



palestine fairtrade
Association

TREES FOR LIFE REPORT

2024



www.palestinefairtrade.org

INTRODUCTION :

For Palestinians, agriculture is more than a source of income. It is tied to the people's history, identity, and self-expression, and drives the struggle and the deliberate Israeli efforts to break the link between farmers and their crops.

farming is the almost spiritual significance of the land to the Palestinians and is a productive, meaningful, and multi-dimensional form of popular resistance through which Palestinians can demonstrate – to themselves and the world – the urgent need to reclaim their lands, livelihoods, and freedom

Israel continues its land confiscation by expanding settlements, stealing land and natural resources, by-pass roads, 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.





Farmer with PFTA team while trees planting

Olive trees are deeply rooted in the culture and also known as a symbol of Palestine and history of the land. This year Israel on going acts affected Palestinian farmers by preventing them to harvest their crops on their land that are closed to the Wall or in the other side , These acts have not only erased palestine cultural heritage but have also deprived families of their primary source of income.

THE HISTORY OF THE PROGRAM:

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- The Program's journey began in 2006, witnessing a growth in the number of participating farmers over the years. Beyond the substantial financial gains experienced by farmers and their families from the trees, the most noteworthy impact has been the revitalized sense of hope and dedication to the land. From the program's inception until the current planting season, over 376843 seedlings have been distributed to more than 6,175 Palestinian farmers.
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The targeted groups and the selection criteria:

The Trees for Life committee focuses on young families, starter farmers, small-scale farmers, women farmers, and those cultivating lands affected by the Israeli wall or military actions. Selection criteria likely consider the impact on these groups and the specific challenges they face.

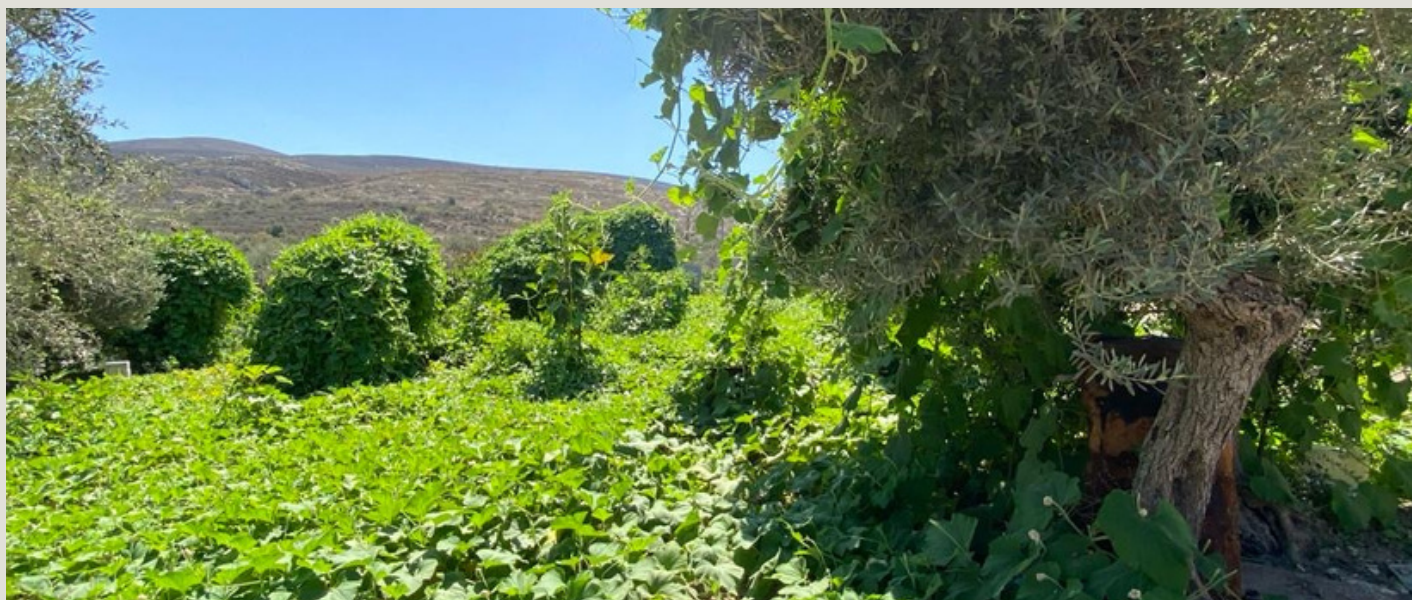
THIS PLANTING SEASON:

During "2024" more than 29900 olive seedlings, 3154 irrigated soft shell almond seedling, around 3701 other types of seedlings such as grapes, figs, pomegranate and carob had been distributed to more than 673 farmers in more than 40 various villages in west bank.

If the olive trees knew the hands that planted them, their oil would become tears.

*Mahmoud Darwish,
Palestinian poet*

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REGENERATIVE FARMING & LANDRACE SEEDS PROGRAM UPDATE:



This planting season, PFTA expanded its program to include regenerative farming and landrace seeds, focusing on topsoil health and fostering an active biological environment year-round. The regenerative approach enhances soil carbon storage, improving moisture retention.

Our farm management strategy emphasizes biodiversity, composting, cover cropping, inter-cropping, and animal integration (dairy animals, chickens, and beekeeping) to enhance food quality for farmers.

We're proud to offer original landrace seeds sourced from native seeds collected from our organic farmers. These seeds are distributed to new farmers for free, considering soil types and major crops. After harvest, we recollect part of the produced seeds, creating a Seeds Bank for future seasons.

This season, 7,427 kg of organic landrace seeds have been distributed to 90 farmers across 22 villages in the West Bank. As part of our sustainable cycle, their production will be collected and recalculated to new farmers next planting season.

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Thank you for being part of our mission for sustainable agriculture and community resilience.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND DONATIONS COLLECTED FOR 2024 PLANTING SEASON:



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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.

Zaytoun, UK ----- 146000£

Roert Mertz, USA -----2500 \$

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

HIGHLIGHT FARMERS STORIES



ARAFAT IESSA - ANIN VILLAGE

Arafat, a 58-year-old farmer, is the head of a seven-member family. He said “ that his connection to the land began in childhood, as he grew up in a simple farming family with a deep love for the land. His father, Youssef Abdul Karim, born in 1951, experienced all the eras that Palestine went through. Youssef inherited a large piece of empty land from his father and started cultivating it with olive trees despite the challenges

- From a young age, Arafat was his father's companion and worked hand in hand with him on the land. Arafat states that there were no nurseries or institutions to obtain olive seedlings, so his father used to bring olive seedlings on a donkey from Haifa to his village for planting. Arafat emphasizes that witnessing his father's struggles to obtain and plant olive trees strengthened his resolve to be a support for his father

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Arafat grew up in a large family, and his father's load was significant in covering the living conditions for the family. Arafat decided to contribute with his father to meet the needs of the family, realizing that the land was the most crucial source to sustain the family's livelihood



Arafat with his Son

Having benefited from the "Trees for Life" program, Arafat planted four new dunams of olive trees this season. He aspires to continuously benefit from the program to complete planting the remaining part of the land.

- In the early 2007, after the establishment of the Palestinian Fair Trade Association, the family experienced a rapid expansion of cultivated land with trees Arafat's father's land grew to 300 dunams, including 200 dunams of olive trees. Arafat and his children now work and take care of the land, Currently, he produces 2000 kilograms of olive oil, marketed through Canaan Fair Trade company



Arafat imparts a vital message to his children, urging them to safeguard the land as their forebears did, preserving it for future generations.

HIGHLIGHT FARMERS STORIES



YASSIR ABU ALRUB

Farmer from Misilyeh village in Jenin, he was born in 1975 from Palestinian family who works in farming. Yassir and his family member's works in the farm which they inherited from his grandfather, this land is the family heritage since years and the Perennial olive trees in his land are the evidence on this.

- Yasser says " that his deep conniction to the land rooted in him by accompanying his father to the fields every day since childhood . Now, he is dedicated to instilling the same love for the land in the hearts of his own children.

Yassir farm which is 32 dunums planted with olive trees , he tries every year to increase cultivated area through planting new seedlings he got from trees for life program in his plot. Yassir now produces more than two tons of organic olive oil annually, which he sold to Canaan Fair Trade company (CFT) after he joined PFTA Programs five years ago. Yassir aspires to further increase his oil production from these farms, aiming to elevate his income from agriculture and thereby enhance his family's overall financial well-being.

