



Palestine Fair Trade Association

Trees for Life Program

2014

*“They planted so we ate. We plant so they eat.”
Arabic proverb*


Introduction

The Trees for Life Program, which is implemented by the Palestine Fair Trade Association (PFTA) www.palestinefairtrade.org, provides olive & almond saplings to Palestinian farmers. While the program covers the majority of the cost of the saplings, the farmers pay a symbolic percentage as a demonstration of their commitment. PFTA General Assembly, which is composed of elected representatives of 34 farmer’s coops, elects a committee of farmers called the Trees for Life Committee. This committee is responsible for identifying sapling recipients, distribution, and implementation. The local Trees for Life committee works within the priorities set by PFTA and targets young families, starter farmers, small farmers, women farmers, and farmers who have recently cultivated lands that have been impacted by the Israeli wall or have been subject to field or tree destruction by the Israeli military. This year 2014 alone more than 13,800 saplings have been distributed to more than 230 farmers in 14 various villages.



Insisting on Life

Palestinian farmers insist on a culture of life. They are committed to sustaining and enhancing the living environment even as they produce a living for their families and increase the economic viability of the larger community. In all their practices they promote a respectful, sustainable relationship with the land with an eye to the future. Through fair trade, they form great relationships with partners and customers throughout the world who appreciate their high quality products.



In the past decade, much of the land of Palestine has been made inaccessible to them. Farmers have been particularly hurt as their crops have been demolished and their land taken for Israeli settlements, by-pass roads, security zones, 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.

(500+) Years old Rumi Olive Tree / 'Anin Coop



The Trees for Life program helps to connect the Palestinian farmers and producers in the fair trade movement in Palestine to the grassroots fair trade movement in world in a meaningful way. In solidarity with olive farmers denied their livelihood, grassroots solidarity organizations abroad have raised funds for the purchase of thousands of olive tree seedlings since 2006.

The History of The Program:

Since the program started in 2006, the number of participating farmers has increased. While the trees have provided significant financial benefits to the farmers and their families, perhaps the most important contribution has been the renewed sense of hope and commitment to the land.

<i>Year/Season</i>	<i>No.Of targeted locations</i>	<i>Total No. Of distributed saplings</i>	<i>Total No. of Beneficiaries</i>
2006	6	3600	129
2007	21	12096	279
2008	16	7374	207
2009	12	6843	358
2010	8	9071	255
2011	14	9660	257
2012	21	10560	377
2013	13	8000	560
2014	14	13865	230
Totals		81069	2652

Trees for life Historical Data 2006-2014.


Farmer stories

Abdullah Zydeh: is a farmer from a village called Mazare' Al Noubani near Ramallah. Abdullah, who is also called "Abu Raed", is 71 years old; he worked for 27 years in Kuwait and then returned back to Palestine in 1990 after the 1st Gulf war and started farming his own lands..

At that time the land was abandoned and no one was looking after it. Abu Raed started planting new trees and serving the old ones in order to restart olive farming on his land. Every day he brought water by his mule and visited his land, which located 3 km from his village, to irrigate the trees, especially the new ones.

Abdullah applied for the Trees for Life program and received the saplings, and planted them in his land. He believes that he may not live until these trees start producing but he also believes that his sons and grandsons will benefit from these new





saplings during the coming years as the traditional proverb says, “*They planted so we ate. We plant so they eat.*”


One of the major problems in Mazare’ Al Noubani village are wild boars which are released by the Israeli authorities and settlers. It’s important to realize that these boars are in huge numbers and destroy the trees and crops of the farmers in these districts. It is very difficult for the farmers to reduce their numbers in the fields because any action is forbidden by the Israeli occupation authority laws.



Wild boars in the Olive Orchards in Mazare' Al Noubani Coop/ this photo was taken by the PFTA team during Internal Inspection.

Ibrahim Kamal: is a farmer from the village of 'Anin, 17 km from the city of Jenin. Like most farmers in his town, he suffers from continuous crop loss due to the inability to access his own olive fields because of the Israeli separation wall that imprisons the whole village, separating farmers from their own lands and their own trees. In 2001 Ibrahim had an accident while he was working resulting in a spinal cord fracture that made him unable to walk for more than 5 months.





After long and difficult therapy, he has started to get back his health and his ability to walk. Ibrahim has more than 150 productive olive trees on his land, and every day he brings his tools and equipment and visits his farm doing the daily agricultural practices such as weeding, pruning and plowing. Every year he sells his organic certified olive oil through PFTA to Canaan Fair Trade (CFT) and he believes that all the Palestinian farmers, even the farmers who are not registered in the PFTA programs, benefit from fair trade. He says simply *“every season CFT exports large quantities of our olive oil to the international fair trade markets and the farmers of the PFTA have a direct benefit from this because they market their production; on the other hand, this process gives better chances and opportunities for other farmers who are not registered in the PFTA to market their production in the local Palestinian market with better prices.”*



Ibrahim Kamal/ 'Anin coop.

This planting season Ibrahim received olive saplings from the PFTA after he applied to the Trees for Life program. He hope these trees will start producing in the next few years which would not only increase his income but also will help him in insisting on his attachment to his land, while Israel tries to uproot this attachment.

Established in 2006, the 'Anin cooperative is one of the biggest olive oil producing



cooperatives of the PFTA due to its large membership of over 55 farmers selling the majority of their production to Canaan Fair Trade.

Trees for Life program is funded by PFTA's olive oil buyers, and a network of solidarity organizations in Europe, USA and Canada. PFTA farmers extend sincere thanks and gratitude to these organizations and the individuals who contributed through them to sustaining the livelihood of Palestinian farmers.

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Jenin, Palestine

July 1, 2014