

YWCA PALESTINE ANNUAL REPORT 2024



“Steadfast & Committed”

Fostering Progress
Creating Positive Change

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“INTERGENERATIONAL STRENGTH FOR A JUST FUTURE”

Mayadah Tarazi – YWCA Palestine Operations, HR & International Relations Manager

As I reflect on the year 2024, which is my 24th year working at the YWCA Palestine, I feel a deep mix of pride, hope, and sometimes frustration. This year, like many before, has brought its challenges; violence, injustice, and uncertainty that continue to affect women, youth, and children in our communities. But despite these struggles, our commitment to women’s rights, equality and just peace has never wavered. It is this commitment that keeps me going every day.

What gives me real hope is seeing the intergenerational leadership at the YWCA. Young women stepping forward with courage and new ideas inspire me every day. At the same time, I have learned so much from the incredible YWCA members, former General Secretaries, and colleagues who have walked this path before me. Their wisdom, experience, and dedication have shaped me and strengthened our movement. I feel honored to walk alongside both generations, sharing my experience while learning from their energy and vision. This powerful connection between generations is the heart of our movement and the reason I believe change is possible.

Over the years, I have been lucky to receive many opportunities that shaped who I am today. The journey hasn’t always been smooth especially when it came to moving up and being recognized. But with every challenge, I grew stronger. Holding a senior position now means more than just a title; it means having the power and responsibility to open doors for others, to amplify women’s voices, and to push for real change. International platforms have also been a vital part of this journey. They gave me space to share my story, connect with others, and gain strength and perspective that I bring back to my work every day.

Our commitment to women’s and youth rights and just peace is at the center of everything we do. Empowering women, and creating opportunities for youth are not just goals they are essential steps toward a just and peaceful world. Even in difficult times, I believe in our collective power to create a future where every woman can live with dignity, safety, and hope.

As we move forward, I am inspired by the resilience and determination I see around me. Together, across generations and borders, we will keep pushing for the equality and justice that all of us deserve.

Here’s to continuing this important journey, together.

INTRODUCTION

Despite worsening political and economic conditions, the YWCA of Palestine will remember the year 2024 as one where we miraculously managed – despite all odds – to achieve meaningful outcomes.

It was a privilege to build local and international grassroots partnerships and collectively strengthen local communities and enhance the sustainability of our associations in Ramallah, Jericho, Bethlehem, and Jerusalem, as well as Aqbet Jaber and Jalazone refugee camps, not to mention other target areas.

It has been an honor to take an active role in enabling women, especially young women, to raise their voices, advocate for their rights, and take charge as decision-makers. We remain committed to our vision that they are agents of change and leaders in society where equality, freedom, tolerance, justice, peace and dignity are promoted. We are deeply grateful to our partners and supporters whose unwavering commitment has been instrumental in advancing our work.

Allow us to reflect on some of our highlights from last year as we persevere in our mission to empower women and youth to demand, exercise, and protect their economic, social, and political rights.

DESPITE ALL ODDS

The first quarter of 2024 coincided with the consistent Israeli aggression against Palestinian people, especially in the Gaza Strip. In few months, more than 31,000 people (and over 10,000 women) had been killed, and thousands wounded.

In 2024, the bloodshed did not stop: The genocidal war persisted, and the entire region underwent heavy consequences. Over the course of the year, more than 45,000 Palestinians were killed. Homes, residential buildings, properties, and infrastructure were overwhelmingly destroyed, with over 1.9 million people forcibly displaced. Entire populations were left deprived of food, water, electricity, fuel, and shelter – let alone the right to live in safety.

The rest of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, have also remained under the Israeli military blockade, with restrictions imposed across the territories. In the first months of 2024, Israel significantly increased movement restrictions by adding 1,300 temporary and numerous permanent checkpoints that deepened the isolation and fragmentation of Palestinian communities. These policies of apartheid and forced displacement have been beyond devastating. The horrific situation leaves a profound impact especially on women, children and youth who remain subjected to various forms of violence, and undermines their mental wellbeing, resilience, and sense of hope.

With that said, these times have reinforced our perseverance to empower women, young women and girls through enhancing accessibility to educational and cultural activities, creating and developing economic opportunities, raising awareness, and advocating for human rights. Guided by our three thematic areas of work, namely Leadership Development and Civic Engagement, Economic Justice, and Just Peace, we remain committed in our genuine belief that young people are the agents of change and given the right opportunities and support, they can build a brighter future for all that promotes freedom and justice. Reminded of our significant role in society, we stand together, in our intergenerational leadership, persisting in the fight for the right to life with integrity.

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2024

"RISE UP!"

YW4A (Young Women for Awareness, Agency, Advocacy, and Accountability)

The YWCA of Palestine took the lead in this strategic program that provided spaces for young women to amplify their voices, advocate for legal, political and gender reforms, all while increasing their participation in decision-making processes. We delivered various training sessions on subjects integral to women's rights and gender justice, including feminist counseling methods, psychological first aid, positive masculinity, domestic violence, workplace harassment, electronic blackmail, and social and behavioral change. Using the international leadership framework, the program utilized a participatory approach towards enabling young women to become decision-makers while advocating for their gender-based rights.



Photo From the YW4A Training Course in Jericho. 2024. Ruba Odeh, center (in green).

"This five-year program was like a precious baby. I vividly recall how it came to life with our partners' meeting at the end of 2019. Little did we know at the time that the challenges to come would be so unprecedented; first with the outbreak of the Coronavirus, and then the genocidal war on Gaza. Its remarkable success, despite all odds, was extraordinary. It demonstrates the young participants' genuine dedication in realizing women's legal rights and achieving gender justice policies. Seeing such a committed, dedicated, and empowered generation of young women persisting for their rights and raising their voices about them gives me hope."

Ruba Odeh, Women, Peace, and Security Coordinator, YWCA of Palestine.

2024

22

YOUNG WOMEN

participated in the "Rise Up!" transformative leadership training methodology.



2025

845

PARTICIPANTS

through peer-to-peer outreach, the number had quadrupled.



33

ADVOCACY INITIATIVES WERE LAUNCHED DURING THE YEAR.

23 of these were self-initiated by young women after discussions with women's rights organizations and groups, and in coordination with community leaders, church-based organizations, and local authorities.



Safe Spaces

With a strong network circle around us fueled by the support of our partnerships with women's coalitions, the YWCA of Palestine paved the way for young women to actively partake in Safe Space gatherings in Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Ramallah, Salfit, and Nablus. These included meetings at ministerial levels, where young participants gained knowledge and support in preparing and presenting legal policy papers and advocacy campaigns.

Young participants took part in tens of grassroots and national initiatives, and media and advocacy training. They built connections and participated in policy safeguarding processes (such as personal status legislative reforms, gender-equitable laws, and national advocacy plans). Young women also engaged in national coalitions and advocacy campaigns, including the 16 Days of Activism against GBV.





The results of these projects, including Naseej, exceeded expectations, as young women took on the lead in developing position papers tailored to local community needs. With peer-to-peer awareness in check, committees were established with experts in the field to prevent conflict and combat VAW. Areas of work included seven targeted areas across the four governorates of Bethlehem, Hebron, Jenin, and Nablus.

Achievements included

A total of 61 awareness workshops on women's and family issues were held, reaching 1,277 women and girls.

32 training days (4 days per location) were implemented on preventing and resolving family disputes using the developed guide, based on the Rise Up transformative leadership methodology. 157 young women were trained, followed by 54 additional training days conducted by first-round trainees, reaching 526 young women.

A guide on practices for preventing and resolving local disputes related to GBV was created, including a response mechanism under Palestinian systems.

An Early Warning and Community Response System for GBV cases was established via local committees in each community. These included women leaders, legal advisors, social activists, council members, and administrative bodies. Through these safe spaces, support and mediation were provided in 65 cases, with 8 cases referred to professional institutions for follow-up.

Creative Ventures

With the support and mentorship of the YWCA of Palestine, young women produced ten awareness-raising short films on key subjects (such as child marriage and workplace harassment), equipping them with transferrable skills for sustainable advocacy.

The YWCA of Palestine also hosted plays and theatrical performances on subjects including domestic violence, economic violence, and workplace harassment. Over a hundred young women attended the events that were followed by discussions with legal experts and policymakers on these issues.



Women, Peace, And Security

The YWCA implemented significant community-led initiatives in alignment with UNSCR 2250 on Youth, Peace, and Security towards strengthening and building young community leaders.

“She Leads” – The Academy for Young Women:

This program, implemented in the West Bank, enhanced young women’s leadership skills and active participation in society through intensive training (including TOT), interactive learning, theoretical and practical sessions, visits and consultations with experts and stakeholders in the field. It incorporated communication, public speaking, facilitation, policy dialogue (within the governmental and NGO sectors, various institutions, and international partners), grassroots internships, knowledge transfer, networking, conflict resolution and mediation on key issues aligned with UNSCR 2250 and 1325.



In August 2024, the YWCA of Palestine received more than 200 applications (and selected 23) from young women (aged 18-23) for the third cohort of the academy. This demonstrated the importance of the program in providing young women with the needed knowledge and skills to foster their leadership towards creating positive change.



In December 2024, the YWCA of Palestine celebrated the graduation of **21 young women** in the “She Leads” second and third cohorts, highlighting the program’s achievements over the past three years.





“[This program] resonated deeply with my identity as a Palestinian refugee and a woman. It provided a platform for me to engage with fellow young women leaders and connect with representatives from the YWCAs of Korea and India. The workshop broadened my understanding of social issues affecting women globally, highlighting various forms of injustice they face.”

Mudalala Abed, July 2024.



“Youth participation in community and political work is essential . . . it brings fresh perspectives, boundless energy, and innovative solutions to societal challenges . . . Everyone has something valuable to contribute, and collective action can drive lasting change.”

Duaa Tuffaha, December 2024.

Youth, Peace, And Security Community-Led Initiatives

These community-led initiatives had a pivotal role for youth resilience and security in the west bank, and the wellbeing of children, women, and community members at large. They focused on the preservation of cultural (folklore/embroidery) and environmental (treeplanting/sustainable farming/greening/recycling) heritage, as well as maternal and child welfare (including those with disabilities).



These **21** community-led initiatives involved **151** youth activists.

They reached over **33,000** people, including about **2,600** people with disabilities.



Success Story:

Vera Shahin, a young woman with visual impairment from Beit Jala, demonstrated her active engagement to the program through the embroidery skills training. She went on to become a member of the YWCA General Assembly, consistently attending meetings and activities while contributing her insights towards shaping the association's future vision. She has inspired her peers and affirmed that community participation is not exclusive but rather a right and opportunity for everyone who believes in their capabilities.

To read more about these community-led initiatives, press [here](#)



Exceptional Youth Activities



25 young men and women attended a three-day training course on self-affirmation, personal storytelling, creative thinking, communication, and time management.



“From Clicks to Progress: Youth Digital Pathways for Sustainable Development” webinar on digital advocacy and youth rights, with focus on digital inclusion, confronting cyber bullying and blackmail, and promoting digital advocacy for national, social, and human rights issues.

Besides the trainings and online sessions, a pleasant event was organized on International Youth Day at the “Youth Village” in Kufr Ni’ma, west of Ramallah, with **over 120 young women participants from various governorates**. This included team building activities and presentations addressing young women's political participation, child marriage, workplace harassment, domestic violence, and others.



“Sanad” Community Campaign aimed to raise awareness among youth about the importance of mental health and help-seeking strategies, while reducing stigma and promoting inclusion. It was implemented in six communities (in Hebron, Tubas, al-Jalazoune and al-Am’ari refugee camps, the Jahalin Arab Community, and Jenin refugee camp). 22 young women and men participated in the training program to build their capacities in mental health advocacy.



"I may not be able to stop marginalization and violence against women or guarantee their safety and protect them from its effects, but we must be certain that through continuous awareness work we can make a big difference. When we reach comprehensive awareness of our community about the dangers of violence, this gives them hope for peace and security."

Sarah Awawdeh, Hebron.

Youth Platforms

With the aim to empower youth to be agents of change and work toward peace, justice, and gender equality in Palestine, a series of trainings were carried out through the YWCA of Palestine in cooperation with key institutions in the governorate for **27 young participants**.

The project provided youth with the needed tools to become catalysts for change, influence policy at local, national, and international levels, and lead advocacy and awareness campaigns. Participants also gained research skills and engaged in discussions on political participation, gender justice, and GBV, in accordance with UNSCR 2250 and UNSCR 3350.



"My participation in the YWCA Palestine's programs considerably boosted my capacities, as I gained leadership skills, good communication, and [learned] how to establish community initiatives. These experiences boosted my self-esteem and prepared me to face challenges and strive for constructive social change."

Amina Hasna. September 2024.

Vocational Training Centers

The vocational training centers of the YWCAs of Ramallah and Jerusalem paved the way for women's social entrepreneurship opportunities, opening up possibilities for building skills towards self-financing. They each offered professional diplomas integral to entrepreneurship, business management, and personal skills, among others, and supported community-driven initiatives such as in tech and social innovative processes, industry, trade, agriculture, and food processing.

The centers also offered multimedia-related specializations combining photography, marketing, and graphic design, all the while enhancing participants' roles to create marketing plans for businesses. Short courses were also offered for enhancing professional skills, with the commitment to employ as many graduates as possible.



Women's Economic Empowerment and Entrepreneurship

It was a highlight that the YWCA centers maintained **full operations and salaries, as well as team spirit, during a year marked by war, military incursions, closures, economic strain, and extreme hardship** — particularly in Jericho and Ramallah. The associations fulfilled the duty of maintaining employment of staff, and achieving certification for students, while empowering women with employment-ready skills during those times.



Notable Achievements



The YWCA Vocational Training Center in Ramallah partnered with women's groups al-Jalazoune refugee camp in offering a six-session food production course (**covering pickling, dairy production, and traditional ghee making**).

30–25 participants completed both theoretical and practical sessions, receiving certificates of participation and expressing increased confidence in their skills.



The YWCA of Jericho's Production Center continued to produce the "khairat Ariha" treasured pastries, cakes, biscuits, traditional dishes, and seasonal products. They also offered culinary training, and beauty and hairdressing courses (in demand in the Palestinian market). They also carried out legal and social awareness sessions at the local and ministerial levels on topics including court procedures, women's rights, mental health, business development, cyber blackmail, and the labor market.



The YWCA of Aqbet Jaber Camp's Kindergarten started classes as usual despite the difficulties. The atmosphere stood out for its harmony, discipline, social interaction, and friendship. **68 children** graduated in the "Class of Freedom" in the kindergarten courtyard, attended by local officials, parents, and YWCA leadership, with children performing special segments. Various activities were held throughout the year, with holidays, seasonal harvests, health and hygiene sessions, and celebrations that proved important for the mental health and recreation of children as well as mothers and families. The Kindergarten was also happy to host a number of international delegation visits. On the morning of Tuesday, 30 May 2024, the YWCA Kindergarten in Ramallah/Al-Jalazoune graduated its sixty-fifth class of children from the camp, celebrating with an open day that featured recreational activities for the children. The number of children graduated was 60.



Social Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development

The economic empowerment and entrepreneurship Program developed and funded existing small businesses for youth. The program aimed to economically and socially empower young entrepreneurs to build their capacities and skills in the field of social innovation and the development or creation of entrepreneurial projects.

Support and guidance were provided to youth who have innovative entrepreneurial projects with a positive impact on their communities. The initiative enhanced social innovation by providing space, tools, and support for participants to acquire relevant experiences and enrich their passion and ideas for social solutions.

The program included 80 hours of training in topics such as entrepreneurship skills, business management, personal skills, and the establishment of small businesses. As a result, 11 innovative and socially impactful income-generating projects were funded in different sectors such as technology applications, industry, trade, agriculture, food processing, and more. A total of 22 young women and men from various areas of the West Bank participated in the training.



Fabric of Our Lives

The YWCA of Palestine's "**Fabric of Our Lives**," an advocacy initiative highlighting the experiences of Palestinian refugee women and the personal stories of displacement following the Nakba of 1948 through handcrafted olive wood dolls dressed in traditional attire, has remained significant as it raises awareness about refugee rights, supports women's livelihoods, and advocates for abiding by international law.

In 2024, the project proceeded with the involvement of **11 women** from al-Jalazone camp, producing **300 items** including shawls, cushion covers, scarves, dolls, and dresses representing displaced cities, maintaining its aim to provide economic support for women.

International Advocacy and Partnerships

In 2024, various women (including young women) from the YWCA of Palestine got the opportunity to participate in international delegations, including:



Two young women at the SVRI/GBV conference in South Africa, three at the HRC in Geneva, and two at the Global Conference on Women's Rights in Islam (GCWRI) in Indonesia.



13 participants were nominated for the Human Rights Council (HRC) engagement, thanks to the successful international advocacy training, and nine young women attended the annual gender justice conference.



Three delegates from the YWCA of Palestine attended the CSW68 in NYC and held a parallel event on "Illuminating the transformative impact of young women's empowerment," attended by 50 participants, and met with key UN Women representatives and Palestine's UN envoy as part of the official Palestinian delegation.



Challenges and Restrictions



It is worth mentioning that all this work was achieved in an intense setting with continuous inhuman Israeli policies and aggression against Palestinians, with daily invasions and closures – particularly in the northern West Bank and refugee camps – with military permanent and random checkpoints, not to mention settler attacks on Palestinian communities.

Political tensions escalated significantly in 2024, leading to intensified occupation practices that severely impacted daily life. Whether meeting online, within the Palestinian Territories, or even internationally, the subject of safe transportation for young women was highlighted. For the YWCA to ensure the safety of the young women was a real challenge under the extraordinary circumstances.

In the context of Palestine, many of the discussions delved into creating methodologies and advocacy campaigns to ensure safety and access amidst the escalating violence. After October 2023, freedom of speech, especially on digital platforms, faced heightened risks, with individuals facing persecution and imprisonment for online expression. It was also often near impossible to meet due to closures and constraints. These challenges directly affected the participation of young women and staff, hindering their ability to implement and participate in program activities.

Still, as staff members note, it was a highlight to see more transformational leadership events come to life in person in 2024. The YWCA endorsed efforts to develop a risk management plan, and established communication protocols, including WhatsApp groups in order to ease communication about mobility. It also organized in-person trainings with overnight accommodations to reduce commuting through checkpoints, and increased budget allocations for transportation to ensure safer commuting, in addition to providing online training.



Special Thanks to Our Supporters

With Deepest Gratitude to Our Donors and Supporters

As YWCA of Palestine, we extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to all our partners, donors, and supporters who have walked this journey with us. Your solidarity, trust, and commitment continue to inspire and sustain our mission as we work toward justice, dignity, and equality for women, youth, and communities across Palestine.

We are especially grateful to those who provided core funding, a vital contribution that allowed us to sustain our programs, build institutional strength, and respond with flexibility to the needs on the ground.

To all who partnered with us through projects, campaigns, advocacy efforts, or direct support thank you for standing with us.

We warmly acknowledge and thank the following donors and partners for their contributions over the past year:

World YWCA, Bread for the World (BFTW), YWCA/YMCA Sweden, Y Global Norway, Kerk in Actie, Finn Church Aid, Enable, United Church of Christ and Global Ministries, YWCA Japan, Christian Aid, African Women's Development Fund (AWDF), UN Women/Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF), and UNFPA, Scottish Church.

We are also deeply appreciative of those who supported us through solidarity statements, advocacy campaigns, and global actions, your voices have amplified ours and reminded us of the power of collective action.

Together, we continue to plant seeds of hope, resilience, and transformation. Thank you for being part of our shared journey.

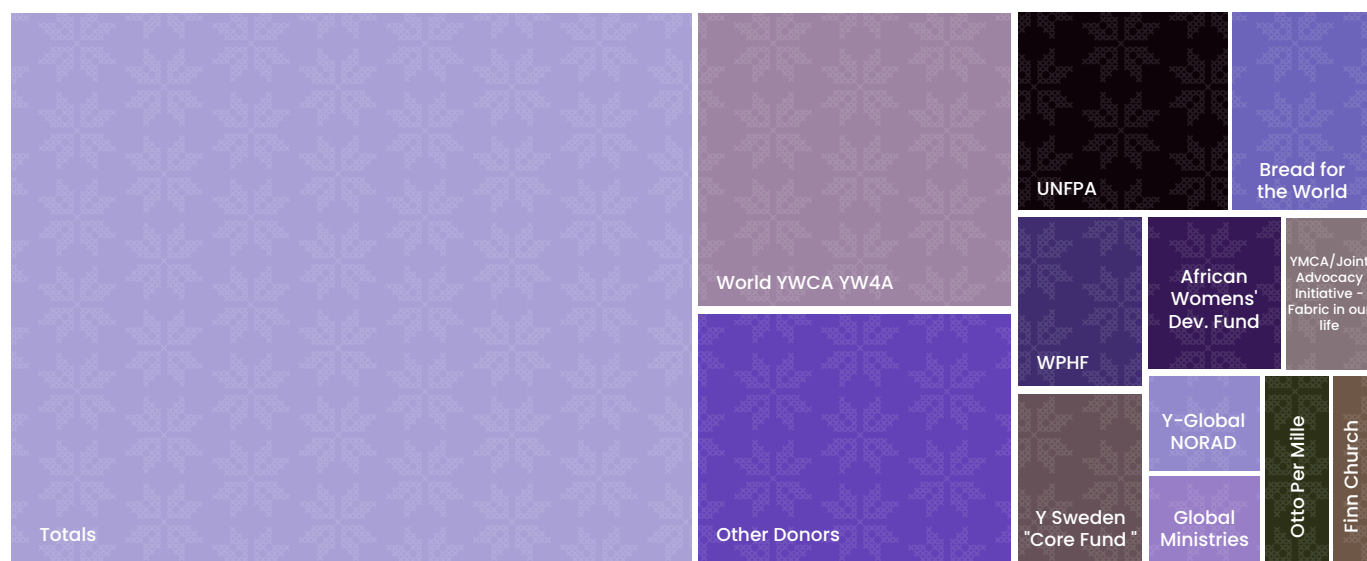
The Way Forward

Building on our Theory of Change, YWCA Palestine will continue to advance our strategic objectives across youth leadership, economic justice, just peace.

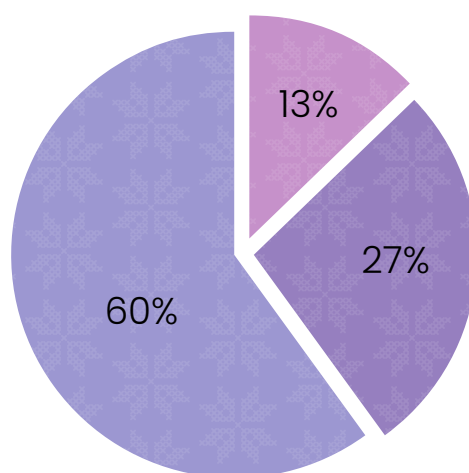
We remain committed to feminist, rights-based approaches that center community voices, local knowledge, and resilience. Through intergenerational leadership, strong partnerships, and global advocacy, we will continue to work for justice, equality, and liberation for all.

Funding Sources

- Bread for the World
- Y Sweden "Core Fund "
- Y-Global NORAD
- African Womens' Dev. Fund
- Church Of Schotland
- WPHF
- Global Ministries
- YMCA/Joint Advocacy Initiative - Fabric in our life
- Global Fund
- Kerk In Actie - YSI
- UNFPA
- World YWCA YW4A
- Enabel
- Otto Per Mille
- Finn Church
- Other Donors



YWCA Palestine Expenditures



- Personnel Costs
- Program Direct Expenses
- General and Administrative Expenses



YWCAPalestine



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