

# Alla' Ni'm Abed El Jawad

CANAAN FAIR TRADE MEMBER OF WOMEN COOP FROM DEIR BALLOUT



## A GIFT FOR THE NEW GENERATION

*“My name is Alla’ but my second name is Ni’m. It means blessings and I am blessed because I am alive.”*

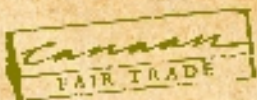
An artist at heart, Alla’ says that hand movement and precision are the main elements that make Maftoul making an art of its own kind. “To watch the grains turn into small balls in my hands...from flour to small golden pearls...it is almost magical.”

The youngest woman in her coop at 20 years old, Alla’ learns so much wisdom from spending time with older women who have experienced different stages in life. A Political Science student at Bier Zeit University, she learned making Maftoul from her aunt Asmahan who was one of the first women who

established the Canaan Fair Trade Deir Ballout women’s coop in the Ramallah district. “I wanted to be independent and I knew that the only way to do that is to start making my own money.” While her father pays for her tuition at the university the cost of traveling from her village to the city everyday can be very costly. “I felt bad having to ask my father for money every day to pay for the bus fare when I know he does not make much money plus the price of books is high. Luckily at the same time I decided to work I learned about the coop and I learned how to make Maftoul. It was a very exciting time and I enjoyed it.”

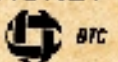
## A SWEET TASTE OF SUCCESS!

One would think that Alla’ would complain about the



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difficulty of balancing her work with her classes but instead she attributes her success at the university to the fact that she is involved with the Palestine Fair Trade Association and the Deir Ballout women coop because “it helped me organize my time and get more done. I wake up early and I start my day by making Maftoul and drinking coffee with my mother. This has brought my mother and I closer to each other, and I start my days feeling like I have accomplished something already. It is a sweet taste of success!”

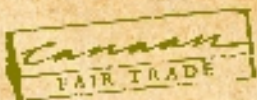


*Alla' hand-rolling Maftoul in Deir Ballout*

## A DOORWAY TO FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

Sitting with the other women in a circle rolling Maftoul, Alla' bursts out in a shy laughter as she describes herself as a *slow roller*. “All the women roll faster than me but I take my time. They laugh at me sometimes but they always support me and when they finish before me they all offer to help especially my mother.”

Beyond supporting Alla' in her work with the Maftoul, the other women speak of her so proudly as they encourage her academic aspirations. In the context of a more limiting environment for women the coop serves as an important doorway for a different future for Alla'. “Since I started making an income my three sisters and brothers started looking up to me and I feel inspired to dream because I want to live a life full of adventures. I like being out in the world and I want to pursue a career in journalism where I write, take pictures and tell stories.” Flipping her mobile phone over in her hands she takes a picture of her mother and says, “I want to learn photography. I cannot afford to buy a camera just yet but soon I will have enough saved and I will be taking pictures with a real camera.”



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