



Palestine Fair Trade Association

Trees for Life Program 2019

“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 45 farmer’s coops, 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 trees destruction by the Israeli military.



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.



This 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 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
2015	20	16700	328
2016	20	13542	250
2017	21	14063	252
2018	22	22646	257
2019	20	25352	318
	Totals	173372	3729
<i>Trees for life Historical Data 2006-2019.</i>			



2019 Planting season

During the **2019** planting season more than **25300** saplings have been distributed to **318** farmers in **20** various villages in the west bank.

Contributions and Donations collected for 2019 planting Season:

Zaytoun CIC, UK -----	19,766 £
Zatoun, Canada -----	10,287 \$
Land of Canaan Foundation, USA-----	7,300 \$
US Campaign for Palestinian Rights, USA -----	20,445 \$

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

Regenerative farming and land Race Seeds Program. (Phase 2)

For the second year; PFTA included Regenerative farming and land race seeds within the trees for life program. This 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. Regenerative Agriculture also calls for farm management that increases biodiversity, composting, cover cropping, inter-cropping and the integration of animals to the farm (dairy animals, chickens and beekeeping), all of which improve and enrich the food type and quality for the farmers.



PFTA is succeeding in encouraging the farmers to implement all the needed RA practices through:

- Capacity Building Trainings
- Agricultural extension and field visits
- Offering original landrace seeds

Providing landrace seeds:

Collecting (purchasing) native seeds from our organic farmers own production, then circulation and distribution of the seeds to new farmers (for free) according to a number of criteria's such as topography of the targeted area, type of the soil and the major crop in the targeted area. PFTA collect part of the produced and harvested seeds from the farmers whom were targeted in the 1st phase of the program and re- circulate these seeds to other farmers this planting season .

Totals from our 2nd Phase of landrace seeds program:

- Total cultivated Area: 220 Donums (22 Hectares).
- Total Number of beneficiaries: 36 farmers.
- Total distributed quantity of seeds: 3720 kg.

Highlight Farmers Stories:

Basheer Habaybeh: a farmer from Sanour village near Jenin. Mr. Habaybeh or "El Haj Basheer" is a 62 year old farmer; he joined the PFTA programs in 2006. He started working in farming with his family when he was very young. Every day Haj Basheer brings his farming tools and equipments





by tractor to serve his land, which is located between the mountains around the village. He is a

Full time farmer, he produces many kinds of crops for both home consumption and also for the market. In addition to organic olive oil which is marketed by Canaan Fair Trade, Haj Basheer produces organic wheat, fafa beans, hot chili, eggplant, lentils and sesame, and all these crops are planted as intercrops in his olive orchards.

Haj Basheer believes that intercropping plays a major role in the health of the topsoil by nitrogen fixation which is very important for soil fertility which increases the productivity of all the major crops.

Through the landrace seed program implemented by PFTA, Haj Basheer received around 180 kg of organic seeds this year and planted them in his plots, The agreement with Haj Basheer is that part of the production will be circulated to other farmers next planting season.

Elayan Abu Arrah

A farmer from the village of Aqaba near Tubas, Elayan Abu Arrah is considered a full time Almond farmer. Every day he brings his tools and visits his farm to do the daily agricultural practices such as weeding and pruning. Since 2013 when he joined the Fair-trade program, Elayan has sold his organic certified Almonds 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 exports large quantities of our Almonds to international fair trade markets and so the farmers of the PFTA have a direct benefit from this because they market their production. But this process also gives better opportunities for other farmers who are not registered in the PFTA to market their production in the local Palestinian market with better prices”. Elayan is always trying to develop and improve his expertise in farming. He owns a number of beehives and set them in his almond fields in order to improve their pollination which will increase the productivity of his almond trees. He also 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 Elayan received around 150 kg of organic seeds through the landrace seeds program implemented by PFTA. He applied them in his almond plots, and will return part of the production to be distributed to other farmers next planting season.

News from previous planting seasons

Mohammed Hamadeh: a farmer from Burqin cooperative, he was one of the farmers who received 200 olive seedlings through the Trees for Life program in the 2015 planting season. All the trees were planted and well served by Mohammed, and now after 4 years of daily hard work these young trees are starting to produce fruits. This season the first organic olive oil will be harvested from these trees.





2019 planting season



Trees for Life 2019.

Jenin, Palestine