

AL-ROWWAD THEATER



Location: Palestine

Partner: Ashoka: Innovators for the Public

Issue Areas: Universal Education, Armed Conflict

Points of Interest: Art for Social Change, Peace and Conflict Transformation, Contact with the founder

The Organization

Al-Rowwad Theater is an independent center for art, cultural, and theatre training for children in Aida Camp, a Palestinian refugee camp in the Bethlehem District. The center provides a safe and healthy environment to help children and women creatively relieve stress from the warlike and violent conditions they are forced to live in. The center uses creative and non-violent acts of expression like painting, drawing, and acting as alternatives to violence and to empower children and women. Al-Rowwad also educates the international community on the existing stereotypes of Palestinians and works to break negative stereotypes by showing another image of the people and culture of Palestine. Al-Rowwad Theatre aims to help children get in contact with the world by reaching beyond the camp limits. The theatre establishes contact with other children in foreign countries and shares with them the experience of being a child in Aida camp, Palestine.

Why the Need?

Aida camp was established after the war of 1948 and deportation of Palestinians from their own lands, towns and villages. Aida has a population of about 5,000 from 35 different villages which were destroyed by Zionist forces. About 66% of the population are under 18 years old, and 45% are under 15 years old.

Due to Aida's location, the camp is now isolated from any parks, or green space, and places where children used to play. Only the narrow streets are available for children and adults to express themselves, celebrate marriages and mourn deaths. While at school some students have their classes interrupted by soldiers shooting tear gas, the sounds of bombs, and rubber or live bullets. The unemployment rate in the camp is 70%. Under war-like conditions and poor economic conditions, it is important for both children and adults to be able to use their creativity to express themselves and look outside of their day-to-day life.

The location of Aida refugee camp is special because it is almost a border zone at the north of Bethlehem, south of Alquds-Jerusalem. Aida is dominated by Gilo, an Israeli settlement colony at its north-western side, and by an Israeli military camp to the east, which is located in the Mosque of Bilal Ibn Rabah, (renamed Rachel's Tomb after 1967). The main military checkpoint between Bethlehem and Alquds is also located at the north-eastern side of the camp. In 2005, the Israeli forces had finished building the separation wall (about 27 feet tall) between the camp and Israel.

How Team Efforts Translate to Impact

Funds NGC Teams raise will go towards assisting Al-Rowwad to conduct workshops and start Al-Rowwad's mobile theater where the student theater group can travel throughout the community as well as internationally and perform their plays.

The Partner

Ashoka's vision is that of a global society that is able to respond quickly and effectively to social challenges everywhere. The organization's mission is to shape a citizen sector that is entrepreneurial, productive and globally integrated, and to develop the profession of social entrepreneurship around the world. Ashoka identifies and invests in leading social entrepreneurs - extraordinary individuals with unprecedented ideas for change in their communities - supporting them, their ideas and institutions through all phases of their careers. Rather than leaving societal needs for the government or business sectors to address, social entrepreneurs are creating innovative solutions, delivering extraordinary results, and improving the lives of millions of people. Ashoka has invested in more than 1,700 Fellows (recipients of support) in 60 countries. Those Fellows have transformed the lives of millions of people in thousands of communities worldwide.

NGC's Approach to Sustainable Global Change

NGC and our Global Partners believe that people in communities all over the world are the real experts and know their community and the solutions to their problems. We want to advocate and educate others on behalf of this model of sustainable global change. Additionally, we seek to empower our grassroots Global Projects with the financial resources to create change at the grassroots level. 100% of funds your team raises are sent to Al-Rowwad Theater.

By sending your team's funds directly, your project organization has the power to decide the best way to use the money. Since money will be spent in the community, your funds will also support the local economy.

Al-Rowwad provides an outlet for youth in the Aida camp by teaching expression through theatre arts. Also the organization employs local community members to facilitate the program, investing money back into the local economy.

Additional Resources

Partner Website: <http://www.ashoka.org/>

Ashoka Fellow: <http://www.ashoka.org/node/3922>

CIA World Factbook (West Bank): <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/we.html>

Related News: <http://newjerseysolidarity.org/alawda/july2005/alrowwad.shtml>

See your team binder for more ways to educate your team about your project.