

# *Palestine Fair Trade Association*

## **Trees for Life Program 2023**

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.



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.

### **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.

More than **343,373** seedlings had been distributed to more than **5,502** Palestinian farmers since the beginning of the program till this planting season.

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

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### **The targeted groups and the selection criteria:**

The Trees for Life committee works within the priorities set by PFTA and targets young families, starter farmers, small scale 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 trees destruction by the Israeli military.

### **This planting season:**

During "2023" more than **41,457** olive seedlings, **3,897** irrigated soft shell almond seedling, around **4,886** other types of seedlings such as grapes, figs, pomegranate and apricot had been distributed to more than **700** farmers in more than **40** various villages in west bank.



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### **Regenerative farming and the landrace seeds program:**

In this planting season PFTA also included Regenerative farming and the landrace seeds in our program which aims to enhance and sustain the health of top soil by keeping an active biological life year round. Regenerative agriculture increases the soil capacity to store carbon, which in turn allows for better moisture retention. Also



Regenerative agriculture calls for farm management that increases biodiversity, composting, cover cropping, inter-cropping and the integration of animals in the farm (dairy animals, chickens and beekeeping) that improve and enrich the food type and quality for the farmers.

**Also** Offering original landrace seeds by Collecting (purchasing) native seeds from our organic farmers own production, then circulation and distribution of the seeds to new farmers (for free) according to the type of the soil and the major crop in the targeted area. After the harvest; PFTA recollect part of the produced seeds and re- circulate them to other farmers in the coming seasons (Seeds Bank).

In this planting season around **7,427** kg of organic land race seeds distributed to **90** farmers in **22** targeted villages in west bank, part of their production will be collected and recirculate to new farmers next planting season.

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### **Contributions and Donations collected for 2023 planting Season:**

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

**Zaytoun, UK ----- 142,453 £**

**US Campaign For Palestinian Rights, USA ----- 20,465 \$**

**Land of Canaan Foundation, USA----- 55,000 \$**

**Welt Partner, Germany ----- 6,500 €**

*Trees for Life program is funded by PFTA's olive oil buyers, and a network of solidarity organizations in UK, USA and Canada.*



### **Highlight Farmers Stories:**

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

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### **Adnan A Yaseen**

From the village of Kofradan near Jenin, he is a full time farmer. Every day he brings his tools and visits his farm to do the daily agricultural practices such as weeding and pruning. Since 2006 when he joined the Fair-trade program, Adnan has sold his organic certified olive oil through PFTA to Canaan Fair Trade



Company (CFT). He believes that all Palestinian farmers, even the farmers who are not registered in the PFTA programs, benefit from fair trade. He says “every year CFT export large quantities of our olive oil to international fair trade markets and so the farmers of the PFTA have a direct benefit from this because they market their production. This process also gives better opportunities for other farmers who are not registered in PFTA to market their production in the local Palestinian market with better prices”. Adnan believes that planting land race seeds such as legumes will enhance the soil fertility and also play an important role in reducing soil moisture loss during the summer by creating a cover for the soil and also making a kind of dew (water) harvesting which increases the moisture in the soil and delays the start of the drying season during mid-summer.

This year Adnan received olive seedlings and also organic seeds through the landrace seeds program. He applied them in his plots, and will return part of the production to be distributed to other farmers next planting season.

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### **Mohammed Odeh**

a farmer from the village of Mazare Al Noubani near Ramallah city. Mohammed who is also called "Abu Awwad" start working in farming when he was very young, at that time the land was abandoned and no one was looking after it, Abu Awwad start planting new trees and serving the old ones in order to restart the olive farming in his land, every day he bring the water and visit his land which located near the village to irrigate the trees specially the new ones.



In this planting season Abu Awwad received different types of seedlings from PFTA after he apply to the trees for life program, he hope these

trees will start producing in the coming couple of years which means increasing in the money income and also this will help in insisting on his attachment to his land, while Israel tries to uproot this attachment.

One of the major problems in Mazare' Al Noubani village is the wild boars which are released by the Israeli authorities and settlers. It's important to say that these boars are in huge numbers and destroyed the trees and crops of the farmers in these districts and it is very difficult for the farmers to reduce its numbers in the fields because it is forbidden by the Israeli authorities' laws.

***PFTA farmers extend sincere thanks and gratitude to these organizations and individuals who contributed through them to the livelihood sustainability of Palestinian farmer.***

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*May 2023*

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