary Fine Art, through the Arts department, and Documentary Filmmaking through the Multimedia department.

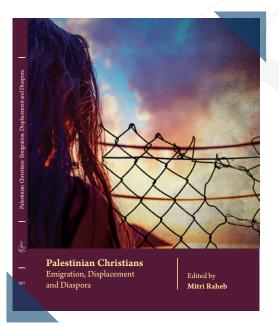
The DIYAR Consortium is a Lutheran-based, ecumenically oriented group of institutions that includes the International Center of Bethlehem (ICB), the Dar al-Kalima Health and Wellness Center, and the newest addition, the Dar al-Kalima College. DIYAR (the plural of the Arabic word dar, meaning "house") was created to promote a process of restructuring that would keep pace with the continued growth and development of the Lutheran-based ministries in Bethlehem. The new enlarged board adopted a new vision statement: "That we might have life and have it abundantly". It was emphasized that programs were to serve the entire Palestinian community, regardless of gender or religion, and would focus on empowering those who traditionally have a weaker status in society: women, children, youth, and the elderly. In 2007, the Price water house Coopers international auditing firm conducted a study of the financial practices of several church-related organizations (CROs) in Palestine. They gave the Diyar Consortium their highest rating, reporting that Diyar's "practices and policies comply with IFRS requirements". Our chief financial officer was a Palestinian woman, Randa Canavati, assisted by Jane Abu Mohor. Mrs. Abu Mohor became in 2021 the vice president for finance and administration succeeding Salim Lama who served as the vice president for finance (2010–2016).

نخن ببني وطناً... نعلي دياداً...
حجراً حجراً... وبشراً بشراً ب... وداراً تلو الدار
That We might have $\begin{subarray}{c} \end{subarray} The and have it \begin{subarray}{c} \end{subarray} bundantly$



New Initiatives

"Palestinian The first initiative, new Christians: Strengthening Identity... Activating Potential", was launched in 2007 with the aim of developing a comprehensive joint strategy and action plan that would allow Christianity not only to survive but to thrive in Palestine. Our first objective was to investigate and map Palestinian Christian communities and organizations, then gather information from Palestinian Christians on their resources, needs, hopes, and concerns. Five volumes have been already published mapping the Palestinian Christian community in the West Bank, Israel and the Diaspora, and researching issues like Christian emigration and Palestinian Christian art.



The second initiative, launched in 2008, came to be called "Religion and State". We felt that a major challenge facing all Arab countries was the unhealthy relationship between religion and the state. We launched this program together with the Olof Palme International Center, especially as the Church of Sweden and the Government of Sweden had just finished reworking a new formula for their own religion–state relations. Over the last twelve years, we have looked at several other models such as the German, French, American, and Indonesian models. We have researched issues like constitutions, inclusive society, gender justice, etc. with focus on five key countries: Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Palestine.



A highlight of 2008 was the graduation of the first class of sixteen students from 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 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 new technologies and market demands. Fifteen of the 16 graduates found good job opportunities directly after graduation. Additionally, the College granted continuous education certificates to 27 local guides using 10 languages (Greek, Russian, German, French, Polish, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Romanian, and Swedish); 23 of them received a local guide license to work in the Bethlehem governorate.

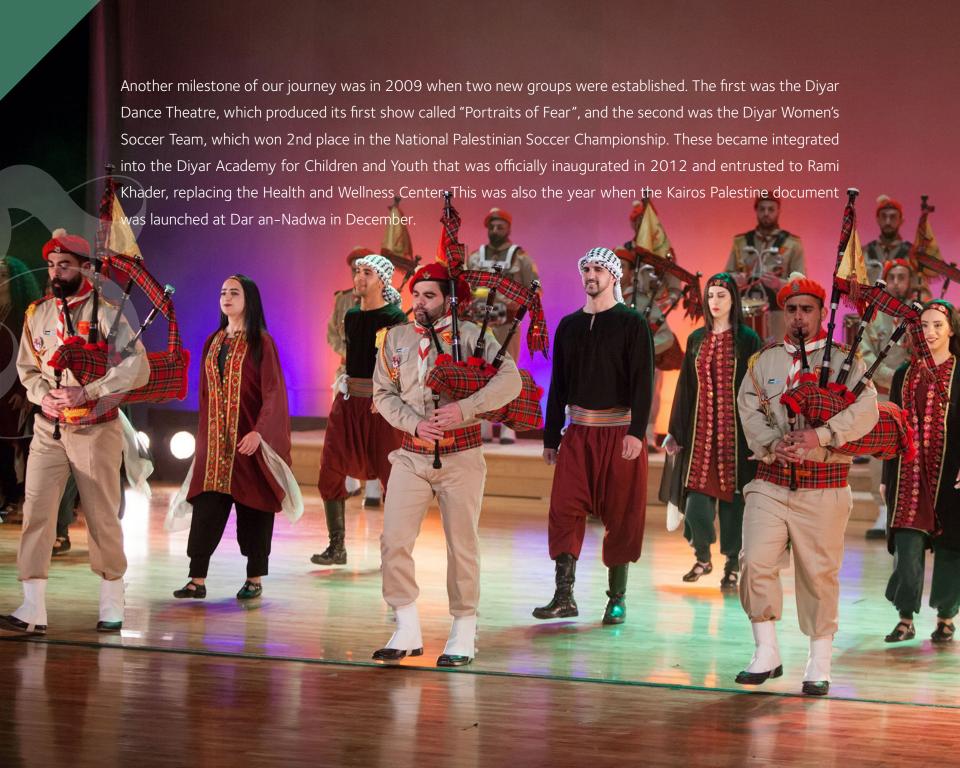


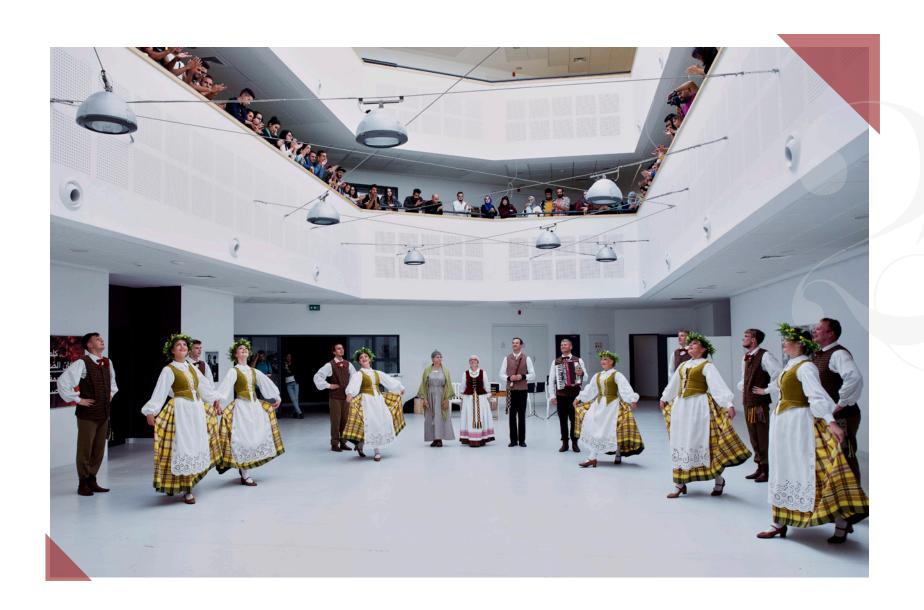
To serve the expanding needs of a growing student body and faculty at Dar al-Kalima College, a new facility had to be constructed on the Dar al-Kalima campus on Mount Murair in southern Bethlehem. Construction of the College of Visual and Performing Art began with a groundbreaking ceremony in April 2007, although commencement of the construction was delayed until January 2008.



In 2008 the municipality of Beit Sahour approached us to assist them in revitalizing the old city area in a manner similar to that we had undertaken in Bethlehem. Dar al-Balad became the name of 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 aim of the new center was to bring the Diyar philosophy of "having life and having it abundantly" to the old city of Beit Sahour, thereby revitalizing an area that had stood abandoned and isolated for years. Once our mission was accomplished, we returned the facility to the municipality to rent it to local businesses.

Another house, known as Dar as-Shamal, was started in the town of Taybeh with the aim of transferring awareness about elderly care to the north of the West Bank. This program ran for several years until the partner organization had developed the skills to conduct the work by themselves.





There was another important milestone in the history of Diyar in 2011. On November 30, 2010, Diyar's brand new Dar al-Kalima College building was inaugurated in the presence of many friends, donors, members of our local board, and international

friendship associations. The 7.5 million dollar building is a new landmark in Bethlehem and makes the Dar al-Kalima compound truly "A City on the Hill". New outdoor playgrounds and an amphitheater were also completed, thus making space available for the development of sports activities. The DAK College, now in a new state-of-the-art building, continued in 2011 to expand its relations with artists, art academies, and universities in the US and Europe.

Our work was receiving widespread coverage and recognition that gave our work visibility like never before. In 2011 I received the German Media Award with all its glamour; a 45-minute TV program



called "Luther Mann in Bethlehem" was aired on the German television station, Deutsche Welle, with over 500,000.00 viewers; I was interviewed on the CBS 60 Minutes program about Christians of the Holy Land; our projects were covered on CNN Arabic online, in addition to articles in many regional newspapers.





















An invitation to speak at the German and Danish parliaments was another indication of this development. Diyar for Women's Sport won the national championship in women's soccer; Honey Thaljieh, our colleague and former captain of the Diyar Women's Soccer Team, was accepted as the first Palestinian and Arab woman in the FIFA Master Studies in Sports Management and Policy Making. After graduation, Honey accepted a position at the FIFA headquarters in Switzerland where she is responsible for International Women Sports Initiatives. On the international level, the Diyar Women's Soccer Team participated in training and competed in friendly games with the German teams SV Werder Bremen and FFC Turbine Potsdam. Through the Palestinian National Team for Women's Soccer, the Team partook in the qualifications for the London Olympics of 2012 in Jordan and played friendly games against the Italian and Japanese national teams.













Another important development in 2011 was the official launch of the Civic Engagement Program which carried out two major projects entitled "Youth Needs Assessment/ Civic Cultural Network" and "The Palestinian Youth Leadership Training" that focused on providing leadership training to 200 young people aged 18 to 30 years of age. These projects, headed by Rana Khoury, our VP for Community Development, were groundbreaking in that they included innovative leadership training workshops that use culture as a training tool. The training was based on five components that revolved around enhanced awareness of Civic Engagement Program issues and current realities; equipping and empowering trainees with skills as part of the self-development and empowerment process; presenting and familiarizing them with different cultural tools important for selfexpression; exposing them to and increasing their understanding of the workings of media; and finally, getting young people into action with the ability to implement the newly acquired concepts in their everyday lives. By 2018 over 1000 young people, spread across multiple areas and localities from the

far north to the deep south of Palestine, had been trained. The graduation of such a number of young civic leaders is a momentous achievement. These young people carry with them the philosophy, values, and ideals of Diyar to implant seeds of hope, creativity, and innovation with other young people and society at large.



Dar al-Kalima University College of Arts & Culture

In 2013 Dar al-Kalima was reaccredited by the Palestinian Ministry of Higher Education to become a University College that could grant BA degrees. The first BA programs to be offered in 2014 were Film Production and Contemporary Fine Art. Every year DAK University College adds new accredited programs. Two new buildings were inaugurated on the DAK compound in 2014: the Cultural Heritage and Community Development Building and the Indoor Sports Hall, the second biggest in the West Bank. These two new facilities have enabled Dar al-Kalima to consolidate Tourism Studies, culinary art, and the Sports Management program. In 2017 a fifth building was added on the campus to house Dar al-Kalima Library and Multimedia Resource Center. The 1.6-million-dollar building is the first and only library in Palestine dedicated to arts and culture. In a commitment to the environment, 113 KW solar energy units were donated by our German friendship association and thanks to the hard work of Christiane Wacker-Singer. This makes DAK the first campus in Palestine to rely entirely on solar energy for lighting, heating and air conditioning: a green building and a zero energy facility.





Today Dar al-Kalima University offers over twenty academic and vocational degrees with the possibility of forty specializations. In addition, Dar al-Kalima was selected in 2015 by DVV International (Deutscher Volkshochschul Verband) as the main hub in the West Bank for adult education and lifelong learning. In 2019 Dar al-Kalima introduced the first two dual learning programs in line with the German dual learning model where students learn both at the University and in the workplace, thus ensuring a close connection to the job market and increasing student employability.











The growth of Dar al-Kalima University College was crowned in 2019 by the opening of a training center in Gaza. The Gaza Strip has been subjected to an inhumane closure for more than 14 years and young people there face deteriorating socio-economic conditions. They are deprived of opportunities to receive professional training and experience. DAK seeks to empower the next generation of creative leaders in Gaza by enhancing the skills of young Gazan artists through specialized training courses to improve the quality of their art; improve the livelihood of artists by building local and international networks that create opportunities to exhibit and market their products; and recognizing exceptional local artists through awards and prizes. Initially, DAK held focus groups to ascertain artists' needs and reached out to local arts and cultural centers to engage them as key partners. We identified local professional trainers and found a temporary location to offer training courses at the French Cultural Institute in Gaza. We held training workshops in photography, artistic design, video art, and civic engagement. In March 2020 the first 58 students of both genders obtained their certificate. In June 2020, DAK rented an old abandoned villa in Gaza city which is being currently renovated and will become the DAK official training center in the Gaza Strip. The resemblance to our beginnings at Dar an-Nadwa cannot be overlooked. Whether Gaza will be as the same success story as DAK in the West Bank can only be known in the future.















A Silver Anniversary

The year 2020 marks our 25th anniversary. It was on September 28, 1995, that we inaugurated Dar an-Nadwa in the newly renovated crypt of the Christmas Lutheran Church as a place for international encounter. Today, as we look back, we cannot fail to acknowledge the growth experienced by this ministry over the years. The number of staff has grown from five in 1995 to over 100 employees in 2020. The number of direct beneficiaries has expanded from less than 1000 people in 1995 to over 60,000 per year. In twenty-five years, twenty-three international conferences have been conducted, in addition to hundreds of local conferences and thousands of workshops. Over forty books have been published in English and Arabic with thousands of copies sold. Geographically speaking, Diyar started its work in Bethlehem itself but developed to become a national player active on regional and international levels. The overall operational budget has also grown from the initial \$88,095 in 1995 to \$3.5 million in 2020. In 25 years, projects totaling more than \$60 million have been implemented (\$27 million for construction and \$33 million in programs). In addition, within twenty-five years, 26,000 square meters of new infrastructure have been constructed. In all the construction projects, Dar al-Kalima has emphasized aesthetics, cultural heritage, and eco-friendly buildings. Through Dar al-Kalima College, hundreds of young Palestinians have been educated; through the civic engagement program over 1000 young potential future leaders have been trained; through Diyar Academy the talents of thousands of children and youth have been discovered and honed; through the Health and Wellness Center over 35,000 people have been served; and cultural events have enriched the lives of over 150,000 people.



The impact of our work can be traced through the heritage of Karimeh Abboud. In 2010 almost nobody knew anything about Karimeh. We heard about her by chance and embarked on researching her story to discover that she was a female entrepreneur and the first female photographer in the Arab world. Her story was documented in a book and her life featured in



three films. To honor her legacy, a photography award was launched in her name alongside an art award for painting in honor of the late Ismail Shammout. The fact that Google chose to celebrate Karimeh's birthday in 2018 speaks for itself. Karimeh's story was recently the focus of a new novel by the famous Palestinian novelist, Ibrahim Nasrallah, entitled *Biography of an Eye*.

The quality of our services has been acknowledged from near and far by our student film makers winning a national award in the Sun Bird festival, in regional events like the Abu Dhabi Student Film Festival and Cairo International Film Festival, and in European festivals like the International Signes de Nuit - Paris and the Cinefoundation at the Cannes Film Festival.

Over the years, our programs have been highlighted in many media outlets including the BBC, CNN, ABC, CBS, HBO, ARD, ZDF, ORF, BR, al-Jazeera, Ma'an News Agency and Palestine TV. Diyar was also featured in publications such as The Economist, Newsweek, The Washington Post, The New York Times, The Boston Globe and





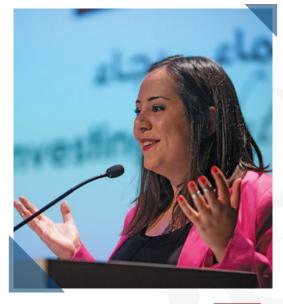
Frankfurter Rundschau and Allgemeine. Also within this period, we developed to be the cultural hub of Bethlehem and regarded as "the most professional cultural entity in the southern part of the West Bank". With the establishment of Dar al-Kalima University College of Arts and Culture, Diyar became the number one address for formal, non-formal, and vocational education in new fields such as film, jewelry, design, theater, music, and contemporary arts. This has enhanced the employability of young people and provided emerging industries with qualified personnel.

We were looking forward to 2020 as it promised to be the best year in our history of 25 years of growth and excellence. We had major plans for the celebrations of Bethlehem 2020 Arab Cultural Capital. The COVID-19 pandemic ruptured our journey. The full impact is still unknown and many things will change as we adapt to the new normal. One thing is clear: Dar al-Kalima University after COVID-19 will not be the same. As we attempt to survive the pandemic, the scale of the new heights that await us is clear. The climb will be difficult, the air lighter, but the view that awaits us is not to be missed.





























On August 3rd 2021, Dar al-Kalima received the official accreditation as a University by the Palestinian National Authority for Accreditation and Quality Assurance. This accreditation comes as a culmination of a 15-year long hard work in Higher Education. In 2006, the Dar al-Kalima Community College was accredited to grant two years associate degrees in visual and performing arts. In 2013, Dar al-Kalima was elevated to become the Dar al-Kalima University College of Arts and Culture, with the academic authority to grant BA degrees.

Now, Dar al-Kalima was re-accredited to become the Dar al-Kalima University, a full-fledged university that has five colleges and is authorized to grant all academic degrees available, from associate diplomas to a PhDs. The current five Colleges are: College of Design, College of Visual and Performing Arts, College of Tourism and Cultural Management, College of Graduate Studies, and the Community College.



جامعة حار الكلمة DAR AL-KALIMA UNIVERSITY



On Social Entrepreneurship

If we wonder what the secret behind this success story is, several things spring to mind. First, the whole vision was conceived locally. It was not the result of an American or a German who wanted to do something for the poor Palestinians; it was Palestinian people who saw the need and the potential, and decided to bring about change. Second, this success would not have been possible without people who believed in this vision and totally dedicated themselves to it. The overwhelming majority of these dedicated staff were, and continue to be, women. I am not just talking about the staff who are visible but about the hundreds of other invisible workers, like George Sadi, who perform their duties in the background to keep the place tidy and in shape. Third, our work was not donor-driven and this has ensured continuity over the years despite setbacks and wars. The programs that we started in 1995 continue today, save for a few that were context-bound and were closed to keep us focused. Fourth, to develop a vision like this requires a spirit of social entrepreneurship, a spirit that sees the immense challenges but discerns the endless opportunities. Fifth, to survive all the ups and downs, resilience is crucial. Creative resistance has always been an important component of our work. Sixth, sound management is important to keep an organization healthy. At several crossroads we have had to make tough decisions: closing whole sections, laying off staff, etc. To keep a tree healthy, pruning must be done regularly. Seventh, for success one need to be innovative. We never tried to copy what other people had done but tried to find the neglected niche where we could achieve the greatest results with limited resources. Eighth, to succeed one has to remain focused on the vision and not be deterred by attacks. This require some stubbornness.















Ninth, one has to put people first and not one's ego. It is not about us but about the people we serve. Last but not least, to succeed one needs a support system and friends who believe in the vision and can encourage others to fund and support. Without our friendship associations in the US, Bright Stars of Bethlehem, our friendship association in Germany, Foerderverein Dar al-Kalima Akademie, and our friends in Denmark, Betlehem Venner, this success story would not be what it is today. Our friends include Bishop Hans-Juergen and Dekan Reinhard Troester from Germany; Pfarrer Albert Rieger from Switzerland; Rich Bimler, Gregg Smith and Jim Hooker from the US; and the late bishop Niels Arndt and Vita Andreasen from Denmark.







Above all,

I believe that it was the Lord who put us in the right place, Bethlehem, at the right time, though often through tough times, with the right vision and the right friends. His blessing was laid on this ministry in way that transcends our understanding.

Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb





Bethlehem Student Film Festival









Dandanat Music and Dance Festival











Statements by Board, Partirers E Stark



The uniqueness of Dar al-Kalima in terms of mission, vision and accomplishments, under a capable leadership in a short 25-year period, was a factor that attracted me initially as a board member to this institution. Its location in Bethlehem and its focus on youth in creative academic programs has positioned Dar al-Kalima University as the leading educational institution in the field of art and culture.

Chairperson of Dar al-Kalima University' Board

Zahi Khouri

In the late nineties when I started working with Dar annadwa, no one would have believed that the dream of establishing Dar al Kalima would become true. Today, as member of the board, I believe more than ever that generating hope in dark times by creatively investing to empower our community, especially youth and women, is in itself rewarding enough for us to continue this mission.



Board member

Dr. Khouloud Daibes



In Palestine, life is more dynamic, less routine. This not only created resilience among the youth but inspired intellectuals to plan for change that makes people live -not die- for Palestine. At Dar al-Kalima, we build a cultured generation equipped with distinguished skills to secure a safe journey within the changing environment.

Board member

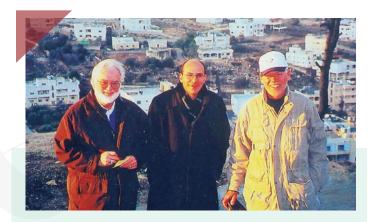


The journey of Spirit-led ministries in Bethlehem for these 25-plus years has been a totally holy experience indeed, which only the Lord could have made happen. He brought together a small and energetic group of disciples, named Gregg, Herb, Rich, and our visionary Mitri. This small band of mixed-talented folks were wise enough to realize that our ministry plans were much too big for us alone, so with Mitri leading the way, we began to vision what the Lord had in mind for Bright Stars of Bethlehem and Dar al-Kalima. With Mitri's theology and leadership, Herb's vision and creativity, Gregg's resources and business savvy, and Rich's contacts and people connections, new ministries were again born in Bethlehem, with Christ leading the way. Rather than feeling like a "wise man" in the process, I personally felt more like a shepherd in the Bethlehem field, hearing, seeing and experiencing the "re-birth" of the Christ in all that the Lord was accomplishing through us struggling shepherds. May the child of Bethlehem and Lord of all of Life continue to bless and quide the people, plans, and promises which Dar Al Kalima continues to create and celebrate with children, youth, adults, and older adults. What a joy, honor and privilege for me to be a small part of this Wholly Holy ministry of the Lord!

Co-founder of Bright Stars of Bethlehem

Dr. Rich Bimler





A bright star came again over Bethlehem. A star that brought the light of hope, dispelling the darkness of oppression. A little over twentyfive years ago, a young minister envisioned and brought about a ministry that reached out well past his congregation and brought hope and light to the entire nation of Palestine. Mitri Raheb was in God's grip and the nation felt His presence. God also reached out to the United States and brought Rich Bimler, Herb Brokering and I to Bethlehem to share in this ministry. What a gift it is to have a place at this table of blessing. Each time we thought we were reaching too far, God said your vision is too small and the ministry continued to grow. We still don't know the size of The Lord's vision, but we continue to work His will. What a gift.

Co-founder of Bright Stars of Bethlehem

Gregg Smith

The vision for the Dar al-Kalima captured my imagination in 2005. Since then, our journey together has created a partnership I could scarcely have imagined. Dar al-Kalima University has grown from an idea into a fully accredited institution where small miracles occur daily, despite overwhelming adversity, and even this year's "double lockdown". The extraordinary commitment of the entire team to creating Hope and Opportunity "from cradle to grave" and the vision of "enabling all Palestinians to have life abundantly" shows the power of faith and positive expectations. Bright Stars of Bethlehem is committed to enabling that vision through our mission: "To grow the next generation of creative leaders of Palestine". Congratulations on all that has been accomplished as we pray for peace with justice in these challenging times.



President and Board Chair, Bright Stars of Bethlehem

Jim Hooker



I have followed Dar al-Kalima from the beginning. It is a miracle how this work has developed and is now spreading hope in a very hopeless situation. Every student who obtains their education here is a sign that God has not forgotten the little town of Bethlehem. Chairperson of Förderverein Bethlehem Akademie Dar al-Kalima

Bischof i.R. Dr. Hans-Jürgen A bromeit

I got to know Dar Annadwa in 2001 during a visit with Dr. Mitri Raheb in Bethlehem. The visit took place a few months after the outbreak of the so-called Second Intifada. Despite the 'qhostly' situation at that time, I had the impression that something very special was taking shape in Bethlehem. In 2004 I decided to work on behalf of the Civil Peace Service at the International Center, Dar Annadwa. Those were the years when the Wall was built and every day the Wall around Bethlehem was 'growing'! Physical and subtle violence caused by the Israeli occupation in the form of the many checkpoints and soldiers, determined everyday life. And yet, with unbelievably creative events, workshops and international conferences, Mitri Raheb and the staff in the facilities and services defied the occupation and deprivation of rights. In spite of the difficult conditions, I saw the events in the center as a 'departure into a new era'. The seminars and training sessions with young people were well-attended and cultural events took place several evenings a week in the large event hall. Even then, the motto at the center was 'Destruction may be - Creativity shall be!'. The question of the extent to which non-violent communication and non-violent conflict management is possible in an environment of violence was answered in my daily work with the young people. I was impressed by the imaginative non-violent actions such as the 'mural paintings' with Mexican artists. Children and teenagers painted walls over several weeks, expressing their feelings and thoughts in the form of graffiti. The art education projects with children and young people, as well as the international workshops and encounters with people from many countries, were also instruments of empowerment. The resistance against occupation and injustice was always non-violent and full of hope!

Former chairperson of Förderverein Bethlehem Akademie Dar al-Kalima





Dar al-Kalima - A Beacon of Hope

My first journey to Bethlehem in 2012 - I had already been to Israel a few times before - had deeply touched me, made me stunned, angry, sad, and left a lasting impression on me. My husband and I passed a checkpoint coming from Jerusalem. I was speechless, almost petrified and terrified, a wall with watchtowers and military, a situation Germany left behind years ago. Why did I know hardly anything about it? Meeting Pastor Dr. Mitri Raheb and his family, today's president of the Dar al-Kalima University, we learned a lot about the difficulties of everyday life and also about his wonderful mission. I was impressed by the incredibly important educational work of Mitri Raheb and his team. Spending several weeks a year in Bethlehem, it was my innermost wish to get involved and make a positive difference. The more I was affected by the circumstances, the more the warm-hearted employees of Dar-al Kalima grew close to my heart. For 25 years now, the university has had a vision of giving young people hope and opportunities for the future with a self-determined life in their country despite unfavorable living conditions.

For this mission, I praise these wonderful human beings! Their commitment, their confidence and their enthusiasm are of equal importance and deserve my great respect as a member and fundraiser in the German Friends Association: "Förderverein Bethlehem Akademie Dar al-Kalima".

Förderverein Bethlehem Akademie Dar al-Kalima

Christiane Wacker-Singer



Trust is the key word to understand the enduring friendship between Dar al-Kalima and Betlehems Venner. In 2002 Mitri Raheb visited a Dan Church Aid-organized program at Løgumkloster high school in southern Denmark near the German border. We were introduced to the mission and vision of DAK with one line: 'Giving voice to the voiceless' which led to the establishment of Betlehems Venner in 2003. Over the years, there has been continuous conversation and the mutual exchange of students and people. Twenty students attended Løgumkloster Højskole for a five-month program from 2003 to 2013. Danish university students attended a three-week Middle East Explorer program in Bethlehem with local Bethlehem students for some years. Mitri Raheb has given lectures at universities and churches, and several of our projects have involved many members of staff. It has enriched mutual understanding. It is a gift for the Palestinian people that Dar al-Kalima was founded 25 years ago. There is a perfect match between the excellent educational programs run by the university and the Danish tradition of building democracy and competent citizens through education as inspired by the world famous philosopher and theologian N.F.S. Grundtviq (1783 - 1872).

Chairperson of Betlehems Venner





For me, Diyar is many very enthusiastic people dedicated to the benefits of their homeland. They fight the harsh Israeli occupation with knowledge and education; they teach Palestinian youth about their roots, culture and history; they understand the needs of grassroots people; and they promote peace despite all the difficulties they encounter daily in the occupied West Bank and besieged Gaza. They are the future of Palestine.

Former program manager at the Olof Palme International Center

Svjetlana Djyric

Through arts and culture, Dar al-Kalima resists the occupation and its consequences in the West Bank and Gaza by offering a path towards employment and psycho-social support. The Act Church of Sweden is proud to be a partner in an initiative that empowers youth with a sense of pride, and with hope for the future in a reality where hope may be difficult to find.

In an environment marked by occupation, oppression and injustice, Dar al-Kalima offers non-violent resistance through culture and creativity; it is an oasis where injustices are attacked with beauty. Youth deserve to cultivate their creativity and have their narratives heard. The Act Church of Sweden is particularly proud to be part of the establishment of Dar al-Kalima in Gaza.

ACT Church of Sweden



It was one morning in the spring of 1997, when a mutual friend introduced me to Dr. Mitri Raheb. This meeting led to a friendship that will last a lifetime, I am sure. It is not only the vision of Dr. Mitri that I admire, but also his will and readiness to act. The reason for us to meet was the upcoming Bethlehem 2000. We Finns wanted to participate in this historic project. From the beginning, it was clear that the International Center of Bethlehem would be the right partner for us as we wanted a partner that would serve the whole Palestinian community. This cooperation led to the construction of the Addar Cultural and Conference Center, which was financed by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland. A particular milestone was reached in October 1999, when President Martti Ahtisaari of Finland laid the cornerstone for the new Center at Madbassa Square. The building itself is a masterpiece by the architect, Arts Academician Juha Leiviskä. Leiviskä's distinctive architecture does not easily fit any stylistic category. As often described, he is first and foremost an architect par excellence: curious to find optimal solutions, always in search of the perfect plan. These skills were definitely needed in Bethlehem as the plot reserved for the Center was small and located in the midst of existing old buildings. Being part of this project was the highlight of my time in Palestine. It also provided a unique perspective of life in Bethlehem. I made so many friends during this period. Whenever I have visited the Center, many times afterwards, I have always been delighted at how lively and full of activity it is. My experience is mainly limited to the International Center of Bethlehem phase of this remarkable 25-year-long journey, which has matured to the establishment of Dar al-Kalima University. Regardless of the name, the purpose is still the same – to serve the whole Palestinian community.

My best wishes for the next 25 years.

Finnish Ambassador



Dar al-Kalima and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, a German political foundation based on Christian democratic values, joined forces in 2017 to conduct research on today's Christian presence in Palestine. After a study of Christian and Muslim migration trends in Palestinian society, cooperation focused on the Christian perspective on East Jerusalem and on the sociocultural history of Bethlehem. Cooperation is not only based on research; it is also meant to bring people together to share thoughts and discussion about the future of the Holy Land. Thus, cooperation has developed into a strong partnership covering both Christian, Palestinian heritage and entrepreuship.



Director Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Ramallah



I was invited by Dr. Raheb to return from the USA to Bethlehem to be part of a dream, one that has now become a reality beyond all our expectations. March 1st, 1996 was my first day of work at Dar Annadwa. There was no room or money for a desk like the ones my colleagues had. Instead, my desk was a piece of wood with one leg, with the wall substituting for the second leg. It is in that office and on that desk that DAK was born. The first time I heard the name Dar al-Kalima was when Dr. Raheb asked me to write a one-page concept paper about a new project he envisioned: to establish a university for the arts to be a called Dar al-Kalima. Other than the name, nothing else existed. There was no campus, no programs, no faculty, no students, and not even land. Yet the idea of an institution of higher education geared to the fine arts was implanted in my mind, and my mission and life career started taking shape.

DAK was accredited in 2006 as a community college with the vision "That we might have life and have it abundantly". Between 2006 and 2011, DAK operated from the church basement and Dar Annadwa with 22 students, two programs and five part-time faculty staff. Ashraf, the first student to apply to study documentary film, is now a well-known cinematographer working for a national television station in Palestine. Ashraf is getting older but his young face was on the first brochure and street signs announcing the birth of DAK. Taha, also from the first class and whose film *The Thyme Seller* won first prize at the first graduation of DAK in 2008, had to sell a film he had made for 100 dollars to pay for his application. He maintained a high GPA, obtained a scholarship, and graduated exactly on time.

The move to the new campus in 2011 gave us the space, the infrastructure, the possibility to expand into a university college, and infused us with a sense of permanency. As we re-accredited DAK as a University College in 2013, we also started accrediting BA programs in the visual and performing arts, design, and cultural heritage that are groundbreaking, creative, distinctive, and address a huge need in higher education in Palestine. It is here that DAK was able to spread its vision to be a source of abundant living and to lay the foundations for an upcoming university.

Looking at the enchanting campus, accomplished academic and artistic faculty, the enthusiastic and talented students, the theater and film festivals, the cinema club, the art exhibitions and musical concerts, and the programs from which graduates have been winners in a variety of competitions, including the Cannes Film Festival, affirms my decision to accept the offer made in 1996 to return home and adopt the dream of Dr. Raheb. Being part of a project that invests in people, supports creativity, strengthens Palestinian identity through art and culture, and is still going strong after 25 years, has been a blessing for my mind and heart.

Vice President for Academic Affairs

Nuha Khouzy



Vice President for Development

Rana Thousa



My story with Dar al-Kalima started back in 1994, when I moved back from Michigan to my hometown, Bethlehem. The decision to leave the US and return to Palestine was based on two factors: my family and a vision that motivated me to aspire for a greater purpose in life than just finding a job or employment.

The vision, created by Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb, took its first steps at the basement of the Christmas Lutheran Church, and soon expanded to include the nearby grounds. We called it Dar Annadwa or the International Center of Bethlehem; it is a jewel of a place that perhaps no other space can compete with in terms of its beauty or the impact it has had on the community. At that time, abandoned places and old buildings were torn down, demolished as if to erase all history. Instead, Dar Annadwa celebrated the old while invigorating a present whose roots were deep-seated in history and whose arms were spread wide open to the future.

The vision grew into several major tracks, each with a purpose of its own and with new names and logos focusing on education, culture, and the arts. Imbued with its life-empowering theology, the vision was like a magnet. It attracted anyone who had the wisdom to look beyond the decrepit reality and imagine a much brighter future. It provided a snapshot into what a future Palestine could look like, one where people of different contexts and backgrounds could come together to debate, learn and grow while maintaining diversity of opinion and space for opposing views.

Today we celebrate a 25-year journey of this vision that has culminated in the founding of one of the most unique institutions of higher education in Palestine, the Dar al-Kalima University. And yet, the ethos of the vision remains the same and the narrative continues to be weaved around a constant core: that we might have life and have it abundantly.

Inspiration is key to living abundantly in a place that all have deemed helpless. That place is Palestine and that inspiration was and continues to be Dar al-Kalima. I never regretted the move back; Dar al-Kalima did not disappoint.

DAK strongly believes in the capacities and skills of its people. It is a place where our knowledge is nourished, and our experience enriched. As a fresh graduate, I started with DAK 15 years ago working as a part time accountant. Thorough out these years, I encountered and conquered different challenges to reach my current position.

DAK was and is not just a place of work. Rather, it is home where dreams grow. As part of the Finance team, my role was to ensure financial sustainability and transparency for the organization, according to the highest international standards. Such endeavor required continuous investment in human resources, constant upgrading of financial policies as well as having the resolve to work under extraordinary conditions and unexpected circumstances. I am proud to be one of DAK's family and to work towards the realization of this great dream.



Vice President for Finance & Administration

Jane Abumohor Mitri





A beehive of dedication, commitment, persistence and hope for Palestinians young and old, amid a troubling political context, and empowering Palestinians for a proactive life of self-fulfillment, determination and creative resistance. That is what Dar al-Kalima is for me! Congrats on the 25-year anniversary.

Former staff member

Viola Raheb

As the first female civil engineer in Palestine at that time, I was very confident and started my career ready to apply building codes and specifications. Throughout the years, working on different projects with Dar al-Kalima that range from the restoration of historic buildings to new constructions and site planning, I have learned that communication, commitment adapting to challenges are the three requirements for a successful engineer. Working with Dar al-Kalima has taught me how to understand people and care for nature and environment. Thanks Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb for the vision and the hard work of building a one-of-akindestablishment.

Former staff member

Maha Abu Ghannam



Our girls were some of the very first Palestinian women to play football and co-founded the first national women's football team Palestine. For US. football is not just a sport but the tool to prove to our society

that women can do everything, and that we are as capable as men. At the beginning of our journey, football was taboo for us as women in Palestine. We had to fight the social norms and patriarchal society in order to pursue our passion. Today, we have successfully managed to spread this sport in Palestine and have encouraged other young Palestinian women to follow in our steps. For us, football is not just a sport but a powerful tool to advocate for women's rights.

Football Caoch

Jackline Jazzawi

Dar al-Kalima helped me to take my culinary dreams to a different level. The experience and knowledge invested in me by my mentors was priceless and kept my passion going. I

owe it all to them: Miss Judy Bandak, Chef Bassem Hazboun, Mr. Elias Juha, Chef Peter, and last but not least, our Dean Miss Nuha Khoury. Before I knew it, one year later, I graduated as one of the top in my class. It was a day that I will always remember. I thank God for helping me to become the man I am today and giving me the opportunity to live my dream. After I graduated from Dar al-Kalima, they gave me an opportunity that I will never forget to travel to Germany and work in the modern world of culinary skills. I worked



in catering, buffet preparation, and my favorite, à la carte. This is the area in which I developed the most and this is where chefs were challenged and performed at their best. Germany was the most amazing experience that allowed my passion to develop to new levels. I was given the opportunity of a lifetime and I was lucky to take part in it. Today I am the head chef in the Alexander Hotel. I am living my dream day by day and growing in the field that I love most. Thank you Dar al Kalima for giving me the opportunity to become the person I am today. I owe it all to you.

A graduate of Dar al-Kalima University

Joey Canavati

Historical Mapping of DAK's Journey

(1995-2020)

Date/Period	Event/Milestone	Implications/Results
1992	The opening of the Abu Jubran Guesthouse and the launch of the Authentic Tourism program.	Attract international fact-finding missions and justice-oriented groups to come and see things for themselves with the aim of advocating a lasting and just peace in the Holy Land.
September 13, 1993	Signing of Oslo Accord I	Signing of Oslo I &II created much optimism: the
September 28, 1995	Signing of Oslo Accord II	idea was born to create a center for local, national, regional & international encounters.
September 29, 1995	Official launching of "Dar Annadwa Addawliyya" (the International Center of Bethlehem - ICB).	Focus on youth exchange, women's programs and reintegration program.
March 1997	ICB received the TODO!96 Award for Socially Responsible Tourism at the International Tourism Fair in Berlin.	This was the first time that an institution from the Middle East had received such an award. Many Palestinian organizations and tour operators have copied ICB's philosophy and started alternative tourism groups, rapprochement centers, and Palestinian tour programs.
1997	The first (5 year) strategic plan was developed in line with Ibrahim Abu Lughods' plan for a new Palestinian educational system.	A new complex comprising a school and a college, connected to a conference and cultural center, was envisioned as Dar al-Kalima compound.

Date/Period	Event/Milestone	Implications/Results
1997	Partnership with Edward Said National Music Conservatory	The first music school in southern Palestine was opened.
	Launch of the Reintegration Program.	ICB turned into a hub for all young Palestinians who graduated from international universities and returned to their homeland where they were able to meet colleagues with similar experiences abroad and similar struggles back home to discuss their experiences.
1998	Ground breaking for the School for Art and Intercultural Studies.	President Arafat and Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb, in the presence of many dignitaries, broke the ground for construction of the School for Art and Intercultural Studies on the Mureir mountain.
	First summer school for children.	ICB organized the first summer school with a focus on art to develop the artistic, creative, aesthetic, and physical potential of the children. This was an earlier version of the Diyar Academy for Children and Youth.
	Art Program added.	Program provided training for young people in painting, ceramics, and glass fusing.

Date/Period	Event/Milestone	Implications/Results
	Opening of the Cave gift shop.	Unique gift shop selling handmade Palestinian art crafts.
1999	Launch of the Vision Art Network.	The Network provided a platform for young and emerging Palestinian artists.
	Opening of al-Kahf Arts & Crafts Center	The first art gallery in Bethlehem started to exhibit the works of Palestinian and international artists.
September 2000	Eruption of 2nd Intifada	Violence, total collapse of the tourism industry, escalating unemployment rate to over 75%, the traumatization of children and adults, and above all, the lack of a light at the end of the tunnel of the vicious circle of violence, all presented big challenges to Palestinian lives and work.
2002	Invasion of Palestinian cities and towns	On April 2, 2002, the Israeli invasion of Bethlehem caused much destruction to the ICB compound building, furniture and equipment.

Date/Period	Event/Milestone	Implications/Results
2001-2002	Second (5 year) strategic plan developed.	The new strategic plan introduced the theme of hope. A new program was initiated focused on healing under the title: "Creating our futureImparting new hope: Destruction May BeContinuity Shall Be".
	Launch of Bethlehem Media Center.	The Media Center has been the voice of the voiceless communicating the everyday life of Palestinians to people around the world.
2003	Inauguration of the Ad-Dar Cultural and Conference Center.	Ad-Dar became the cultural hub of Bethlehem and the magnet for cultural productions, hosting hundreds of cultural events every year.
2003	Opening of Dar al-Kalima Health and Wellness Center.	The Health and Wellness Center comprised several clinics, a multipurpose room for health awareness meetings, workshops, and training sessions, and a swimming pool – the first indoor pool in southern Palestine. It ran programs in prevention, education, and healthy living.
2004	Opening of Il'illiyeh Restaurant and al-Kuz Coffee Shop.	Both, the Restaurant and the Coffee Shop serve visitors, tourists, and staff.

Date/Period	Event/Milestone	Implications/Results
2006	Opening of Dar Al-Kalima College.	Dar Al-Kalima College was officially accredited by the Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education, and teaching commenced.
	The AJYAL program was established.	The AJYAL ("generations") program for community care for the elderly was established.
2007	Launch of the initiative "Palestinian Christians: Strengthening IdentityActivating Potential".	Five volumes have been already published mapping the Palestinian Christian community in the West Bank, Israel and the Diaspora, and researching issues like Christian emigration and Palestinian Christian art.

	Date/Period	Event/Milestone	Implications/Results
		Third cycle strategic plan 2008-2012 drafted.	The Board tentatively endorsed the draft and suggested that further elaboration was needed. A new (i.e., revised) Strategic Plan 2009-2011 was developed. DIYAR Consortium was created, comprising Dar an-Nadwa Addawliyyah (ICB), Dar al-Kalima Health and Wellness Center, and Dar al-Kalima College. It was envisaged that each Dar would have its own director and distinct organizational structure.
	2008	First graduation of Dar al-Kalima College students.	The first class of sixteen students from the Documentary Filmmaking and the Glass and Ceramic Arts programs graduated.
		Launch of "Religion and State" initiative.	The initiative addressed the unhealthy relationship between religion and the state with focus on five key countries: Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Palestine. Issues researched: constitutions, inclusive society, gender justice, etc.
		Construction started on the College of Visual and Performing Art.	The ground breaking ceremony for the College of Visual and Performing Art on the Dar al-Kalima campus on Mount Murair took place in April 2007. Construction started in January 2008.

Date/Period	Event/Milestone	Implications/Results
2008	Dar al-Balad established.	An abandoned old family house in the center of the old city of Beit Sahour was renovated and Dar al-Balad was established. The aim of the new center was to bring DIYAR's philosophy to the old city of Beit Sahour. Once the mission was accomplished, the facility was returned to the municipality to rent to local businesses.
	Dar as-Shamal started.	Dar as-Shamal was started in the town of Taybeh with the aim of raising awareness about elderly care in the north of the West Bank. This program ran for several years until the partner organization had developed the skills to take over its operation.
2009	Diyar Dance Theatre and Diyar Women's Soccer Team established.	Diyar Dance Theatre produced its first show called "Portraits of Fear". Diyar Women's Soccer Team won 2nd place in the National Palestinian Soccer Championship.

Date/Period	Event/Milestone	Implications/Results
2010	Inauguration of Dar al-Kalima College building.	On November 30, 2010, the Dar al-Kalima College building was inaugurated in the presence of many friends, donors, members of our local board, and international friendship associations. The building is a new landmark in Bethlehem and makes the Dar al-Kalima compound truly "A City on the Hill". New outdoor playgrounds and an amphitheater were also completed, thus making space available for the development of sports activities.
	Fourth cycle strategic plan 2012-2015 drafted.	The aim of the fourth strategic plan 2012-2015 was to consolidate and target DIYAR's operations. The institutional set-up and the relationship between the three "Dars" was modified so that DIYAR came to constitute a "consortium of programs" rather than institutions, and detaching "facilities" from activities.
2011	Diyar Publishing established.	To date, over forty publications in Arabic and English have been published. All the English titles are made available on Amazon and Kindle platforms.
	Official launch of the Civic Engagement Program.	The Civic Engagement Program carried out two major projects: "Youth Needs Assessment/ Civic Cultural Network" and "Palestinian Youth Leadership Training" that focused on providing leadership training to young people aged 18 to 30 years of age.

Date/Period	Event/Milestone	Implications/Results
2012	Diyar Academy for Children and Youth inaugurated.	The Academy replaced the Health and Wellness Center. The Diyar Dance Theatre and Diyar Women's Soccer Team were integrated into it.
2013	Reaccreditation of Dar al-Kalima College to become a University College (DAK).	Dar al-Kalima College was reaccredited by the Palestinian Ministry of Higher Education to become Dar al-Kalima University College (DAK) and qualified to grant BA degrees.
	Two BA programs offered.	The first BA programs offered were Film Production and Contemporary Fine Art. Every year, DAK University College adds new accredited programs.
2014	Inauguration of the Cultural Heritage and Community Development Building and of the Indoor Sports Hall.	The two new facilities have enabled Dar al-Kalima to consolidate Tourism Studies, Culinary Art, and the Sports Management programs.
	Inauguration of the Cultural Heritage and Tourism Studies program.	The Cultural Heritage and Tourism Studies program at DAK started.

Date/Period	Event/Milestone	Implications/Results
2015	Fifth cycle strategic plan 2016-2020 drafted.	The fifth strategic plan focused on building upon and sustaining growth achieved in previous years, while safeguarding the cohesiveness and focus of DAK and its programs.
	Further construction.	Completion of the changing rooms for the Indoors Dar Al Kalima Sport Hall, and the fifth floor of the Visual and Performing Arts building.
	DAK recognized as the main hub in the West Bank for adult education and lifelong learning.	DAK was selected by DVV International (Deutscher Volkshochschul Verband) as the main hub in the West Bank for adult education and lifelong learning.
2016	Accreditation of three new BA programs.	Three new programs were accredited by the Palestinian Ministry of Higher Education: BA in Interior Design, BA in Performing Art with a focus on Music or Theater, and BA in Sustainable Cultural Tourism. The last two programs are the first of their kind in Palestine.
	Ground breaking for the new Library and Multimedia Resource Center.	In June 2016, the ground breaking ceremony of the new Library and Multimedia Resource Center building was held.

Date/Period	Event/Milestone	Implications/Results
	Fifth building added.	The new building was to house Dar al-Kalima Library and Multimedia Resource Center, the first and only library in Palestine dedicated to arts and culture.
2017	Solar energy units installed.	113 KW solar energy units were installed making DAK the first campus in Palestine to rely entirely on solar energy for lighting, heating and air conditioning: a green building and a zero energy facility.
	Launch of BA programs in Interior Design and Performing Arts.	In September 2017, DAK launched two new BA programs, Interior Design and Performing Arts (with focus on music).
2018	BA programs in Sustainable Cultural Tourism and Performing Arts.	The two new BA programs in Sustainable Cultural Tourism and Performing Arts (with focus on theater) launched in September 2018.

	Date/Period	Event/Milestone	Implications/Results
	2019	Introduction of dual learning programs.	DAK introduced the first two dual learning programs in line with the German dual learning model in which students learn both at the University and in the workplace. This ensures a close connection to the job market and increased student employability.
		Opening of Training Center in Gaza.	A Training Center was opened in a temporary location at the French Cultural Institute in Gaza to provide training in photography, artistic design, video art, and civic engagement. The aim of the Center is to empower the next generation of creative leaders in Gaza by enhancing the skills of young Gazan artists; improve the quality of their art; improve the livelihood of artists by building local and international networks that create opportunities to exhibit and market their products; and recognize exceptional local artists through awards and prizes.
		Accreditation of Design program.	A new BA program in Design was accredited for offer in 2020.

Date/Period	Event/Milestone	Implications/Results
	First group of students complete training in Gaza.	In March 2020, the first 58 students of both genders obtained their certificate.
2020	A villa was renovated to become DAK,s official Training Center in the Gaza Strip. Completion of three construction projects.	In June 2020, DAK rented an old abandoned vill in Gaza city. It is currently being renovated and will become DAK's official training center in the Gaza Strip. Rubash Garden, DAK Gallery & the student ateliers.
2021	Dar al-Kalima was re-accredited to become the Dar al-Kalima University, a full-fledged university.	DAK is authorized to grant all academic degrees available, from associate diplomas to a PhDs, with five Colleges: College of Design, College of Visual and Performing Arts, College of Tourism and Cultural Management, College of Graduate Studies, and the Community College.

Digar Publisher books list

Year	Author	Book Name
2011	القس د. متري الراهب	الدين والدولة
2011	یحیہی حجازي	الممارسات الثقافية لدى الشباب الفلسطيني
2011	Yahya hijazi	Youth Assessment in English
2011	القس د. متري الراهب أحمد مروات د. عصام نصار	كريمة عبود
2011	أنيتى كلاسينغ	ديمقراطية و مشاركة في عمل الشبيبة
2012	القس د. متري الراهب	بیت لحم ومصوروها
2012	القس د. متري الراهب	الربيع العربي ومسيحيو الشرق الاوسط
2012	Sune Fahlgren	A Swede in Jerusalem
2012	راجي خوري	هذا أنا
2012	Viola Raheb Abado	Latin American with Palestinian Roots

Year	Author	Book Name
2012	Johnny Mansour	Arab Christians in Israel
2012	Rania Al Qass Collings Rifat Odeh Kassis Mitri Raheb	Palestinian Christians in the West Bank: Facts, Figures and Trends
2013	عدنان مسلم	عيسى البندك
2013	Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb Garo Nalbandian Fred Stickert	Bethlehem: A World Heritage
2013	أ.د. معتصم عديلة د. حسين الدراويش	فن الزغاريد الشعبية في الاعراس الفلسطينية
2013	القس د. متري الراهب	المسيحيون العرب وقضايا الامة: متغيرات السياق والادوار
2013	القس د. متري الراهب	لكل مقام مقال
2014	Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb	Faith In the Face of Empire:
2014	Garo Nalbandian Fred Stickert	The Church of Nativity

Year	Author	Book Name
2014	Iyas Abu Rahme	Palestine: Land, People, Identity:
2014	ميخائيل رشماوي	ھۇلاء من بيت ساحور
2014	Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb	Palestinian Identity
2015	Faten Nastas	Reflections on Palestinian Art
2015	Yasmine Sherif	The Case of Humanity
2016	Adnan Musallam	Ayyoub Musallam
2016	Ahmad Saifi	Khawater Falastinieh
2017	Ghadeer Najjar	Bethlehem: A Historic Center and Bethlehemites in Jerusalem
2017	القس د. منذر اسحق	مدخل الى اللاهوت الفلسطيني
2017	Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb	Palestinian Christians: Emigration, Displacement and Diaspora

Year	Author	Book Name
2017	القس د. متري الراهب	میلاد کنیسة
2017	المطران منيب يونان	العقيدة اللوثرية
2018	Rev. Dr. Munther Isaac	Christ at the Check Point
2018	Theo Sundermeier	For an Open Jerusalem Palestinian Christian Art Today
2019	Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb	Jerusalem: Religious, National, and International Dimensions
2020	Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb Saeb Erekat	The Double Lockdown: Palestine under Occupation and Covid_19
2020	Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb	Bethlehem: A Socio-Cultural History
2020	Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb	Tawfiq Canaan: An Autobiography
2020	Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb	Towards Inclusive Societies in the Middle East
2021	George Akroush	Mapping of Christian Organizations in Palestine: Social and Economic Impact



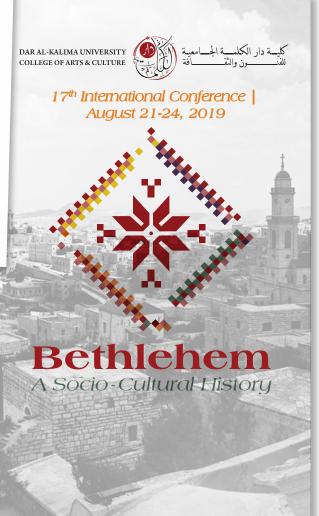
International Conferences at Wall al-Kalima in Bethlehem

- 1995: Internationale Symposium Contextuel Theologies, October 1-8 1995, Bethlehem, Publication: Bechmann, Ulrike/Fuchs, Ottmar, Von Nazareth nach Bethlehem. Hoffnung und Klage. Mit einem Forschungsbericht von Saleh Srouji (Tübinger Perspektiven zur Pastoraltheologie und Religionspädagogik 4), Münster: LIT 2002 (Teil B: 135-292)
- 2 1997: Women and Political Culture in Palestine and Germany, April 3-10 1997, Bethlehem,
- 3 1997: The Future of Intereligious and Intercultural Studies, October 7-14 1997, Bethlehem.
- 2004: Land, People, and Identities. Biblical Models of Coexistence and Conflict in the Middle East. A Planning Conference, September 11-17 2004, Bethlehem,
- 5 2005: Shaping Communities in Times of Crisis. Narratives of Land, Peoples and Identities, November 6–12, 2005, Bethlehem,
- 2007: God's Reign and People's Rule. August 26–September 1. 2007, Bethlehem Publication: Raheb, Mitri (Hg.), God's Reign and People's Rule, Constitution, Religion, and Identity in Palestine. Berlin: Aphorisma 2009
- 2008: Religion & State 1: December 14-17 2008, Istanbul.
- 2009: Invention of History. 5. International Conference, August 23-29 2009, Bethlehem Publication: Raheb, Mitri (Hg.), The Invention of History: A Century of Interplay between Theology and Politics in Palestine. Bethlehem: Diyar 2011

- 2010: Towards a Healthier Relationship between Religion and State, March 2010, Istanbul. Publication in Arabic.
- 2011: Biblical Texts, Ur-contexts, and Contemporary Realities, August 2011, Bethlehem Publication: Raheb, Mitri (Hg.), The Biblical Text in the Context of Occupation: Towards a New Hermeneutics of Liberation. Bethlehem: Diyar 2012.
- 2013: Palestinian Identity in Relation to Time and Space, August 2013, Bethlehem Publication: Raheb, Mitri (Hg.), Palestinian Identity in Relation to Time and Space. Bethlehem: Diyar 2014.
- 2013: Religion, Constitutions and Rule of Law, April 23-26 2013, Berlin
- 2014: Middle East Christians and the Public Sphere. December 3-5 2014, Beirut
- 2015: Palestinian Diaspora and Identity. August 2015, Bethlehem Publication:
 Diaspora and Identity: The Case of Palestine. Diyar 2017
- 2015: Shifting Identities: Changes in the social, political, and religious structures in the Arab World 3.-5. Juli 2015, Paphos Publication: "Shifting Identities: Changes in the social, political, and religious structures in the Arab World", Bethlehem: Diyar 2016

- 2016: Arab Youth: Challenges and Opportunities. December 1-3 2016, Limassol
- 2017: The Palestinian Naksa of 1967 and Its Implications, October 18-20, Diyar/ Dar al-Kalima University College in Bethlehem, Palestine.
- 2017: A Century of Migration, Displacement and Diaspora: Demographic Shifts in the Arab World - 1917-2017, November 29-December 3, 2017, Limassol Publication: Palestinian Christians: Emigration, Displacement and Diaspora. Diyar 2017
- 2018: Jerusalem: Religious, National, and International Dimensions, 22-25, 2018, Bethlehem Publication: Raheb, Mitri (Hq.), Jerusalem. Religious, National, and International Dimensions, Bethlehem: Divar 2019.
- 2018: Jerusalem: What makes for Peace. November 2018, Houston.
- 2018: Women's Rights in the Middle East Today: Law, Culture, and Religion, November 1-4 2018, Bethlehem Publication: Raheb, Mitri (Hq.), Middle Eastern Women: The Intersection of Law, Culture and Religion, Bethlehem: Diyar 2020
- 2019: Towards Inclusive Societies in the Middle East. October 2019, Aiya Napa. 22 Publication: Bethlehem, Diyar 2020.
- 2019: Bethlehem: A Socio Cultural History Conference: August 21-24, 2019, Bethlehem Publication: Bethlehem: A Socio - Cultural History Conference, Bethlehem: Diyar 2020.











1. Introduction and Background

The Dar Al-Kalima University College of Arts and Culture (DAK) is the first institution of higher education in Palestine to focus its education objectives on arts and culture. Its beginnings date back to the first Intifada in the late 1980s and early 90s. This era was marked by an engaged civil society, an active Palestinian intelligentsia, and a strong determination to end the Israeli occupation and create a Palestinian state. The new center, named "Dar An-Nadwa Addawliyya", also known as the International Center of Bethlehem (ICB), was officially launched on September 28th, 1995. Over the years, DAK has witnessed significant growth and expansion institutionally, programmatically, geographically, and financially. The embryonic ICB of 1995 developed steadily to become the Dar al-Kalima University College, now renowned both locally and internationally.

The year of 2020 marked DAK's 25th anniversary. The number of staff has grown from five in 1995 to over 100 employees in 2020. The number of direct beneficiaries has expanded from fewer than 1000 people in 1995 to over 60,000 per year today. In twenty-five years, twenty-three international conferences have been hosted, in addition to hundreds of local conferences and thousands of workshops. Over forty books have been published in English and Arabic with thousands of copies sold. Geographically speaking, DAK started its work in Bethlehem but has developed to become a national player active on both regional and international levels. The overall operational budget has also grown from the initial \$88,095 in 1995 to \$3.5 million in 2020. Over 25 years, projects totaling more than \$60 million have been implemented (\$27 million in construction and \$33 million in projects and programs). In addition, 26,000 square meters of new infrastructure have been constructed. In all the construction projects, DAK has emphasized aesthetics, cultural heritage, and eco-friendly buildings. Through DAK, hundreds of young Palestinians have been educated; through the civic engagement program, over 1000 young potential future leaders have been trained; through Diyar Academy for Children and Youth, the talents of thousands of children and youth have been discovered and honed; through the Dar Al-Kalima Health and Wellness Center, over 35,000 people have been served; and cultural events have enriched the lives of over 150,000 people. Currently, DAK is filing an application with the MoHE to reaccredit DAK as a fully fledged university.

2. Formulation of the Strategic Plan

The current health and political situation has triggered economic uncertainty, geopolitical changes, and social turmoil. It has placed everyone, DAK included, in a new, unexpected and complex context. This calls for a new planning and implementation paradigm that deals with a future of "uncertain uncertainty" based on fast iteration, accelerated learning, and dynamic management that can build resilient systems for the future.

In developing the Plan, a participatory interactive approach was pursued to enable DAK's management, faculty, and staff to undertake joint planning, consultative/transparent decision-making, and steering/control of the planning process, thus ensuring their ownership of the whole strategic planning and its results. Throughout the process, the 'snowball technique' has been used as a basic tool to assist participants to develop their own strategic plan in a collective manner.

The formulation of the Plan took place in three interrelated stages:

Stage I: Situation Analysis and Identification of Strategic Issues

Stage II: Developing the Draft Strategic Framework for 2021-2025

Stage III: Developing the Implementation Framework

The strategic plan was presented to DAK's Board of Directors and approved on December 11, 2020.

3. Prevailing Environment and Main Strategic Issues

Health, Political and Socio-economic Context

Internal Environment

External Environment

Main Strategic Issues

Based on analysis and understanding of the context, and the prevailing internal and external environment, DAK will focus in the coming five years (2021–2025) on addressing the following main strategic issues that are mutually dependent and interlinked:

- 1. DAK's Resilience
- 2. Transition from "College" to "University"
- 3. DAK's Sustainability
 - (a) Behavioral Sustainability
 - (b) Economic/Financial Sustainability
 - (c) Environmental Sustainability
 - (i) Sustainability of the Green Environment
 - (ii) Social Environment Sustainability
 - (d) Institutional Sustainability
 - (e) Policy Level Sustainability
- 4. Digital Transformation: Turning the Crisis into an Opportunity
- 5. Employability of Programs
- 6. Safeguarding Institutional and Academic Excellence

4. The Way Forward

DAK's Values 1.

All DAK's work is anchored in the following principles:

- In a context of continuing Nakbah, lack of security, and deprivation, DAK believes in the value of education for the flourishing of the individual and the building of human capital.
- In a context of overwhelming demoralization and disorientation, DAK believes in promoting art and culture to improve quality of life and build a dynamic Palestinian identity.
- In a context of excessive politics, DAK believes in caring for the polis.
- In a context of exclusive beliefs, DAK believes in investing in the culture of inclusion.
- In a context of segregation and spatial fragmentation, DAK believes in building bridges and platforms for intercultural dialoque.
- In a context of gender discrimination, DAK believes in advocating and bolstering gender equality.
- In a context of despair, DAK believes in creating room for hope and civic engagement.
- In a context of deteriorating human values and conditions, DAK believes in offering space for a culture of life.
- In a context of restrictions and suppression of thought, DAK believes in promoting freedom of expression and opinion.
- In a context of intellectual stagnation, DAK believes in broadening horizons.
- In a context of high unemployment, DAK believes in empowering the individual through quality education that enhances employability.
- In a context of overconsumption, DAK believes in stimulating producers and encouraging social entrepreneurship.

2. DAK's Vision

"That We Might Have Life and Have It Abundantly."

3. Mission Statement

"DAK is a Palestinian university with a focus on the arts and culture, committed to educating the next generations of creative leaders through innovative and high quality academic programs and lifelong learning opportunities, underpinned by a culture of entrepreneurship, research, and social and civic engagement."

4. Goal and Objectives

In line with the Education 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goal 4, and Palestinian national policies and priorities, DAK's overall goal is "To provide high quality and competitive learning pathways in the fields of arts and culture."

In the coming five years, DAK will strive to:

- 1. Provide opportunities for quality education and training that inspire and nurture talent for professional and creative careers.
- 2. Create spaces for relevant lifelong learning, civic engagement, and intercultural exchange.
- 3. Secure an effective and up-to-date working environment that promotes active learning and excellence.

5. Strategy, Thrusts and Directions

A. Strategy

To fulfill its mission and achieve its goal and objectives, DAK will pursue two interlinked and overarching strategies, namely 'differentiation' and 'focus':

1. Differentiation Strategy

From its initiation, DAK has distinguished itself from other Palestinian higher education institutions by offering unique academic programs in arts and culture. In fact, DAK is the first and only academic institution that focuses on these specializations, not only in the West Bank but also in the Gaza Strip where DAK recently opened a training and educational center. Yet, although DAK is currently the leader in the field, it may not be forever. Thus, DAK will continue to differentiate itself from other Palestinian higher education institutes by offering unique programs that meet the economic, cultural, social, and educational needs of the Palestinian community.

2. Focus Strategy

Correspondingly, DAK will work on broadening the choice of study opportunities with a clear focus on the employability of its graduates and their engagement in the community. By integrating lifelong learning, civic engagement, and entrepreneurship in its programs, DAK provides students with new contexts: exploration, experimentation, discussions on social issues, decision making and working life, thus enabling students to discover and plan their own path.

Intermediate Strategy

In addition to the two key strategies outlined above, the prevailing crises (the pandemic, plus the political and economic situation) call for a third intermediate strategy that will enhance DAK's resilience in both the immediate and long term perspectives.

B. Strategic Thrusts

The overall strategic thrust in the coming period is to transition DAK into a fully fledged university with a distinctive character and identity. This entails instituting an appropriate governance and organizational structure, creating robust managerial and administrative processes and procedures, and maintaining an appropriate mass of professional faculty members. Adequate, reliable and secured financial resources are also required to ensure continued delivery of quality services and growth. Additionally, the following strategic thrusts will guide all DAK's work in the coming five years, knit together its activities, and focus the efforts of faculty and staff:

1. Entrepreneurship

Development into an entrepreneurial university has been identified as one of the strategic issues that DAK needs to address to enhance the employability of its graduates. Cooperation between DAK and various partners/stakeholders in dual learning offers an abundance of opportunities and should be constantly reinforced. It is of paramount importance that such cooperation is optimized to ensure the effectiveness and relevance of the programs offered, and to create graduates with the necessary leadership and entrepreneurial capabilities.

Civic Engagement

Civic engagement has been central to DAK's ministry since the outset in 1995. As a university, DAK will continue to emphasize its commitment to serve the community by producing informed individuals and leaders motivated by concern for the common good of their society and the world at large. Along with entrepreneurial spirit, DAK will foster the values of responsible citizenry among its faculty, staff and students to build their civic preparedness and encourage them to adopt an active role in the community.

Research and Innovation 3.

Research and innovation are the backbone of any university and should be intrinsic to the entire learning process. Research must be incorporated into all courses and projects undertaken by students to link intuitive and rational creativity. This will allow students to develop critical thinking expertise, plus effective analytical, exploration, and communication skills. Moreover, students will be able to find possible solutions to questions in a methodical way through research. It will advance their knowledge and connect them with sources of information and networks of professional support.

Resource Mobilization 4.

The biggest challenge faced by DAK today is to secure sufficient and fairly reliable resources (financial and non-financial) that will ensure the continuation of its work and growth. To this end, DAK will pursue a more effective resource mobilization strategy that reduces vulnerability and, in the long run, will enhance viability, resilience, and sustainability.

Another concern of DAK is the limited local availability and scarcity of adequately qualified human resources in the field of arts and culture. This issue will be more critical as DAK becomes a university. DAK will devise a longterm human resources development plan to upgrade the qualifications of its existing faculty by encouraging them to continue their academic education. DAK will also strive to recruit outstanding graduates and support them in acquiring higher degrees.

> In addition, DAK will continue to build and mobilize its social capital to advance its mission and achieve its objectives.

C. Strategic Directions 2021-2025

Building upon accumulated experience and taking into consideration the prevailing situation, DAK will focus its efforts in the coming five years in the following strategic directions to achieve its goals and strategic objectives:

- Reduce DAK's financial vulnerability and enhance long-term financial viability, independence and sustainability by diversifying and intensifying resource mobilization interventions, with emphasis on securing funding for its projects and expanding revenue raised locally or self-generated.
- Develop robust mechanisms to deal with shocks and uncertainty at all levels of DAK, both in the immediate and the strategic horizon.
- Digitalization of DAK's internal processes and development of adequate digital service delivery mechanisms.
- Enhance the culture of institutional and academic excellence in DAK, and institute effective internal performance monitoring, quality assurance, and development mechanisms.
- Maintain and promote gender equity and equality in all DAK's work. Empower both men and women to play a proactive role in determining and shaping their lives, and that of the society in its political, economic, cultural, and social aspects.
- Lay the foundations for institutional structures, policies, and processes that will enhance DAK's 'entrepreneurial' capacities to become a driver of innovation and entrepreneurship. Also, strengthen the 'dual learning' process and connect it to the market.
- Ensure a stimulating internal cultural and intellectual environment for students.
- Implement quality and tailored lifelong learning programs.
- Promote proactive civic engagement, cultural expression, and intercultural dialogue.
- Enhance and broaden targeted branding, promotion, and marketing interventions.
- Continue to expand networking and the building of partnerships locally, regionally, and internationally.

Implementation Mechanisms

Restructuring of DAK

As part of the planning for the Strategic Plan 2021-2025, a new organizational structure has been developed to accommodate the envisaged transition of DAK into a university, and to reflect the growth and expansion of programs and operations witnessed during the last planning cycle. Within this new structure, functions and responsibilities are to be streamlined to ensure smooth and efficient implementation of the Strategic Plan, and to facilitate communication in and between the various units and departments. The structure comprises three main clusters, namely the Academic, Development, and the Finance and Administration clusters. Each cluster is headed by a vice president and includes departments/units that have common or closely linked functions. The current academic programs are grouped into four faculties: Faculty of Fine Arts, Faculty of Tourism and Heritage, Faculty of Architecture and Design, and Faculty of Cultural Management.

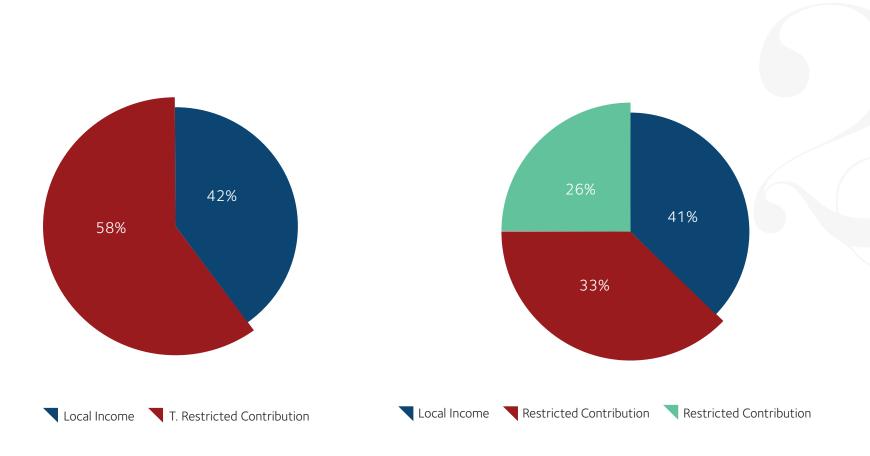
A Faculty of Graduate Studies will be established once DAK is accredited as a university by the MoHE. The Academic cluster also includes the Community College that will offer the diploma programs.

The Development cluster is responsible for research and development, quality assurance, entrepreneurship development, and grants and projects. It also includes the Institute for Civic Engagement and Lifelong Learning which promotes continuous education and civic engagement. Other non-university related functions such as Ajyal and the Diyar Academy for Children and Youth are transferred to the newly established Dar Al-Kalima Benevolent Society. The Authentic Tourism program is moved to the Finance and Administration cluster.

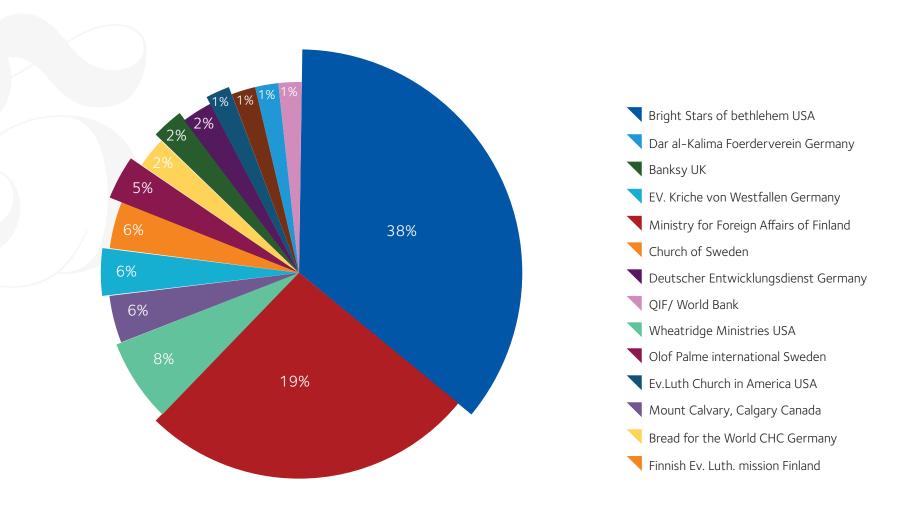


Local Income vs Total Restricted Contribution over 25 years

Revenue Sources

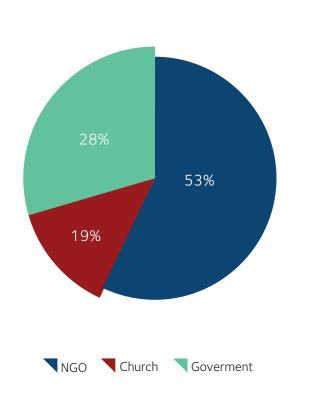


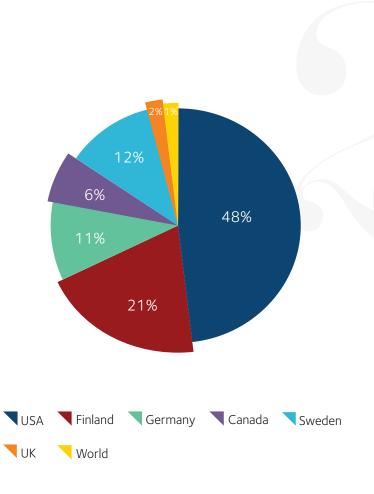
Contributions by Partners



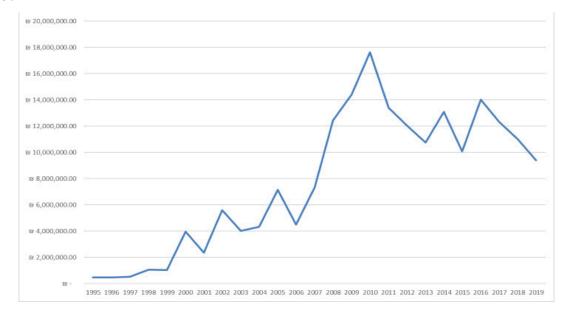
Grant by Category

Grant % by Country

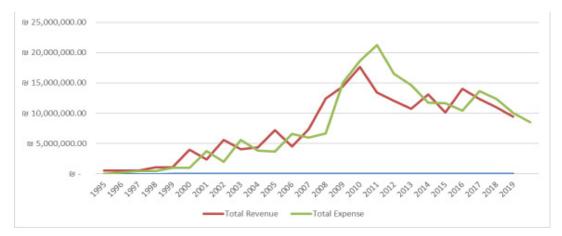




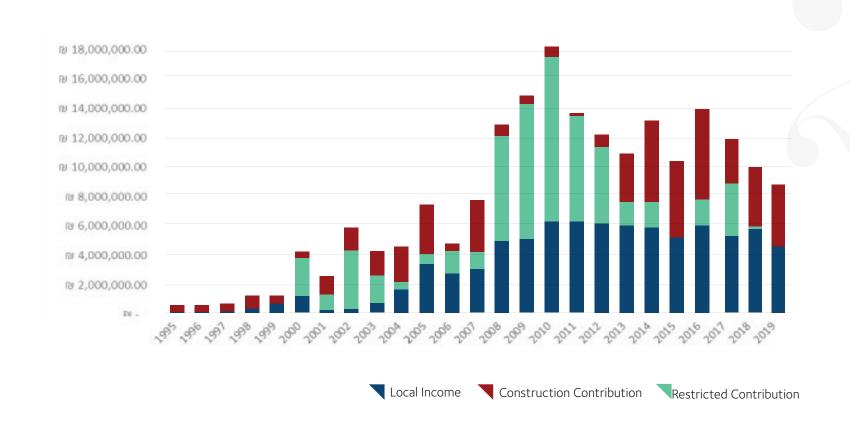
Total Revenue Per Year



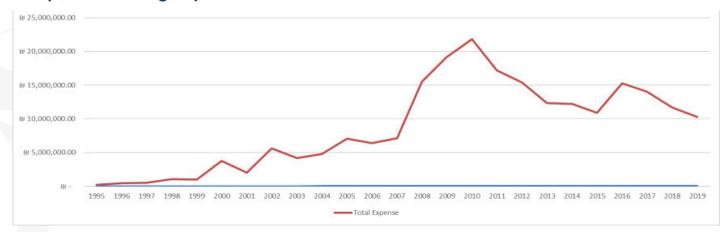
T. Revenue vs T. Expense



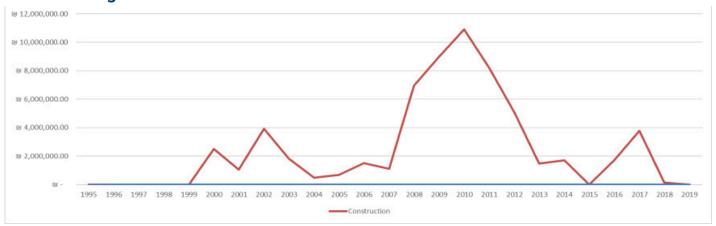
Revenue by Local Income, Construction & Restricted Contribution Per Year



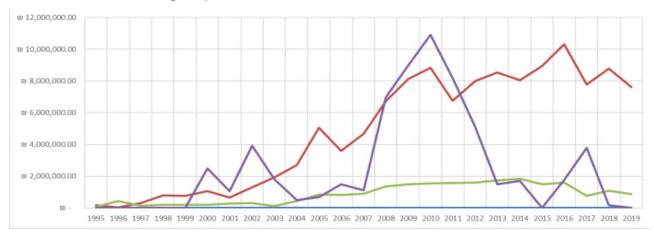
Total Expense including Depreciation Per Year



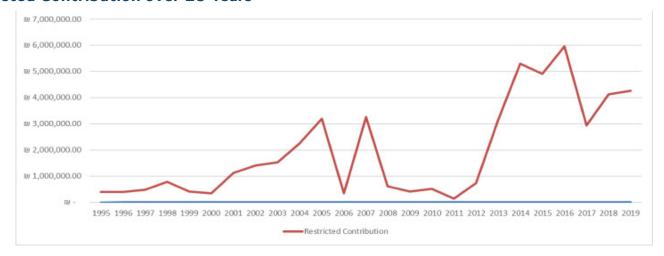
Construction Progress



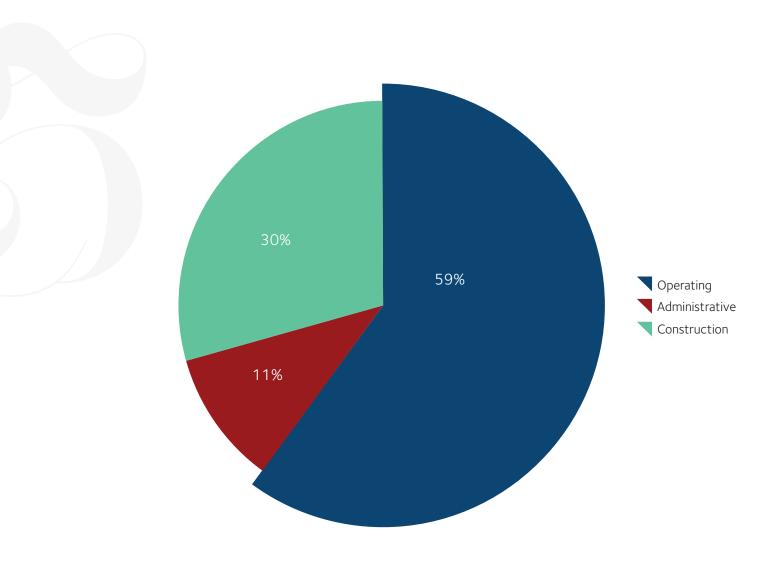
Expense Allocation excluding Depreciation



Restricted Contribution over 25 Years



Expense Allocation excluding Depreciation























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