

2 February 2004

Project Hope Progress Report

For the period of mid-December 2003 to the end of January 2004

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A. Jayyous

1. The “History of Jayyous” art project has been aimed towards the children in Jayyous drawing pictures of their houses, of traditional dress and of how they see their lives before and after the occupation. Many children wanted to draw pictures depicting Islam and pretty flowers, but the most common theme was the brutality of the occupation. On this basis, the art instructors felt it was best to name and categorize the art project according to what the children of Jayyous have made it.

Until the 31st December the instructors were holding lessons using the kids’ school books. Between the 31st of December and 16th January, was a holiday. During this period the instructors held art classes for the girls in the first week and for the boys in the second week. The instructors then selected some of the young artists to attend a further session 22nd of January. There were another 8 students, one class of boys and one class of girls, who were selected to attend a final art class on 29th of January. The instructors hope start mounting the pictures for display soon.

2. Male and Female English classes have continued successfully, though there tend to be a disproportionate number of girl’s classes at the moment. People in surrounding areas are hearing about the classes and want Project Hope to come and teach there. We are being asked to teach in Kufur Zebad and Kufur Jamal, and have been giving some private lessons program to surrounding areas. There are people who are willing to start traveling to Jayyous. However, with our current number of volunteers and funding available for Jayyous, we are too overstretched to expand much further.

3. One of the international volunteers can instruct Yoga. She is beginning yoga classes for women.

4. Project Hope in Jayyous has been facilitating and entertaining guests from Iceland, England and France.

B. Nablus

1. Nablus was the site extreme violence for most of the last half of December and the first half of January. This large city sees frequent invasions by the Israeli military, but this was a particularly violent string of assaults. It was very dangerous to enter the street, and many people were killed, while the basic infrastructure was further undermined. (For instance, this means that simple things like electricity in a neighborhood might fail.) Fortunately, things have returned to normal. Invasions now tend to be smaller in scale, size and lower in

frequency. However, this was not before causing major problems and devastation for the ordinary people of Nablus.

The violence has fortunately been followed by the 2nd of the two major Muslim holidays, Eid al Adha. This is the holiday of the Hajj, or pilgrimage, when millions of Muslims head to Mecca to perform one of the pillars of Islam. This week hundreds of millions of Muslims around the world are celebrating the holiday with their families, feasts and in get-togethers. Nablus is a majority Muslim city, with only small Palestinian Christian and Jewish populations in the vicinity.

These two events, one good and one bad, have, markedly restricted activities in Nablus. However, we were able to use the time for some activities and to make preparations for what will be a busy Spring and Summer.

2. Project Hope is helping children to celebrate Eid. There are two main free kid's parties planned: one in Nablus and the other one in Balata Refugee Camp. Another three parties will be held in more affluent Rafidia section of Nablus at the Al-Qaser Hotel, but in this case with tickets to cover costs. One of the international volunteers will join the local Palestinian "clowns" with a juggling act. We are in need costumes, and will gladly take donations. Our greatest need is for animal costumes. Please contact [NO LONGER VALID] if you can make a donation.

These shows are held for a large audience of children, normally hundreds at a time. The local Palestinian "clowns" are a great troupe of young volunteers who volunteer their time through a group they call "Space Toon." The group is their great creation, and is currently working under the banner of Project Hope. We plan to add a section about Space Toon to our website in the near future.

3. We are restarting drama classes after a lull in activities from the late summer. These will be simple and small classes, with larger projects to follow during the course of the year.

4. Following the end of the Eid al Adha holiday, Project Hope will be re-implementing a major art project. This is based on a project we have twice started since the summer. Both times, activities were disrupted due to problems in Nablus and the Refugee Camp they were taking place in. The idea is to use art therapeutically to help the troubled Palestinian children and youth. We will now use a more professional program, and have hired a local Palestinian artist to coordinate the activities.

5. One of the current international volunteers is a musician, and will put on music classes.

6. The first week of December an exhibition was held through Project Hope at the Happy Childhood Club in Balata Refugee Camp. Two Korean volunteers put up displays about their homeland for the local population. The activities took place the first half of the week, while the second half of the week the exhibition moved to An Najah National University.

7. In Nablus, Project Hope facilitated foreign guests, notably from Iceland, Spain and Canada.

C. Need for English Native Speakers

At the moment we are short on Native English speakers at the moment. They are very necessary for two of our important activities. One is to lead English classes. The second is to edit English language documents. A lack of native speakers has slowed our administration and has held back the number of English classes we could teach.

D. Website Update

Our new website is finally up in its initial version. It will be updated quite regularly from now on, and will show the activities Project Hope is undertaking at any one time. Many sections of the website are just draft version, while most of our designers and editors do not speak English as a first language, so please forgive any grammar or spelling errors to start. For now, we are concerned mostly that the general idea of everything is conveyed well.

You can find our website at www.palhope.net [NO LONGER VALID]

To contact us, email projecthope@gmx.net [NO LONGER VALID]