

## *Palestine Fair Trade Association*

### *Trees for Life Program*

**2021**

*"They planted so we ate. We plant so they eat."*  
*Arabic proverb*

#### ***Introduction:***

The Trees for Life Program, which is implemented by the Palestine Fair Trade Association (PFTA) [www.palestinefairtrade.org](http://www.palestinefairtrade.org), provides trees to Palestinian farmers. While the program covers the majority of the cost of the saplings, the farmers pay a symbolic percentage as a demonstration of their commitment. PFTA General Assembly, which is composed of elected representatives of 49 farmer's coops, elects a committee of farmers called Trees for Life Committee. This committee is responsible



for identifying sapling recipients, distribution, and implementation. The Trees for Life committee works within the priorities set by PFTA and targets young families, starter farmers, small farmers, women farmers, and farmers who have recently cultivated lands that have been impacted by the Israeli wall or have been subject to field or trees destruction by the Israeli military. This year "**2021**" more than **37,800** seedlings have been distributed to more than **350** farmers in more than **30** various villages in the west bank.

## *Insisting on Life*

Palestinian farmers insist on a culture of life. They are committed to sustaining and enhancing the living environment even as they produce a living for their families and increase the economic viability of the larger community. In all their practices they promote a respectful, sustainable relationship with the land with an eye to the future. Through fair trade, they form great relationships with partners and customers throughout the world who appreciate their high quality products.



In the past decade, much of the land of Palestine has been made inaccessible to them. Farmers have been particularly hurt as their crops have been demolished and their land taken for Israeli settlements, by-pass roads, security zones, and the Wall. Often farmers are forced to watch without recourse as their olive trees are uprooted, and often they stand at a gate in the Wall hoping for access to plant, tend, and harvest crops on their land on the other side. Young and small farmers have found it particularly difficult to establish and expand their operations. PFTA and solidarity groups have, however, found creative ways in which to restore production and hope for such farmers.

This program helps to connect the Palestinian farmers and producers in the fair trade movement in Palestine to the grassroots fair trade movement in world in a meaningful way. In solidarity with olive farmers denied their livelihood, grassroots

solidarity organizations abroad have raised funds for the purchase of thousands of seedlings since 2006.

### ***The history of The Program:***

Since the program started in 2006, the number of participating farmers has increased. While the trees have provided significant financial benefits to the farmers and their families, perhaps the most important contribution has been the renewed sense of hope and commitment to the land.

<b><i>Year/Season</i></b>	<b><i>No. Of targeted locations</i></b>	<b><i>Total No. Of distributed saplings</i></b>	<b><i>Total No. of Beneficiaries</i></b>
<b>2006</b>	6	3600	129
<b>2007</b>	21	12096	279
<b>2008</b>	16	7374	207
<b>2009</b>	12	6843	358
<b>2010</b>	8	9071	255
<b>2011</b>	14	9660	257
<b>2012</b>	21	10560	377
<b>2013</b>	13	8000	560
<b>2014</b>	14	13865	230
<b>2015</b>	20	16700	328
<b>2016</b>	20	13542	250
<b>2017</b>	21	14063	252
<b>2018</b>	22	22646	257
<b>2019</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>25352</b>	<b>318</b>
<b>2020</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21940</b>	<b>300</b>
<b>2021</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>37800</b>	<b>350</b>
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>233,085</b>	<b>4,122</b>
<b><i>Trees for life Historical Data 2006-2021.</i></b>			



## ***2021 Planting season:***

During "2021" planting season more than **37,800** saplings have been distributed to more than **350** farmers in **30** various villages in the west bank.

## ***Regenerative farming and land race Seeds program.***

In this planting season PFTA also included Regenerative farming and the landrace seeds in our program which aims to enhance and sustain the health of top soil by keeping an active biological life year round. Regenerative agriculture increases the soil capacity to store carbon, which in turn allows for



better moisture retention. Also Regenerative agriculture calls for farm management that increases biodiversity, composting, cover cropping, inter-cropping and the integration of animals in the farm (dairy animals, chickens and beekeeping) that improve and enrich the food type and quality for the farmers.

Every year PFTA is successfully encouraging more farmers to implement all the needed RA practices through:

- Capacity Building Trainings.
- Agricultural extension and field visits.
- Offering original landrace seeds.
- Providing landrace seeds:

Collecting (purchasing) native seeds from our organic farmers own production, then circulation and distribution of the seeds to new farmers (for free) according

to the type of the soil and the major crop in the targeted area. The PFTA will recollect part of the produced seeds after harvest and re- circulate them to other farmers in the coming seasons (Seed Bank).

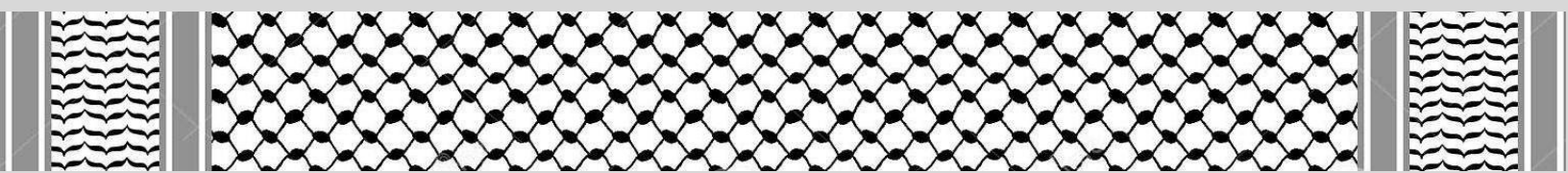
**The totals since the starting of the program until now:**

<b>Year (phase)</b>	<b>Quantity of seeds</b>	<b>No. of targeted villages</b>	<b>No. of beneficiaries</b>
<b>(1) 2018</b>	<b>kg 2450</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>farmers 32</b>
<b>(2) 2019</b>	<b>kg 3720</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>farmers 50</b>
<b>(3)2020</b>	<b>kg 3600</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>farmers 60</b>
<b>(4)2021</b>	<b>kg 6000</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>farmers 81</b>

### ***Irrigated Soft Shell Almonds***

During the last couple of years, the Trees for Life Program has distributed thousands of rain-fed soft shell almond trees to a large number of Palestinian farmers. The rain-fed almonds produce high quality nuts but with lower yield in comparison to irrigated almonds. In order to increase the almond production (both quality and quantity), PFTA started distributing irrigated soft shell almonds as a part of the Trees for Life Program, whereby a group of farmers receive capacity building training by an expert agronomist about the needed practices and regulations for irrigated almond





farming. Field visits, soil and water analysis are carried out by PFTA technical staff.

This planting season around 5000 irrigated almond seedlings will be distributed to farmers in the coming weeks.

**Contributions and Donations collected for 2021 planting Season:**

**Zaytoun, UK ----- 96,386 £**

**Zatoun, Canada ----- 12,680 \$**

**US Campaign for Palestinian Rights, USA ----- 20,271 \$**

**Land of Canaan Foundation, USA ----- 12,600 \$**

**Jordan Nasser, USA ----- 10,560 \$**

Trees for Life program is funded by PFTA's olive oil buyers, and a network of solidarity organizations in Europe, UK, USA and Canada.

***PFTA farmers extend sincere thanks and gratitude to these organizations and individuals who contributed through them to the livelihood sustainability of Palestinian farmer.***



### *Highlight farmer's stories:*

*Yosef Sadiq* a farmer from the village of T'enek near Jenin. He owns more than 3000 productive olive, almond and carob trees in his land; he is a real full time farmer. Every day he brings his tools and visits his farm to do the daily agricultural practices such as weeding, pruning and plowing. Since 2008 when he joined the Fair-trade program, Yosef markets his organic certified olive oil and almonds through PFTA to Canaan Fair Trade company (CFT). He believes that all Palestinian farmers, even the farmers who



are not registered in the PFTA programs, benefit from fair trade; he says “simply every year CFT export large quantities of our products to the international fair trade markets and so the farmers of the PFTA have a direct benefit from this because they market their production. On the other hand this process gives better opportunities for other farmers who are not registered in the PFTA to market their production in the local Palestinian market with better prices”. This planting season Yosef received a number of saplings from the PFTA after he applied to the Trees for Life program. He hopes these trees will start producing in the coming couple of years which means increasing his income and also increasing and assisting his attachment to his land, while Israel occupation tries to uproot this attachment in Palestine.

## The story of Deir Ballut olives:

In January 2021 the Israeli forces uprooted over 3000 olive saplings and other trees in Deir Ballut village, west of the northern West Bank city of Salfit. That day in the early morning the Israeli forces sealed off the western part of



the town, known as Khallet Al-Abhar, and escorted the bulldozers to it and started to destroy the olive trees and saplings which belong to local Palestinian farmers from the village. This aggressive behavior was done by the military without any kind of declaration to the farmers. Uprooting trees is always happening in Palestine by the Israeli military authorities especially in areas located near the separation wall, settlements or any area controlled by the Israeli authorities. Many farmers in Deir Ballut lost their source of income. Because of that PFTA, through a great campaign carried out by the British fair-trade partner Zaytoun CIC, succeeded in supporting the farmers who lost their trees with around 2000 olive saplings and planted that area only one week after the uprooting. This kind of supports helps to assist and strengthen the attachment of the farmers to their lands.

***PFTA will continue supporting the Palestinian farmers to be resilient in facing all the attempts by the occupation to cut the link between the farmers and their land and will keep the cooperation with all the great fair-trade partners and solidarity movements in the world.***

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