



## *Palestine Fair Trade Association*

### *Trees for Life Program 2015*

*“They planted so we eat. 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](http://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 47 farmer's cooperatives and 6 women's cooperatives, elects a committee of farmers called Trees for Life Committee. This committee is responsible for identifying sapling recipients, distribution, and implementation. The 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, **2015**, more than **16,700** saplings have been distributed to more than **328** farmers in **20** various villages in the West Bank.





### ***Insisting on Life***

Palestinian farmers insist on a culture of life. They are committed to sustaining and enhancing the environment even as they produce a living for their families and increase the economic viability of their 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 strong 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.



***In the picture above:*** A sign put up by the Israeli Authorities on a farmer's land after they built the wall taking more than 65% of his land.



This program helps to connect the Palestinian farmers and producers in the Fair Trade movement in Palestine to the world grassroots Fair Trade movement 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 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>
<b>2006</b>	6	3600	129
<b>2007</b>	21	12096	279
<b>2008</b>	16	7374	207
<b>2009</b>	12	6843	358
<b>2010</b>	8	9071	255
<b>2011</b>	14	9660	257
<b>2012</b>	21	10560	377
<b>2013</b>	13	8000	560
<b>2014</b>	14	13865	230
<b>2015</b>	20	16700	328
<b>Totals</b>		<b>97,769</b>	<b>2652</b>
<i>Trees for life Historical Data 2006-2015.</i>			



### ***2015 Planting season***

During the **2015** planting season more than **16,700** saplings have been distributed to more than **328** farmers in **20** various villages in the west bank

*Contributions and Donations collected for 2015 planting Season:*

<b>Zaytoun, UK</b> -----	<b>20,423 £</b>
<b>Zatoun, Canada</b> -----	<b>12,012 \$</b>
<b>U S Campaign to end Israeli occupation, USA</b> -----	<b>8,147 \$</b>
<b>Canaan Fair Trade, USA</b> -----	<b>2,731 \$</b>
<b>Land of Canaan Foundation, USA</b> -----	<b>4,441 \$</b>
<b>SOLIVR, France</b> -----	<b>8,296 €</b>
<b>AlterEco, France</b> -----	<b>500 €</b>

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



### ***Highlight Farmers Stories:***

**Ayman Abu Al Rubb**, a farmer from the village of Jalboun near Jenin, has worked in the land with his family since he was very young. Building the Israeli separation wall between West Bank and Israel cut off around 65% of the land Ayman's family owned. Ayman is trying to utilize what is left of his land by planting trees, because for him, planting trees is a form of non-violent resistance against the Israeli occupation and a way to verify his rights in the ownership of the land, which builds the soul of attachment to the land in the coming generations.



When Ayman heard about the Trees for Life program, he immediately visited the PFTA and applied to receive trees; he was a perfect candidate. In January, Ayman received and planted 100 trees, and since then he has been visiting his land daily to serve the new young trees. When asked what Trees for Life meant for him, farmer Ayman replies: "It means so much to find sides to

support me and help me hold on to what is left from my land after they have taken away the majority of it... for me planting trees is my way of resistance".





**Yusuf Abdulkarim Issa** is a 93-year-old farmer from the village of Anin, a small town located around 17 KM from the city of Jenin. He has been part of the PFTA since September 2006.



Hajj Yusuf is the oldest man and the oldest olive farmer in the village, and all the people call him “The Grandfather”. Villagers believe that he is the most important reference for all the historical information not just in his village but also in all other nearby villages. They also believe that he is a traditional agricultural expert and consultant.

According to his family, Hajj Yusuf has planted more than 2000 olive trees during his life, Hajj Yusuf lost his wife 5 years ago and since that day, he has been living with his sons and grandsons. Hajj Yusuf applied for Trees for Life and received 25 saplings this year. He says that he may not live until these trees start to produce, but he’s confident that his sons and grandsons will continue the work he has started and will benefit from these new trees in the upcoming years, as the traditional proverb says “*They planted so we eat. We plant so they eat.*”