Mohammad Irsheid is the youngest of 9 children from a farming family in Siir, a beautiful small village located about 18km south of Jenin with a population of only 1000 people. Mohammad and his family own 300 dunums (300 sq. km) of olive groves which produce up to 9 tonnes of olive oil in a good harvest and 180 dunums (180 sq. km) of almond groves that yield 15 tonnes of almonds per year. This produce is sold through the Palestine Fair Trade Association (PFTA) to Canaan Fair Trade who in turn sell it to fair trade organisations worldwide.

The price of olive oil was 10 shekels per kg (£1.70) in 2006 and after Siir cooperative joined PFTA that year they were able to command a price of 18 shekels (£3.06) per kg which has made a huge difference for full-time farmers like Mohammad and his family.

In addition to the fair trade price, Siir coop also receive a Fairtrade premium which this year will go towards building a public bathroom and a large storage room for the village.
PRODUCER PROFILES
Mohammad Irsheid
Siir village, Palestine

When asked whether fair trade benefitted his family Mohammad said: “Fairtrade has had a big impact on my life in all sorts of ways. First of all, I started receiving higher prices, and that made a huge difference to our family’s farming income, about 20,000 shekels (£3,400) difference per year. I stopped worrying about searching for local traders that would take my olive oil with conditions and at low prices. Now it all goes to one buyer and we get paid during the harvest instead of waiting months to sell all our produce. We are now our own masters.

Seeing the many benefits, my family and I started to invest more in the land, spending the extra income received through Fairtrade to rehabilitate about 20 dunums of land, and planting it with olive trees. From this additional land we produced an additional 1-2 tonnes of olive oil. From that extra income, we bought new land which we planted with almond trees. In short, Fairtrade made farming viable for us as Palestinian farmers.”

TREES FOR LIFE
Zaytoun supports an olive tree planting project which is run by the Palestine Fair Trade Association (PFTA). The PFTA farmer coops produce the olive oil, maftoul, almonds and freekeh which Zaytoun sells.

Farmers interested in participating in the project apply through Palestine Fair Trade Association coordinators. Allocations based on the following, a farmer must:
- Own land suitable for the number of trees applied for
- Demonstrate capacity to care for and nurture trees
- Be ready to prepare land for a collective tree planting day.

All trees must be planted on the day they are delivered.

Priority is given to farmers who:
- Have lost trees to Israeli destruction
- Farm small areas
- Are women landowners interested in farming
- Young starter farmers who have inherited or acquired land

£20 pays for 5 olive tree saplings (3 years old) to be planted in Palestine. Contact us (details below) to participate.

www.zaytoun.org/products/catalogue/trees-for-life/

To find out more about our great range of Palestinian artisan food visit www.zaytoun.org or call 0207 832 1351

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