

PRODUCER STORIES SERIES:

# Khadir khadir

CANAAN FAIR TRADE OLIVE OIL PRODUCER FROM NUS IJBAIL



## FROM THE FACTORY TO THE FIELD

Fiery and jovial Khadir Khadir is the youngest Canaan Fair Trade producer from the village of Nus Ijbail. Born in 1982, Khadir is only 28 and has already gained the trust and admiration of everyone in his village for being an industrious farmer. As Khadir likes to emphasize, “if I don’t sweat, I don’t feel like I worked.” Indeed, he is no stranger to hard work; since he was merely a teenager Khadir was already working 12-16 hour days in Israeli plastic factories. He would leave the village for weeks and sleep in the factory where he worked. After ten years of working in terrible conditions, he decided that he could not take it anymore.

Despite the fact that he was not big on farming at that time, his father convinced him to help in the olive harvest that year. After experiencing one season, Khadir decided that he could do more than just collecting olives. In his first season with Canaan Fair Trade, Khadir managed to save enough money to buy a tractor, which created another season of work for him because he was able to offer services to the village farmers. From plowing their lands, delivering manure to their trees, to harvesting their crops, Khadir’s fingerprints are in every piece of land in his small community of 350 inhabitants. He makes it a point to help each farmer the best way he can because he says, “Our village is very small, most young people have left and the farmers that are still here are mostly older folks. I have to help. I profit for sure but my village is also my family. In harvest season we all



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help each other. My father, my friends, my wife, there are always more people ready to help than not.”

## A NATURAL RESEARCHER

This is exactly what makes s Ijbail ever so captivating because it is one of the few places in the world where people are still involved in old ways of cooperative farming. Despite Khadir’s young age, he is still committed to this way of life and that is why he is always attentive to his local coop and is receiving people from different places in Palestine to share with them what he calls, *the beauty of rural life*.

Even though Khadir never finished his education he is a great researcher. Excited about the new piece of land he just bought, he explains that he chose it because it is perfect for his agricultural experiment. “I want to see if I can revive the old fruit trees in this valley. We used to have so many fruit trees in our village but with climate change even the indigenous fruit trees are not doing so well anymore. I want to experiment so I can compare what happens to the trees I plant here and the trees I have planted in the mountain.”

Along with being a hands-on natural researcher, Khadir likes to read the literature that Palestine Fair Trade Association puts out. “It was the booklet they gave me about growing organic that awakened in me a passion for organic agriculture. After I read it, I attended workshops they gave about the subject and became more interested.”

## A VERY LUCKY MAN

Khadir’s dream is to build a house for his family on a hilltop in his land. He is confident that one day he will achieve that but for the time being he says, “The most important thing to me is that I no longer have to work in an Israeli factory and be separated from my family and wife. I may have a humble house now but I make a decent living that allows me to go to sleep every night in my home with my wife and children, and not in a noisy factory. I consider myself to be a very lucky man.”



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