

# **Dalia Association Annual Report 2009**

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## Our Mission

Dalia Association was established in 2007 by members of the Palestinian community from the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, Gaza Strip, Israel, and the Diaspora. We are diverse in terms of age, gender, religion and politics, yet we are united by our vision -- to realize our rights as Palestinians to control our resources and sustain our own development for generations to come. Our mission is to mobilize and properly utilize resources necessary to empower a vibrant, independent and accountable civil society.

To achieve our mission, we:

- **Make grants** to support inspirational and relevant civil society initiatives, especially grassroots efforts that are supplementing local resources. Community-controlled grantmaking increases the transparency, accountability and professionalism of local initiatives.
- **Link resources** by introducing people with expertise, ideas, contacts, equipment, and other assets to community activists who can use them to serve their communities. Effectively utilizing resources that already exist in our abundant community helps decrease our dependence on outside resources.
- **Encourage giving** by local people, companies, and refugee and Diaspora Palestinians. We revive local traditions of philanthropy and volunteerism and create new systems that make giving easier, safer and more trustworthy. A permanent endowment will be built over time to ensure sustainable income for current and future generations.
- **Advocate for systemic change** in the international aid system so that it respects Palestinian rights and responds to local priorities. Advocacy includes constructive engagement with innovative donors who want a local partner to help them improve their policies and maximize their impact.

“**Dalia**” means “grapevine” in Arabic. It symbolizes the potential of a small seed of hope and innovation to grow into a flourishing community initiative that provides sustenance, shelter and beauty for generations to come.

## Letter from the Chairperson of the Board

Dear Friends,

Sometimes it's difficult to explain – to local organizations, to potential donors, to our colleagues who also work in Palestinian communities – what exactly Dalia Association does. As a community foundation, we aren't like other NGOs, We work *with* NGOs by funding community initiatives, and we help them use the funding properly, but we don't run projects ourselves. So is Dalia merely a donor? No! Dalia is a community philanthropic organization – a first-of-its-kind initiative that aims to help us value and use our resources better, strengthening and sustaining connections on the round.

Of course, all organizations must keep revising and defining themselves: adapting to the community, paying close attention to local priorities, and accommodating the unexpected. In Palestine – a place where resources and capabilities are vast, but where freedom and access are constantly constricted by occupation, colonization and dispossession – we feel even more intensely aware of the obligation to find and continually refine our approach. *How can we grow responsibly? How can we make systemic change in systems that are under-developed or broken?*

Our answers are still evolving. But one thing that remains clear, and one that has grown even clearer in 2009, is just how important a community foundation *is* to Palestine. While international bodies often define Palestine by its crises, it's both philosophically and practically crucial to have a local organization that enables creative, sustainable community initiatives and strengthens our autonomy and capabilities – capabilities we often already have in our own community!

The coming year will bring new developments in our board, administration and programs. No matter what, Dalia Association will continue to grow as a team and as part of a community: committed to our grassroots values, finding links wherever we can, and strengthened by our supporters.

Thank you for joining us!

Sincerely,

Mohammad Shaheen, Ph.D.  
Ramallah, March 15, 2010



## Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Partners,

With your support, Dalia Association continues to grow in many directions at once! Developing our work on the ground and strengthening our programs also requires us to literally make room for an expanding staff, for a growing administrative system, for a greater number of funding mechanisms . . . 2009 has been a big year for us, and we've tried to be flexible and resourceful every step of the way.

This year, we moved offices – though we're still in Ramallah. We also managed to secure new legal registration in Palestine to complement the one we already have in Belgium. Amid the boxes, we expanded our team to include new staff members, and improved our technological infrastructure. We strengthened existing relationships with donors, NGOs, and philanthropy and advocacy groups, and we've come into contact with new ones.

Growing stronger as an institution helps increase our capacity to find better ways – concrete, sustainable ways, driven by both practicality and integrity – to encourage the power of local community and invest in the capacity of local institutions. We continue to believe that links between local activists and resources are a direct and crucial part of more general advocacy for improvements and greater independence in the international aid system.

And despite the obstacles we face – a small staff, a limited budget, the complexities of community work, the challenges of sustainability, the hassles and frustrations and outrages faced by everyone living under occupation – it seems like we're doing a good job. In fact, other organizations increasingly come to Dalia Association for guidance in developing sustainability strategies, resource mobilization, professionalizing their work -- the kind of strategic-but-also-human mentorship that's so often missing for new NGOs and community groups.

For Dalia Association, it's a privilege to be a mentor to and partner with so many grassroots leaders and groups that work for social change in Palestine. We are grateful to be able to learn so much from the organizations we work with, the communities we connect to, and the supporters who reach out to us.

Let's keep going!

Warmly,

Nora Lester Murad, Ph.D.  
Jerusalem, March 15, 2010



## Letter from the Community Organizer

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

At Dalia Association, our goals are many and substantial: empowering organizations, strengthening communities, creating sustainable social change and independence in an environment where basic dignities are often stifled.

We cannot understate the challenges we face. While we speak a lot about linking – ideas, knowledge, goals, organizations, resources of all kinds – we keep learning about how hard it is to make these links successful. The obstacles are many and substantial: the instances when the expectations of a donor and a community come into conflict; disagreements among the community project leaders; the discrepancies between projected timelines and actual timelines; the bureaucratic hurdles we face from governmental institutions; and, as our Board Chair Dr. Mohammad mentioned in his letter, the complex obligation to keep defining and fine-tuning our approach in every activity in order to create effective practices that express our values and standards of integrity.

Part of our job, as we repeatedly learned in 2009, is to determine where the limit of our responsibility lies – in other words, to always remember that we help organizations work better, but that we don't *do* the work of an NGO. Part of our job, too, is to develop responsibly: quickly enough to truly grow, slowly enough to keep up with ourselves, and steadily enough to never sabotage our own progress. We're learning from our successes, from our mistakes, and from the good fortune to be able to keep doing the work we so deeply believe in.

As we empower people to lead their own development, then, we are also empowered to lead our own. As we look back on the accomplishments of 2009, we are energized to see where this new year will take us!

With hope,

Saeeda Mousa  
Ramallah, March 15, 2010



## ***WE BELIEVE IN...***

### ***...CAPACITIES, NOT JUST NEEDS.***

A grant isn't simply money. It's a relationship: between resources already present and resources gained, between a plan and its realization, between the members of a community working together to move forward. It's a way to build capacities, not "fulfill needs."

Dalia Association has created several grantmaking programs and other fiscal initiatives that supplement and strengthen the abundant resources that Palestinian communities already possess. These programs support their participants as they gain the necessary confidence and leadership to develop and sustain their projects.

#### **A Community Park Northwest of Nablus**

We worked with a group of 15 women leaders from five villages northwest of Nablus to formulate, develop, and present their design for a community park. We had originally planned to fund three small grants, up to \$2,000 for each dollar's worth of local resources they could mobilize. However, the 15 leaders decided to form a single self-governing body that worked together (with support from Dalia Association) to plan a park to benefit the entire region. Together they navigated the obstacles, strategized solutions, and realized their own power to effect change – real, concrete, and durable change – for themselves and in their communities.



(Left) Women from the villages northwest of Nablus decide how to use their grant. (Right) A 3D design plan by NajahPal, a planning company that volunteered their services for the park project.

Local resources include time, transportation, food cooked or bought, the acquaintances and local contacts who could be called upon to contribute whatever their expertise might be (as craftsmen, businesspeople, etc) ...in short, an abundance of resources we often take for granted. In examining what they already had – and by what they could gain through confident, persistent, and thoughtful networking—they became more aware of their resources and their autonomy, and found that they didn't need to wait for outside funding at all.

### Youth Leading Reconstruction in Gaza



We gave a grant to Youthbank in Gaza, a youth-led group that helps young people decide how to use resources and strengthen their own communities. The youth decided to use their unrestricted grant to hold a Bazaar where young people who make products by hand (jewelry, embroidery, graphics, woodwork, pottery, food) could market and display

their creations at the University of Palestine. Dalia Association was excited to sponsor a project that supported youth initiatives – both creative and entrepreneurial – and showcased their capabilities. Since Dalia Association staff cannot physically enter Gaza, the American Friends Service Committee in Gaza offered its help to Youthbank in their planning and reporting.

As a community foundation in spirit and practice, Dalia Association also provides financial services to civil society initiatives in the form of fiscal sponsorship. In 2009, we were honored to offer fiscal sponsorship to the **Right to Enter Campaign**. Right to Enter is a volunteer group that collects information, establishes networks, advocates for people affected by Israel's increasingly harsh restriction-of-entry policies and encourages protest against the policies themselves. Working under the fiscal sponsorship of Dalia Association allows Right to Enter to fundraise, receive donations, officially report on their finances, and offer donors to the Campaign a high level of professionalism and transparency.

### Promoting Financial Sustainability

We offered many consultations, financial sustainability assessments, and coaching to NGOs and community initiatives in the West Bank and inside Israel, including **Al-Taj for Health and Heritage** in Sakhnin in the Galilee, the **Young Palestinian Lawyers Association** in Ramallah, and **www.scholarships.com**. These also included extensive consultation to the Board of **Riwaq**, a Ramallah-based NGO that restores and preserves Palestinian architectural heritage, about endowment management and investment, as well as to the **SOS Children's Village in Bethlehem Alumni Group** about endowment planning.

## ***WE BELIEVE IN...***

### ***...GROWTH, NOT IMPOSITION.***

When Dalia Association supports community initiatives, what we're really supporting is communities' right and capacity to support themselves. We work with Palestinian communities to strengthen their own mechanisms of self-governance and project-monitoring – to strengthen, then, the transparency and accountability of local initiatives.

#### **Community-Controlled Grantmaking**

Dalia Association continued its community-controlled grantmaking program, "**The Village Decides**" – in which villagers distribute \$12,000 in funds to four of their local community organizations, and then the organizations decide how to use the funds according to their own priorities. In the village of Zawiya, Salfeet, an array of projects came to life: the **Women's Society of Zawiya Village** opened a photo studio that caters to women and children, the **Youth Leadership Club of Zawiya** made renovations to their health unit and kitchen, and also bought sports equipment; and the **Sanabel Women's Center** and **Abel Qader Abu Naba' Center** decided to pool their grant money to purchase a much-needed school bus to transport children in Zawiya to schools on the outskirts. In the case of this grant project, like all Dalia Association's grant programs, the recipients built on their own resources and funds to make the grant go further towards meeting community needs.



A man from Zawiya presents his grant idea to the community before they vote to determine which projects will receive funding.

In Zawiya, Dalia Association introduced an innovation, one that roots us even more deeply in our principles of transparency and full participation: monitoring committees, formed by villagers, which follow the activities and progress of the grantees. In this way, grantees must answer—both practically and ethically—to their own communities, not to some external donor body that writes a check and disappears. In other words, the entire process (the democratic election of grantees, the carrying-out of the project proposals, the supervision of their progress) becomes local, communal, and transparent.



Villagers from Zawiya on the day of they voted on how to use their grant funds.

As the programs proceed, Dalia Association stays involved to support and build local capacity. Often grantees request workshops enhance their skills and encourage effective participation. We provide coaching or draw on local volunteers, NGOs and companies to provide capacity-building workshops tailored for the specific interests of the participants.



A capacity-building workshop in Nablus about how to use resources strategically.

In Zawiya, for example, a local company, **ABC Consulting**, provided monitoring and evaluation as a pro bono service, and they even trained community members in self-monitoring. In the villages northwest of Nablus, **Alrafah Microfinance Bank** led a business consultation for the women. The same group had training in legal matters by two local volunteer lawyers and a priority setting session by **Najah Pal**, a planning company that trains and utilizes student volunteers from Al-Najah University. Women in Beit Liqia took part in a strategic planning session led by a volunteer.

## ***WE BELIEVE IN...***

### ***...BOTH GENEROSITY AND MUTUALITY.***

Dalia Association looks for links. We've found that Palestinian community-based organizations often have 9 of the 10 ingredients they need to make a positive impact, and the 10<sup>th</sup> ingredient isn't always money. And so we try to serve as a connector between people with a range of things to offer—ideas, contacts, equipment, etc.—and people who can use them to strengthen their communities.

Links can occur between two grassroots Palestinian organizations, or two communities and their respective projects. We also like to think of the relationship between a donor and a beneficiary as another kind of link: our job is to help the donors reach the grassroots. Any link, large or small, forges a new relationship.

Often, the first step in “linking” is determining what the community organization has and what they need, which we accomplish through a financial sustainability consultation. Each consultation is customized and may include coaching for the executive director and/or fundraising staff; referrals to financial or management professionals; and, in some cases, assistance in preparing proposals for submission to international donors. In all cases, we stay in close relationship with community-based organizations and advise them of funding opportunities that we learn about, making introductions to donors when appropriate.

#### **Serendipity and Creativity**

By chance, the **Wishah Popular Dance Troupe** from Ramallah and another Palestinian folkloric dance group, **Al-Kaleel *Dabke* Troupe** from Nablus, both had the same problem. Their performances were fast approaching, but they had not secured funding to buy new costumes. Could we help? A strange coincidence, but an easy solution: we linked Wishah and Al-Kaleel together. Wishah was able to loan their costumes to Al-Kaleel, and both groups were thrilled at being able to use existing local resources effectively.



Al-Kaleel's  
performance – and  
Wishah's costumes!

Dalia Association considers this particular "link" to be a perfect example of our guiding philosophy and the strategies it yields: ample resources are already present in Palestinian

communities, and what is needed is to forge connections between them. It doesn't necessarily require any money, just a bit of imagination.

### **A Beauty Salon in Beit Liqia**

Dalia Association was pleased to support the women of Beit Liqia, a village west of Ramallah, in their desire to open a beauty salon. After many complications, they registered their group as an NGO, submitted for funding to the French Consulate in Jerusalem, and negotiated a two-year project in the amount of \$77,000. We helped them get a generous contribution of wedding dresses from **Nafis Bridal Salon** in Amman, Jordan. We also helped them get develop a supportive relationship with the **Masrouji Company**, a major local player in the salon products business in Palestine. The whole process has been harder and more complex than we or the women of Beit Liqia envisioned, and we're still determining how to take the different steps that remain. But we're all learning a lot about how to support ambitious initiatives in complex rural communities, and we're eager to move toward a conclusion together.



Beit Liqia women learn to deliver beauty services and sell products.

### **Other links that Dalia Association facilitated in 2009 include:**

- A link between **Al-Taj for Health and Heritage** in Arrabe village in the Galilee and the **Oncology Nurses Association** to pay transportation expenses for a Palestinian health expert to present the Palestinian health experience at a professional conference.
- A link between **Friends of the Blind Association** in El-Bireh and **Norwegian People's Aid** for a new school bus to enable blind and visually impaired children in villages to attend school.
- **Palestinian Mobile Cinema** and the French Consulate for a van to transport volunteers to remote villages to promote cinema as a social force.



Sorting wedding dresses donated by a dress store in Amman at the Beit Liqia beauty salon.

### **Promoting Philanthropy by Making Giving Professional and Satisfying**

One of our priorities at Dalia Association is to facilitate many kinds of giving, not just prescribed ones – in other words, to connect people in ways that our existing systems don't readily provide for. This is exactly what happened with Abu Ahmed Qadi – the husband of Sebha, one of the original leaders of the Beit Liqia beauty salon. Abu Ahmed has Muscular Dystrophy, and he needed an electric wheelchair; these are terribly expensive and difficult to acquire in the West Bank. Dalia Association doesn't typically raise money for individual cases like this. But two volunteers, one in Ramallah and one in Chicago, expressed a strong interest in helping, and we agreed to serve as the repository for funding raised.



Abu Ahmed with his family.

Abu Ahmed now has an electric wheelchair! And the volunteers and donors have the satisfaction of knowing they did something that changed a family's life. Dalia made sure that the process was efficient and trustworthy.

## ***WE BELIEVE IN...***

### ***...REACHING OUT AND SPEAKING OUT.***

Dalia Association connects both locally and globally. It's crucial for us to incorporate global trends into our thinking and to get Palestine on the global agenda. We make it our goal to be “out there,” making connections and raising our voices in various media and in person.

- We launched our **website in Spanish**, both to widen the Dalia Association network in general and to reach out to Spanish-speaking Palestinians in the Diaspora.
- We produced and edited a **video called “Calling Diaspora Palestinians!”** and distributed it through **YouTube** in Arabic, English, Spanish, French, and Italian.
- We wrote an **article about effective giving for Gaza** for the Japanese Catholic Bulletin.
- We distributed our **Gaza Position Statement** to donors, aid actors, the media, diplomats, and advocacy groups calling attention to risks of humanitarian aid after the Gaza attacks.
- We were **interviewed on NPR's Worldview** by Jerome McDonald in Chicago.
- We published an article, “Palestine’s Companies are Generous, But Is Their Giving Effective?” in ***This Week in Palestine*** (Issue No. 140, December 2009).



Saeeda meets Amr Khaled, an Egyptian Muslim activist at the World Congress of Muslim Philanthropists in Abu Dhabi. At the same meeting, Nora presented the Gaza position paper to Tony Blair and presented on “The Role of Philanthropists in Aid-Dependent Environments.”

- We traveled to Kuwait for the **Global Development Network Conference**.

Saeeda in Cairo, Egypt with the staff and volunteers of Waqfiyeet Maadi, a community foundation in Cairo, about a possible implementation of “The Village Decides” in their own context.



- We attended the **WINGS Peer Learning Event on Community Foundation Sustainability** – a wonderful exchange among community foundations professionals from around the development world.



Board member Mahmoud Kittana, (front, right) at WINGS Peer Learning Event in Texas

- We also presented a workshop at **Grantmakers Without Borders** in Washington D.C. about community-controlled grantmaking.



Board member

Sam Bahour with Mary Robinson, former President of Ireland

We participated in a Ramadan Iftar sponsored by **The Elders**, a remarkable gathering of prominent, social-justice-seeking elders like Desmond Tutu, Jimmy Carter, and Richard Branson.

## ***WE BELIEVE IN...***

### ***...EXPANDING THE COMMUNITY OF GIVERS.***

Dalia Association is fortunate to have many supporters who, through their participation, prove that we can all be givers in one way or another. We reach out to expand the community of givers whenever we can. These are just a few events we took part in:

- “Are Palestinians Ready for Self-Determination?” A talk and fundraiser at St. Anselm’s Episcopal Church in Garden Grove, California
- “Philanthropy Road Table” at DePaul University, Chicago, sponsored by Arab-Jewish Partnership for Peace
- “International Aid to Palestinians – Helpful or Oppressive? A brown bag lunch and fundraiser sponsored by Community Change Inc. in Boston
- “Japanese Support for Palestine,” an educational and fundraising event at Kyoto University, Japan

And we enjoyed the help and support of tens of volunteers all over the world!



Looking ahead.

## ***WE BELIEVE IN...***

## ***...EXPANDING A COMMUNITY OF PHILANTHROPY AND VOLUNTEERISM.***

As we've said, Dalia Association's sights are set on both the local and the global. We've been fortunate to find many **supporters** – like you! – and we hope to make even more connections as we grow and change.

### **Some of our fundraising initiatives from 2009:**

- A fundraising event at a church in Garden Grove, California
- A fundraising dinner in Chicago, sponsored by the Arab Jewish Partnership
- A Philanthropy Roundtable sponsored by Arab Jewish Partnership at DePaul University in Chicago
- A fundraising talk at Community Change, an anti-racism organization, Boston
- Dalia Association's first fundraiser at Kyoto University, Japan

### **And where do we go from here?**

Lots of places! Dalia Association is committed to encouraging philanthropy and volunteerism: and this fundamentally means, we believe, encouraging people to think of themselves as whole human beings, to imagine themselves as capable of giving and not simply receiving.

To give requires confidence and trust. In yourself, of course, but also in the systems and institutions that receive your money, time, skills, and hope. It's easy – too easy – to be cynical about the mechanics of donations, about the way the process can be bureaucratic and impersonal.

What Dalia Association seeks to do, then, is to foster means of giving that reciprocally foster the professionalism and impact of the giving process itself. We want it to be easy for you to participate in the ways that suit your needs, convictions, and commitments, and we want you to know that your gifts are going directly to Palestinian communities in ways that suit theirs.

One of our most important plans is to reach further into the Palestinian Diaspora. We want to serve as a link by which Palestinians living around the globe (about half of the estimated 9 to 11 million Palestinians worldwide) connect to their cities and villages of origin, donate to projects there, and strengthen ties within a global community whose ties have so often been severed by force. So, the most intimately local action becomes profoundly global in a natural, sustainable way. Dalia Association is eager to help these connections grow.

## Acknowledgements

Dalia Association's work is strengthened and sustained by the support – financial donations, certainly, but also in-kind donations and volunteer work – of many individuals and organizations. **We thank you for your partnership!**

### Contributors (cash, in-kind, or volunteer) in 2009

Nadia Hasan Abdo  
Khaled Aboughazaleh  
Juliette Abu-Iyun – SUSTAINER  
Ali Abunimah  
Miriam Adams  
Joyce and Ziad Ajlouny-Khalaf – SUSTAINER  
Mark Ajluni  
Abd Al-Atari  
Hamada Abed H. Al-Bayari - SUSTAINER  
Waleed Almous  
Emad Al-Moakat  
Charles Alverson  
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Applied Information Management – SUSTAINER  
Assali Computer Systems, Jerusalem  
Association of Small Foundations, Washington, D.C.  
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Shadi Badawi  
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WINGS, Worldwide Initiatives for Grantmaker Support, Philippines  
Joan Whitaker  
Keren Wood  
World Congress of Muslim Philanthropists  
Nancy Wrenn  
Trees Zbidat-Kosterman - SUSTAINER

## Board of Directors

**Juliette Abu-Iyun**, from Jaffa but residing in Montreal, has a Master's degree in Legal Studies from Aix-en-Provence and has been a member of the Israeli Bar since 1996. She has expertise in human rights, international law and international humanitarian law, with a specialization in refugee issues. Juliette works as a consultant to Non-Governmental Organizations and multilateral agencies, including United Nations Relief & Works Agency (UNRWA). She has extensive experience planning and leading innovative research, advocacy and other politically sensitive interventions in Palestine, Israel, Brussels, France, and the United States. She worked as a researcher for Human Rights Watch in New York and Brussels and in Brussels for the Center for European Policy Studies. She ran a two-year participatory research project with refugees in Jalazon Camp, which she describes in the September 2006 issue of *Forced Migration Review*. She is fluent in Arabic, Hebrew, French, and English.

**Hamada Abed H. Al-Bayari** is the humanitarian affairs assistant for the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the Gaza Strip. Previously he worked development and public relations at El-Wafa Medical Rehabilitation Hospital and did field research and coordination for B'Tselem: The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, Civic Forum Institute, and National Democratic Institute for International Affairs. He has worked as a physiotherapy assistant and an Arabic interpreter/translator for the French media. Hamada has a B.Sc. from the Islamic University in Gaza City.

**Sam Bahour** is a Palestinian-American businessman and activist based in Al-Bireh/Ramallah. He is Managing Partner of Applied Information Management, a management consulting firm specializing in business development with a niche focus on the information technology sector. Sam was instrumental in the establishment of PALTEL and the PLAZA Shopping Center and currently serves as a member of the Board of Trustees at Birzeit University in the role of treasurer. He is also a Director at the Arab Islamic Bank. Sam writes frequently on Palestinian affairs and has been widely published. He is co-editor of *HOMELAND: Oral History of Palestine and Palestinians*.

**Mahmoud Kittana**, a lawyer based in Ramallah, currently works as a legal advisor at the Birzeit University Institute of Law; there, he conducts legal research, lectures and gives workshops, prepares curricula, and organizes/analyzes legal data. He also works for Ittqan Law Firm. Mahmoud received his B.A. in Law from Al-Quds University in Jerusalem; his Master's degree in Commercial Law from Birzeit University in Ramallah; and a Master of Laws degree from Duke University in the US. He was trained in various other law firms, both in Palestine and in the US, and has extensive experience in matters of democratic involvement and development, crisis management and negotiation, and strategic planning for institutions. Mahmoud has also published several articles on legal and political issues in the Palestinian context.

**Rula Muzaffer (Treasurer)** is the Jerusalem Director of Administrative and Financial Affairs for MIFTA, the Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy. She received her B.A. in Accounting and English from Yarmouk University in Irbid, Jordan. Before starting her work with MIFTA, where she has over ten years of experience, Rula worked in numerous other financial and administrative capacities, including at (AA) Consulting Engineers in Ramallah (where she served as a financial analyst; the Palestinian Ministry of Higher Education (as the director of financial affairs);

the Palestinian Independent Commission for Citizens' Rights, and several trading and maintenance companies. Rula also has training experience in financial management for NGOs, government administration in conflict areas, and other fields related to the coordination of both public and privately run organizations.

**Thuqan K. Qishawi** is a development expert with over fifteen years of experience in the field. He is currently the Middle East Regional Coordinator of Youth Programs for the American Friends Service Committee. Thuqan holds a Bachelor of Mathematics & Economics from the American University in Cairo and a Master's degree in Economics from Birzeit University, Palestine. In his current capacity, Thuqan spearheads the Public Achievement (PA) program in Palestine, one of the world's most successful PA initiatives. Thuqan has worked with a variety of governmental and non-governmental entities in Palestine, focusing on issues as diverse as gender budgeting and sensitivity, feasibility studies, youth employment policies, youth civic engagement, business management, and entrepreneurship. A monitoring and evaluation expert, he has conducted various evaluation studies and strategic planning processes over the years. Thuqan attained his trainer certification from Inwent, Germany, and has become a skilled trainer, moderator, and facilitator; he has facilitated trainings and both regional and local workshops on water/environmental issues, socioeconomic issues, gender, leadership, and youth civic engagement.

**Mohammad A.M. Shaheen (President)** is the Dean of Public Health and Director of the Center for Development in Primary Health Care at Al-Quds University, where he has taught various subjects for over 20 years. He has a Ph.D. in Health Services Administration with a focus on health economics and policy research from the University of Pittsburgh, a Masters in Community Health from Purdue University and a B.Sc. in Medical and Nursing Sciences from the University of Jordan. One of the country's pioneers in advocating the role of the community as a partner in development and public health, he is a founding member of the Palestinian Health Policy Forum, which promotes policies responsive to the needs of the Palestinian people. He is a long-time board member and current vice president of Childwatch International. With extensive experience in collaborative research with researchers around the world, Mohammad has led or contributed to scores of evaluations, capacity building projects, and developmental interventions with multilateral agencies, International Non-Governmental Organizations, and Non-Governmental Organizations.

**Azza Shoaibi (Secretary)** works at Birzeit University, where she is completing her M.A in public health. She is also a chief pharmacist at YazanCare in Ramallah. Previously, she was the training and projects coordinator for Jerusalem Pharmaceuticals Company (JPHARM) in Ramallah, the largest pharmaceutical company and exporter in Palestine. Azza is involved in a wide range of community volunteer work, including serving as a lecturer and trainer for Injaz Association, a program that teaches business skills to Palestinian youth. Azza received her degree in pharmacy from the Jordanian University of Science and Technology in Irbid, Jordan, and has been certified as a Project Management Professional (PMP) by the Project Management Institute (PMI) in the United States.

## **General Assembly**

Davina Gately  
Hiba Hussein  
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Salwa Jaradat  
Basel Mansour  
Maha Mikhail  
Jamal Najib  
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Trees Zbidat-Kosterman