

Annual Report: 2012



Humanitarian Opportunities for Peace & Education

Presented by Project Hope

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1. Report Overview, Executive Summary and 2012 Achievements

Report Overview:

This report is divided into three sections; the first section (chapters 1-3) sets out the internal configuration and historical development of Project Hope; the second section (chapters 4-6) addresses external performance over the course of 2012; the third section (chapters 7-9) then provides specific items of analysis that are clearly directed towards improving performance over the forthcoming year.

Executive Summary and Achievements in 2012 highlights success and refers to the subsequent report. *Project Hope Profile/Overview* acquaints the reader with our internal structure, core objectives and history. *Meet Our Volunteers* details our international volunteer program and provides insight on our most valuable contribution. *Working to Make a Difference* distinguishes core and secondary programs, and briefly describes their development during 2012.

The *Statistical Overview* chapter breaks down key figures, with specific reference to core programming commitments. *Monthly Activities and Events* sets out a chronological breakdown of volunteer activities/community engagement initiatives. *Continuing Commitments* looks at our general performance over the course of the year and reaffirms core priorities. The final section then outlines the findings of our internal evaluation before *Future Plans* establishes an action plan for the future.

Executive Summary:

Project Hope has considerable cause to look back upon the preceding year with great satisfaction. Building upon the work of the previous year, we managed to expand our existing programs and simultaneously reinforce existing strengths. Although the figures suggest some fluctuation and possible areas of improvement, it is satisfying to report that we surpassed targets established in 2011.

Aside expansion in our core language programs, the breadth of our general educational output suggests that real and lasting progress has been made. This development is in turn predicated upon our ability to attract volunteers with wide-ranging skill-sets; strengthening recruitment has therefore enabled us to offer a far wider range of educational and recreational opportunities to our students than in previous years.

As an organization that seeks to embed its work within the needs and educational demands of the broader community, it is particularly pleasing that we have been able to engage with the wider community through our community engagement initiatives. In particular, the range of ways in which we have forged links and ties (whether through film screenings, guest lectures or public debates) has underscored our ability (and intention) to connect with local people and organizations.

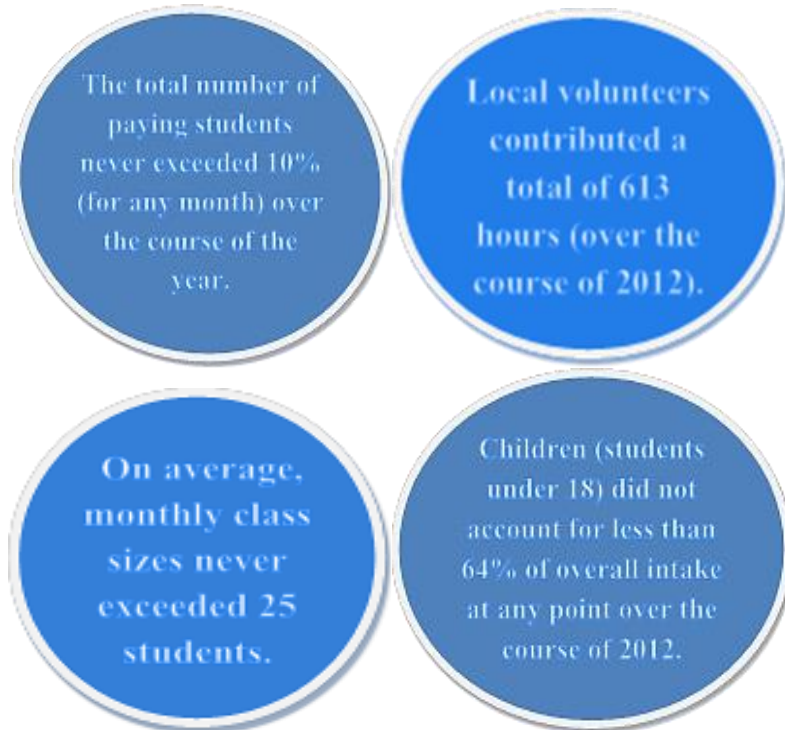
Our volunteers are at the heart of each of these initiatives, and it is therefore immensely pleasing to report that our total volunteer recruitment (over the course of the year) rose from 82 to 113 volunteers – an increase of 38%. At the same time our overall course provision has shown a still more striking improvement, as an exponential increase of both student and class numbers attests (refer to the *Statistical Overview* section of this report).

While the scope and coverage of our educational and recreational programs has dramatically increased, it is essential that this expansion does not come at the expense of core values and principles: gender equality, the promotion of advancement through education and the provision of educational opportunities to the poorest and most disadvantaged sections of our community, must remain at the heart of everything that we do. While much has already been achieved, there is more that we can do.

2012: Achievements

While working with local Palestinian communities in the West Bank in 2012, we can point to a number of clear successes and achievements. Whether through lending support to partner organizations, providing volunteer assistance to broader community events/initiatives, or simply through expanding existing programs, it is clear that we have made a real contribution; from our perspective, the following achievements stand out as being particularly noteworthy. Over the course of 2012 we:

- Ran 784.5 classes for 9143 students.
- Taught 395.5 English classes to 5146 students.
- Enlisted 113 international volunteers over the course of the year (these volunteers came from countries as diverse as New Zealand, Germany and the Philippines).
- Provided new and innovative opportunities for artistic expression, whether through photography, art or music.
- Enabled students to engage with social and political issues (primarily through dramatic mediums).
- Participated in numerous musical events around our home city of Nablus (in collaboration with Music Harvest).
- Provided training for partner organization teaching staff.
- Provided opportunities for broad sections of the community to engage with information technology.
- Enabled Project Hope volunteers to gain and develop new insights/perspectives.
- Provided numerous opportunities (see below) for artistic expression and development.
- Enabled students to participate in ad hoc classes on subjects as broad as social justice, peacebuilding and First Aid.



2. Project Hope Profile/Overview:

Introducing Ourselves...

Project Hope emerged from the chaos of the second intifada; founded under incredibly challenging circumstances, it initially struggled through a social context defined by military incursions, arbitrary recourse to force and the denial of human rights.

Although subsequent years were far from easy, Project Hope emerged as a key actor within – and to a lesser extent beyond – its home city of Nablus. Substantial progress has been made in the years since 2003, and we can take pride in what we have achieved in our first decade. In comparison to its initial stages of development, Project Hope now appears much better equipped to alleviate some of the challenges and obstacles that confront Palestinians in their everyday lives.

Initially conceived (upon its foundation) as a limited initiative that would confine its efforts to the city's four refugee camps, we have subsequently expanded to become the largest (in terms of volunteer numbers) volunteer-based organization in the West Bank. At present, in addition to our well-established English and French language programs, we also provide a range of broader educational opportunities in subjects that range from photography to graphic art.

Objectives

Founded upon a clear capacity-building ethos, Project Hope has, from its inception, been aware of the problems that frequently arise as unintended consequences of international assistance/engagement. That is why it is important to remember that we have done our best to be driven by our Palestinian team, and not just by the vagarious nature of international funding trends or the short-term fads in development research.

Founded upon a commitment to forge more effective links between the two levels, we have committed to:

- Empower participants and consolidate their ability to make their own choices.
- Build Palestinian capacity and contribute to ancillary social objectives.
- Build and construct value systems that are founded upon mutual respect and regard.

Governance Structure and Legal Status

Project Hope is a registered charity in Palestine and Canada, and supported by a primary partner charity Firefly International in Britain. Its founding entity “Humanitarian Opportunities for Peace and Education” (in Toronto, Canada) and its Executive Officer manages donations through Canada and governs administrative protocol concurrent with that registration. Project Hope's practical and logistical (or ‘on-the-ground’) operations are directed by its local headquarters in Nablus, Palestine, including fundraising and outreach remotely attached to that headquarters.

Within the Nablus office, Project Hope's Director is primarily responsible for managerial operations (including staff oversight/recruitment and volunteer management) and the Treasurer assumes responsible for financial affairs (including budgeting, financial oversight and financial reporting). The local team is further divided in accordance with functional specialization (into I.T support, volunteer assistance and volunteer co-ordination roles). In addition, we provide MA and PhD graduate students internship opportunities as Project Advisers providing macro-level administrative support.

3. Meet Our Volunteers

International Volunteer Program



Total Annual Volunteer Numbers went from 82 (2011) to 113 (2012) – an increase of 38%

Since the initial learning curve of setting up our program in such a challenging context, our global volunteer recruitment has become our strongest point. Without them, Project Hope would not be in a position to offer any of the opportunities and services that it currently does. Their work is essential to our core subject provision (English and French) as well as the broader opportunities (including Spanish, Dutch and music activities, amongst others) that we are able to offer to the wider community.

Aside from their active teaching contribution, our volunteers are also heavily engaged with the wider community (refer to the *Events/Activities* section of this report). The expansion of volunteer numbers also enables the international volunteer program to become self-sustaining because volunteers' financial contributions helps offset some of the costs of placing them in programs and looking after their stay. This also provides Project Hope with breadth of independence to fund the most important aspect of its work, the many Palestinian and international volunteers working through it.

Our International Volunteers

Over the course of the year, our volunteers have benefitted from numerous training opportunities, including workshops and team-building events. These activities have been overseen both by experienced volunteers and external trainers. In providing opportunities for participants to develop their skills in a range of areas (including teaching English as a secondary language, utilizing different teaching techniques and teaching English grammar), these training opportunities have also contributed to the ongoing development of Project Hope's skills base.

Our volunteers tend to come from a wide range of backgrounds (both personal and educational/vocational) and this has accordingly provided us with a number of opportunities to provide additional educational and recreational opportunities. Aside from assisting with internal training activities, volunteers have also drawn upon their expertise to provide classes in law, social justice, art and psycho-social therapy (amongst other courses).

Although volunteer recruitment has been subject to some challenges (typically stemming from work with our partner organizations or our own internal mechanisms), we have nonetheless managed to ensure over

the course of the year that overall recruitment has remained relatively constant and broadly in line with Project Hope's requirements and existing program provision. Many of the upgrades we made to the volunteer recruitment system that were introduced in 2011 still appear to be functioning well, and we are accordingly still on course to scale up volunteer recruitment over the course of 2013.

Broader Volunteer Initiatives

We take every opportunity to educate our volunteers about the occupation and broader political issues. Over the course of the year, volunteers have engaged with films as diverse as *Being with Juliano* (about the founder of Jenin's Freedom Theatre), *Paradise Now* (about the second *intifada*) and *La Viste De La Fanfare* (which follows an Egyptian band's attempt to perform at the inauguration of a Palestinian arts center).

In addition, volunteers have also benefitted from the opportunity to engage with a number of guest lectures that have been provided by notables such as Nasser Arafat (renowned architect and author), Professor Jaen Clam and Zaher Shashtari (PFLP spokesman). These lectures primarily focused upon Palestine-related issues, although they also occasionally engaged with broader political/cultural issues and themes.

These films and lectures are valuable because they help us to educate our volunteers about the current political situation and to provide diverse opportunities to engage new and original insights. Upon their return to their own countries, volunteers will be in a much better position to challenge the misinformation, misrepresentation and falsification that continues to prejudice external perceptions of Palestinians.



Ayesha, a 26-year-old volunteer from the UK, and her Level Two English students get to grips with their learning material.

International Volunteers: National Profiles

	January-February	March-April	May/June/July	*	September/October	November	December
USA	5	1	10		7	6	4
Germany	1		2		1	1	
Sweden	1	1	1				
Australia	2	1	2		1		
Netherlands	1	1			2	2	1
Britain	2	3	1		3	4	2
New Zealand	1	1			1		
France	3	2	10		2	1	2
Belgium		1	1		2		
Norway					1		
Italy			1		2	2	2
Poland					2	2	
Canada			2		1		
Philippines			1				
Switzerland			1				
Total (per month)	16	11	32		25	18	11

*No figures for August

4. Working to Make a Difference

English Language Program

When we unveiled our English language program, we simultaneously announced our intention to become a leading English language provider within the West Bank. The English language program continues to account for the vast bulk of our program output and participation in the program, both in terms of students and volunteers. It grew substantially over the course of 2012 - this development is particularly pleasing as in the project's initial stages concerns were expressed about whether the English program could reasonably aspire to self-sufficiency.

Our English language programs were initially intended to supplement existing English language provision in and around Nablus – this explains why the program explicitly focuses upon conversational language, complementing and making up for weaknesses of English teaching within Palestinian schools has conversely tended to focus upon more book/rote-based pedagogical techniques/approaches.

Over the course of the past year, we have also made amendments to the teaching structure, so as to make it easier for our volunteer teachers to teach the material. The placement exam has been amended, so that we now focus upon specific skills and abilities. We have also adopted the Oxford University Headway books as our curriculum; in addition, the English teaching has now been divided into 12 different sub-levels in response to teacher feedback.

In comparison with other English language service providers in and around Nablus, we continue to provide our services at highly competitive rates. At all points over the year, **90% of our English classes were offered FREE of charge**. Over the last year, we ran 395.5 classes, and thereby enabled 5146 students (from UNRWA principals to schoolchildren) to consolidate and develop their English language skills.

French Language Program

While it operates upon a considerably smaller basis than its English language counterpart, the French language program has nonetheless made considerable strides over the course of the past year. Although English is the pre-eminent international language and, as such, is more widely in demand within the West Bank, French nonetheless continues to account for a considerable proportion of our overall educational provision.

Although their volunteer numbers are considerably smaller in scale, our French volunteers have nonetheless managed to meet existing demand through their continued dedication and efforts. For example, in January and February, three volunteer instructors served 325 students in Nablus, adjoining refugee camps and surrounding villages. Over the course of the year, we also succeeded in expanding the geographical outreach of this particular program.

Graphic Novel Program

The Graphic Novel program, which began in January 2011, entered its third edition over the course of 2012. The program currently operates under the leadership of Dr Ustaz Hamad, a graphic design artist who is currently employed by An-Najah University. The program combines the written word with graphic art within a strikingly original format to strikingly portray the social and political realities of occupation.

As part of the course, 14 students (of varying levels of artistic ability) are provided with an opportunity to develop their graphic design and art skills (in a set of specially organized classes). After deciding upon the technique that is best suited to their novel, the students begin the process of drafting and editing their own

stories. After completing their stories, the participants then teach the skills that they have developed (to selected groups of schoolchildren).

Art/Activities

Although art can be integrated in any one of our programs, it is perhaps in the area of therapy that its full impact (and potential) is most fully realized. In providing opportunities for participants to engage with repressed memories or sensations, art can provide new modes of creative expression that are geared towards socio-political outcomes (our graphic novel program is explicitly founded upon similar expectations).

In the initial stages of the year, with the assistance of funding from the Canadian International Development Agency, we were able to develop an art therapy course that was premised upon this model of psycho-social healing. As part of this program, 16 international volunteers were trained to offer classes to children in centers across Nablus. A total of eight classes engaged with 74 children.

In contrast to our English and French programs, our art classes tend to operate on an *ad hoc* basis; they are established as a consequence of sufficient student demand and volunteer availability (for this reason, most of the art/activities classes tend to be held in the summer, when volunteer intake is at its highest). Student participants are not confined to a specific artistic activity, ranging from theatre to photography and film-making. This is why, depending upon the relative importance of the relevant activity, such activities are alternately classified - within our reports and evaluations - as 'art' or 'activities'.

Music

The creation of a partnership relationship with Music Harvest, a non-profit Irish NGO, has provided us with an exciting opportunity to renew our working relationship with Kevin Bohan, a former volunteer. His charity's distinctive name derives from his belief that the planting of initial seeds will contribute to the reaping of later harvests: as an artistic vision it is one that we are very much attuned to.

Given that we are already fully aware of what Kevin has to offer, we feel that it will be possible to establish a smooth working relationship within a relatively short space of time. Under the terms of the agreement between the two organizations, Project Hope will host individual music teachers (provided by Music Harvest) over the course of the year. In the summer, for a period of around ten weeks, a team of Music Harvest volunteers will participate in public performances, provide music lessons and engage with the broader community.

During summer 2012, Music Harvest volunteers led activities classes at the Red Crescent, The Children's Cultural Centre (CCC), the Multipurpose Community Resource Centre (MCRC) and the Woman's Programme Centre (Balata). A substantial majority of the participants were children between 6-14 years.



Shall we shake on it? Hakim (Project Hope director) and Kevin put the finishing touch to their partnership agreement.

Drama

At Project Hope, we take great pride in the range of volunteers that have engaged with our work; this diversity applies across age, social background and, perhaps most importantly of all, experience. By drawing upon these volunteer resources, we are able to offer program participants a broad range of cultural, social and political opportunities/insights.

Our drama classes, which are currently organized on an *ad hoc* basis, illustrate how we are able to match volunteer expertise to educational and recreational opportunities. In September and October the influx of volunteers with experience in the dramatic arts enabled us to provide class participants with an opportunity to write their own scripts and engage with the finer details of theatre performance.

Social Engagement/Justice

In keeping with our commitment to promote values of co-operation, equality and mutual regard, we have also run a limited number of classes in social justice and peacebuilding. These classes are important because they provide participants with an opportunity to engage with insights and perspectives that are directly applicable to an ongoing reality of dispossession, displacement and occupation; this is particularly important as the repressive political climate offers limited opportunities in this respect.

Additional Activities

In September and October, Pawel, a 27-year-old from Poland, ran four first-aid classes, in which he instructed children (three classes) and adults (one class) upon basic first-aid techniques. Over the course of these months, a second volunteer (Daryl) also initiated a number of photography classes, in which local participants were provided with the opportunity to develop their photographic skills and abilities. Both initiatives were particularly noteworthy to the extent that they were accompanied, and to a considerable extent enabled, by fundraising activities on the part of the aforementioned volunteers. In November, our volunteers also assisted with educational activities at the third Palestinian Science Festival held at An-Najah National University.

Summer Camps

Although our preference is for volunteers to make a commitment of several months, we often make an exception in the summer months, when a considerable number of our volunteers come in to work on a one-month basis. The bulk of these volunteers will work in the summer camps, which are held in different locations in and around Nablus. In addition to these classes, we hosted a summer camp for deaf children that provided classes in art, drama, dance and hip-hop. Other children were also provided with an opportunity to engage with classes in arts and English (Aseerah and Bureen), painting (Beit Forik) and photography/sports (Nablus's Old City).



Young students take the opportunity to pick up first-aid tips from Pawel, a Polish volunteer.



Wajeeh, one of our local Palestinian volunteers, takes part in the third Palestinian Science Festival.

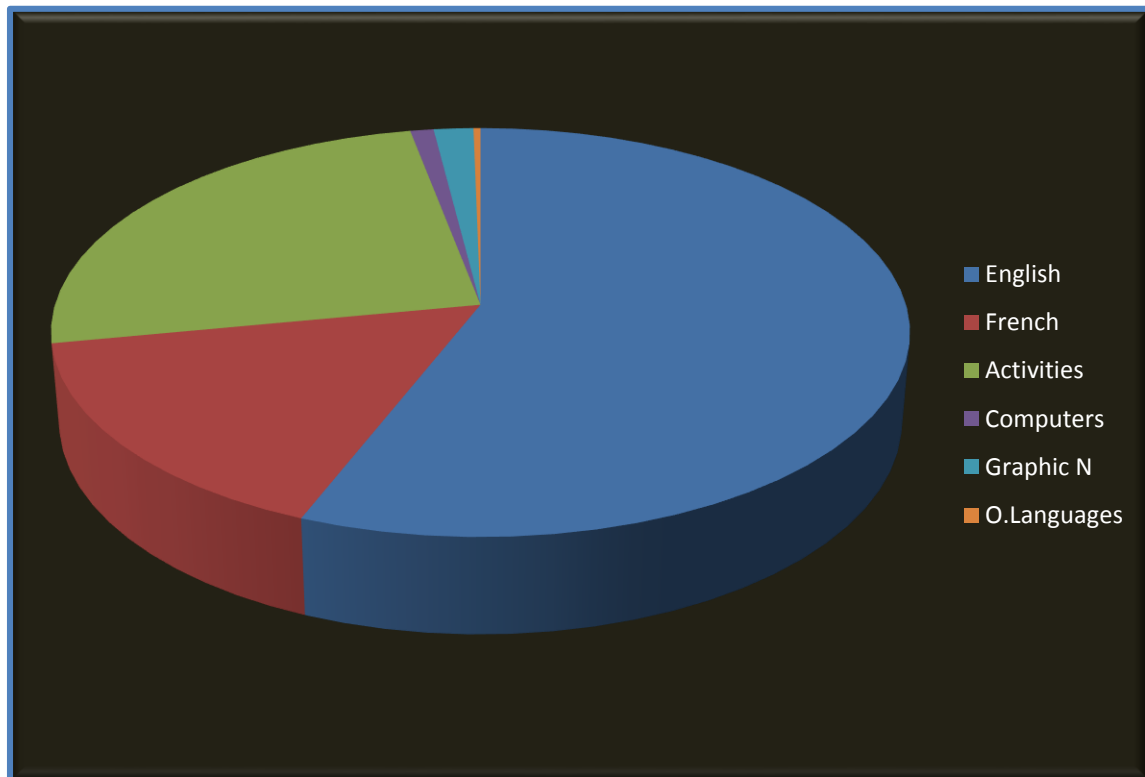
The total number of 2012 classes increased massively: up from 289 (2011) to 784.5 – an increase of 171%. Total student numbers experienced a similarly spectacular increase: up from 4146 (2011) to 9143 (an increase of 121%).

5. Statistical Overview

Number of Students (per course/month)

	January/February	March/April	May/June/July	September/October	November	December
English	830	562	786	1218	1194	556
French	130	325	581	150	85	184
Activities	248	70	1428	266	148	127
Computers	81	62				
Graphic Novels		80				
Other Languages				6	23	3
Total (per month)	1289	1099	2795	1640	1450	870

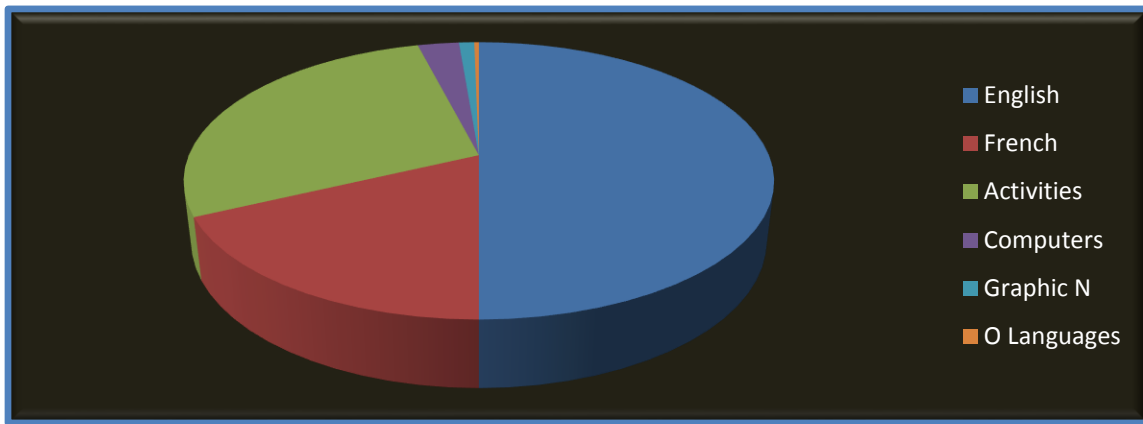
Students per Course (Annual)



Number of Classes (per month)

	January/February	March/April	May/June/July	September/October	November	December
English	61	43	127.5	72	47	45
French	10	22	74	12	6	14
Activities	10	4	164	21	11	8
Computers	8	5				
Graphic Novels		8				
Other Languages				3	6	3
Total	89	82	365.5	108	70	70

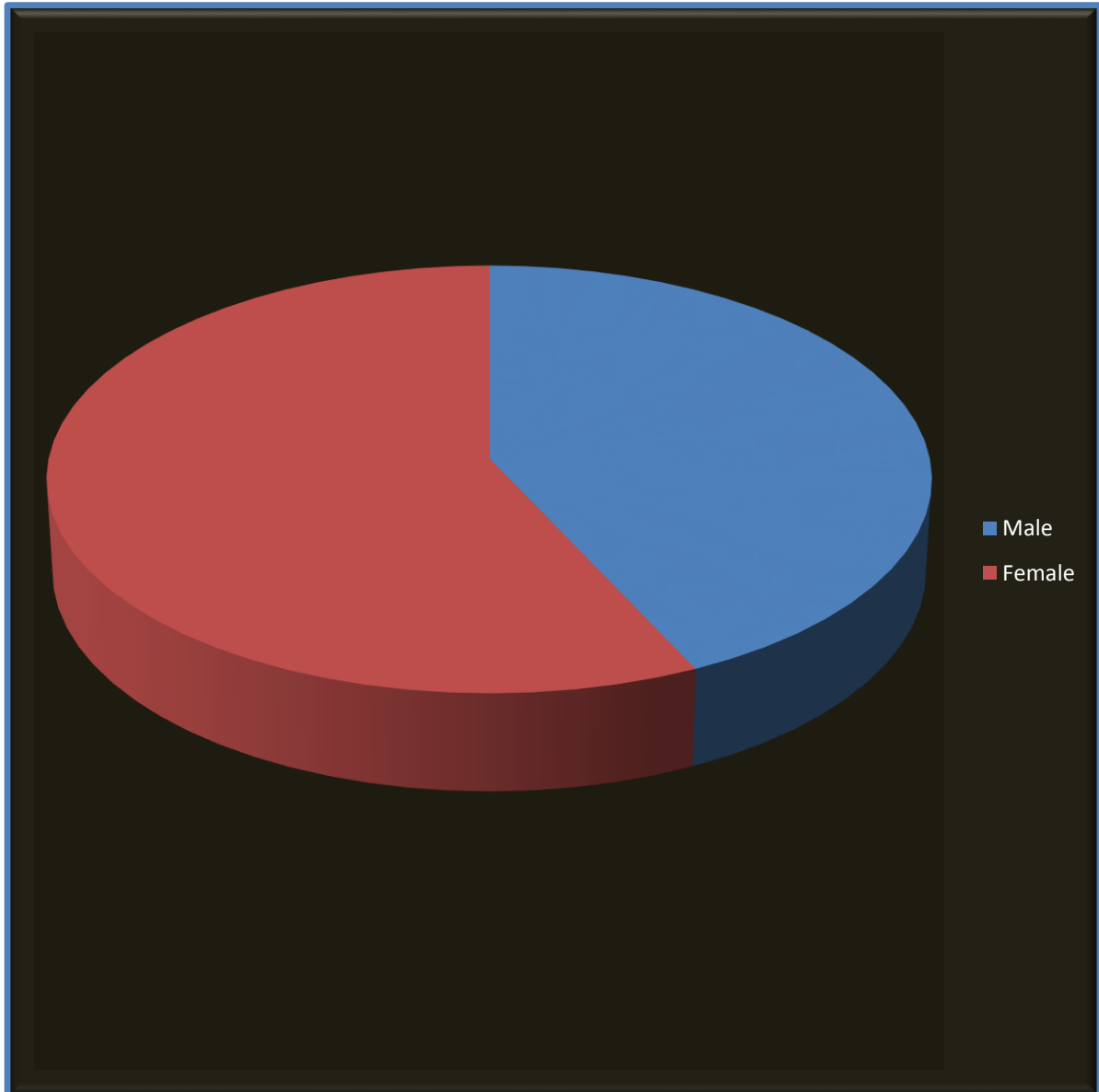
Class Subjects (Annual)



Class Composition: Student Gender (Monthly Overview)

	January/February	March/April	May/June/July	September/October	November	December
Male (%)	40	35	43	48	46	46
Female (%)	60	65	57	52	54	54

Class Composition: Student Gender (Annual)





One of our students proudly displays her work from the les infant a Balata photo exhibition that was held in Balata Camp in December. The event was organized by Julie, one of our French volunteers.

Class Composition: Age Groups (Monthly Overview)

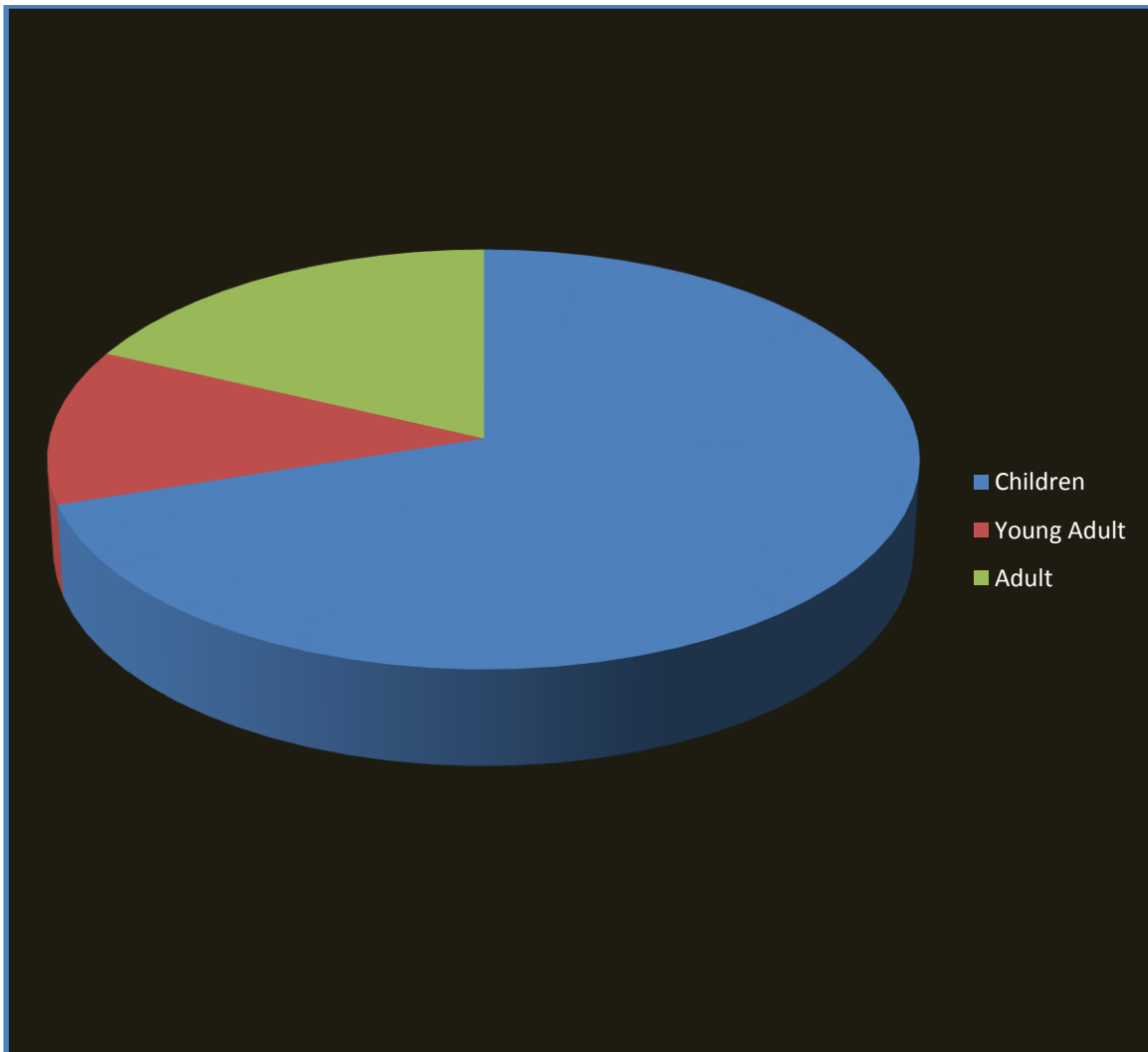
	January/February	March/April	May/June/July	September/October	November	December
Children (%) *	70	73	79	68	64	64
Young Adults (%) **	7	9	17	14	11	11
Adults (%) ***	23	18	4	18	25	25

*Under 18.

**18-25

*** 26 and Over

Class Composition: Age Groups (Annual)



6. Monthly Activities and Events

January-February

Classes, Activities and Volunteers

- Three volunteers provided presentations (during teaching workshops) to newly arrived international volunteers (on topics as diverse as teaching English grammar, the incorporation of games into lesson planning and the general teaching of English as a second language).
- Teaching workshops were organized for English teachers at Balata Camp Girls' School and Al-Ein Camp Boys' School.
- A British volunteer provided guidance to (governmental school) counselors and An-Najah (University) upon appropriate responses to post-traumatic stress.
- Youngsters who participated in Project Hope drama workshops performed in a set of comic sketches and a play about the personal and social costs of drug addiction (on February 26).
- An American volunteer provided a law class to students at An-Najah National University.

Community Outreach, Events and Special Guests

- Danish and Palestinian dancers collaborated to give a public performance of breakdancing.
- Spectators enjoyed several film showings, including, amongst others, *Being with Juliano* (a profile of the assassinated founder of Jenin's Freedom Theatre), *Budrus* (which explores the Palestinian village of Budrus and its resistance to the apartheid wall) and *Le Sel De La Mar* (which follows an American-Palestinian woman's first visit to Palestine).
- Nasser Arafat, the renowned architect, author and director of the Rehabilitation Committee in the Nablus Municipality, provided a talk about the reconstruction of Palestinian homes in the aftermath of the second *intifada*.

March-April

Classes, Activities and Volunteers

- New drama classes started in Nablus and Balata.
- New French and activities classes began in Nablus and the surrounding area.
- An international volunteer began a new social justice course for local youth.
- Hamdi Manko students began an e-pal exchange with American students to discuss issues of peace and co-operation.
- Two international volunteers initiated an IELTS preparation course for teachers at An-Najah University.
- An American volunteer created a yoga class for local volunteers.
- An international volunteer created an art therapy class for Balata Camp youngsters.

Community Outreach, Events and Special Guests

- In April, Project Hope volunteers attended performances of classical music (by Arcangelo, a French group) at An-Najah University and the French Cultural Centre.
- In March, Project Hope staff organized an appreciation dinner for the volunteers.

- In March, Project Hope attended a performance by the as-Sirk as-Sagheer circus school (at An-Najah University).
- Project Hope volunteers attended showings of *Paradise Now* (a Palestinian film about the second *intifada*) and *Rachel Corrie* (a film about the American peace activist who was killed by the IDF in Gaza).
- Professor Jaen Clam gave a lecture (entitled: *The Culture of Love and Intimacy – a Comparison between the West and the Orient*).

May, June and July

Classes, Activities and Volunteers

- Project Hope organised a summer camp in which deaf children were provided with opportunities to engage with art, drama, hip-hop and dance.
- An American volunteer developed and taught a peacebuilding class in Balata Refugee Camp.
- A French volunteer taught football in the city's football stadium.
- Project Hope also organised classes in outlying villages; creative opportunities were provided in Beit Forik (arts and painting), Aseerah (English and arts) and Bureen (English).
- A summer camp (offering opportunities in arts, photography and sport) was hosted in the Old City.
- Eight Music Harvest volunteers provided introductory music lessons in and around Nablus.
- Multiple showcase events which publicly demonstrated Music Harvest's work (incorporating music, drama and song) in and around Nablus.
- The preparation process for the third edition of the Graphic Novel was initiated.

Community Outreach, Events and Special Guests

- Project Hope volunteers attended a jazz performance by a trio from Russia.
- Volunteers attended a performance by the Ramallah Orchestra in Ramallah.
- Volunteers attended a (primary) school graduation ceremony in Balata Refugee Camp.
- Saed Abu Hijlih spoke to volunteers about the BDS (Boycotts, Divestment and Sanctions) movement.
- Volunteers attended a special performance by the Nablus Circus School (which was established by a former Project Hope volunteer) at An-Najah University.

September-October

Classes, Activities and Volunteers

- As part of Project P, two Project Hope volunteers (Anna and Pavel) produced videos on broad-ranging topics.
- Drama classes were taught by three Project Hope volunteers (Gertjan, Sylvester and Laura).
- Pavel began teaching first-aid classes.
- Project Hope and Music Harvest signed a new contractual agreement.
- Project Hope volunteers helped Bureen villagers to pick olives.

- Zaher Shashtari, PFLP (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine) gave a speech about the forthcoming municipality elections.
- Project Hope volunteers worked on a mural at Al-Aqsa kindergarten (in Askar Camp).

Community Outreach, Events and Special Guests

- Project Hope volunteers attended public showings of *Arna's Children* (a film about Jenin's Freedom Theatre), *Jenin, Jenin* (which engages the IDF's brutal destruction of the town's refugee camp during the second *intifada*) and *Waltz with Bashir* (which depicts Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon).
- Project Hope volunteers participated in a football match at Heten.
- Project Hope volunteers covered EAPPI training days by staying at Yanoun.

November

Classes, Activities and Volunteers

- Performance of oriental music by Alkamandjati at An-Najah National University. Project Hope volunteers were in attendance.
- International volunteers participated in Arabic classes, under the supervision of Majid and Muhammad.
- Volunteers helped villagers to pick olives at Zwata village (on the 6th of the month).
- International and local volunteers participated in face-drawing as part of the National Youth Week.
- David and Greta assisted with mural drawing at Rojeeb School.
- Raghav, as part of his weekly series, hosted a discussions about ongoing events in Gaza and the efficacy of non-violent resistance.

Community Outreach, Events and Special Guests

- The third Palestinian Science Festival took place at An-Najah National University. Project Hope's local volunteers assisted with educational activities.
- A documentary about the Palestinian Nakba was screened at the French Institute. Both Project Hope volunteers and members of the public were in attendance.

December

Community Outreach, Events and Special Guests

- Véronik Bontemp presented his book (entitled *The City and the Heritage in Palestine: An Ethnographic Study about Soap Factories in Nablus*) at the French Cultural Centre on December 2.
- A photography exhibition, entitled *Les Enfants a Balata* (The Children in Balata), was previewed at Balata Refugee Camp by one of our French volunteers on December 5.
- *Le Livre de la Jungle*, a play, was previewed at Dar-el Fonon (in Askar Camp) on December 9.
- The famous photographer, Shreef Sarhan, held a public viewing of a number of photographs at the CCF (as part of the *Gaza Exists* exhibition) on December 12.

7. Continuing Commitments

Our educational programs continue to be guided by a number of core commitments. In focusing upon improving our performance in each of these respects, we anticipate that our overall performance will simultaneously show signs of improvement. For this reason, we continue to emphasize our ongoing commitment to smaller classes, gender equality and a broader volunteer base.

Ensure that Class Sizes do not Exceed Existing Resources

Class size is a crucial determinant of teaching quality. It is equally challenging for the students to learn if the class size is too big, especially when so many students are hyperactive or distracted because they suffer from post-stress disorders associated with the violent confrontations from the occupation. Teaching large classes is challenging enough for trained, let alone untrained, teachers. In order to ensure that resources are concomitant with student numbers, we endeavor to ensure that class sizes are kept within manageable limits. This is shown by the fact that, over the year, our classes never exceeded an average of 25 students. To a substantial extent, this average was also a reflection of the fact that we were able to increase the number of classes that were on offer over the course of the year.

Ensure Classes are Flexible and Responsive to Demand

Flexibility in our class scheduling demonstrates the extent to which our volunteer recruitment efforts have kept pace with existing demand. This is particularly important as overall demand tends to fluctuate over the year (especially during summer, which is our busiest period). We must accordingly make strenuous efforts to ensure that our recruitment is fully responsive to these fluctuations and shifts.

Ensure Gender is Mainstream and Proactively Engaged

In accordance with our commitment to equal rights of participation in the social, political and economic spheres, we try to ensure that the gender composition of our classes promotes broader social objectives. Although equal participation cannot be conceived as an end in itself, it does nonetheless represent an important step forward within a culturally conservative society (such as Nablus). Over the course of the year, we have been very successful in ensuring that participation within our classes is in line with this objective: thus, whereas in the first half of the year women accounted for the sizable majority of participants (at times accounting for up to 65% of a single class), by the end of the year the male-female balance had leveled out to a state of rough equivalence.

Ensure the Consolidation and Growth of Existing Programs

It is the consolidation and expansion of existing programs that provides perhaps our most impressive achievement. A brief comparison of the 2011 and 2012 figures helps to demonstrate this. In 2011, a total of 4146 students attended 289 classes; in contrast, by 2012 both figures had increased to 9143 students and 784.5 classes (a respective increase of 121% and 171%).

8. Lessons Learned

To a large extent, 2012 has been a successful year for Project Hope. We have exceeded many of our initial expectations and have also ensured that we have consolidated previous achievements. However in order to ensure that our forward momentum is sustained, we must ensure that lessons are learned and incorporated into all aspects of our working practices. The following section tentatively sketches some ideas and also provides an insight into how these suggestions will be integrated and proactively applied.

Adapt to Staff Turnover

As is the case across the voluntary sector, our charity has a high rate of staff turnover. As a consequence of competing against organizations with considerably larger resources, we find it hard to retain highly skilled staff members. Given that staff turnover has persisted over time, it appears appropriate to conceive of this as a structural feature which we have to adjust to.

Perhaps the most obvious way in which this can be achieved is to ensure that there is a higher level of managerial oversight (something that is linked to improved feedback mechanisms – see below). In addition, by arranging training sessions for newly arrived staff, we can also ensure that there is a greater degree of continuity over time.

Incorporate Volunteer Feedback at Every Opportunity

Our volunteers are well-placed to provide an insight into what we are doing well and, conversely, what we are not doing so well. We have already incorporated their feedback into the design of our curriculum (and accordingly amended the number of levels that are taught over the course of a single year). However, it is also clear that this feedback could also be sought in other respects, most notably with regard to the level of support that volunteers receive and general organizational performance.

It would seem appropriate to put in place a combination of formal and informal processes that would be enable us to benefit from volunteer feedback: to some extent we are already doing this – there are already meetings and our program coordinators meet with volunteers on a regular basis. Of course, we are limited by the small number of paid staff we have engaged to support volunteers and by our equally limited management hours available. However, it is also apparent that we could be doing more – most notably through questionnaires, participatory training events and brainstorming sessions. Our volunteers are our most valuable resource and we should accordingly incorporate their insights/perspectives at every opportunity.

Plan Ahead

Our volunteer program generally works very well, to the extent that applicants currently far exceed the number of volunteers who are ultimately accepted. However, we must be alert to the problems that can potentially arise and act accordingly. To some extent, some of the challenges that we face are unavoidable (e.g. last-minute cancellations, the caprices of the occupation regime and other exigencies). Others, however, can be easily avoided by thinking ahead and ensuring that the appropriate systems, processes and structures are in place.

Ensure that the Interview Process Sufficiently Identifies Volunteer Abilities

Due to the efforts of our volunteers, we were able to teach a wide range of activities over the course of the year. Although the language programs (French and English) account for the vast bulk of our activities, we

were able to simultaneously teach in subjects as broad as first aid and yoga. Due to the difficulties involved in setting up sustainable programs, we offer broader courses on an *ad hoc* basis.

If we are to continue to do this, then we need to be sure that we are fully aware of our volunteers' abilities and skill-sets. The best way to ensure this is to liaise with volunteers and to fully establish their skills and abilities prior to arrival – if we do this it will be much easier to ensure that we can schedule appropriate classes (and make other preparations) in advance of their arrival.

Due to the fact that the vast bulk of our broader activities take place during the summer months, it should be easier to ensure that this is the case, as we generally recruit for the summer camp classes several months in advance.

Focus upon Core Programs

We are proud of the range of activities that we are able to offer to participants; however, we must ensure that our programs are self-sustaining. At present, it is not sustainable for us to offer any of these wider activities upon such a basis. Due to financial restrictions, it is consequently prudent to focus upon core programs and to ensure that they remain at the centre of everything that we do.

For the foreseeable future, we will therefore concentrate upon our language programs while continuing to offer broader activities upon an *ad hoc* basis. This will be relatively easy to ensure as our existing (non-language programs) are not particularly resource-intensive (whether in terms of teaching or volunteer resources). In continuing to offer these options on a flexible basis, we can also ensure that they do not detract from our core programs.

9. Future Plans

Improve Feedback Mechanisms

For much of the past year, our efforts have mainly concentrated upon improving participation. This was essential in order to ensure that our existing courses would become self-sustaining. This has been reflected in improved participation rates and the exponential growth of our language programs.

However, in order to ensure that we do not expand participation at the expense of quality, we need to ensure that we have appropriate feedback mechanisms in place. Over the course of the next year, we will take steps to ensure that participants' feedback is both solicited and fed back into our programs. By ensuring that we do so, we will in turn be able to provide more assurances about the quality of our educational output.

Expand Training Provision

Although we began the year by providing training workshops for volunteers, our commitment in this respect dropped off as the year progressed. We need to ensure that teaching experiences are handed on and that new volunteers are provided with a wide range of opportunities to develop new skills and competencies.

Over the course of the year, our international volunteer intake will include a number of individuals with teaching experience. Although the total number of volunteers with this experience will vary at any one point, we should take steps to ensure that their experiences and insights are handed on. In addition, a number of our local volunteers are trained teachers and they too could play a central role in the expansion of our existing training provision.

Strengthen Existing Ties with Other Cultural/Educational Organizations/Institutions

Our close working relationship with some of the key institutions of Nabulsi cultural and social life (notably the French Institute, An-Najah University and the Edward Said Conservatory) has derived benefits in a number of ways throughout 2012. To take just one example, our close relationship with the French Institute has enabled us to host community-based events, artistic performances and film viewings.

In a broader sense, we continue to collaborate closely with An-Najah University in the development of various educational activities; in addition, our work with the Edward Said Conservatory enables our volunteers to learn from musicians, composers and singers of the highest caliber and to participate in the development of high-quality musical performances. As an organization with limited resources, our working relationships are of strong importance to us, and we will accordingly seek to identify ways to strengthen them over the course of the forthcoming year.

Continue to Recruit from our Volunteer Base

Previous efforts to recruit staff externally have proven to be difficult and time-consuming. This is by no means a problem that is isolated to ourselves or our sector: aside from the difficulties involved with identifying suitable candidates, there are invariably always difficulties involved in integrating external candidates into the ethos, working practices and values of the recruiting organization.

Recruiting staff from our volunteer base is one obvious way to overcome some of these problems. Promoting internally has a number of advantages; as a consequence of their long-term commitment, we can be sure that local volunteers are equally committed to our work and broader social objectives. Equally, as a direct consequence of their work alongside our international volunteers and local coordinators, we are in an excellent position to assess their strengths and the various ways in which they can contribute to our work. Finally, it offers us another opportunity to support them in their professional development, while rewarding them for their commitment to the community

Broaden Opportunities and Participation

Although most of our classes still tend to be concentrated in Nablus, we have begun to expand our teaching activities to a wider range of outlying villages and areas. Aside from benefitting as broad a range of participants as possible, the expansion of our operations will ensure that communities who are relatively disadvantaged (particularly in relation to their urban counterparts) receive the help, assistance and support that they require and deserve.

Appendix: Geographical Distribution

Project Hope worked with the following local partners over the course of 2012:

Nablus City

1. Al-Aqsa University
2. Al-Ein Centre
3. Al-Manhal (Rafidia)
4. Al-Quds Open University
5. Al-Quds Open University
6. Al-Wafa School
7. An-Najah University
8. Ashbal Al-Aqsa Kindergarten
9. Awtar Centre
10. CCF (French Institute)
11. Charitable Association
12. Child Cultural Centre (CCC)
13. Doctors' Residence Centre
14. Hamdi Manko (Municipal Centre)
15. Happy Childhood Centre
16. Hidaya Kindergarten
17. Itihad Orphanage (Itihad Hospital)
18. Itihad Society
19. Kroom Ashour
20. Lawyers' Syndicate
21. Legal Clinic
22. MCRC (Old City)
23. Medical Relief Centre
24. Nablus Boys' School (UNRWA)
25. Nablus Girls' School (UNRWA)
26. Palestinian Women's Committee Union (PWCU)
27. Palestinian Women's Club
28. Rawda College
29. St Joseph School
30. Sharaf Kindergarten
31. Sorna Kbar Kindergarten
32. Tanweer Al-Awtar Centre
33. Women's Corner (Municipal Centre)
34. Women's Studies Centre
35. Women's Working Department (Ministry of Waqf)

Askar – Refugee Camp

1. Al LED Association
2. Al-Wafa Kindergarten
3. As Safeer (New Askar)
4. Dar al-Fanoon
5. Hiwar Centre
6. Mothers' School (Askar Camp)
7. Social Development Centre
8. Women's Programs Centre

Balata – Refugee Camp

1. Al-Salaman Centre
2. Balata Boys' School (UNRWA)
3. Balata Girls' School (UNRWA)
4. Kofr Saba Association
5. Local Committee for the Disabled
6. Naher Oja Centre
7. Yazour Centre

Al-Ein Refugee Camp

1. Al-Ein Boys' School (UNRWA)

36. Yallo Center
37. Youth Development Association
38. Youth Rehabilitation Centre

Villages/Outlying Areas

1. Al-Badan Village
2. Al-Jneed Village
3. Arabeh Village School (UNRWA)
4. Asserah Village
5. Azmout Village
6. Beit Foreek
7. Bilal Najar Centre (Boreen Village)
8. Boreen Village
9. Jneed Women's Centre (Jneed Village)
10. Majdal Bani Fadil
11. Mothers' School (Beit Forik Village)
12. Red Crescent Association (Aseereh Village)
13. Rojeec Centre
14. Salem Village
15. Sebastya
16. Qusra Village