



# Galilee

## FOUNDATION



As the new academic year begins, we reflect on the year that has passed and look forward to the one ahead. Tragically, the past few years have seen parts of the Middle East devastated by war, violence and great destruction. The urgent claim on your philanthropy this year has been to aid the refugees created by these crises and, consequently, the Galilee Foundation chose not to hold a major fundraiser this year – instead, we held several events that highlighted the work of the Foundation, aiming to raise awareness and widen our support base.

Relying as ever on your generous support, we will continue to develop our programme supporting education and the civil society of the Palestinian minority in Israel. Headlines from the region continue to be dominated by conflict. Against this backdrop, more than ever, education will prove to be the most powerful tool to empower individuals and communities, and remains the best way to challenge the negative elements that we confront. Please continue to support our work.

**Sawsan Asfari**  
Executive Director

## The Scholarship Programme

***The Galilee Foundation continues to develop its Scholarship Programme and is proud to report its achievements for the 2013-14 academic year.***

Thanks to the help of the Foundation's friends we were able to support 250 students with university scholarships in the 2013/14 academic year. This year, 60 of our students will be graduating from their universities, as well as from the Foundation's Scholarship Programme, which has supported and accompanied the majority of them for three years.

Our scholarship students study a variety of topics including medicine and other medical studies, engineering, physical and biological sciences, social science, law, the humanities and other professions. Many would not have been able to complete their



2013/14 Scholarship students, Foundation and ACA representatives at the Award Ceremony, December 2013.

higher education without the Foundation's help, and they are indebted to the Foundation and its supporters for allowing them to fulfil a dream to enhance their knowledge, life skills and begin their careers.



*The Programme's activities and the information it's provided have taken me forward and enabled me to develop my way of thinking so that I can have a clearer vision. You influenced me greatly. Thank you for your efforts and*

*for what you have done for us. I hope that one day I can pay you back a little part of what you have done because it was immense. Thank you very much.*

– Heba Dakwar, second year Accounting and Economics student, Haifa University

This year we also received letters from parents of students. Nisreen Jabareen, the mother of Marah Jabareen, a first year law student, shared this with us: "We would like to express our sincere gratitude for your efforts and for the support you provided our children with through the scholarships. The scholarship has contributed considerably to alleviating the financial burden, especially in light of the current difficult economic situation. May you remain a light that illuminates a path for our youth and a role model for giving."



Scholarship students are given a guided tour of Ghabseya, a village destroyed in the 'Nakba'.

The Programme organised a variety of training activities throughout the year for the scholarship students, including literature workshops discussing *Men in the Sun*, a novel by the prominent Palestinian novelist, Ghassan Kanafani; critical thinking and leadership workshops; a study day examining challenges facing Palestinians in Israel. Students were also given guided historical tours of Akka and Ghabseya, a destroyed Palestinian village, as part of their 'Journey to the Roots' activity day.



*The knowledge you have helped us to acquire is precious – I will pass it on to my children and grandchildren. The tours, the lectures and the efforts you invested in the students are the most important aspect of the scholarship because*

*they will stay with us long after we graduate. I am fortunate to be part of this special group. The values you instil will always accompany us.*

– **Firas Khalayleh**, second year dentistry student, Hebrew University

### Giving Back to the Community

'Giving Back to the Community' is an important aspect of the Scholarship Programme in which our students commit to volunteer work with community and civil society organisations. This year about 3,500 persons benefited directly from the volunteering programme, including 3,290 children and youth. The student volunteers were enlisted with 10 civil society organisations, which highly praised the programme and students' involvement. Here is some of the feedback we have received from these organisations:

**Al-Hawakeer** works on community development, agriculture and environment with the Palestinian society in Israel.

"The volunteers' work was every important and efficient," said Alaa' Yousef of Al-Hawakeer. "They participated enthusiastically in our activities. They had

### Mentorship Initiative

For first year students we introduced the mentorship programme, through which they received additional support to help them adapt to university life and to provide them with support within their respective fields of study. The mentors are GF beneficiaries who have already completed their Fresher year in the same topic. Judging from the success and the praise it received from our mentored students, we plan to continue the programme this coming academic year. We are sharing some of their feedback with you:



*The academic mentor played an imported role during the 1st academic year. He presented me with the best and most credible academic references. At the first meeting, he prepared a weekly schedule where he allocated specific time for materials review, based on his past experience. He also provided me with summaries and with the needed advice regarding effective time management and methods of study. He also helped me solve complicated problems.*

– **Amani Al-Taweel**, medical student at Ben Gurion University, was mentored by Alaa' El-Atawneh



*The mentorship I had during my first year provided me with the guidance that I needed. As a 1st year student in a new place, I had my fears. But thanks to Haneen, my mentor, I got over these fears. I believe that, thanks to this project, my academic year was successful. I hope that this project continues so that other 1st year students can benefit from it. I would like to thank you for what you have done for us.*

– **Madeeha Hijazi**, Occupational Therapy student at Haifa University, was mentored by Haneen Farran



Scholarship students at the Critical Thinking workshop, ACA, Nazareth.



Scholarship students painting a kindergarten as part of their volunteer work.

creative and important ideas to suggest for improving the project.”

**Al-Mashghal** is a non-profit, independent organisation working to increase awareness and cultural cohesion among the Palestinian minority, mainly in the field of music and the arts.

Its General Director, Habib Shehadeh Hanna, said: “Thank you for the great effort you put into pairing up volunteers and hosting organisations, and for your follow-up on the volunteers’ performance. Their contribution to the success of our activities and projects has been immense and extremely beneficial for both the organisation and the volunteers.”

The indirect beneficiaries of the volunteering programme runs to thousands. They include elementary and high school students and teachers who benefit from the Arab Culture Association’s Curriculum project, which looks critically into the contents of the curriculum studied by Palestinians inside Israel.

Another major development has been the introduction of a specially designed database, which will allow the Foundation to administer the Programme cost effectively. The new database will also enable the Foundation to store and manage students’ data more efficiently.

## Other educational and research projects

**Young Musicians** – This past academic year, the Foundation partnered with Al-Mashghal, the Arab Centre for Arts and Culture, to support their Young Musicians project. Initially set up to benefit 30 children aged 3-18 years from disadvantaged backgrounds, the project had benefited over 100 children from Haifa and the surrounding villages by the year’s end, providing them with professional musical training. Fifty of the children participated in a sold out concert in Haifa organised by Al-Mashghal.

**Kindergarten in the Naqab** – During the academic year of 2013/14, the Foundation worked with Yasmin al-Naqab to support and empower the kindergarten in the unrecognised village of Rahmah. The kindergarten benefits about 30 children aged 3-6 years and is the only educational facility available for the residents of the village. This unique project provided high quality training to two teachers, helped to purchase educational toys and games,

and provided awareness raising workshops around children’s health for mothers.

**Hewar School and Kindergarten** – The Foundation will partner with Hewar, the Arab Association for Alternative Education, for the 2014/15 academic year to support their school and kindergarten. Hewar is an alternative public school for Palestinian children in Haifa and the surrounding villages. The project provides an alternative, democratic, creative, engaging and child-centred education to children aged 3 to 13 years.

**Mada al-Carmel – the Arab Centre for Applied Social Research** – The Foundation renewed its support to Mada al-Carmel’s Israeli Studies Programme, which addresses social, political and historic questions on the Israeli state and society, to enable it to reach a more diverse constituency. The Programme provides informative academic papers, books and online publications on its areas of research.

**The Galilee Foundation gives opportunities to young Palestinians living in Israel to advance their lives through education**

**Please continue to help us contribute to this positive change**

**To make a donation, please see overleaf**

## Window to the Galilee

Our 'Window to the Galilee' programme organises events in London and elsewhere in the UK to introduce the Foundation's supporters and audiences in the UK to the culture and arts of the Palestinian minority in Israel and, whenever possible, from other parts of the Middle East. It aims to create constructive discussions around the diverse issues of importance to the Foundation and its beneficiaries through events.

This year, 'Window to the Galilee' held a screening in February of the film *The Muslims are Coming*, a documentary that follows Muslim American comedians across the USA. Through the screening, the programme aimed to reach a young audience and university students.

The screening was held at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) and was well attended by students and some of the Foundation's supporters.

An interactive Q&A was held following the screening, during which Mrs Sawsan Asfari – one of the co-producers of the film – along with comedians Dean Obaidallah and Negin Farsad, related to their work experience on the film and their experience as Arab and Muslim comedians in the USA.



Dean Obaidallah and Negin Farsad promote their film, *The Muslims are Coming*.

'Window to the Galilee' also held a literary event with the renowned Turkish writer, Elif Shafak, in March at the home of Sawsan and Ayman Asfari.

Ms Shafak, an award-winning novelist and the most widely read woman writer in Turkey, spoke about politics, literature and the role of women in the Middle East. The evening was attended by about 100 people, and it was an intimate occasion where Ms Shafak answered questions on a number of topics. There was also a book signing by the author, with 20% of the proceeds donated to the Foundation.



Writer Elif Shafak speaks to attendees at the home of Sawsan and Ayman Asfari in March.

## Please support the work of the Galilee Foundation

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