



# Through education we discover the world

*Our scholarship students in Gaza tell us about their hopes and dreams, about the value of an education even if it does not lead to employment, and how they have been affected by the Right to Return marches that took place in Gaza in 2018.*

My name is **Areej Khaled El-Ebweni** and I'm in my fourth and last year of a degree in medical laboratory analysis at the Islamic University. I live with my family in a small house and our financial conditions are very bad. Like other people we are affected by the disastrous economic situation in the Gaza Strip. It is difficult to meet the simple needs of life and university fees are so high that students cannot always complete their education.

I was awarded the Sheffield scholarship in my third year at university. It has helped me a lot - to pay the very high fees and to complete my education.

I believe the goal of education is not only employment. There are other goals - for example gaining experience and knowledge and learning about different cultures. Education is a very positive and beautiful experience. Through education we discover the world.

I will continue my education until I get my masters and PhD and I will volunteer in associations to gain more experience and knowledge. I want to be of benefit to people and serve them with the science that I've learned. I want to reduce their pain and offer them a helping hand.

You will have read this year about the Right to Return protests at the Gaza-Israel border. These were to assure the world that Palestinians have not forgotten our right to return and we will fight for this and for the lifting of the Israeli siege on the Gaza Strip that has affected us in so many ways. We have had relatives and friends killed and injured on these Right to Return marches and, despite the psychological pressure this caused, our determination to complete our studies has grown even stronger. Education is the only way to achieve victory. In Gaza we have learned the meaning of patience and steadfastness and how to fight for our dreams despite the very difficult circumstances.

I love my specialisation and doing scientific research. My family encourages me to be myself and to be an active member of society. I give my thanks to everyone who has helped and encouraged me to complete my studies. Thank you from the bottom of my heart to the Sheffield Scholarship Fund for your support. I will never forget this. I will complete my studies with excellence and be an active woman in society.





## I am passionate about nursing

My name is **Waed Bahjat Abu Sweerih** and I have one sister and seven brothers. My father is a government employee and our financial situation has got much worse in the last couple of years as his salary has been cut by fifty percent. This was due to a disagreement between the ruling Palestinian factions.

I always dreamt of getting a bachelor's degree in nursing but I couldn't achieve this because of my family's difficult financial situation. Instead I ended up studying for a nursing diploma at Al Azhar university. Diploma-level qualifications are free of charge and I graduated with an average of 87%. Then this year the Sheffield Scholarship Fund helped me to achieve my dream. I am now completing a bachelor's degree in nursing at the Islamic University.

I am very passionate about nursing. It is humanitarian work and I can use what I learn to benefit my family, neighbours and relatives. We live in a small, marginalised village where there is no hospital or even a primary care centre, so having a female nurse in the village is very important for the village women.

I am determined to complete my education, even though unemployment in Gaza can be as high as seventy percent. Having a job and money is not everything. By studying I benefit myself, my family and my village. I become stronger, more confident and more capable of facing the difficulties of life. I am sure that the conditions in Gaza will change for the better one day and we will find good opportunities that will allow us to achieve our ambitions.

I was frustrated in the past when I was unable to complete my studies but then I found the Sheffield Scholarship Fund. It has helped me and filled my heart with hope again. Today I am hopeful that life will improve and there will be opportunities for work.

This year there has been a new situation in Gaza. The Right to Return marches began in March and I participated as a nurse, helping to transport the injured and to provide first aid when it was needed. The marches did not hinder my studies. On the contrary, they taught me to be more generous and to give without waiting for a reward. They made me more determined to finish my course and to be more effective in society.

Thank you, Sheffield Women's Scholarship Fund. You brought us out of our homes to learn and become stronger and you gave us hope, which is most needed in Gaza.



Waed practising her nursing skills

# Education is the best way to build a strong personality



My name is **Ayat Ahmed Mohammed Ahmed**. I'm twenty-two years old and I'm studying for a degree in industrial engineering at the Islamic University in Gaza. I have five brothers and two sisters and after the loss of my father it is my mother who takes care of us all.

My father died in the Israeli attack in 2014. I was eighteen at the time and about to enter university. Suddenly all doors closed in my face. We had lost my father's income – the only source of money for this large family. Without a Sheffield Women's Scholarship I would not have been able to study for a university degree. Even when I faced health difficulties, the Scholarship Fund did not abandon me and has continued to support me. This has been such an important source of motivation for me – my suffering was not a barrier.

The lack of employment opportunities for graduates in Gaza does not mean that a university degree is not important. Education is the best way to build a strong personality capable of dealing with all circumstances. Education is how we will achieve our dreams and improve our living conditions. I have worked hard to fulfill my dream of becoming an engineer able to work in factories, ministries, hospitals and project management offices.

This last year in the Gaza Strip we have been marching for the Right to Return, demanding our legitimate rights. These continuous events along the border have had a great impact and made our life tense because we feared losing people or having to fight new Israeli attacks. But none of this has stopped me from continuing with my studies. Education will be our weapon to face this difficult life. I will raise my head and make my father proud of his daughter. I will continue what he wanted for me and this makes me even more determined.

Thank you, Sheffield, for the support and motivation that you give us.

*We would like to thank Wafaa El Derawi for conducting these interviews and for all that she does, as a volunteer, to support the Scholarship Fund in Gaza. What you do is brilliant, Wafaa! Thank you!*



Dalia, who featured in our 2016 Newsletter.

## Message from a 2017 graduate

*In April 2018 Dr Mona El Farra, our partner in Gaza, received this message:*

Peace upon you Dr Mona. My name is Dalia Tayseer Abu Shammala and I am a pharmacy graduate. I benefited from the Sheffield Women's scholarships through Afaq Jadeeda. I wanted to reach out to you after my graduation to thank you from the bottom of my heart for your support. I thank all the women in the Sheffield Women's Scholarship Fund who advocate for Palestinian women's right to education. This message cannot articulate enough how thankful I am for having been given this opportunity.

# Every obstacle thrown at them is challenged

## Launching the Scholarship Fund in the West Bank

*Having received four sizeable donations (please see page 7 for more information) we have been exploring the possibility of providing scholarships to young women in the West Bank as well as Gaza. In July 2018 **Beverley Booker**, a member of the organising group, made a personal visit to the West Bank and whilst there began mapping out how the Fund might start to operate (which could be different to how we work in Gaza). This is what she reported back:*



Sahar Awadallah, Sara Gowen, Bev Booker and Mona El Farra (our partner in Gaza) planning Bev's visit.

Sixty percent of the West Bank is under total Israeli control and this fact is immediately apparent when you arrive. There are watch towers, countless checkpoints, the hideous wall and heavily armed soldiers everywhere. It feels like a war zone.

Ramallah is full of building sites – new blocks of flats appearing everywhere – but it is the scale of settlement building in the West Bank that dwarfs everything. The Israeli settlements stretch for miles and dominate the skyline and will soon cut the West Bank in half. One settlement we drove through had sprinkler hosepipes on green lawns whereas most of the West Bank was baked dry under the hot July sun.



A member of the Surif Women's Co-op.

Palestinian resistance is humbling to witness. I enjoyed visiting women's co-operatives in the Hebron area, laughing with the women as they sewed, and we swapped life stories. Bir Zeit University is also impressive where the

Institute of Women's Studies' staff work hard to ensure women students succeed despite domestic hardships.

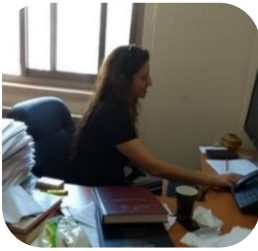
I visited villages in Massafer Yatta in the South Hebron hills where the Israeli government wants to confiscate all Palestinian land for Israeli settlements. The community practices non-violent resistance with some successes including getting sections of the wall removed. Women are equally active and some girls from this sheep farming area are now at university. The community included young Italians who escort the primary-age children to school to prevent settlers attacking them. Every obstacle thrown at them by Israeli soldiers is challenged and I found the same determination everywhere I went.



Baking bread in Massafer Yatta community

I visited a Bedouin community Al Mehtwish where women make woollen camels and donkeys to sell. They are proud to be earning for their community but are threatened constantly with demolition orders. The community used to be semi-nomadic but now only have animals for domestic consumption (Israel banned seasonal migration in 1977) and they are not allowed to





Lena Miari, Head of Women's Studies at Birzeit University

expand the community. When a couple got married in summer 2014 their one-room dwelling was bulldozed by the Israelis. The Bedouin are confined to smaller and smaller areas as the settlements expand and they fear being forced into an urban ghetto.

During my visit I met with a range of individuals and organisations that have an interest in women's education. I found a lot of support for the Sheffield Women's Scholarship Fund and for our aim in the West Bank of giving scholarships to young women from marginalised communities. By the end of my stay I had identified a group of five women – all with relevant experience – who agreed to work with us as partners. They are:

- **Kirsty Wright**, who has lived in the West Bank for twenty-seven years and is a monitoring and evaluation expert.
- **Shirabe Yamada**, who is Director of Sunbula, a Palestinian Fair Trade organisation that supports economic empowerment of marginalised people through the promotion of traditional handicrafts.
- **Josie Shields-Stromness** who works with Middle East Children's Alliance (MECA) and who already (through MECA) administers some scholarships.
- **Lena Miari** Head of Women's Studies at Birzeit University.
- **Tania Kassis** Administrative and Financial Assistant at the Institute of Women's Studies at Birzeit University.

#### **Beverley Booker**

*With especial thanks to Kirsty and Shirabe for their care during my visit.*

## **Since the visit ...**

In December 2018 Kirsty Wright met with the SPWSF organising group in Sheffield. This was a great opportunity for us to discuss our approach to the West Bank scholarships and some of the practicalities. Kirsty agreed that when she returned home she would convene the first meeting of the West Bank SPWSF partners so they could start to iron out how the Fund will work on the ground.

We hope that the first West Bank scholarships will start in September 2019. We originally thought of starting with three scholarships (as we did in Gaza), but the number will depend on how much each will cost. Scholarships in the West Bank may also need to include funding for transport or accommodation to enable students to complete their degrees. It is this sort of information that our partners in the West Bank will be able to provide us with and they will establish criteria for selecting students (based on what is used in Gaza). We are grateful to have such experienced partners guiding us through our first, exciting steps as we develop the Scholarship Fund in the West Bank. We look forward very much to working with them.



Kirsty Wright (3<sup>rd</sup> from left) with the SPWSF organising group in Sheffield.

# Women of the Nakba

## International Women's Day 2018

2018 marked the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Nakba. Nakba is the Arabic word for catastrophe or disaster and is used to describe the ethnic cleansing and colonisation of Palestine, a process which continues to this day. When planning our biennial International Women's Day (IWD) event for 2018, the Northern Women for Palestine Group decided to



*Sisters: UNRWA Nakba archive*



*Alenby Bridge 1948: UNRWA archive*

commemorate this historic event, dispelling myths and celebrating the resistance and resilience of Palestinian women. We also wanted to connect the Palestinian cause with women worldwide, in particular asylum seekers and refugees.

Eight cities hosted the IWD event: Bradford, Halifax, Huddersfield, Leeds, Manchester, Saddleworth, Sheffield and York. Over a hundred and thirty women attended in Sheffield - a full house.

A range of approaches conveyed the themes and political message. A photographic exhibition from the UNRWA Nakba archive, set alongside modern images, showed that the ethnic cleansing didn't end, but is still happening. A film

*Palestinians: Leave or Die*, edited by

Angela Martin, contained powerful footage of harsh treatment in 1948, with commentary from distinguished historians. Angela also crafted a film collage showing the Sub Laban family being harassed out of their family home in East Jerusalem today.

Kholoud Al Ajarma showed the film she had made about four generations of women in her family. Kholoud, a good friend of the Scholarship Fund, lives in Aida refugee camp, Bethlehem. Her grandparents were forcibly evicted from their land in Ajjur in 1948 and her grandmother, Fatima, a feisty 90-year-old, tells great stories, full of emotion, humour and longing for her true home: 'The air is never so fresh and the fruit never so sweet as in Ajjur!' The film shows life in the camp and the determination of the women to live with dignity and work for their Right of Return.

During her stay in the UK, Kholoud's home was raided and ransacked in the middle of the night. Her parents were threatened by the Israeli army who were searching for someone with the same name as Kholoud's mother. Here was just another of the everyday harassments to which Palestinians are subjected.

At the Sheffield event Sahar Awadallah, a stalwart of the Scholarship Fund, spoke about her family and her personal experiences of the Nakba and its aftermath. She helped us realise that



Kholoud Al Ajarma with symbolic keys to Palestinian homes lost in the Nakba

no Palestinian has been left untouched by this event as it reverberates across the generations and takes in the far-flung places where Palestinians now live.

Kate Thomas, leader of Body of Sound, wrote a song, *Two Weeks*, capturing the experiences of the Palestinian refugees in 1948. This moving soundscape emerged from the symbolic tent made for the events by Hilly Fletcher. In Sheffield, we had a bonus with Body of Sound opening the event with songs celebrating women whilst Kate, with her friends Helen and Rose (The Top Shelalas) sang *Two Weeks* live - a stunningly good finale.

Everyone who attended received a copy of *Ten things we can do for Palestine*, a leaflet on the Nakba and a symbolic key with a fob that read: Remembering the Nakba: 531 Palestinian villages ethnically cleansed 1947-1949.

**Annie O’Gara**

Scholarship Fund and Northern Women for Palestine



Kholoud Al Ajarma  
inside Hilly Fletcher’s  
‘Belonging(s)’ – at  
the Bradford event.



## Large donations to fund West Bank scholarships

In last year’s newsletter we announced that the Scholarship Fund had received three very generous donations, an incredible £30,000 in total. Such a sum meant that for the first time we could consider working not only in Gaza, but also in the West Bank.

We were just embarking on discussions – between ourselves and with our partners in Gaza – when we received a further £10,900 (a legacy). We now had £40,900 in unallocated funds and there was no question: we could definitely explore giving scholarships in the West Bank as well as Gaza. In October we held a meeting with supporters and agreed:

- We would spend £15,000 in **Gaza** on extra scholarships over the next three years. Mona El Farra, our partner in Gaza, was clear that there was a need and that students could be identified for scholarships to start in the autumn of 2018.
- Based on what Bev Booker had found out on her visit to the **West Bank** (see page 4) we would work with local partners to develop selection criteria and working arrangements with the idea of starting to give scholarships – possibly three in the first instance – from September 2019. We have allocated approximately £15,000 for this.
- It was later agreed by the organising group that the legacy of £10,900 would initially be held for transport and accommodation costs in the West Bank, as these may need to be met for students to be able to make use of a scholarship.

We are hugely indebted to the four donors, who are enabling the Scholarship Fund to work now across the whole of Palestine, linking young women in Gaza and the West Bank through the Fund. *Is leaving a gift in your will something you’d like to think about? A gift can be small or big. Any amount means more young women in Palestine can gain an education.*



# Palestinian universities on the front line

For Palestinian students, confrontations with heavily armed Israel Defence Forces (IDF) troops are regular, and often deadly. Palestinian universities are raided and closed and their buildings ransacked. Staff and students are regularly tear-gassed, shot with live ammunition, and arrested. Students are killed.

In March 2018 armed Israeli soldiers disguised as students made a violent intrusion onto the Birzeit University campus — the fifth in two years — and kidnapped the head of the Student Council, Omar Kiswani, who was pinned to the ground outside the Student Council building; live rounds were fired. In the first month of Kiswani's detention he endured interrogations that lasted for eighteen to twenty hours a day, was prevented from sleeping and banned from seeing his lawyer for twenty-five days. A student march protesting against Kiswani's kidnapping was attacked with live ammunition several days later. At least eight students were injured, one of them seriously.



In March 2018 students from the newly formed Sheffield Hallam Palestine Solidarity Society organised a protest against the arrest of Omar Kiswani of Birzeit University. The green Scholarship Fund Banner is on the right.

In July 2018 Israel indefinitely closed the Hind Al-Husseini College in Sheikh Jarrah in occupied Jerusalem and detained fifteen people. In September Israeli forces sealed off the Abu Dis campus of Al-Quds University. Dozens of students suffered from teargas inhalation. In November the new head of the Birzeit Student Council, Yehya Rabie, was taken into custody, joining sixty other Birzeit students in Israeli prisons, many without charge or arrest. On December 5, Israel announced that it would no longer recognise social-work qualifications from Al-Quds University, effectively voiding that degree of its professional utility.

Education is key to Palestinian people's aspirations for freedom and justice. Universities are important hubs of resistance and we often see students in the front line, as with the 2018 Right to Return Marches in Gaza. Students accounted for more than a quarter of civilian deaths during Israel's 2014 war on Gaza, when numerous university buildings were damaged or destroyed.

In October 2018 the Palestinian Union of Social Workers and Psychologists joined the many Palestinian organisations calling for international support for the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions movement. The Union asked their international colleagues to boycott the 2019 conference of the International Association for Relational Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy, due to be held in Tel Aviv: "in the name of the freedom, justice, and dignity of every Palestinian."

*With thanks to an article by Nick Riemer (from Sydney University) in the magazine Jacobin. See*

*[www.jacobinmag.com/2018/12/palestinian-universities-higher-education-israeli-violence](http://www.jacobinmag.com/2018/12/palestinian-universities-higher-education-israeli-violence)*

*For more information on the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement see: <https://bdsmovement.net/>*





## This year's students

This year we are funding **65** students. This amazing number is due to the ongoing generosity of our supporters and to the large donations we received (see page 7). We have taken on **33** new students whilst **9** have graduated (see details on page 12 – congratulations to all of them!) and a further **6** discontinued their studies – one because she married, the other five because unfortunately they did not achieve sufficiently high grades. We wish all of our current students success in the coming year!



2018 award ceremony hosted by our partner organisation, Afaq Jadeeda, in Gaza

	Name	Address	University	Subject	US \$
<b>Students supported since September 2016</b>					
1	Eman Ghassan Ahmed Abu Hatab	Khan Younis	Gaza University	Translation	600
2	Noor Atta Hamdi Habashi	Gaza	Islamic Uni.	English Teaching	400
3	Ayat Ahmed Mohammed Ahmed	Nuseirat camp	Islamic Uni.	Engineering	1000
4	Haneen Hamed Deeb E-raee	Gaza	Islamic Uni.	Clinical Investigations	300
5	Hala Abu El Elkheir Mohammed Ferjani	Khan Younis	Al-Aqsa	Business Administration	300
6	Amani Mohammed Adel Abdelhameed	Nuseirat	Al-Aqsa	English Teaching	500
7	Hanaa Atef Hassan Salha	Deir-El-Balah	Al-Aqsa	Primary Education	300
8	Mai Jamal Saleh Abu Sha'ban	Gaza	Al-Aqsa	Primary Education	600
9	Ritta Reyad Ahmed El-Looh	Bureij	Al-Quds	English Literature	600
10	Karama Hassan Mohammed El-Da'or	Jabalia	Uni. Of Palestine	Pharmacy	1000
11	Rasha Anwer Hassan Salha	Jabalia	Al-Azhar	Applied Science	600
12	Lubna Abdelkhaleq Ali El-Farra	Khan Younis	Al-Azhar	Engineering	800
13	Areej Mohammed Madi	Gaza City	Al-Azhar	Accounting	600
14	Deena Soheil Omar El-Tanani	Gaza City	Al-Azhar	English Teaching	600
<b>Students supported since September 2017</b>					
15	Noha Raed Ahmed Abu Khater	Nuseirat camp	Islamic University	Nursing	600

16	Lamees Ashraf Wedad Faraj	Jabalia Camp	Islamic University	Business Administration	600
17	Areej Khaled Shehada El-Ebweni	Nuseirat camp	Islamic University	Health Administration	600
18	Duha Jamal Abdulrahman Abu Hayya	Nuseirat camp	Al-Aqsa	English Teaching	300
19	Aseel Nedat Mohammed Shahin	Nuseirat	Al-Aqsa	English Teaching	500
20	Rawan Faraj Abdulqader Abu Shammala	Nuseirat camp	Al-Quds	Accounting	600
21	Abeer Anwar Khalil Maleha	Gaza City	Al-Quds	Health Administration	600
22	Salsabeel Salman Hassan Abu Rashed	Nuseirat camp	Palestine University	Business Administration	600
23	Nehal Fouad Nabhan Salama	Nuseirat camp	Palestine University	Teaching English	600
24	Reham Bassam Abdulsame' Abu Seef	Nuseirat camp	Palestine University	Law	600
25	Noor Nasee Abdulaziz Abdula'al	Nuseirat camp	Palestine University	Law	600
26	Eman Arrar Mohammed El-Atawna	Nuseirat camp	Al-Azhar	Pharmacy	800
27	Anwar Saed Sobhi Abu Jalhom	Gaza City	Al-Azhar	Teaching Arabic	600
28	Israa Ra'fat Ameer Abed	Gaza City	Al-Azhar	Applied Sciences	600
29	Shorouq Hassan Mohammed El-Awadi	Jabalia Camp	Al-Azhar	Psychotherapy	600
30	Noor Nael Shehda Abu Obeida	Gaza	Al-Azhar	Clinical Investigations	6800
31	Norhan Khaled Tawfeeq El-Ghaffari	Nuseirat camp	Al-Israa	Business Administration	300
<b>New students – from September 2018</b>					
32	Nahla Mohammed Hassan Ahmed	Maghazi	Palestine University	Law	600
33	Tasneem Naser Juma Darweish	Maghazi	Al-Quds University	Accounting	600
34	Noor Mohammed Ibrahim Rayan	Deir El-Balah	Al-Azhar University	Dentistry	800
35	Ghalia Ghalib Gabr Abu Khaled	Zwaida	Islamic University	Nursing	600
36	Manar Nafez Mahmud Al-Saidy	Bureij	Islamic University	Nursing	600
37	Remaz Ahmed Zaher Farj Allah	Nuseirat	Al-Aqsa University	English Literature	600
38	Hadeel Gamal Abdullah Abu Haya	Nuseirat	Al-Aqsa University	Arabic Teaching	500
39	Hanady Mahmud Khalil Abu Shawish	Nuseirat	Al-Azhar University	Clinical Investigations	600

40	Lamia Anwar Abdulhameed Abu Hezien	Nuseirat	Al-Aqsa University	Accounting	500
41	Rola Borham Mohammed El-Quraan	Zwaida	Al-Aqsa University	Nursing	500
42	Malak Ibrahim Ibrahim Qnanish	Khan Younis	Al-Azhar University	Engineering	600
43	Rwan Ali Abdulmajeed Abu Shawish	Nuseirat	Al-Azhar University	Translation	500
44	Alaa Naser Hassan Zuqat	Nuseirat	Al-Quds University	Primary Education	600
45	Lama Hussein Nady Hamad	Jabalia	Al-Azhar University	Accounting	600
46	Samaher Akram Abdulsalam Ali	Jabalia	Al-Azhar University	Teaching English	600
47	Marwa Mamdouh Ibrahim Ba'alousha	Zwaida	Al-Azhar University	Pharmacy	600
48	OI Khairi Abdulrahma Abu Habid	Jabalia	Al-Azhar University	Pharmacy	600
49	Amal Mahmud Rizq Seyam	Nuseirat	Al-Azhar University	Nursing	600
50	Iba'a Yosif Mohammed Hamoda	Khan Younis	Al-Azhar University	Engineering	600
51	Eliaa Ibrahim Ibrahim Al-Fasees	Gaza City	Al-Quds University	Information Technology	600
52	Haya Mohammed Gasem El-Assar	Nuseirat	Islamic University	Mathematics Education	600
53	Alaa Maher Fahmy Al-Ghreez	Nuseirat	Palestine University	Information Technology	600
54	Lina Abdullah Mahmud Awadallah	Gaza City	Islamic University	Engineering	600
55	Rima Fayex Ali Al-Thawabta	Nuseirat	Al-Aqsa University	Business Administration	500
56	Yasmin Baker Ismail Shaheen	Bureij	Al-Aqsa University	Teaching Arabic	500
57	Nehad Raed Ahmed Al-Jadbah	Gaza City	Al-Aqsa University	Chemistry	500
58	Rozan Nahed Abdulrahman Matar	Gaza City	Al-Azhar University	English Literature	600
59	Reham Sobhi Mohammed Nassar	Gaza City	Islamic University	Clinical Investigations	600
60	Rania Khaled Tawfiq El-Ghafari	Beit Lahia	Al-Aqsa University	Clinical Investigations	500
61	Noor El-Huda Amin Esmat El-Borno	Gaza City	Al-Aqsa University	Business Administration	500
62	Asmaa Iz El-Dein Abdeen	Khan Younis	Al-Aqsa University	Teaching Arabic	500
63	Rouand Jaber Ibrahim Abu Saeed	Bureij	Al-Quds University	Primary Education	600
64	Amal Maher Ahmed El-Sayed	Bureij	Gaza University	Business Administration	600

65	Waed Bahjat Nayef Abu Sawirh	Zwaida	Islamic University	Nursing	300
<b>Students who graduated in 2018</b>					
1	Rola Atyya Murjan Abu Zer	Nuseirat	Uni. Of Palestine	Business Administration	
2	Duaa' Kamal Kamel Arafat	Gaza	Islamic Uni.	English	
3	Alaa' Fouad Dawood Aljumasi	Gaza	Islamic Uni.	Medicine	
4	Ghadeer Khaled Salman Abu Khashan	Khan Younis	Al-Quds	English	
5	Mai Mohammed Ahmed Abu Shawish	Nuseirat	Al-Quds	Primary Education	
6	Amal Basheer Talab Alghrabli	Gaza	Uni. Of Palestine	Dentistry	
7	Aya Khaled Mohammed Alghalban	Khan Younis	Uni. Of Palestine	Nursing	
8	Sabreen Mohammed Ismael Albaz	Nuseirat	Al-Quds	Health Management	
9	Hadya Sami Owda Abu Reda	Khan Younis	Islamic University	Information Technology	



## Bolton Socialist Club

Over the last year members of the Bolton Socialist Club have raised £2,400 for the Sheffield Palestine Women's Scholarship Fund. Every spring we organise a sponsored walk and every



Spring sponsored walk

autumn a curry evening - supported and put together by our many friends in the Bolton Asian community. In addition, several members have standing orders while others make one-off donations. We also raise money for charities, including the Scholarship Fund, through raffles at our regular music and theatre events.

The Club has over two hundred members and many of them take a great interest in our support for women's education in Gaza (and now the West Bank). We keep them informed not only through the regular reports we receive from Sheffield but

by displaying photos and other materials on the walls of the club.

We are proud to be part of the Scholarship Fund network and are delighted at its ever-growing success.



# Saddleworth Palestine Women's Scholarship Fund

In March 2018 we hosted one of the International Women's Day events devised by Northern Women for Palestine. It included short films, talks, poems and art works around the theme of the Nakba and the right of return. We were delighted to be joined by film-maker Kholoud al Ajarma from Aida refugee camp in Palestine's occupied territories, by actor Maxine Peake, and by our local MP Debbie Abrahams. Attendees were given symbolic keys as well as information leaflets as they left and feedback suggested that many people had found the event moving and inspiring.



Henry Martin's Christmas card

To contrast with this event, our autumn fundraiser in November was billed as a 'Sunday Social'. It included music, food, a range of stalls selling Palestinian goods, local crafts, and second-hand books, clothes and vintage crockery. We also sold some wonderful Christmas cards donated by a supporter, Henry Martin. Music was provided by soul singer Hayley Morris and by the Late Start Wind Band from Oldham Music Centre. Thanks also to Hilary Smith from Sheffield for making the trip over the Pennines to update people on the current and future plans for the Fund. Turnout for this event was over one hundred, a first for us.

## Finance

In 2018 we raised a total of £8506.80. Over £900 was raised through the International Women's Day event, nearly £1700 through our autumn fundraiser, and we received a donation of £1500 from a women's trust fund (Funderbirds). We also received over £700 from one-off donations and over £3700 from standing orders.

## Committee Members

In August 2018, our longstanding secretary of the group Kathy Brooks moved to Wales. Kathy worked tirelessly for the group to raise funds and awareness for women's education in Palestine. Another valued member of the committee, Joy Bishop, also left the group due to other commitments. Both are sorely missed. Magda Sachs, a longstanding supporter, has recently joined the committee and between us we hope to continue our traditions and perhaps do things differently as well. We'll let you know next year.



Audience and Late Start Wind Band at our autumn event



Committee members Michele Abendstern (right) and Kathy Brooks (left) with actor and supporter Maxine Peake.

## **Data protection**

After much discussion we decided to send an email to individuals on our Saddleworth PWSF mailing list requesting them to respond to us if they wished to continue to receive information from us. Most people responded positively although we did lose a small number.

## **Media**

We have had good coverage of our events in the local press, on Facebook and twitter.

**Catherine, Jacqui, Magda, Michele, Sarah, Sue**



Saddleworth Committee with Maxine Peake and Kholoud al Ajarma (2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> from left) at the International Women's Day event in March.



## **Rotherham Friends of Palestine**

Over the last year Rotherham Friends of Palestine arranged a number of small gatherings and events to raise awareness and fundraise for the Sheffield Palestine Women's Scholarship Fund. These included shared meals hosted by group members (the Bartleys)

and two delicious Palestinian meals provided by Sahar and Abdul Awadallah. Sahar also organised a fundraising coffee morning in January 2019 during which a documentary film on Israel's tactics to undermine the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement was shown.

We are grateful for the support we've received from the Sheffield SPWSF group, from Rotherham Labour Party and our MP Sarah Champion, and from Rotherham Irish Society. We'd also like to thank the many individual friends who made a contribution this year, including Janet Vout (who donated some of the proceeds from the sale of a book she has written) and Amanda Johnson aged 16 who completed a sponsored swim.

We have raised over £600 since March 2016.

## **Ellen Bartley**

*In the photo:* Mona El Farra (SPWSF's partner in Gaza), Sahar and Abdul Awadallah (Rotherham Friends of Palestine), Chris Wood and Annie O'Gara (Sheffield PSC) at a Palestinian meal.



# A **BIG** thank you

In July 2018 we sent **£30,450** to Gaza! This covered the **65** scholarships as well as a 5% admin fee to Afaq Jadeeda in Gaza and bank charges. We thank everyone who has organised, helped with, or attended events and/or made donations of time, money or other forms of support to the Fund over this last year, including:

- ✚ All those who have maintained or taken out a standing order. This regular income is, as always, the backbone of the Fund and is hugely valued.
- ✚ Everyone who has made a one-off donation or collected donations for the Fund.
- ✚ Supporters in Bolton, Saddleworth and Rotherham and in the Palestine Education Network at Sheffield Hallam University.
- ✚ Members of Labour Party constituencies and trade unions that made donations to the Fund. *We are hoping to develop more links with the labour movement. Please contact us if you would like a speaker on the Scholarship Fund to attend one of your meetings.*
- ✚ Everyone who walked, ran or helped to organise the **Small park BIG RUN** in June 2018. The event, which takes place in Meersbrook Park, was a great success, raising £7000: a sum shared between the Scholarship Fund and the Khuza'a Children's Play and Heal project. The Run will be repeated on June 15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> 2019. See <https://en-gb.facebook.com/smallparkbigrun/>



- ✚ The U3A Feminists Over Fifty network for giving the proceeds of their women's disco to the Scholarship Fund.
- ✚ Sheffield Palestine Cultural Exchange for the money raised through Reem Kelani's wonderful performance in Sheffield in November 2018.



## Thinking of raising sponsorship for the Scholarship Fund?

We are registered on **Virgin Money Giving** which makes it very easy.

Just go to <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/giving/> and use the search facility to find Sheffield Palestine Women's Scholarship Fund.

# How the Fund works

The Fund is managed in Sheffield by a small coalition of women working in partnership with the Sheffield Palestine Solidarity Campaign, and in Gaza by a panel drawn from the Board of Directors of the Red Crescent Society and the Union of Health Work Committees, with administrative support from Afaq Jadeeda. We have recently identified new partners in the West Bank (see page 5) and are exploring with them how the Fund will operate there (which may be different to Gaza). Our plan is to award up to three scholarships to West Bank students in the autumn of 2019 and we will give more information in next year's newsletter about our working arrangements in West Bank.

In Gaza candidates for scholarships are nominated by their local community centre and are either ready to enter university or are in the first or second year of a course but unable to continue for financial reasons. There are strict selection criteria for the Scholarship Fund, which include having attained 65% or above in high school grades, socio-economic background, commitment to the community, and personal and family circumstances such as a recent home demolition, or war injuries.

Our partners in Gaza keep in contact with the scholarship students and help them overcome problems in completing their courses, from bombings to not being able to afford transport, books, equipment etc. Our partners access other small amounts of funding to cover some of these additional costs.

In Britain the Fund's supporters make donations or monthly contributions through a standing order, and/or by organising or taking part in fundraising events. Any contribution is much appreciated. Standing orders are particularly welcome as they enable us to estimate our income more accurately and to plan.



*The Scholarship Fund Organising Group in Sheffield*

## HOW TO CONTACT US

You can contact the Scholarship Fund on [sheffieldpwsf@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:sheffieldpwsf@yahoo.co.uk) or by writing to SPWSF, 124 Cliffe Road, Sheffield S8 9DN.

If you wish to take out a standing order with your bank, our bank details are:

**Yorkshire Bank**, account name: Sheffield Palestine Women's Scholarship Fund

**Sort code: 05 08 68**

**Account number: 33288777**

**Reference:** your name.

Please contact us if you do take out a standing order. In order for the Fund to claim back any tax you may have paid on your donation/standing order, can you please supply your name, address and postcode and indicate that you are a tax payer and wish the Fund to claim gift aid. Our charity number is 1133499.

Thank you for your support.