



مؤسسة ابداع

لتنمية قدرات الطفل والتبادل الثقافي

Ibdaa Cultural Center

Dheisheh Refugee Camp, Palestine

Annual Report 2008

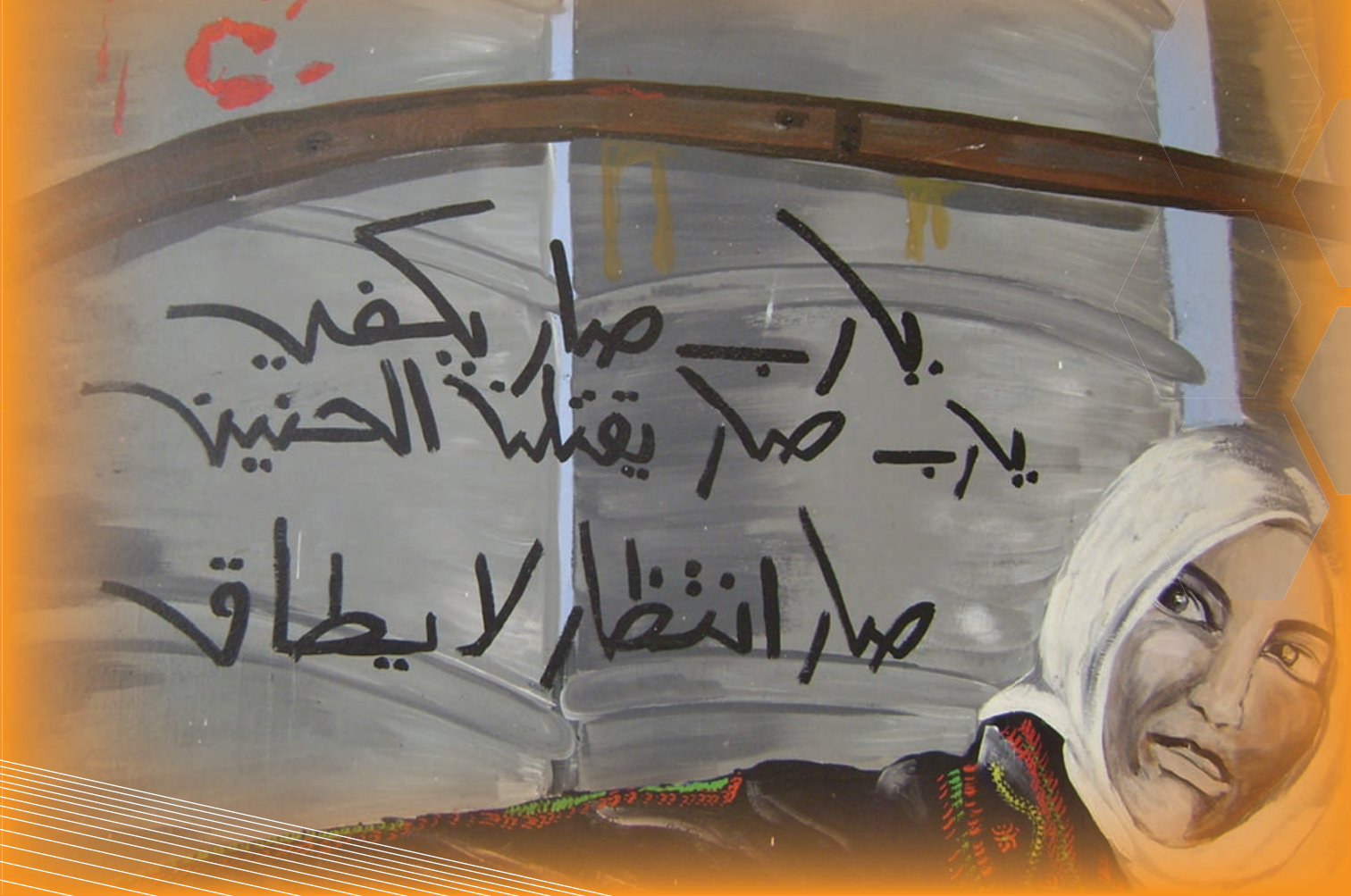


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Mural in Ibdaa's hallway depicting scenes from Palestinian history. Translation: "God, it's enough and the prolonging cannot be beared." Credit: Marinane Yahyaoui

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Acknowledgment

We would like to extend our thanks and gratitude to all of our staff, volunteers, partners, funders, and friends throughout the world who have supported and continue to support our work to help the residents of Dheisheh build brighter futures for themselves and their community.

We appreciate the trust you have shown, the encouragement to continue our work, and the belief in our vision.

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- Kinder USA
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- Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI)

- Middle East Peace and Justice Alliance
- Palestinian Children's Relief Fund (PCRF)
- Partage
- NGO Peace On Earth
- Tatwir - Palestinian NGO Development Center
- Unga Örnar
- United Nations Relief Work Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)



Children playing in the small allies of Dheisheh Refugee Camp. Credit: Albert

Board Word

The year 2008 could be considered as the most dangerous in the history of Ibdaa Cultural Center. There was huge impact on Ibdaa's programs and activities after a series of violent attacks on the center. The prosperity and the progress of our center after the attacks can be partially attributed to the support of Dheisheh's community leaders including national and social structures. In addition, the motivation of our staff is a significant factor for strengthening our center; their admirable work makes Ibdaa one of the pioneer centers in providing social, cultural, artistic, athletic, and educational services delivered to all the camp target groups without exception, in particular to the children and women.

Many visitors and media have highlighted Ibdaa's creativity during the past 14 years. Ibdaa has continuously been working and struggling to send the message of Palestinian refugees and their pains. It conveys the message of Palestinian refugees through its children dancers who are living the Nakba (Arabic for catastrophe referencing the ethnic cleansing of Palestine in 1948) and the displacement, suffering, and hope of returning back to their lands.

Ibdaa today is a culture for the present, a model for

civilized change despite the refusal from some people. Its ingenuity has made equality between the girl and the boy, and between the woman and the man a reality. Ibdaa empowers marginalized groups, provides an opportunity for deprived groups, and covers some of Dheisheh's basic needs that are otherwise lacking. Ibdaa is a way to believe in a better future for us and our children.

Ibdaa today is an example of transparency and of administrative, professional, and programmatic development. The year 2008 brought with it the start of a new stage by implementing new administrative and financial systems, pledging employees' rights, and developing the work towards specializing. Also, within the year we developed a unified programmatic plan for the center for the year 2009, with input and insight from some of the senior and other employees. Today Ibdaa is working fully through banking transactions according to the accepted organizational procedures.

In the year 2008 we would like to thank the masterminds who initiated Ibdaa 14 years ago, our two colleagues teacher Khaled Al Saifi and Ziad Abbas. They worked hard and gave voluntarily for many years to shape Ibdaa into what it is now locally and internationally. They worked together with tens of volunteers to develop this statue that serves the Palestinian refugees in and out



of the camp.

We would like to extend our gratitude for every person who supported and advocated for Ibdaa during these years. We thank every person who defended Ibdaa during the hard days Ibdaa lived, they gave their days and nights to empower Ibdaa to be stronger, flourish, and grow.

At the same time, we thank all our partner organizations, and our local, regional, and international funders, who have had massive impacts through helping us carry out a number of programs, projects, and activities.

Ibdaa today is walking towards its future with resilient steps; we are sure it will be creative as it has always been.

Nasser Atallah
Vice President

Letter from the Director

For fourteen years Ibdaa dancers, sports teams, staff, and volunteers traveled around world to send the message from the Palestinian people that are suffering. Ibdaa delivered the common messages of Dheisheh Refugee Camp. The message of a child who never experienced childhood. The message of a young person with no future. The message of an old man who lost everything as a youth and is still waiting to recover it. The message of an old woman who died from the pain of the Nakba. And the message of hope that we all carry.

For fourteen years Ibdaa continuously gave, developed, and grew. Ibdaa has grown not because of what we want or plan, but because of what the generations of camp residents need. The work expands and expands to reach more boys, girls, youth, men, women, and elders. Ibdaa has raised the status of women and girls in Dheisheh and the broader Palestinian community, opened a door to the world for our children, and made a place for children to learn and play.

I am proud of what Ibdaa has accomplished locally and internationally. Though I have not been in Ibdaa since the very beginning I know that the past fourteen years were hard years but great years with the focus always on how to give the people in our community and society what they need.

Ibdaa Cultural Center

In 2008 we thought about what Ibdaa needs for the first time. Ibdaa faced many problems this year and nearly had to close its doors because though the buildings, programs, and number of beneficiaries were getting bigger and bigger, the systems were the same as when we started. We needed new systems to keep Ibdaa safe and strong. Systems that make each of us accountable to the community we serve, systems that give employees and participants their rights. With the support of a new board we were able to discover the problems and work together to build a stronger organization ready to face the challenges of the future. We now have good financial and administrative systems, clear job descriptions, a pay scale, retirement funds, and contracts with all employees.

With these new systems in place both the employees and Ibdaa can give the society more and more. In 2008 Ibdaa served more than 8000 people. We owe it to these children, youth, women, and men to ensure that Ibdaa lasts.

We took another step towards improving Ibdaa when we conducted an annual review in 2008 for the first time in Ibdaa's history. We, the staff and youth leaders, developed plans together which set us on track for a great year in 2009. By the end of 2009 we intend to have a three-year plan for Ibdaa that will push us to grow up more and more. These plans leave room to be creative but also keep the focus on the projects that are central to Ibdaa's values and vision for the future.

I would like to thank the founders for their incredible vision and years of leadership; the new board for their patience in the face of so many problems and the experience that they bring to Ibdaa; the staff and volunteers for their hard work, even during a very difficult year, and for continuing to believe in Ibdaa's value – you are Ibdaa's lifeline; the thousands of participants who inspire us; all of the people and organizations who stood by Ibdaa from its start, especially during 2008, the hardest year; and our friends and funders around the world whose support keeps us going year after year.

Hazem Alqassas
Acting Director





Ibdaa in 2008

National and Local Level

The year of 2008 was a year of Nakbas. Throughout 2008 we, the Palestinian refugees, commemorated our forced displacement and dispossession 61 years ago. We demanded implementation of Palestinian refugees' right to return to our homes and properties in accordance with international law and UN General Assembly Resolution 194.

The last moments of this year in Gaza were terrifying for all of humanity. We lived another Nakba, a modern Nakba. The images of death and destruction were broadcast instantaneously to the world but the result was the same as 60 years ago with an estimated 90,000 people displaced, many of them refugees for the second or third time. The captive victims of Gaza lived under the lethal weapons of the Israeli military.

After the mass expulsions in 1947-8, Palestinians were forced to temporarily settle in refugee camps and wait to return to their homes and lands. The refugee camps in the West Bank and Gaza are the most densely populated and poor areas in Palestine. Less than one percent of the Palestinian refugee population has been permitted to return with the implementation of Oslo Accords. Even fewer have had access to housing and property

restitution. Today, it's estimated that there are seven million Palestinian refugees, constituting one of the largest and the longest-standing refugee populations in the world.



Zeinab (14 years old) is hugging a tree in Ras Abu Ammar destroyed village during the visit of the destroyed villages in the summer camp.

Here in Dheisheh Refugee Camp, 12,804 people live in harsh conditions similar to the situations in all the refugee camps both inside and outside Palestine. There is no space between houses, a lack of sanitation and

medical services, shortages of water and medicine, and overcrowded schools. Refugees are still suffering the legacy of their dispossession: destitution, insecurity and they all share unhealthy living conditions.



View of Dheisheh Refugee Camp where more than 12,000 Palestinians live on less than one square kilometer of land. Credit: Marianne Yahyaoui

Organizational Level

The term of Ibdaa's temporary board ended in 2008. The General Assembly held elections in June and the result was a board with 70% new members. The acceptance of this change was very slow and challenging for the community.

Though the board changed mid-year Ibdaa's focus remained on raising the voice of Palestinian refugees. In honor of the 60th anniversary of the Nakba we organized special activities to keep our history and our rights alive. The children's library held oral history storytelling with elders from the camp, some of our children painted murals in the camp and made speeches to a community gathering, the Ibdaa dancers performed at UNRWA schools in a commemoration ceremony and continued work on a new dance show about the Nakba and its legacy. Ibdaa also co-organized The Right of Return and Destroyed Villages Summer Camp which brought children from Dheisheh, Jenin, and Balata refugee camps together to visit their original villages and envision what the right of return would look like.

Ibdaa strived to address the many pressing needs of the Dheisheh community, sometimes stretching beyond our capacity. This strain on the organization was exacerbated by Ibdaa's administrative systems which were not



adapting to meet the needs of the increasing numbers of staff and projects. This had been a problem for several years and in 2008 we took the first steps towards building the organization's capacity and developing a strategic plan for our work in an effort to better the organization.

Organizational Focus

Ibdaa's focus during 2009 will include:

1. The implementation of the one year strategic plan (programmatic and financial).
2. Staff, Board, and General Assembly capacity building.
3. Mid-year review of projects and finances.
4. Modification to the Bylaws according to the new strategic plans.
5. Periodical evaluations for projects and staff.
6. Activation of the signed Code of Conduct.
7. Memorandum with local partners concerning joint projects.
8. Internal guidelines for funding and cooperation agreements.

Vision

Creating an environment to spread awareness and make changes in the community regarding issues ranging from Palestinian history to foreign cultures to health and human rights.

Goals

1. Providing educational, social, and cultural projects to the children, youth and women of Dheisheh Refugee Camp.
2. Raising awareness about the Palestinian refugee cause through different mediums.
3. Empowering the residents of Dheisheh Refugee Camp culturally, socially, and economically.

Summary of Outputs:

I. Art and Performances:

Ibdaa's Dance Troupe

Ibdaa's identity and philosophy is closely linked to the dance troupe. Ibdaa first began with a dance exchange in 1994 and through this activity Ibdaa's leaders developed the initial vision for the organization. Ibdaa initiated several youth empowerment projects for the young dancers and then rapidly grew into a multi-project institution that serves the needs of the larger Dheisheh community. The dance troupe is still used as a model for other activities because of the integration of education and leadership development in the project. Each group of dancers learns responsibility and the importance of giving back to their community. Additionally Ibdaa learned about the power of art in educating and empowering the Palestinian and international community through the dance troupe.

The Ibdaa Dance Troupe has a repertoire of three shows, Al-Khaima (The Tent), Al-Wasiya (The Will), and Moa'taqal (Political Prisoners) that tell the stories of the Palestinian people. The dancers depict the lives of Palestinian farmers before 1948, their displacement during the Nakba and the present realities of refugees and prisoners through graceful and sometimes painful dance, music, and song. In 2008 they continued work on a new show that will capture the Nakba and its legacy.

One of the most distinctive features of the Ibdaa Dance Troupe is how each group of dancers becomes the leadership for the next group, passing on their knowledge of the debka and theatrical choreography that are the core of the troupe's repertoire. The three shows are presented by the fourth and fifth generations of dancers aged 10 to 17.

The following are their activities for the year 2008:



Ibdaa's fourth generation of dancers performs Al-Wasiya at a celebration in Bethlehem. In this scene the young women are announcing to their fellow villagers that their homeland has been stolen. Credit: Edmund Aves



- The Ibdaa Dance Troupe performed for international delegations when they visited Dheisheh and at special events in Ibdaa.
- The troupe performed at the SOS Children's Village for the students at this school.
- The troupe performed at Shepherd's Fields in Beit Sahour.
- The troupe performed for the students in Dheisheh schools to commemorate the Nakba.
- The troupe performed for children from other refugee camps during the Right of Return and Destroyed Villages Summer Camp in Beit Jamal.
- The troupe presented two shows in the Freedom Theater in Jenin Refugee Camp.
- The troupe was invited to Birzeit village in Ramallah and performed at a memorial service for George Habbash, a Palestinian leader.
- The troupe performed at the Heritage Festival in the Ramallah Cultural Palace.
- The troupe performed twice at the University of Hebron.
- The troupe performed at the El-Bireh municipality.
- The troupe performed at the Revival Heritage Festival and anniversary party for Middle East Children's Alliance at the International House in Bethlehem.
- The troupe performed at the memorial service for Qussay Al Afandi, a 17-year-old from Dheisheh who was killed by the Israel Occupation Forces in January 2008, the Zakaria Village Festival, the Prisoners' Day celebration, the memorial for Mohammed Abu-Aker, and the Sabeel Conference in Al-Feniq Center in Dheisheh.
- The troupe performed at the mourning ceremony for the Palestinian Artist Zakaria Al Zubaedi in the Bethlehem Peace Center
- The troupe performed at Bethlehem University during a student-organized celebration.
- The troupe performed at a summer camp at St. Joseph School for Girls in Bethlehem.
- The fifth generation received intensive trainings in dance and education throughout the year, especially in the summer. The educational training included the history of Palestinian refugees, particularly in Dheisheh, and discussions about the message behind the shows. The dance training taught them basic debka moves and the choreography for Al-Khaima.



Fourth generation singing and dancing for freedom in Al-Wasiya. This is a traditional Palestinian song that originated in the villages decades ago. Credit: Edmund Aves

Music

The music project has two parts: the children's music group and the hip-hop groups called "Bad Luck" and "Refugee Rappers". There are 14 children, aged 10-13 years, in the music group. The trainers for this project are the young musicians from Bad Luck. They give lessons in the tabla (Arabic drum) and daf (Arabic tambourine).

Both groups use music as a tool for expression a Bad Luck hip-hop group performs live for an enthusiastic

audience in Ibdaa. Hufirat Al-Lajeen (Pit of Refugees), one of their most popular songs, speaks about the collective suffering of Palestinian refugees who have no privacy, no rights, and are continuously displaced. Credit: Ibdaa

- In cooperation with Sabreen Association, Ibdaa held a week-long intensive training in break dancing, spoken word, and hip-hop for 22 young people from Dheisheh and Aida refugee camps. In addition to enhancing the arts, these trainings also aimed to connect Palestinian refugees from different camps to each other and to Palestinians in the Diaspora.
- The Bad Luck group joined youth from Aida and Aza refugee camps in Bethlehem for a training led by Musicians without Borders. The training prepared them to lead music groups for children using body movements and some simple instruments.
- The children's music group had 10 sessions in which participants practiced on the tabla and daf and learned to sing traditional Palestinian children's songs.
- Refugee Rappers recorded two new songs during this period called "Refugees" and "Our Soil."
- Ibdaa hosted two Rap and Hip Hop concerts featuring Bad Luck.



through their music the children and youth talk about their daily lives, the political situation in Palestine, their rights, and their struggle for a decent life.

Theater

The theater group is a relatively new addition to IbdAA's art program. In 2008, the 10 children and youth focused on skills-building.

- Bi-weekly meetings to develop writing skills

Detailed Outputs for Art and Performances:

Activity	Target Group	Output
Al-Jazeera, an activist group from Hawaii, and a Spanish group all filmed the dance troupe and did interviews with the dancers about their performances and what it means to them to perform	IbdAA Dance Troupe	Two small movies about the dance troupe broadcast at Al-Jazeera TV and local TV in the US.
Follow-up training about hip-hop, rap, break dancing, and spoken word	20 youth from Dheishah, Aida, Balata, Shufat, and Jenin refugee camps	More advanced skills development for the participants. The youth performed at a final concert in Bethlehem University for an audience of 300.
209 activities were held for children with three organizations in Jericho and 316 activities for children in ten locations in Bethlehem.	520 children 8-16 years old 9 trainers 17 volunteers	Different drama, drawing, debka, sports, awareness workshops and recreational trips encouraged creativity and expression among the children.
Closing ceremony for Jericho centers	Children and trainers Families of children	Children performed dance and music and presented their artwork from the previous activities



In Beit Jibreen Refugee Camp, a member of Ibdaa's theatre group leads a training for children to help them express themselves and use their energy constructively. Credit: Ibdaa

II. Women's Program:

Women's Mental Health Project

This project aims to improve the overall mental health of women and children living in the camp. The violations of Palestinians' rights are increasing daily and this project supports the women and children by creating a safe space in Dheisheh for them to share their pain and receive support. The Women's Mental Health Project achieves these aims by providing individual counseling, support groups, educational trainings, and workshops.



A volunteer social worker leads group activities at the Ramadan Iftar for women. Credit: Ibdaa



Support group for children of prisoners presents their art pieces after an expressive art therapy session. Credit: IbdAA



One of the social workers from the Women's Mental Health Project visits Um Qussay in her home. Um Qussay's eldest son was shot and killed by Israeli soldiers on his way home from school in January 2008. Credit: Albert

- The project coordinator gave a speech in a post-conflict conference about the status of Palestinian refugee at present at a conference in Germany.
- Project staff conducted a needs assessment survey with women in Dheisheh and selected the most pressing educational topics and mental health issues in the domestic life of women.
- Organized four meetings for mothers about raising teenagers and associated challenges and problems.
- Workshop for 30 women on mid-life crises and how to prepare for this stage.
- Workshop for 12 women discussing menopause including the physical and psychological changes that women may experience.
- Two training courses on relaxation for 22 women.
- A training course on resolving family problems through therapy. There were 12 participants from the Women's Center, Al-Quds University, IbdAA, and UNRWA in Dheisheh. The training lasted for three days and it was 18 training hours.

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- 22 home visits to martyrs' families in Dheisheh Camp.
- 40 home visits to prisoners' families on the Prisoner Day
- A Psychological-Debriefing Support Summer Camp in Jenin. The women had relaxation sessions, debriefing activities such as painting, dancing, singing and also shared experiences. The women were able to speak freely, learn new problem solving mechanisms as well as being relieved from the family burdens for short period.
- An Iftar gathering attended by 50 women. A volunteer social worker planned group games for the women in Ibdaa's hall after the Iftar.
- The support groups were developed so that the women and children could benefit from the support of their peers as well as social workers. In 2008 the five support groups were:
 - Two groups of prisoners' mothers and wives with 17 women that met biweekly.
 - A group of 8 martyrs' wives and mothers that met biweekly during the first half of the year and monthly during the second half of the year.
 - Two groups for 23 children of prisoners and martyrs that met weekly

Miscellaneous

- In March and April, twelve young women from Dheisheh Refugee Camp participated in intercultural exchange seminars on Palestinian and German history, culture, and identity with young Palestinian women from Nazareth and young German women from our partner organization, AMICA, in Frieberg, Germany.
- In April the project coordinator traveled to Morocco for a one-week conference and cultural exchange project titled "Resource Mobilization for Women's Rights Organizations and Movements in the Middle East and North Africa" organized by Association of Women International Development (AWID)



Detailed Outputs for Women's Mental Health		
Activity	Target Group	Output
14 meetings for mothers on mental health focusing on the domestic lives of women	80 women, mothers and working mothers in the camp	Women requested further explanations about the personal problems regarding the topics of the educational meetings. The building of confidence and trust between the participants and the trainers by creating a safe and comfortable atmosphere for discussions between the trainers and the participants
205 women participated in the mother's and women's day activities.	Refugee women from Dheisheh Camp	Real space and opportunity to engage with other women.
Detailed Outputs for Sewing and Palestinian Embroidery		
Activity	Target Group	Output
Distributing pieces of cloth with designs to members of the Women's Tatriz Collective.	100 women 18-55 years old from Dheisheh Refugee Camp	More than 100 tatriz (embroidery) pieces were produced by the women each month
Ibdaa's sewing workshop had good business during the first half of the year but experienced a sharp decrease in demand in the second half	7 women	Clothes for children and adults Income for women in the camp



member of the Women's Tatriz Collective embroiders in her home. She is one of 100 women in Dheisheh who are part of the collective, receiving monthly payments for their handwork. Credit: Ibdaa

III. Sports:

Sports play an important role in our community. Sports are among the most popular activities at Ibdaa and therefore an important way to reach and engage more participants. It is also one of the most effective ways to reduce the impact of occupation on the community members, either through playing in the fields or watching the games and supporting the teams.

Football

Ibdaa has two football teams with one coordinator who trains both teams and organizes the games. The football teams practice in the concrete playground of Dheisheh Boys' School or the dirt field of Beit Jala Playground which is a ten-minute drive from the camp. The two teams have 30 players ranging from 13 to 22 years.



Football players practice in a nearby gym during the winter when it is too cold and wet to practice in the concrete playground of Dheisheh Boys' School or the dirt field of Beit Jala Playground. Credit: Ibdaa

- The younger football team played in a Bethlehem tournament for their age group and won the cup after 7 games.



- The older team played in a Bethlehem tournament for their age and won the cup after 5 games.
- The older team also played in the national league for their age in Qalqilia, and they won the bronze medal.
- In April both teams played in tournaments, one in Al-Ram and one in Terra Sancta. The younger team left from the semifinal, the older team lost their first game in the tournament.

Basketball:

The basketball teams continue to grow in popularity and have gained many dedicated fans in Dheisheh. There are 42 basketball players, both female and male, who are divided into three teams according to their ages and gender. There are two coordinators for these teams.



Dina, a thirteen year-old member of the girls' basketball team, dribbles the ball in a game against De La Salle. This is her third year on the team.

Credit: IbdAA

Ibdaa Cultural Center

- The two men's teams played friendly games three times a week during the end of May and June and they won all the games against teams from Bethlehem and Hebron area.
- The older men's basketball team played against E'bal Hiteen team and lost the game.
- The older men's team played against Ma'alia team and lost.
- The girls' basketball team played against De La Salle twice, they won one game and lost the other.
- The girls' basketball team played in a small tournament in Beit Sahor and came in fourth place.
- The girls' basketball team played against Catholic Action and lost the game.

Volleyball:

Ibdaa has two volleyball teams, one for young women and one for men, with a total of 25 players. The female volleyball team, which has been playing for three years, made a big achievement this year by winning the national women's volleyball championship. Ibdaa is proud to have

the first female sports teams in a Palestinian refugee camp. There is one trainer and one coordinator for these teams.

- The young women's team won the Palestinian Volleyball Championship and a game against the Catholic Action Team.
- The men's team played friendly games throughout the year, sometimes winning and sometimes losing.



Ibdaa's team (in red) beats Catholic Action in Bethlehem. Ibdaa is proud to have the first female sports teams in a Palestinian refugee camp. Credit: Ibdaa



Table tennis

Ibdaa’s table tennis team is one of the best in Palestine. They practice in Ibdaa’s hall and travel all over the West Bank for championships. There are five men playing on the team.

- The table tennis team participated in the Palestinian Table Tennis Championship. The team won many championships locally in Bethlehem and other Palestinian cities.



A determined summer camp participant plays tug-of-war during a day of relay races and group sports activities at the Third Annual Sports Under Siege Summer Camp. Credit: Ibdaa

Detailed Outputs for Sports		
Activity	Target Group	Output
Third Annual Sports Under Siege Summer Camp.	50 children from Aida, Al Aroub, Al Fawwar, and Dheisheh refugee camps participated in the summer camp. 10 leaders for the groups of children. Four soccer and basketball trainers from Dheisheh and a basketball trainer from Jalla, a partner organization in Italy that worked with the kids to develop their sports skills.	Children have become familiar with basketball, swimming, football, and volleyball. They learned basic techniques and rules for each of these sports.

IV. Youth Engagement

Ibdaa believes strongly in the power of youth to change to their communities. Ibdaa runs leadership development initiatives for children and youth in Dheisheh and incorporates leadership building activities into each of our projects. The aim of the leadership project is to activate the youth sector and engage them in community work by equipping them with new skills in the areas of communication, strategic planning, evaluation, media, and leadership as well as introducing them to different aspects of human rights and international law.

Children Lead the Social Change

The project targeted 25 children, age 14-17, from Dheisheh who are active either in Ibdaa, in other organizations, or in their schools. The project lasted 8 months.



Participants in Children Lead the Social Change play a game that requires collective problem solving in a village east of Bethlehem. Credit: Ibdaa

- Two workshops for the children about personal conflict, self-esteem, accepting the other, and problem solving.
- The children organized a recreational day in Al-Hussein hospital to provide emotional support to children with cancer.



- Day-long workshop about democracy and elections followed by a visit to Bethlehem Municipality to meet with elected officials and hear first-hand about their election experience.
- Visited Dheisheh schools to meet with students' parliaments and learn how they conduct the elections in the schools.
- Organized elections in Ibdaa for a council of young leaders. Five boys and girls were elected.
- Day-long workshop on environment and health.
- Painted banners about health, environment, and hygiene and put them up in Dheisheh.
- Organized an exhibition in Ibdaa about life in Palestine focusing on young people.
- Exchanges with children from other centers who are doing the same activities to discuss the topics and results in each area.
- Exchange trip to Balata Refugee Camp to see and learn about another area of Palestine.

Youth Lead the Social Change

25 university students living in Dheisheh are in this project.

- The university students visited local community-based organizations, schools, the Dheisheh popular committee, and UNRWA services office and shared their concerns about low representation for youth in their organizations and identified some of the youth.

Detailed Outputs for Youth Engagement	
Activity	Target Group
A week of intensive trainings on strategic planning, communication, leadership development, problem identification, and project management.	22-25 university students.
Visits to local CBOs, schools, popular committee, and UNRWA services office.	22-25 university students Youth groups in the CBOs and officials.
14 interactive workshops on strategic planning, communication skills, community problems, and project management.	Four new groups of children and youth: two elementary school student groups, one university students group, and one young women's group.
A training course on the International Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Palestinian children's reality, and implications of children's rights and women's rights. The children were then divided into four study groups to research problems for youth and women in their communities.	25 children from Dheisheh.
Ibdaa hosted a workshop on video making and editing.	Five youth members in the Youth Solidarity Network.



Output

Harmony and cooperation between group members was one of the main outcomes.

The participants' knowledge of problems in the camp has been increased and their sense of responsibility towards solving these problems has also increased. They were able to design an example project with objectives, aims, and implementation plan. They practiced democracy when they chose the date, location, and time for a recreational trip. They worked well in groups, using the communications skills that they had learned during the training. And lastly, the participants overcame their shyness and were able to discuss everything. They also broke down social barriers between them to work together.

The youth group was introduced to the work of these community organizations.
Forming four new youth groups within these civil society organizations

Each group has identified problems in the community facing their peers and started to plan to address the problem.

After one week each group presented their studies on problems to all participants. The first outcome was a protest in front of Dheisheh entrance addressing the smoking habit among children and its negative impact on their health. Then they co-hosted a project about the same subject with a local TV station.

Five youth from five different centers attended the workshop and created music videos for the hip-hop songs that they had created last summer. They used digital storytelling technology to lay images from the internet, drawings, and photos over the music and add transitions between the images. This workshop was a success with all five youth finishing their pieces and leaving the workshop with new friendships and skills.



Participants in the Youth Lead the Social Change project practice time management and public speaking. Each one must present his or herself in the time it takes for the match to burn out. Credit: Ibdaa



Mesa' (center), a youth participant, leads a training on team building with younger children in the project. Credit: Ibdaa



V. Health Program

Ibdaa has three health projects and a variety of activities to improve the health status of the Dheisheh community and surrounding areas through direct services and preventive education. These projects and activities were developed to combat the problems of the lack of professionalism and shortages of medical services provided in the camp and nearby areas.

Diabetic Club

The club had 200 participants during 2008. They organized the following activities for the diabetes patients in Dheisheh Refugee Camp and the surrounding towns and villages:

- Daily educational workshops focusing on exercise, nutrition, personal health for the diabetic patients, how to take medicine, and foot care.
- Distributed 1200 educational brochures and 300 posters about diabetes to workshop participants, to other people with diabetes who are not in the club, to local schools, and to other health societies.
- Psychosocial support project through individual and collective sessions for children with diabetes and their parents attended by 65 patients.
- A medical team consisting of a doctor, a nurse, and a social worker accompanied a group of 47 diabetic patients on their pilgrimage to Mecca because the patients needed special care and attention.
- Educational door-to-door campaign in Dheisheh about diabetes. The campaign involved distributing posters and brochures about taking care of the feet and the complications and effects of diabetes. In addition they provided medical diabetic checks for 100 persons and blood pressure tests for 65 patients that asked for further help in learning to treat their diabetes.
- In Ramadan, Ibdaa hosted an Iftar celebration for 80 diabetics in Ibdaa's restaurant. There were not many activities for the club during Ramadan so the Iftar was an important opportunity for them to meet each other and socialize.

The Community Eye Clinic

The Community Eye Clinic is an initiative that came out of our survey of students in Dheisheh schools. We encountered a high percentage of children with low academic scores. We determined the reasons for these low scores were psychosocial problems, financial problems, and poor vision. We did several short-term projects distributing 800 eyeglasses to schoolchildren. But with the opening of the Community Eye Clinic we can reach students all over the Bethlehem area. During 2008 the eye clinic team organized the following activities:

- Provided eyesight checks for 700 people and eyeglasses for 600 people on a sliding scale.
- Organized medical days outside the clinic which include educational presentation about eyes and eye health, free eyesight checks, and distribution of educational brochures. 920 persons benefited from these days in different areas.
- 316 pairs of glasses were made and distributed free of cost to children who could not afford to pay anything.



Students in Ibdaa's kindergarten get their vision checked free of cost by the optician from Ibdaa's eye clinic. In 2008, the eye clinic served more than 700 children and adults from Dheisheh and the surrounding areas. Credit: Ibdaa



Assessment and Support Project

This project was developed after the survey of Dheisheh students. The project staff provide academic tutoring and psychosocial support for 350 children who are not performing well in school due to the difficult political and social situation in the camp.



Two social workers lead a group psychosocial support session for children who are not performing well in school due to the difficult political and social situation in the camp. Credit: Ibdaa



Children from the Assessment and Support Project paint during a group psychosocial session. Credit: Ibdaa

- Academic tutoring in Arabic, Mathematics, and English meeting two times a week with a maximum of 14 children in each group.
- Group psychosocial support sessions organized by a social worker and psychologist.
- Psychosocial support sessions for parents attended by parents.

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- 100 children took part in Nakba activities by painting on walls and presenting speeches in the streets of Dheisheh.
- A final festival featuring artistic performances by some of the children attended by the children and their families. Roses and awards were distributed to all children.
- Distributed school bags with supplies to 130 at the beginning of the new school year.
- Ibdaa gave the children gifts of clothes and shoes for the Eid feast because the children all come from families with difficult financial situations.
- First aid training course in cooperation with the Development Center of Al-Quds Open University which was attended by 45 nurses and doctors from Bethlehem and Hebron. The training course began in fall 2007 and finished in April 2008. It was conducted in Ibdaa's hall for 6 hours weekly.
- Launched environmental health is a national duty campaign.
- 60 free medical days with specialists in throat, nose and ear, bones, chest, and heart diseases for 450 people from the camp and Bethlehem areas.

Miscellaneous Activities

- Arranged for 65 patients from Dheisheh and Bethlehem to receive free surgeries in the nose, ear, and throat in Beit Sahour Medical Center. An additional five patients were hospitalized at little or no cost.
- Training course on problem solving attended by 35 social workers for two months.



Detailed Outputs for Health Program		
Activity	Target Group	Output
The children's parliament participated in the sixth national conference under the supervision of DCI/PS about children's initiatives.	Children's Parliament of the Assessment and Support Project	They presented initiatives about how to create safe school environments.
Launching children's campaign against drugs which included festivals, field visits, and workshops	Children's Parliament of the Assessment and Support Project, Assessment and Support Project children, other children from Dheisheh Refugee Camp	Children were introduced to the negative impacts of drugs
Launching campaign about women's health which included field visits, home visit, awareness meetings, and educational materials	150 Women from Dheisheh Refugee Camp.	The women were introduced to new and relevant issues about women's health.
A training course about First Aid	Diabetic persons	New skills for the patients to deal with their small injuries at home



A young girl has her ears examined during one of the sixty free medical days that Ibdaa organized in 2008. Medical specialists examined more than 450 people from the camp and Bethlehem areas. Credit: Ibdaa

VI. Kindergarten and Nursery:

The kindergarten and the nursery are the second home for our students and must be supportive, educational, and fun. Attending kindergarten gives the children an opportunity to meet and interact with new children and adults. Our kindergarten teaches the children many new skills that help them think for themselves and learn to depend on themselves away from their mothers.

The Ibdaa Kindergarten and Nursery were the first coeducational daycare centers in Dheisheh Refugee Camp. They were initiated by working women in the camp in 1997, three years after our dancing troupe made a name for Ibdaa in the camp. Today the Kindergarten and Nursery are both run by innovative female staff.

During the year of 2008 in the spring semester we had 110 children, in the fall semester we had 90 children in the kindergarten and 22 babies in the nursery. There were four teachers in the kindergarten, two nannies in the nursery, and a headmaster for the kindergarten and nursery.



Kindergarteners on the see-saw at Ibdaa's playground.
Credit: Ibdaa



A classroom of kindergarteners make paper hats and decorate them with their names. Each of the five kindergarten classrooms has 15-20 students. Credit: Ibdaa



A group of kindergarteners learn their numbers by coloring the apples. Credit: IbdAA



Toddlers play in the nursery while their parents are at work. There were 22 babies and toddlers this year with two nannies. Credit: IbdAA

- The kindergarten teachers taught lessons in Arabic, English, and math and conducted scientific experiments according to the Palestinian Authority curriculum.
- The teachers supplemented the curriculum with storytelling and drama activities for the children.

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- Medical checks for all kindergarten children (includes eye examination; nose, ear, throat inspection; bone check; dermatological check; blood, height, and weight checks; chest infection check).
- The kindergarteners enjoyed daily singing and dancing sessions for an hour, in which they learned new songs and new dance movements to express their feelings. The children performed at the graduation ceremony in May.
- Each class of kindergarteners spent one hour each day in Ibdaa's playground. This unstructured recreational time gave the children the opportunity to exercise, play and learn how to take care of themselves and each other.
- Recreational trips for mothers and children: three trips for children and their mothers and six trips for the children only
- 10 workshops for mothers about children's behavior problems, child development and appropriate way of interacting with their children, the importance of play, and how to help children to express themselves using language.
- There were 22 babies and toddlers in our nursery from January until the end of December.

VII. Children's Library

The children's library is a space to promote literacy. Ibdaa encourages the children and the youth to visit and join the library through art activities, cultural activities, competitions, and storytelling.

Ibdaa's library contains more than 1,000 books in English and Arabic. The library is open from 2 pm-7pm daily.



Children come to the library after school for art activities before reading time begins. Credit: Ibdaa

- Weekly cultural competitions and drawing activities for children to express themselves and enjoy their time.
- Children from Ibdaa's library visited other children's libraries in Bethlehem and took part in their activities.



Detailed Outputs for Children's Library		
Activity	Target Group	Output
Handcrafts and painting competition.	20 children from Dheisheh Refugee Camp	They expressed themselves through drawing and coloring.
Children and Bethlehem University students cleaned IbdAA's buildings together, visited Solomon's pools, and planted trees near IbdAA's buildings	Bethlehem university students and children from IbdAA_	Team spirit emerged
Elderly people came to the library to tell the popular, folk stories to the children	Elderly people and children from Dheisheh Camp	The children were able to know more about their history, culture, and their original villages.
Organized activities for the national reading week, an annual project each April started by Tamer organization. As part of the reading week, library members met with children from different organizations, also they visited the SOS Children's Village—a unique organization that is committed to long-term family based care for children in need—to take part in their activities. Each child that participates must chose a book and wrote a short summary about it and paint a picture that shows the main point of the book.	71 Children	At the end of the week each child presented the book s/he read at a closing festival. Moreover the children organized a celebration in Al-Khader playground to thank all of the organizations that cooperated with IbdAA for the reading week.
Story-telling competition in which the children told stories about their original villages and a panel of judges who were elders from the camp that lived in the villages before the Nakba gave awards for the children.	Children from different associations in Bethlehem.	The children were introduced to new villages they didn't know before.
In SOS Village the children from the different organizations wrote their village names on kites and flew them. Lajee theater group presented a play for the children about the traditional stories and its influence on the children.	Children from different associations in Bethlehem	The children played together and mixed in one group, they learned about new villages, and they had the chance to talk about their own villages and share the stories they had heard from their grandparents.

VIII. Computer Lab and Virtual Exchanges:

Ibdaa's computer lab provides opportunities for children in Dheisheh Refugee Camp to connect with children from all over the world and to share the real picture of their lives while learning about other countries and cultures. It is also used for trainings and workshops.

- Two video conferences between Dheisheh students and students in the US as part of the Cyber Bridges Project. The students shared stories and information with each other and had a chance to ask questions and learn more about each others culture and life.
- Eight-day computer training course for beginners in cooperation with UNRWA for 17 of their employees
- Two-week excel training course in cooperation with UNRWA for 17 of their employees
- Two-weeks writing and audio-visual media training course in cooperation with Birzeit University for 12 participants from local NGOs
- Provided internet services for the camp's residents.



Participants from five Palestinian centers come to Ibdaa for a three-day workshop on video editing as part of the Youth Solidarity Network (YSN). Each participant left the workshop with a music video to accompany their original songs made in a previous YSN workshop. Credit: Ibdaa



IX. International Delegations and Culture Exchanges

One of Ibdaa's main goals is to educate the international and local communities about Palestinians, especially Palestinian refugees and the daily life in refugee camps. Ibdaa also tries to share with others about the work we are doing inside this one square kilometer. We welcomed local and international visitors throughout the year.



A group of mayors from Italy meet with members of the girls' basketball team at Ibdaa to learn about situation in Palestine. The team visited Italy in 2007 and spoke at different municipalities and universities. Credit: Ibdaa

- We hosted delegations and individuals in cooperation with organizations such as Alternative Tourism Group (ATG) and Saint George, who brought groups from Brazil, Britain, Canada, Germany, France, India, Italy, Japan, Korea, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, the United States,. Some of the groups stayed in the guest house for a few days and took part in several of Ibdaa's projects.
- People of different nationalities came as volunteers after hearing about Ibdaa from friends and magazine articles.
- We hosted a sports delegation from Al Najah National University and Arab-American University; they participated in the universities basketball tournament in Bethlehem University.
- A group of 18 students from different universities in the US stayed in Ibdaa for one week. This trip was organized by Faculty for Israeli-Palestinian Peace. Two volunteers stayed in Ibdaa and worked with the health committee.
- Three Basque delegations came to Ibdaa. The Basque delegations came here in cooperation with the Union of Health Work Committees.
- German youth group that were volunteering in

Ibdaa Cultural Center

Israel visited Ibdaa

- Kjalema Motlanthe, the deputy president of the African National Congress (ANC) came to Ibdaa to visit and see the situation.
- During Easter time, Ibdaa hosted 100 Italians who came with the Sports Under the Siege Campaign. Ibdaa coordinated their visit to Dheisheh and to other areas of Palestine. The aim of their trip was to learn more about the current situation under the occupation and to show solidarity with the Palestinian people. Ibdaa also arranged friendly football matches between the Italian visitors and Palestinian teams.
- Eight faculty members from Italian universities and mayors from Italian cities stayed in Ibdaa for one week.
- Clowns from Italy stayed in Ibdaa for one week and did performances for Ibdaa's kindergarten as well as local school children in Ibdaa's hall. Ibdaa also arranged performances for them in other cities in the West Bank.
- Group of puppeteers from the United States came for a tour of Dheisheh and made a performance in the street for local children.
- A group of 6 young volunteers and staff from

Ibdaa spent one week in Sweden learning about the culture and government, sharing information about Palestine and refugees, and developing their leadership skills.



Young staff and volunteers in Sweden for a cultural exchange. Together they must complete an obstacle course in the forest. Credit: Ibdaa



X. Conferences and Festivals

- Co-organized a nursing festival on the International Nursing Day which was attended by 110 nurses from the Bethlehem area.
- Organized the first conference on diabetes in Palestine. It was a three-day conference focusing on the causes and the symptoms of diabetes.
- IbdAA held a day-long discussion about family violence in cooperation with Health Work Committees (HWC) and Caritas hospital with presentations from IbdAA, HWC, Caritas, Women's Counseling Center, and Mewher, a women's shelter.
- IbdAA organized a party to mark International Children's Day. Over 300 children came to IbdAA for performances by local clowns and jugglers as well as face-painting and balloons.
- During the Eid Al-Adha break IbdAA organized a series of activities for children including a football tournament for boys, a writing competition, relay races, and mural painting.
- In the fall, IbdAA organized a group of staff, volunteers, and children from the center to go olive picking in the nearby village of Nahalin. 25 people went by bus to help the villagers pick olives in an area very close to an illegal settlement. It was also an important show of solidarity between the camp and the village and a rare opportunity for the children from Dheisheh to take part in the tradition of olive picking since their families lost their lands more than 60 years ago.
- IbdAA organized a celebration for the Middle East Children's Alliance's 20th anniversary to thank them for their partnership and support for Palestine.
- Conference on domestic violence with CBOs, NGOs, and health organizations from Bethlehem, Hebron, Ramallah and Jerusalem in which 6 working papers were presented.
- Festival for people with diabetes to mark the International Day for Diabetics.



More than 300 children crowd into Ibdaa's hall to celebrate International Children's Day. Credit: Ibdaa

Razan, a basketball player, joins other Ibdaa staff, volunteers, and participants for a day of olive picking in a nearby village of Nahalin, very close to an Israeli settlement. This activity was an important show of solidarity between the camp and the village and a rare opportunity for the children from Dheisheh to take part in the tradition of olive picking since their families lost their lands more than 60 years ago. Credit: Ibdaa





Beneficiaries

Direct beneficiaries:

The total number of direct beneficiaries in 2008 was 8085. The beneficiaries are different ages, have a range of needs, and come from Dheisheh Refugee Camp as well as other Palestinian towns, villages, and refugee camps and many other countries. Children were the main beneficiaries of IbdAA's projects with 2169 children aged anywhere from a few months to 18 years benefiting in 2008. IbdAA placed a particular focus on children with disabilities and low academic performance.

IbdAA's projects reached 1966 women in 2008. Some of these women come from families with a low socio-economic status and were able to earn a living through our projects. Others have different problems in the home or in daily life because of the occupation, social stresses, and increased responsibilities and received support from IbdAA's projects.

1110 youth, above 18, benefited from a range of projects and activities. The youth included university students as well as other young people who find IbdAA a suitable environment to learn new skills that are not included in their formal education and to exercise their creativity.

The adult beneficiaries included professionals, visitors, clients, and parents. There were 2840 throughout the year.

Indirect beneficiaries

Through IbdAA's different projects we cooperate and connect with different active organizations and bodies like UNRWA schools and service offices; local, national and international audiences; CBOs; NGOs; international solidarity groups; local schools and universities; local government offices; sport's clubs and other members of the local community.

Challenges and Problems encountered

1. Lack of necessary facilities, materials, equipments, and proper place to implement some of the activities.
2. Lack of clear and well organized plans of action.
3. Difficulty encouraging participation from some children and families because IbdAA activities bring boys and girls, men and women together.
4. Absence of the supervision for the social workers and social work students in the Assessment and Support Project.
5. Absence of strategic plans, visions, and joint goals.
6. Inability to market articles produced by the Women's Tatriz Collective.

7. Insufficient mechanisms and lack of well staffed professionals in some projects.
8. Shortage in budget for some activities.

Recommendations:

1. There is a crucial need to revise the organization's By-Laws.
2. All activities need to be documented and archived.
3. Regular capacity building training courses targeting the staff in all projects about administrative and project management, besides other specialized training courses as needed.
4. Quarter evaluation sessions must be implemented for both staff and projects.
5. New joint reports formats should be prepared and circulated.
6. New financial system needs to be implemented.

Institutional Program

Board

Ibdaa had a board election in June which was monitored by a representative from the Palestinian Authority's Ministry of Interior, Ibdaa's legal advisor, and supervisors from different local and international organizations.

Eleven people were nominated for the board out of the 40 members of the General Assembly who were present (Ibdaa's General Assembly is 50 members) and seven were elected to serve for the next two years. There are four men and three women:

Khaled Al-Saifi
Nasser Atallah
Raji Odeh
Ahlam Ahmed
Mousa Al-Khmour
Hanadi Ramadan
Marwa Herzallah

Board president
Vice president
Treasurer
Secretary
General Member
General Member
General Member

After the election, the board made many positive changes in the organization using their extensive experiences with national non-governmental organizations. They



completed the process for re-registering IbdAA with the Palestinian Authority, they led a process for restructuring the organization that addressed the problems of decentralized decision-making, low administrative capacity, and financial mismanagement.

Leadership and Decision-Making

Following the board elections, IbdAA revised its organizational chart with the aim of creating a clear division of roles and responsibilities among the employees and board members of the organization and higher professionalism.

The board is responsible for the organizational vision, general policymaking, hiring key positions and approval for all other employee hires, and overall supervision and monitoring of the organization's work. In the new organizational chart, a management team led by the executive director was created. Key employees working in administrative affairs, public relations, and project development, as well as project coordinators are also part of the team.

This year saw many important changes in the work dynamic inside the organization. IbdAA, with the help of the Palestinian NGO Development Center (NDC), implemented

a series of evaluation sessions with beneficiaries, staff, executive management, and board members. NDC staff also observed our activities and reviewed our organizational documents. This process is the first step in a package of institutional building services.

For the first time IbdAA conducted an annual review of all of our projects. The review sessions led to annual plans for each project in 2009.

Staff Meetings

At the end of 2008 the staff met often for the annual review and planning sessions. During the previous periods staff meetings were held by project and meetings varied according to need. Some of the project had weekly meetings and others had monthly meetings. These meetings were led by a board member, the project coordinator, or project staff.



Project coordinators meet for 2008 annual review. Credit: Ibdaa

Relations with the Palestinian Authority

After completing the process for re-registering Ibdaa with the Palestinian Authority's Ministry of Interior, Ibdaa was given a new registration number BL-501-C. The Ministry's formal acceptance and approval of the new board was received a few months later.

Planning

The 2008 planning process was conducted for each project individually and the linear connections and meeting points were identified in joint meetings between

the projects that have similarities. However the overall connections between the projects were not visible for the project coordinators.

This obstacle was overcome in the first annual planning sessions for all the projects at the end of the year. In 2009 the coordinators are working according to an annual plan and associated monthly plans with coordination between all projects.

Financial & Administrative Systems

The desire for new financial rules and regulations came about because the organization needed to maximize our financial and human resources which will in turn help us develop our programs and facilities. Two important components of these new rules and regulations were creating more clarity and transparency in the financial system.

The first areas we worked on were fiscal policy and internal staff regulation. We drafted a guidebook about our financial regulations for all relevant staff. The guidebook explains acquisition of supplies, use of petty cash, the organization's hierarchy, the rights of employees, vacation time, hiring policies, end of service policies, and job descriptions, among many other things. We also drafted contracts for all employees to insure their rights and Ibdaa's rights are respected. The contracts and guidebook were approved by Ibdaa's board in late 2008 to be signed and put into place January 1, 2009.

