

Palestine Fair Trade Association 2022

Trees for Life Program 2022

Introduction

The Trees for Life Program, which is implemented by the Palestine Fair Trade Association 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 46 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 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.

More than **293,133** seedlings had been distributed to more than **4,802** Palestinian farmers since the beginning of the program till this planting season.

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The targeted groups and the selection criteria:

The Trees for Life committee works within the priorities set by PFTA and targets young families, starter farmers, small scale 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 planting season:

During "2022" more than **43,048** olive seedlings, **5,000** irrigated soft shell almond seedling, around **12,000** other types of seedlings such as grapes, figs, pomegranate and apricot had been distributed to more than **680** farmers in **39** various villages in the west bank.

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



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animals, chickens and beekeeping) that improve and enrich the food type and quality for the farmers.

Also Offering original landrace seeds by 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. After the harvest; PFTA recollect part of the produced seeds and re-circulate them to other farmers in the coming seasons (Seeds Bank).

In this planting season around **6,000** kg of organic land race seeds distributed to more than **85** farmers in **15** targeted villages in west bank, part of their production will be collected and recirculate to new farmers next planting season.

Insisting of farmers resilience

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 farming practices they promote a respectful, sustainable environment friendly relationship with the land keeping a vision on the future.

In the past decade, increased access restriction of Palestinian farmers to their land. Farmers have been particularly harmed, as their crops have been demolished and their land confiscated for Israeli settlements, by-pass roads, security zones, and the Israeli separation Wall. Often farmers are forced to watch without recourse as their olive trees are uprooted, and often they stand at a gate of the Israeli 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

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which to support these farmers, as plantations of trees has contributed to the protection of their lands from being exposed to confiscation by the Israeli settlements.



The Trees for Life Program helps to connect the Palestinian farmers and producers to the grassroots fair trade movement worldwide in a meaningful way. In solidarity with olive farmers denied their livelihood, grassroots solidarity organizations abroad have raised funds for the purchase of hundreds of thousands of seedlings since 2006.

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Contributions and Donations collected for 2022 planting Season:

Zaytoun, UK ----- 166,950 £

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

US Campaign For Palestinian Rights, USA ----- 20,271 \$

Land of Canaan Foundation, USA----- 34,950 \$

Trees for Life program is funded by PFTA's olive oil buyers, and a network of solidarity organizations in 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 Farmers Stories :

Insherah Melhem (Um Isam)

A farmer from the village of koforrai near Jenin. Her family working in agriculture since she was very young, Her land located in an area near the Israeli settlement of Humesh, which is threatened to be confiscated by the settlers and the Israeli military. When Um Isam heard about the Trees for Life program, she directly visits the PFTA and applied to receive trees, she was a perfect candidate. In



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January she received & planted 150 olive trees in her land, and since then she has been visiting her land daily to serve the new young trees. When we asked her about what Trees for Life meant for her, she says: "It means so much to find sides to support me and help me to be more resilient against all kinds of challenges and also for me planting trees is my way of resistance".

Ekdam Ikhzemeyeh

A young Agronomist from Qabatyah near Jenin, graduated from al Quds University in 2021, She is working as a technical supervisor in a local trees nursery in Jenin; she lives with her family and plays a major role in supporting her family financially, in addition of working in the nursery, she is also helping her family in the fields, in this season Ekdam heard about the trees for life program from a friend and she contacted the PFTA in order to receive grapes seedlings and establish her own grapes farm in her village, in February she received and planted 200 grapes seedlings in her 2 Donums



farm, she is visiting her farm every 2 days to do the needed work such as weeding, irrigate the trees and other things, she hopes that she succeed in her project and start the production within the coming 3 years which will helps the family in improving their financial income in the future.

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Ekdam Hope to continue her higher education one day, she believe that she will get her PhD Degree in agricultural science one day in the future.

