



Project Hope Annual Report for 2008

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ABBREVIATIONS

ANERA	American Near East Refugee Aid
B2W	Bridge to the World
ESL	English as a Second Language
FSL	French as a Second Language
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
SJHR	Social Justice and Human Rights Workshop Program
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project Hope has undergone rapid growth since its inception in May 2003. Initially launching as an initiative in the city of Nablus under the direction of a Canadian and Palestinian co-founders with a small group of Palestinian and International volunteers, its initial goals were to support just one Palestinian community center in each of the city's refugee camps with educational and recreational programs for dozens of children often living under curfew. It had no initial budget, with some minimal external funding in the hundreds of dollars monthly provided largely by the small Canadian charity the Near East Cultural and Education Foundation.

Since that modest beginning, growth has been rapid. Project Hope is officially a program under the Canadian not-for-profit organization "Humanitarian Opportunities for Peace and Education," which was founded to support it. Project Hope has become one of the most visible and largest social initiatives in the city of Nablus, and is starting to expand beyond the city's boundaries into outlying villages and West Bank cities facing similar needs. It has educational, recreational and limited medical regular programs and short-term activities that are provided for an excess of 700 disadvantaged people in need in partnership with 56 Palestinian civil society organizations and 9 schools in the city of Nablus, 5 refugee camps and 25 villages. On average 25 Palestinian volunteers worked every month with some of the 82 international volunteers who came from 16 different countries to volunteer with Project Hope. At the international level Project Hope works in partnership with over 20 organizations and has a presence in the volunteer network in Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Norway, Iceland, Ireland, Australia, South Africa and Italy.

This rapid growth has been a measure nonetheless incompatible with the ever growing needs faced by the deteriorating conditions of Palestine, economically, security-based and rights-based, resulting in an ever stressful condition faced by Palestinian children and youth. Project Hope wants, and always tries, to do more, but is ever constrained by a limited budget that does not compare to less-grassroots NGOs that have much smaller programs and do not rely on local leadership and capacity-building for program implementation. While Project Hope has made excellent use of its grassroots volunteer network to carry out quality programming and activities for children and youth in Palestine, it is nonetheless limited by this funding which leaves it with a small and overworked staff with insufficient funds to retain on an indefinite basis. Its core-programs are also left too much at the whim of two or three-year funds which are inadequate in length-of-time to the ongoing problems faced by Palestinian children and youth, and the length of time necessary for a noticeable intervention into a child's life. It is impossible to raise a child in just two or three years even in normal living conditions; it is even more difficult to contribute to a child's development in such a short time in Palestine.

Project Hope does have weaknesses that need to be addressed. The insecurity in funding for its core programs causes problems with continuity, making it hard to organize regular classes on a long-term basis in single locations for the same groups of children. Funding limitations further translate into a limited ability to collect data for Project Hope's programs and activities, and then to analyze and report on their effectiveness. Further, Project Hope has an extremely

limited budget for outreach to promote and fund raise for its programs.

Nonetheless, there is hope for the future and we do recognize our deficiencies. Even though our budget is limited, it has expanded one hundred fold from its first year. Our programs are growing bigger and more stable, while we are making some effort to improve on our internal data collection despite limited staff. One example is an in-depth study we are conducting over multiple years to measure the impact of our Bridge to the World program for 36 children with support

from a professor at Oxford University's Refugee Studies Center. We engaged in much greater outreach in 2008 than ever before, and have much more ambitious plans utilizing our volunteer network into 2009. We will continue to build on our successes against the odds of years past to build a strong program in order to continue to make an impact on those lives which need it the most.

Jeremy Wildeman, Co-founder and Executive Director of Project Hope



Young boys in an art class in Balata refugee camp.



Art work of a refugee child.

2008 FACT PAGE

Table 1: Monthly Enrollment

Month 2008	Students
January	296
February	589
March	551
April	486
May	265
June	853
July	1 350
August	1 034
September (Ramadan)	59
October (Eid Al-Fitr)	782
November	1 555
December (Hajj, Eid Al-Adha, Christmas)	1 051
Monthly Average	739
Total Placements	8 871

Table 2: Courses

	Monthly Average	2008 Total
English	368	4 417
French	100	1206
Blogs	32	228
Social Justice	20	250

Table 3: Special Activities

Activity	Description	Participants
Healthy Living Initiatives and First Aid	Two Intensive 3-Month Periods of Workshops/Courses	619
Art	Four Multi-Month Projects	589
Drama	5 Courses (between 2-3 Months)	504
Photography Course	Two 3-Month Courses	122
Sport (dance, yoga, aerobics, stretching, volleyball, acrobatics)	8 Courses varying in length	352
Other Languages	Spanish	20
Robotics	1 Month Course	20
Summer Camps	3 Weeks	200
Leadership-Advertising	2 Month Courses	100
Music	Two 2-month projects	81
Digital Storytelling	2-Month Course	34
Pen Pals	1-Month Initiative	35
Kids' Party	Circus/Dance Performance and Party	1 500+

Table 4: Where Project Hope Worked in 2008

Cities	Tulkarem, Jenin, Nablus
Refugee Camps	Balata, New Askar, Old Askar, Al Ein, Al-Faraa
Villages	Beit Dajan, Beit Fourik, Kufer Lakif, Huwara, Beit Ebah, Tel, Beit Imreen, Kufer Laqif, Joreish, Yanoon Al Oyla, Talfeet, Nusfi Jibaal, Yetma, Yamoun, Yanoon, Asira Ashamalia, Awerta, Bourin, Asira Ashamalia, Upper Yanoon, Oureef, Kufer Qalil Aseera Al-Qabliya, Kufer Jamal, Oudala, Salem

Table 5: Other Facts

Average Number of Palestinian Volunteers per month: 25
Training and Cultural Opportunities for Palestinian Volunteers in Europe: 3
82 international volunteers from 16 countries: average 6+ per month for 2+ month stays
Worked with 56 Palestinian organizations, 8 UNRWA schools and 1 private school
Worked with 16 different international organizations

Table 6: Palestinian School Holidays in 2008

New Year	1 January
Orthodox Christmas	7 January
Winter Break	15 January – 1 February
Eid al Adha	7 – 11 December
Hijri (Muslim New Year)	29 December
Prophet Mohammed's Birthday	20 March
Summer Vacation	2 June – 24 August
Ramadan (school in session)	2 – 31 September
Eid al Fitr	1 October
Christmas	25 December



Mural painted on the wall of a neighborhood center during the 2008 summer camp in Old Askar refugee camp.

I. REPORT OUTLINE

In 2008 Project Hope continued with the English and Social Justice/Human Rights programs while expanding the French program and implementing a new multi-faceted program called Bridge to the World. All programs are anchored by sizable English and French components that utilized native speaking foreign volunteers. In addition, Project Hope provided a number of different special activities such as drama, music, art, sports, and photography thanks to the flexibility provided through the Bridge to the World program. The target group was the marginalized children and youth suffering from the effects of the longstanding conflict, economic disaster and trauma of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and ongoing occupation. The goal was to assist them in their skills development while providing them with valuable instances of structure and normalcy for psychological support. At the same time, countless Palestinian youth volunteers benefited from participating in the administration of the program.

This work was successfully undertaken within the context of the general unrest associated with an unrelenting Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Though the conflict became less violent in purely military terms with a general drop in the number of monthly deaths, the situation for the Palestinian civilian population showed little improvement in 2008. The situation within the West Bank continues to be characterized by restrictions on movement due to the Israeli wall and armed checkpoints, military incursions, night raids and arrests, Palestinian factional disputes and a devastated economy.

The following report details the implementation of all of Project Hope's programs in 2008. Section II details the development of the English as a Second Language program. Section III details the expansion of the French as a Second Language program. Section IV presents the progression of a program in its second year of implementation entitled Social Justice and Human Rights Workshops Program. This program was implemented in 2006 and has seen steady expansion as it enters its final year of implementation. Section V discusses the implementation of Project Hope's newest program, Bridge to the World. This section details the challenges and successes of the first year of an experimental program that introduces new technologies to the students and instructors. Section VI a and b survey the many special activities that Project Hope was able to conduct in 2008 both inside and outside the classroom. In particular, first aid, drama and art classes that were at times comparable in scope to the English and French programs. Section VI a. encompasses thirteen such special activities: Healthy Living Initiatives, Art, Drama, Photography, Sports, Other Languages, Robotics, Summer Camps, Leadership/Advertising, Music, Digital Storytelling, and a Pen-Pal program. Section VI b. discusses extra curricular activities including a Kids' Party/Circus and Dance Performance, new websites created by Project Hope, murals, films, Arabic classes, olive harvesting, a City Clean-Up Initiative and a TV series screening.

Section VII discusses the challenges of the implementation of all of our programs as well as the successes and demand of the classes taught in 2008.

It remarks on both the challenges of administering educational programs, works closely with the local and programs in a conflict environment as well as technical international volunteers and performs many difficulties of facilitating a large number of classes for administrative duties. This section also talks about the hundreds of students. Section VIII details the general expansion of the available human resources locations in which Project Hope worked and its despite the continuing strain on Project Hope's geographical growth. Section IX speaks about the personnel as Project Hope has expanded its programs. organizations with which Project Hope worked at the This is followed by a discussion of the role of community and international level. Section X deals Palestinian and International volunteers to make the with the personnel that made Project Hope function. It program possible. Finally, Section XI contains a remarks upon the staff that implements the financial report.

II. ENGLISH

Table 7: Monthly English Enrollment

Month 2008	Students
January	142
February	309
March	343
April	280
May	185
June	508
July	704
August	512
September (Ramadan)	21
October (Eid Al-Fitr)	338
November	635
December (Hajj - Eid Al-Adha, Christmas)	440
Monthly Average	368
Total Placements	4 417

Project Hope’s English program provided an anchor for many other programs and special activities implemented in 2008. International and local volunteers have worked to provide disadvantaged students in the refugee camps, the old city of Nablus and many other locations in the area with regular classes to better their English. These classes have focused on conversational, practical English as opposed to grammar and structure. In this way students add to their formal English education they receive in schools.

The summer months of 2008 saw a raise in enrollment due to the staff’s work to fill the children’s summer vacation with fun, educational activities. There was a dip in enrollment in September as it

coincided with the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. In October the number of students rose again, but in order to provide more regular classes for more students, Project Hope began English classes in the UNRWA schools and in one private secondary school. This initiative proved successful and the schools were enthusiastic about this new opportunity for their students, thus enrollment in November increased. The initiative continued into the New Year, although due to the second Muslim holiday (Eid Al-Adha), the Christian holiday of Christmas, and final exams in schools, enrollment dropped slightly in December.

In 2008 Project Hope gave classes for adult and university students in its office. These classes were well attended and provided a good opportunity for individuals not involved with one of our partner centers to benefit from English classes taught by native speakers. These classes took place mainly in the evening so that students who attend university or who have jobs could participate as well.



English class for teenage girls.

chairs and adequate space for the students.

English courses were organized on a one-month schedule, subject to renewal at the month's end. A renewal decision was taken following a review of the evaluations completed by the partner organization, students and instructor. Classes were held 5 days per week from Sunday to Thursday with weekends constituting Friday and Saturday. Most courses were held through the facilities of local organizations and schools. The schedule was organized to take account of the Palestinian administrative and religious holidays consistent to both the Gregorian and lunar Islamic "Hijri" calendars. Already a complex schedule, the program had to be strong enough to cope with disruptions due to external exigencies such as military incursions, curfews, restrictions on movement, indigenous factional disputes and general unrest.



International and local volunteers work together in an English class.

We demanded that every classroom met our basic requirements for a positive learning environment that simultaneously could provide the students with a psychological sense of structure and normalcy. This meant that every classroom had to have the basic requisite facilities: a chalk- or white board, desks,

The English curriculum used the New Headway "English as a Second Language" (ESL) series. However, our approach was not to teach by lecture or write, where students simply memorize the grammar out of the text but never truly understand how to use the language. We used the New Headway series as a frame while basing our program around a communicative and task-based learning approach. Teachers were encouraged to use art, drawing, mimes, acting, role-playing, tongue twisters and flash cards. In addition, many of our special activities (Section VI), while not English courses, were organized and led in English. The adult students enrolled in classes in Project Hope's office are given a placement test in order to create appropriate levels of classes. A goal for the coming year is to bring an international volunteer to Nablus who has a strong professional background teaching ESL in order to organize a better curriculum for the coming years that incorporates conversation, fun activities and discussion within the context of an Arab learning environment.

Class size was typically limited to a manageable number of ten to fifteen students. For Palestinian children this is a great opportunity for more individual attention compared to their classes in school, which are very crowded and can sometimes reach 50 students to one teacher. These children suffer from abnormally high rates of psychological trauma due to the history of violence in their area. The disorders make it difficult for them to concentrate and/or cause them to act aggressively. With so many children suffering psychological difficulties and frequent disruptions, the large class sizes common to their schools make it very difficult to actually learn. This is

especially true for a foreign language that is taught with antiquated methods, yet is so important to gaining employment.

This philosophy sometimes led to problems in organizing class and activities with other Palestinian NGOs, which normally try to have large groups. Even with small class sizes, our instructors faced regular challenges besides the mental health problems. On occasion children came to class when the previous night their home was invaded by soldiers and perhaps a family member arrested. Sometimes class was disrupted by an Israeli military incursion. Fortunately Project Hope's instructors could rely on support from the Project Hope staff and volunteers and the staff of the local center. Teachers shared their experiences at a weekly meeting where they were given the chance

to speak about any problems they were facing. At the same time, the vast majority of students have been highly receptive to the classes and the opportunity not only to learn English but also to interact with the instructors. Most students look forward to continuing their English lessons after a course is finished. The students benefit not only from instruction from native speakers but also benefit from the enthusiasm and fresh outlook that many of our young volunteers have. In this way the children become excited about and interested in learning English, as opposed to it being merely an obligation that they must fulfill. In a society that is driven to pessimism, it is invaluable that these students get a new, usually optimistic, perspective on life.

III. FRENCH

Table 8: Monthly French Enrollment

Month 2008	Students
January	87
February	102
March	108
April	75
May	50
June	111
July	104
August	117
September (Ramadan)	38
October (Eid Al-Fitr)	91
November	161
December (Hajj - Eid Al-Adha, Christmas)	162
Monthly Average	100
Total Placements	1 206

Just as English is an important skill for children and adolescents in the occupied Palestinian territories, French can be a valuable skill. French classes are on demand in the Palestinian Territories because fluency facilitates employability with the numerous French NGOs working there. Programs taught in French give students the chance to establish social relations with French speakers while increasing students' awareness of other cultures. French education has historically been a preserve of the elite, despite the advantages fluency accrues. Project Hope has worked hard to make French available to all levels of society by working in the more disadvantaged places such as the refugee camps and the old city of Nablus.

Project Hope's French program expanded noticeably in 2008. We expanded our French program over the past year so that now we provide regular French classes and summer camps and have more French-speaking staff and local volunteers. The principles behind the French classes are much the same as those for the English classes. The classes are meant to be about fun, personal development, and practical use of the language. Our focus is more on actual communication rather than grammar rules. As an example, in May a volunteer culminated her French class with an animated film created by her students with the help of other volunteers. Also in December a French volunteer finished a theater class conducted in French in which the students performed a French play



for their family and friends.

Our French classes are held in centers in the refugee camps and in the old city. We also work closely with the French Cultural Center to provide conversation classes. Most of the students are at the beginner level, but we also have long-term students who have progressed to the intermediate level.

IV. Blogs

Table 9: Monthly Blog Class Enrollment

Month 2008	Students
January	--
February	--
March	--
April	--
May	--
June	19
July	26
August	39
September (Ramadan)	39
October (Eid Al-Fitr)	39
November	34
December (Hajj - Eid Al-Adha, Christmas)	32
Monthly Average	32
Total Placements	228



In May of 2008 Project Hope received support for a new multifaceted program called Bridge to the World which strengthens our English and French courses, allows more special activities and teaches children how to use the Internet, computers and how to create Blogs in one of the new languages they are learning.

The goal of combining language instruction with Internet classes is to give the students new skills while also giving them a chance to communicate with their peers in other countries. This program is a way for them to reach out and connect with people around the world, despite the network of physical and political barriers surrounding them.



In this program many young Palestinians were taught how to create their own Blogs where they can document their daily lives, write stories and share their experiences online. In the course of their computer classes the students completed a number of activities. During some classes they wrote stories or essays of their choice to upload to their blogs using the program Word Press. The students also learned to use programs such as Photo Shop and Flash to decorate their blogs using pictures they took with digital cameras provided by Project Hope. The students were tutored in Internet searching and email as well.

The students' blogs include an introduction page entitled 'About Me' and ensuing pages discussing different subjects related to Palestine and Palestinian culture; some of these topics include recipes for traditional Palestinian cuisine, the diversity of the

Arabic language, animals found in Palestine, the history of certain areas and traditional Palestinian embroidery.

The number of blog students was kept quite low in order to choose the most motivated and hard-working students from the ESL and FSL classes as well as to keep the classes small so that the instructor could spend individual time with the students. The number of students in each class ranged from 3 to 6 students. The groups were divided by their language of choice (French or English) and their location (Old/New Askar, Balata and Al-Ein Refugee Camps and the Old City of Nablus). All groups met once per week for a period of approximately 3 months and met once per month after the course was finished in order to keep up their blogs.

V. SOCIAL JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Table 10: Monthly Social Justice and Human Rights Class Enrollment Palestinian readers.

Date	Students
30 January 2008	17
28 February 2008	27
30 March 2008	27
30 April 2008	27
31 May 2008	15
30 June 2008	10
31 July 2008	60
31 August 2008	25
30 September 2008 (Ramadan)	--
31 October 2008 (Eid Al-Fitr)	14
30 November 2008	15
31 December 2008 (Hajj - Eid Al-Adha, Christmas)	13
Monthly Average	20+
Total Placements	250

The Thematic Social Justice and Human Rights workshops program has been developed into one of Project Hope's main programs. The program has overcome many of the challenges it faced in the first year of its implementation and has been running smoothly. The goal of these workshops is to educate the students about their rights as children, citizens and human beings in a place where social justice is not always present and human rights are often compromised. These workshops provide an open environment where Palestinian youth can discuss their many different views in each workshop. The program uses Amnesty International's Human Rights Guide for its curriculum, which is in Arabic and created for

In the first five months of 2008, bi-weekly classes were running in all of the four refugee camps in the Nablus area. The next three months witnessed a new phase that provided the students with weekly, intensive workshops that included a formal lecture, discussion and creative learning activities. Five lawyers from Nablus were invited to Project Hope to give the lectures and facilitate the discussions. The students benefited greatly from being able to interact with professionals in their society.



A local lawyer gives a lecture on prisoner's rights during one of the summer Social Justice workshops.

September coincided with the Muslim holiday, Ramadan, so in place of classes during this month, the time was spent organizing and translating reports from the classes and workshops, evaluating the program and preparing for the next session of classes. From October to December of 2008 one SJHR class

ran in New Askar Refugee Camp. One student was chosen to be interviewed and his words were sent to the organization *You Move Me* in the US. An article was written about him based on his answers and sent to teachers around the US for their students to read and discuss in order to promote awareness about other cultures and ways of life. His article can be read at: <http://www.youmoveme.org/Hassan.pdf>

The program faced minor problems in scheduling the classes around the students' school obligations as did many other programs. However, these were solved with some work in the curriculum.

The Workshops Officer has commenced new projects in New Askar and Al-Ein refugee camps. Despite

initial problems of commitment to the program common in the formation of new relationships, the Project Hope staff have worked hard to make good these relationships with the new community centers in order to achieve successful implementation of the workshops. The results have been palpable with the participants demonstrating an increased understanding of the socio-political situation in the camps, as well as an awareness of their rights. Project Hope intends to move forward with the workshops, keeping the goal of strengthening relationships with the community centers and expanding the target groups. Project Hope will also strive to provide new, challenging information and activities for students who will continue with our program.

VI. a. SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

Table 11: Special Activities

Activity	Description	Participants
Healthy Living Initiatives and First Aid	Two Intensive 3-Month Periods of Workshops/Courses	850
Art	Four Multi-Month Projects	589
Drama	5 Courses (between 2-3 Months)	504
Photography Course	Two 3-Month Courses	122
Sport	8 Courses varying in length	352
Other Languages	Spanish	20
Robotics	1 Month Course	20
Summer Camps	3 Weeks	200
Leadership-Advertising	2 Month Courses	100
Music	Three 2-month projects	86
Digital Storytelling	2-Month Course	34
Pen-Pals	1-Month Initiative	35

Healthy Living Initiatives and First Aid

Project Hope has facilitated a number of different medical initiatives since its inception in 2003. A team of medically skilled international and Palestinian volunteers travel to villages and refugee camps to deliver basic first aid training and carry out basic medical checks. The program hopes to expand to

establish a clinic run by volunteer physicians.

In addition to first aid training, lectures are given on healthy living initiatives such as how to avoid Type 2 Diabetes and High Blood Pressure. At the end of the class, blood pressure and blood sugar screenings are offered to all participants. Medical advice is then given on an individual basis by qualified medical professionals. The lectures are given in conjunction with practical first aid training, where students are taught vital medical skills such as how to identify early signs of a stroke or heart attack, how to render first aid to a choking victim, and basic CPR techniques. Where access to emergency medical services is restricted, these basic first aid skills can save lives.



The program targets the areas in the West Bank with a lack of access to medical services. This includes isolated villages, which have many checkpoints and barriers between them and hospitals. Another is refugee camps suffering from overcrowding and poverty. In 2008 Project Hope ran two intensive multi-month first aid courses. These took place from

June to August and from November to December.

The summer course was given in Beit Dajan village to 30 students, once per week for two months and Al-Faraa Refugee Camp to 10 Students for one month. The course gave the instructors a longer amount of time with their students (as opposed to a one day workshop) so they were able to provide the students more information and a stronger grasp on first aid skills and medical knowledge.

The second course began in November when two nurses from the US arrived in Nablus for their annual visit to volunteer for this program. They brought with them medicine which Project Hope gave to the municipality for distribution. They began a program of intensive, daily workshops in villages and the Old City of Nablus. These workshops focused on teaching first aid skills and discussing healthy living as a way to avoid diseases such as diabetes, osteoporosis and high blood pressure. Two more volunteers arrived at Project Hope in mid-November to continue the program and by the end of December they had conducted workshops in 23 villages for more than 800 students (the majority women, including a smaller group of men and children). One of the international volunteers who is a certified MD also volunteered for one week at the Arab Specialty Hospital as an assistant physician.

Art

Art classes are relatively inexpensive and easy to organize while being highly beneficial and popular with children. Clinical experience and a large body of literature has demonstrated that artistic painting and the analysis or interpretation of those paintings can provide the opportunity for children to formalize, express and transform potentially traumatic

experiences into a creative and enriching activity.

Project Hope provides a great variety of art classes on an ad hoc basis when there are international volunteers interested in teaching. These classes, most often facilitated in either English or French, provide a fun learning environment for students while simultaneously offering a new language and new creative skills.



The first of 4 major art projects in 2008 took place at a center in Old Askar Refugee Camp and one center in Nablus, in which 28 students were given arts and crafts classes including drawing, painting and collages. The second and third projects began simultaneously in June. Both programs included creative activities such as painting, drawing, collage making, hat making, free expression, technical artistic instruction, full-body outlines, self portraits, box making and many other activities.

The second project was conducted by an Irish volunteer who began facilitated classes in centers in Nablus, New Askar Refugee Camp and Balata Refugee Camp. She taught classes for 126 students over the course of 3 months and painted murals for Project

Hope's partner center, Assirk Assaghir in Nablus.

Refugee Camps during these two months.

The third program was run by a Scottish EVS volunteer who began her art classes outside of Nablus in Al-Faraa Refugee Camp, Beit Dajan village and Beit Wazan village. She worked in conjunction with the organization ANERA, which provided her with art materials. Her program was expanded to include two centers in the neighboring city of Tulkarem. This section of her program lasted 3 months and included classes for a total of 190 students. The next section of her program ran from October to November in centers in the Old Askar, New Askar and Balata Refugee Camps. In these months she taught 48 students. She also concluded her programs with Project Hope by painting a mural at the UNRWA Girls' School in Old Askar Refugee Camp.

Drama

2008 saw five different drama projects implemented by Project Hope. Two programs were drama therapy in which the students were encouraged to discover and work with their emotions and thoughts through the medium of drama and movement. The drama therapy teachers conducted activities that promoted self-confidence, self-expression and creativity as a positive way to deal with many negative feelings that exist in children when living and maturing in a conflict



A drama therapy class in Balata refugee camp.

environment. These classes are especially important, as children need to learn a constructive, not destructive, way of dealing with emotions of sadness and frustration arising from their situation.

The final art project of 2008 was conducted by 3 volunteers in Kufer Laqif village in November and December. The volunteers traveled to the village on Fridays and gave classes throughout the day to a total of 40 students. One of these volunteers also conducted additional classes in Old Askar and Balata

The first Drama Therapy project was one month in length (February) and had classes in the New Askar and Balata Refugee Camps and in Tel village for a total of 95 students. The second Drama Therapy project ran from October 2008 into 2009 and consisted of classes in two centers in Nablus, one

center in Balata camp and classes in Huwara village for a total of 238 students.

Another volunteer conducted a Puppet Theater project for the whole month of April in Old Askar Refugee Camp for 24 students. This third project was concluded with a puppet theatre performance in the center for the students' friends and family.

The fourth drama project was run by two volunteers who conducted classes in Balata camp and at Beit Eiba summer camp. The project included 74 students and ran from July to August of 2008. Their activities were focused on acting games and movement much like the Drama Therapy courses.

The final drama project of 2008 was run by a Canadian volunteer for 2 months (October and November). He gave classes in the Balata, Old Askar and New Askar Refugee Camps as well as in two centers in Nablus and the new campus of Nablus' university, An-Najah. The number of students totalled 116.

Photography

Project Hope provided two photography courses in the refugee camps in 2008. There are a number of digital and film cameras available through Project Hope's Bridge to the World program to make these classes possible. There were 3 photography courses in 2008 conducted in New and Old Askar and Balata refugee camps. The first was conducted from January to February in Old Askar by two international volunteers for 36 Students. The second was a one-month course in Balata Camp for a total of 18 students run by a British volunteer.

A girl looks at her photography on display at an exhibition in Balata refugee camp.



The second course ran from June to August in New Askar and Balata Refugee Camps for a total of 68 students. This course included both lecture and practical work in self-portraits, still life, landscape and street-scapes. The students participated in a project called 'My Camp' in which they discussed who makes up the society in their camp. The children then went to these people and asked their permission to photograph them and did a short interview with each person. The culmination of this course was an exhibition of the students' photographs with refreshments, music and traditional Palestinian dancing called dabka at the Happy Childhood Center in Balata.

Sports

Yoga - Project Hope ran two sessions of yoga classes lasting one month each (in January and in April) in the Child Culture Center in Nablus and the Women's Program Center in Old Askar Refugee Camp. These classes were given to 20 students who were taught basic yoga skills in order to better the health and physical fitness of the students. Yoga is a way to exercise as well as a way to relax, so it is very beneficial for students living in a conflict environment.

Acrobatics - One of Project Hope's volunteers conducted an acrobatics class in the partner center Assirk Assaghir (The Small Circus) in Nablus. The course ran for 3 months (April - June) for a total of 54 students. The instructor taught basic acrobatic skills such as tumbling, handstands, cartwheels and general strength building.

Indian Dance - One Canadian volunteer instructed a course in Indian dance that was 2 months in length for a total of 36 students. The students were dance students at Assirk Assaghir center in Nablus. The course culminated with a performance in Nablus' open-air theatre for more than 1,000 spectators. The American volunteer instructor performed a solo number in this performance as well.

The Indian dance poses after the performance.

Fitness/Aerobics - Project Hope gave two 2-month sessions of fitness/aerobics given in 2008 at the Assirk Assaghir center in Nablus (July/August and November/December) for a total of 68 women. The number of students was 68 women. The different international volunteers. The instruction on strength training, weight loss and overall fitness and well-being.

Stretching - Project Hope gave two 2-month sessions of stretching in Nablus at the Assirk Assaghir center. The number of students was 68 women. The different international volunteers. The instruction on strength training, weight loss and overall fitness and well-being.



future trainings.

Volleyball - One volunteer gave volleyball classes to children and adults for three months from October to December of 2008. She gave a class twice per week for 18 girls at an UNRWA school in Old Askar Refugee Camp. She also gave two classes for a total of 36 students at An-Najah University in Nablus. These volleyball teams already existed, but were in need of teaching support, as the numbers of team members was very high. This volunteer provided that support and introduced to the groups new skills and practices.

Other Languages

In 2008 Project Hope gave one course in Spanish that ran for two months (June - July) in the Child Culture Center in Nablus for a total of 20 students. Although languages other than English and French are not in high demand in Nablus, there are select groups of people interested in languages such as Spanish and Hebrew for specific purposes. Project Hope has one member of its Palestinian staff that speaks Hebrew fluently and is available to give classes on an ad hoc basis. Many international volunteers, especially from North America, speak Spanish and can give classes when needed.

Robotics

A course in Robotics was held in the summer of 2008 taught by one of Project Hope's staff members. The course was a unique initiative in the field of Robotics, concentrating on building the capabilities of the children to understand Robotics as a science, how to build robots and how to deal with the experience of Robotics in daily life.



Many of the special classes that Project Hope facilitates are given on an ad hoc basis. In this way both an Advertising class and a Leadership program were run for two months each in 2008. A Canadian volunteer taught the Advertising class at An-Najah University for media students. An American volunteer created a leadership program that she taught at An-Najah University and at the Child Culture Center in Nablus. The University is eager to have more classes including English for specific purposes.

At the end of the course, the students could build a robot and also could reach a good level of understanding of how they can find Mechatronic solutions for many ideas. They could also apply successfully many electronic projects as well as Internet-based research on the same subject. This course was unlike other courses that have been taught through Project Hope. The course ran for 2 months for 10 teenage students.

Summer Camps

In July and August of 2008 Project Hope worked with Dar Al-Fonon in Old Askar Refugee Camp to create a two-session summer camp. Approximately 200 children and 7 international volunteers participated in this camp. Some of the activities were painting, theater, sports and other creative games. Project Hope's French volunteers also cooperated with the MCRC Center in the Old City to create a summer camp in which students created and performed a play and a song in French.

Leadership/Advertising

Music

An American volunteer gave a guitar class at Dar Al-Fonon center in Old Askar for 5 students. The class lasted for 2 months and was held twice each week for a duration of 2 hours per class. The center provided the instruments for the students.

Three international volunteers gave lessons in Guitar and Piano at Project Hope's partner center, The Nablus Culture Center, in 2008. These lessons lasted between one and two months.

In November and December of 2008 an Australian volunteer gave classes in electronic music using a program of his choice. He gave classes to the blog students of B2W so that they could compose their own music to put in their blogs. He also gave a class to Project Hope's local volunteers so that they may continue the program. Previous to his arrival in Nablus, this volunteer began a program on Facebook to get laptops donated to give to Project Hope. He is working with Project Hope staff to find a way to send them to Nablus.

Digital Storytelling

A British volunteer worked with a local volunteer on a month-long intensive course in Digital Storytelling. The course culminated with an exhibition on December 17th at the Naher Al-Oaja Center in Balata Refugee Camp. During the course the children made their own 'Digital Story' on the computer. They each wrote a story and then recorded their voices telling their story, which was dubbed over a slide show of pictures of their choice. The British volunteer will take the 'Digital Stories' back to the UK to spread awareness about the situation in Nablus.



Pen-Pals

In April of 2008 an American volunteer started a pen-pal exchange with 35 students. They made an exchange with two student groups in the US and Japan. This program precluded the Bridge to the World program and laid a base for future communication through the medium of blogs.

A girl from Balata camp writes her personal story which she will make into a 'Digital Story' in the coming classes.

VI.b. SPECIAL ACTIVITIES: OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

In 2008 Project Hope undertook many new initiatives outside of its regular programs and classes.

Performances

In July, Project Hope cooperated with Assirk Assaghir and the French Culture Center to put on a 'Kids' Party' in Nablus' historic Roman amphitheater. The performance included acrobatics, juggling, stilts,

unicycle and other circus tricks as well as an Indian dance number and a Dabkah (traditional Palestinian dance) performance. The show was attended by more than 1 500 children and parents and performed by a group of more than 40 children and youth, adolescents and university students.



Websites

In February of 2008 Project Hope finished the creation of a new informational website entitled *Nablus Guide* (www.nablusguide.com). This website presents information about the history, geography, culture and current events of Nablus. It is designed for tourists and future Project Hope volunteers. In 2008 Project Hope also updated its website at www.projecthope.ps. Project Hope's local Webmaster and her assistant worked for more than four months to create the new website which includes news updates, program updates and picture and video galleries.

Films

In March of 2008 for 3 months a Dutch volunteer English teacher started her own film project that was entitled *Good Morning Nablus*. She filmed every-day life as well as traditions and habits that are specific to Nablus in order to show 'the good side' of Nablus that is not plagued by occupation and constant invasions. She conducted interviews with different religious leaders — a nun and an imam — to show religious diversity and co-existence in Nablus. She also interviewed students and professors from An-Najah

University about education in Nablus. She included a section on how to make kunafah, a famous Nablusi sweet, how to dance dabkah, a traditional Palestinian dance, and footage from a soap factory, as Nablus is well known for its olive-oil soap production. In terms of daily life she also filmed people walking in the streets, going to work or shopping in the early morning. A local volunteer will complete the final interviews with a Samaritan religious leader and with taxi drivers around the city. When this is finished she will finalize the film to be broad casted in the Netherlands.

A French volunteer conducted and filmed more than 20 interviews during his stay in Nablus in the summer of 2008. He interviewed Project Hope staff and volunteers and combined them with footage of Nablus and its people to make a film about life under occupation. He posted them in his blog at lifeunderoccupation.wordpress.com

Murals

Three volunteers in 2008 painted murals at different sites in Nablus. As mentioned above (Section VII a. Art), one volunteer painted multiple murals on the walls of the circus group, Assirk Assaghir, whose center is in Nablus. Another volunteer painted a mural on the wall of the UNRWA Girls' School in Old Askar Refugee Camp, which was a translation of the



students drawings from her art class there. Near by, another volunteer painted multiple murals at Dar Al Fonon center also in Old Askar Refugee Camp. She worked full-time on the mural and used traditional Palestinian designs and figures.

Arabic Instruction

In 2008 Project Hope began free Arabic instruction for the International volunteers interested in learning the local language. The classes were held bi-weekly or weekly for beginners, intermediate and advanced. The instruction focused on the Palestinian dialect, but also included basic reading and writing skills. The classes are given by staff in the Project Hope office.



Olive Harvest

October 2008 is the time of olive harvest in Palestine. Olives are one of Palestine’s most important products and most villagers take to their fields during this time to harvest the olives for oil and to produce other products such as soap. Sadly, the extremist Israeli settlers throughout the West Bank use this time period to harass and abuse the farmers while they are in their fields, away from the safety of their homes. Project Hope volunteers, in solidarity with the villagers, helped pick olives in three different villages on their weekends in October. During this experience they gained perspective about the realities of living outside of major Palestinian cities and learned about Palestinian agriculture at the same time.

City Clean-Up

Two International volunteers started an Environmental project by cleaning up an unkempt garden with a small group of their students in Old Askar Refugee Camp. The project then expanded and another group

cleaned an open space around an UNRWA school in Nablus. They picked up garbage and pruned trees and bushes so that the space could be used by the students of the school as a play area. In the coming year these volunteers will work to expand the project even further by getting support from the Nablus Municipality to clean up many spaces around the city and refugee camps.

TV Series Screening – Little Mosque on the Prairie

Through cooperation with the representative office of Canada, Project Hope screened the TV series *Little Mosque on the Prairie* at the local Yasmeen Hotel in October 2008. The event was well attended and included a post-screening discussion.

VII. CHALLENGES, DEMAND & EVALUATIONS

A. CHALLENGES

The Palestinian Territories is a difficult location in which to work. It is a violent region plagued by factionalism, corruption, repression, poverty, checkpoints and frequent Israeli military incursions. It can be nearly impossible to follow an exact schedule. At the same time, these adverse conditions are the very reason we work in the devastated Nablus governate and for this reason we were prepared to face such difficulties. It is the nature of the situation and what has become "normal" there. Several negative exigencies interfered with the efficacy of Project Hope's programs, complicating its overall development.



There was a general deterioration in the socio political situation during the fall when there was a rise in settler violence coinciding with the olive harvest. During the same period, a building in Hebron that Israeli settlers had occupied was evacuated by the Israeli army and the ensuing settler violence throughout the West Bank caused checkpoints to close. The main result was more restrictions imposed upon the Palestinian civilian population as it became

more difficult to move past the numerous checkpoints..

Though in 2008 most Israeli military incursions were early morning (around 3 AM) raids and arrests, it was still not unusual to see armed incursions during the day, especially into the Old City and Refugee Camps. In a more extreme of the examples, on January 3rd the Israeli military invaded Nablus for 4 days during which all classes were canceled and the city was under curfew.

In terms of organizing classes, the greatest challenges proved to be a lack of commitment and organization in the partner centers. It is the partner centers' responsibility to communicate with the students and their families about the courses and to make sure that the students attend each class. The centers in many cases were not upholding this responsibility, which caused a steady drop in the number of students of any given class as the course progressed. To deal with this problem, Project Hope worked harder to communicate the importance of students' attendance to the centers.

In addition, Project Hope worked hard to forge a new relationship with the UNRWA schools, as mentioned above. This proved to be a challenge in itself as UNRWA does not normally cooperate readily with outside organizations. We worked hard to gain their trust and finally we began the new classes in eight of their schools in the refugee camps and Nablus city.

In May of 2008 we found that demand for our program had dipped because of the upcoming Tawjihi exams. Tawjihi is of vital importance in Palestine, not only because the academic future of the students is based upon their results, but also because English accounts for *one-third* of their final grade. The English mark is mostly determined by grammar and writing skills. Our instructors were not able to assist



Girls working individually in a class in a Balata UN school.

the students in the way they needed to be prepared for the exams; not necessarily understanding English but knowing the right answers for specific grammatical structures - much in the same way mathematics questions are answered. This is part of the systematic problem we have found with English teaching in the Palestinian Territories. It is not effective and does not teach the children how to actually communicate in English, leaving it largely a privilege of the small local elite that can afford quality private schooling. With so much importance placed on the examinations, a teacher's strike and scholastic uncertainty in the refugee camps at the end of the school year prolonged the real examination period by almost two months.

B. SUCCESS AND DEMAND

Project Hope's English and French classes were and are still in high demand with our available pool of English and French native speakers and fluent instructors. Besides working with many marginalized children and youth, Project Hope is filling a niche in the community because of a lack of ESL schools. On occasion we have even been approached by professional institutions in Nablus requesting English classes, such as the Al Quds Open University, An-Najah University and local unions such as the Union of Psychological Workers. It must be noted that these classes are only accepted if other classes are filled in order to ensure that the majority of Project Hope's classes remain free and focused on the more marginalized populations of Nablus.

Our work was enhanced when, in October, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) agreed to allow us access to their schools in the refugee camps. They have better school facilities compared to our typical partner organizations, which allows us to provide multiple classes in a positive learning environment. We were granted limited access for a set period of time before and after school and the international volunteers were able to assist the English teachers in their classes during the regular school day to add a conversational element to their teaching as well as to help manage the large classes.



C. EVALUATIONS

Overall we feel that our work has had a very positive impact in mitigating the severe psychological, educational, and social conditions that prevail in Nablus. Feedback recorded from evaluations by the centers and students would tend to support this. A few sample opinions follow:

Tanweer center in the Old City commended the work done by the volunteers of Project Hope: "Your English classes complimented the Palestinian academic curriculum, so that there is a comprehensive relation between formal and non-formal study of the English language. This has led to a major development among youth because it compensates for the lack of non-formal, conversational English education at school. In the same context, the Palestinian youth and their families are suffering from the bad economic situation and high level of unemployment. Because of this, young men and women cannot pay to have additional classes in different subjects. Project Hope has contributed to the community in that it provides information to everyone, regardless of his or her economical status."

The director of *Happy Child Center* in Balata camp emphasized the importance of the cultural exchange occurring in Project Hope's classes as well as the educational benefits. He commends Project Hope for the regularity and variety of its classes as well as the organization of the administration in coordinating classes.

A 14 year-old student from the Old Askar UNRWA girls' school said of her Project Hope

English class: "The class is good, excellent. Everyone in the class learns English no matter what their level and it helps us in our English classes in school. We get to learn exciting, new words and get a chance to have conversations with our teacher. I also like the topics we get to learn about like transportation, food and clothes. They are very useful words."

A local Palestinian volunteer said about her work: "I love to be a local volunteer because of the good discussions I can have with the internationals. They give me a different perspective on the outside world and my city too. Working as a volunteer also gives me skills in language, conversation and leadership that I cannot get anywhere else."

A long-term international volunteer stated that "Project hope has been a fantastic learning experience for both the students and for me. I have seen a lot of progress in my students' English skills, especially regarding their comfort level with the language. They have become more animated and interested in speaking their opinion since the beginning of the class."



Project Hope conducted regular evaluations of its four main programs (English, French, Social Justice and Human Rights and Bridge to the World) as well as evaluations with the centers in which we often conduct our special activities and creative arts classes. These evaluations consisted of questionnaires to be completed for each course by the host organization or school, the instructor and the students. This allowed us not only to evaluate our program but also to decide at the end of a month whether or not to renew a course. In addition to the evaluations, qualitative analyses of the program were complemented by the quantitative analysis of course enrolment, maintained by attendance sheets by the teachers.

A French volunteer intern who worked with Project Hope for 6 months in 2008 created an organized system for analyzing the evaluations of each class using the program Excel. She used her French classes as a sample group divided into students continuing their French education and students new to French. The results of her analysis are annexed. She then instructed the Project Hope staff in her method so that the same analysis may be made of the evaluations of the ESL, SJHR and B2W programs as well as the special activities.



The French program also conducted an evaluation of the French efficiency of all students studying French at the end of 2008. Because the French program has expanded in the past year, new students were mixing with more advanced French students, making the skill level in each class unbalanced. After the evaluations, the volunteers, in cooperation with the French coordinator, were able to split the groups into appropriate levels. These evaluations also informed the Project Hope team of what information the students had been taught previously, so that new French volunteers do not repeat what the students have already learned.



An evaluation like this would be very beneficial to the English program, however, as it is much larger, it would require greater resources for implementation. A reason Project Hope is hesitant to do this kind of quantitative analyses for the English classes is that all students take English in school for which they must pass a series of very difficult exams based on grammar and writing. These exams produce fear and dislike of the English language and that is exactly what Project Hope wants to steer away from. A second reason is that with the existing socio-political conditions the psychotherapeutic effects of our program are as important, if not greater than, the statistical improvement of a student's grasp of grammar. The classes should not be onerous, but fun,

providing a sense of normalcy, structure and a means of temporary escape.

Formal evaluations of both the B2W and the SJHR programs were made in November and September respectively. Those reports are annexed.

As a future means of evaluation, a professor from Oxford University will work with Project Hope to create an in-depth report of the B2W program. This report will share a depth of insight into the lives of the children. This will be a qualitative report seeking to provide Project Hope with a better understanding of these children's lives than a quantitative report. It will also make B2W contrast with the many projects implemented for Palestinian children but of which, for various reasons, very few explore in detail the effects upon the participating children themselves.

The objectives of this report are to document the challenges and benefits of B2W, to illustrate to donors the impact of their support, and to complete a study that describes and analyses the experience of implementing B2W. The issues that will be covered by this study are the importance and challenges of running such a program in the harsh conditions of Nablus and the role that communication through the Internet and through personal contact with outsiders may play in the personal and social development of children living under occupation.

A core group of students will be chosen for this study and contact made with these students and their parents through field visits to their homes and inviting the parents to meetings and exhibitions will be crucial to the collection of qualitative data for this report. This kind of evaluation will serve as an example for a more in-depth way of evaluation that may be used in other programs run by Project Hope.

VIII. LOCATIONS

With the growing number of volunteers and staff, Project Hope expanded its classes and consequently its geographical reach in 2008. While continuing regular classes in all four of the refugee camps in the Nablus area as well as Nablus itself, including the Old City, we added many new partner centers. Special activities and classes were held nearby in more than 30 villages and cities in the northern West Bank, including Beit Dajan, Tel and Beit Eiba, and further away in Jericho, Tulkarem and Jenin.



First Aid workshop for women in a village near Nablus.

Table 12: Where Project Hope Worked

Regular Program	Special Projects
Nablus City	Al-Faraa Refugee Camp
Nablus Old City	Beit Fourik
New Askar Refugee Camp	Beit Dajan
Old Askar Refugee Camp	Tel
Balata Refugee Camp	Assira Shamalieh
Al Ein Refugee Camp	Jericho
	Kufer Lakif
	Huwara
	Tulkarem
	Jenin
	Beit Eiba
	Beit Imreen
	Kufer Laqif
	Joreish
	Awerta
	Bourin
	Upper Yanoon
	Oureef
	Kufer Qalil
	Aseera Al-Qabliya
	Kufer Jamal
	Oudala

IX. COOPERATION

Cooperation between individuals in Project Hope is mirrored at the organizational level by our partnerships with local NGOs in Palestine. We also receive substantial support from international NGOs for specific projects.



A. PALESTINIAN ORGANIZATIONS

Project Hope provided services to or together with more than forty NGOs, eight UNRWA schools and one public school in the governate of Nablus. Collaboration with the schools could consist of either the use of their facilities or assistance in selecting students for activities.

Table 13: Project Hope’s Palestinian Partner Organizations

Location	Organization
Nablus	
	An Najah National University
	General Union for the Disabled
	Child Cultural Center
	Hamdy Manko

	Youth Union
	Multipurpose Community Resource Center (MCRC)
	Al-Watani Hospital
	Youth Union
	Rafidia Hospital
	Bazour Center
	Agriculture Union
	Palestinian Medical Relief Society 'PMRS'
	The Popular Corporation for Rural Development in Palestine
	Al-Mustaqbal Society for Development and Democracy
	Assirk Assaghir
	PYALARA
	SOS Children’s Villages
	Al-Quds Open University
	Tanweer Center
	Palestinian Forum
	British Council
	Progressive Youth Union
	Nablus-Dundee Twinning Association
	Palestinian Women’s Club
	Relief International
	Health, Development, Information and Policy Institute
	French Culture Center
	Union of Palestinian Women’s Committees
	The Union of Psychological Workers
	The Union of Electricians
	Community Service Center
	The Right to Education Center
	The Center for Continuing Education

Balata Refugee Camp	
	Mother's School
	Balata Youth Social Center
	Local Committee of the Disabled
	Yazoor Center
	Happy Childhood Center
	Naher Al-Aoja Center
	Bessan Center
Askar Refugee Camp (New* and Old)	
	Dar Al-Fonon (O)
	Women's Program Center (O)
	As-Safeer Center (N)
Al Ein Refugee Camp	
	Women's Program Center
	Local Committee of the Disabled
	DIS

* New Askar Refugee Camp is an official refugee camp and under the responsibility of UNRWA, but there is no UNRWA school.

We worked with the following UNRWA schools:

- ³⁵/₁₇ Askar refugee camp boys' and girls' schools
- ³⁵/₁₇ Balata refugee camp boys' and girls' schools
- ³⁵/₁₇ Al Ein refugee camp boys' and girls' schools
- ³⁵/₁₇ Nablus' boys' and girls' school

We worked with the following private school:

- Al-Islamiya

OFFICE

Project Hope has continued its work in its office at an advantageous location in central Nablus. As the costs for both the office and volunteer apartment in the same building come out of our available resources, we took the decision to move the international accommodation across the street to the former Medecins Sans Frontier office and accommodation. The office continues to double as a classroom for adult English classes and for the B2W blog classes, as well as overall coordination of our activities. The office is now made up of two rooms for staff, two classrooms (one equipped with 6 computers), a lounge with 2 computers for the volunteers' use, a kitchen and a bathroom. The addition of printers, a fax machine, a copier and a scanner has made the staff's work more organized and professional and has given the instructors a good resource for preparing for their classes.

The office is also able to house many books and materials for teaching French and English and for learning Arabic. The instructors and volunteers take advantage of these resources for their classes and their personal use.



Children explain the photos they took for an exhibition in Balata refugee camp.

B. INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Project Hope worked with or had the support of organizations for specific projects in 2008 from Canada, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, the United States, Iceland and Norway. This is not taking into account the various international organizations and individuals who funded Project Hope's programs in 2008.

The main cooperation that Project Hope has with International organizations is with volunteer sending organizations that sponsor prospective volunteers in their respective countries to come to Palestine to volunteer with Project Hope for a specific period of time. The following is a list of the volunteer-sending organizations Project Hope worked with in 2008.

1. *Nederlands Palestina Komitee*: Sent three volunteers who spent between 3 and 6 months with Project Hope teaching English and other activities. This was a project funded by Oxfam-Novib.

2. *Community Link - Firefly International*: Sent 2 Scottish volunteers who taught English, art and music. Also in this year two Palestinians, one Project Hope volunteer and one staff member, were hosted in Edinburgh, Scotland. They will stay for six months working at a local community center that provides creative arts activities for adults with learning disabilities and on a Palestinian Festival that will take place in March of 2009. This partnership is funded by the European Voluntary Service.

3. *Network Together France*: Sent one French volunteer for an 8-month stay who taught activities and French. This partnership was funded by the European Voluntary Service.

4. *Faculty For Israeli and Palestinian Peace*: Sent 10 volunteers in 2008 from the United States, the Netherlands and France who taught English and French and worked in a Summer Camp in Old Askar Refugee Camp.

5. *SCI Belgium*: Sent 3 volunteers from Belgium in 2008 that also worked on a Summer Camp for children.

6. *Norwegian Palestine Committee*: Sent 2 volunteers from Norway in 2008.

7. *Association Iceland Palestine*: Sent 3 volunteers in 2008 and will finance a book about the First Aid/Healthy Living Initiatives program to be published in 2009.

8. *Broederlijk Delen*: Sent 2 volunteers from Belgium in 2008.

Other International Organizations helped fund or support projects with resources.

9. *American Near East Refugee Aid (ANERA)*: Project Hope worked with ANERA in 2008 in a Scottish volunteer's art therapy program. They donated all art materials for 3 different art therapy courses in different locations in Tulkarem and Nablus districts. A psychologist from ANERA followed up on the results of the project.

10. *Friends of Nablus and Surrounding Area (FONSA)*: FONSA, based in Dundee, Scotland, helped finance the art therapy project with ANERA in the summer of 2008.

11. *Zatoun Canada/USA & Zaytoun UK*: Separate not-for-profit, fair trade initiatives, both support

Project Hope through a program called Soap for Hope, selling Palestinian olive oil soap with part of the profit forwarded to Project Hope. We began this arrangement in 2005 with Zaytoun and in 2006 with Zatoun. It has proved an excellent way to raise money for Project Hope while simultaneously supporting the Nablus economy. The funding provided from this project has had great benefits including funding for Project Hope's programs and administration and the benefits of cooperation with sellers in other countries. The consequences and effects of this project have gone well beyond its initial application and will continue to provide for future programs. Zatoun has also been donating a percentage of its olive oil sales to Project Hope since 2004.

12. *Music in ME*: Raised funds for a music project in Balata and Old Askar Refugee Camps that will start in January 2009 along with a fund provided by FONSA.

13. *French Consulate in Jerusalem*: Financed a French-teaching program in the Refugee Camps and the Old City for the summer of 2008. They have supported this program in the past as well.

14. *Wide Awake*: An American organization that supports Project Hope's newest program, Bridge to the World. It is a regular donor to Project Hope and can receive funds to work on other programs.

15. *Canadian AutoWorkers Union*: The single biggest donor to Project Hope for 2008 – 2011, it finances more than half of the Bridge to the World program.

16. *Near East Cultural and Education Foundation of Canada (NECEF)*: Works in partnership with Project Hope in Canada raised funds for various programs and projects. NECEF has worked with Canada since 2003 and was crucial to the foundation of Project Hope.

X. PERSONNEL

Project Hope is a highly trans-national organization that is not limited by cultural, geographic or physical barriers. It is unified by a vision to work together in support of those who are in need. It is coordinated globally and in its field mission by a small staff overseeing a large body of volunteers. Individuals apply and come from all over the world to join Project Hope as volunteers in the West Bank. The core of the organization consists of its registered Canadian NGO and the Palestine field mission, creating a complete fusion of foreigners and Palestinians working together in a Palestinian/Canadian NGO. Its work in Palestine is carried-out by local professionals as a locally led, community based initiative. This work is monitored by the Canadian office. Project Hope is not engaged just in capacity building; it backs already skilled local professionals who understand the problems their community faces.

A. STAFF

Project Hope's membership was even more diverse in 2008 than in the past. Besides our state-based associations in Canada, the United Kingdom and the Palestinian Territories, international volunteers came from many different countries to volunteer in our program in the West Bank. Our membership consisted of secular individuals working alongside people of Muslim, Christian, and, on occasion, other faiths such as Baha'i, Mormonism and Judaism. It is difficult to conceive of Project Hope in traditional categories, because it is a truly global people-driven organization that brings together all types of people to carry out humanitarian activities.

There are a large number of Palestinian and International volunteers involved with Project Hope. The success of the 2008 program was made possible

by this large pool of volunteer manpower that displayed admirable commitment and professional conduct working in the midst of the dispiriting Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Such voluntarism was evident in three forms: the numerous local Palestinian volunteers of Project Hope; the International volunteers that make the difficult decision to volunteer in the West Bank; and the core of long-term professional volunteers located around the world who support Project Hope in a professional capacity, in their spare-time, to administer the organization on a global level. This latter group includes the Canadian and British board members, advisors and specialized volunteers. It is this large pool of volunteer manpower that has driven Project Hope from its inception.

Project Hope began the year 2008 with a small but capable professional staff. This staff coordinates Project Hope's large body of Palestinian and International volunteers that enables its equally numerous programs and activities, which far exceed the expectations of organizations on a similar budget in the context of Palestine, where costs are high and movement difficult. The staff nearly doubled in size in the Nablus office in May 2008 with the addition of the Bridge to the World program, which will become easily Project Hope's largest program by 2009.

In the first half of 2008, the Project Hope staff in Nablus consisted of the Director, Treasurer, International Volunteer Coordinator, Administrative Assistant/Program Coordinator, French Program Coordinator and the SJHR Program Coordinator.

Internationally they were complemented by the Executive Director and Recruiter. In June, the International Volunteer Coordinator who is one of the founding members of Project Hope and a long-time volunteer/staff member, left Project Hope to focus on his work with the Palestinian NGO, Assirk Assaghir. The position was changed to full-time and filled in June. The Administrative Assistant/Program Coordinator, who is also a long-time staff member, was given responsibility over activity coordination in June, becoming the Activity Coordinator. The position of Programs Officer was created and filled in June by a qualified translator with a degree in Comparative Linguistics and Translation, who is responsible overall for the Bridge to the World program. The SJHR Coordinator continued the administration of the SJHR program while adding the responsibilities of logistics coordination and Arabic instruction.

Our French Program Coordinator left Project Hope when she married and moved outside of Palestine. She was replaced in June with a recent French graduate from An-Najah University in Nablus. We also created the position of Web Master to help run the B2W program and to be responsible for all website updates. An IT graduate from An-Najah filled this position in June, assisted by a volunteer University student. At the end of September, the Webmaster resigned for personal reasons and her assistant took over the position in October of 2008. An American Administrative Assistant was hired in the end of August 2008 to accommodate the large amount of local administrative work done in English. In addition, the Janitor of the office continued to work part time in 2008.

Due to the large amount of administrative work carried out in Canada and event management in Toronto, an Administrative Assistant was hired for

Canada to assist the Executive Director with some of the work there. Project Hope has a large number of international partnerships, a global volunteer network, promotions, international volunteer recruitment, fund raising, outreach and donor reporting which has been to date carried out by an even more limited staff consisting of the Executive Director and Recruiter, based in December 2008 out of Canada (Montreal) and Scotland (Edinburgh) respectively. An ongoing concern is that these staff, even with the Canada Administrative Assistant, have too much work to handle. The Recruiter should be working part time while working on her PhD full-time, yet is forced to work more than twice the hours she is hired to work. The Executive Director has typically been unfunded since the founding of Project Hope while working long hours without holidays, typically having frequently to work evenings and weekends because this is the time when most Project Hope volunteers are free.

Although we have been typically concerned with the Palestinian office in Nablus having too high a workload, we have been able to make strides in 2008 with the hiring of additional staff to more adequately spread out the work and better coordinate the international volunteers in Palestine, who then themselves are able to carry-out more work. We were also able to offer in 2008 for the first time health insurance to our Palestinian staff as well as improved office facilities. The addition of the Canada Administrative Assistant and the Administrative Assistant in Nablus have helped reduce the workload in administration and reporting, although it is still an overwhelming amount of work that the Executive Director and Recruiter face with no office facilities and an equally large number of tasks to carry-out for the continued functionality of Project Hope. In 2009 the goal will be to better improve the workload and a long-term goal is to make the Canada Administrative

Assistant position full-time.

Table 14: Project Hope Staff

Nablus Staff Positions - December 2008
1. Director
2. Treasurer
3. Programs Officer
4. International Volunteer Coordinator (Volunteers Officer)
5. French Program Coordinator
6. SJHR Program Coordinator (Workshops Officer)
7. Activities Coordinator
8. Webmaster
9. Administrative Assistant
10. Janitor
International Staff Positions - December 2008
1. Executive Director
2. Recruiter
3. Canada Administrative Assistant

The Nablus staff is made up of Palestinian, local professionals except for the Administrative Assistant, who is American. All full-time staff work from 9am until 5pm either in the office, visiting partner centers for meetings, or assisting International volunteers with logistics. Part-time staff members work in the afternoons from 1pm until 5pm. All staff members attend a weekly meeting run by the Director in which new initiatives are discussed, concerns are voiced and progression of projects is evaluated.

The International staff do not have an office space and very irregular hours.

B. PALESTINIAN VOLUNTEERS

Project Hope’s base lies in its large volunteer body,

which has an International and a Palestinian component. Project Hope’s many Palestinian volunteers not only help facilitate activities, but benefit themselves from an opportunity for work experience, skills development and cultural exchange all while having the opportunity to enjoy themselves doing something constructive for their community. These opportunities lie in stark contrast to the massive youth unemployment and underemployment that plagues the Palestinian Territories. As such, and considering the size of this volunteer body, it could be considered a program in itself.



As of the year’s end, four 4th year students and three graduates from the French Department as well as two 4th year students and one graduate from the English Department of An Najah University were volunteers with our program. Many volunteers are very committed and have volunteered for more than one year. We have three volunteers who have been working with Project Hope for more than three years. Three volunteers, one French and two English, have been given the responsibilities of assistants to the Project Hope staff because of their commitment and proficiency in their language.

OPPORTUNITIES

Many volunteers are drawn to Project Hope as a free

place where, as men and women, they can meet with their peers and new friends from abroad. All Palestinian volunteers benefited from their contact with our International volunteers in improving their English skills. This is most evident in long-term volunteers, some of whom speak fluent English with an excellent accent. Others can now speak after having initially joined Project Hope with absolutely no English fluency.



The Executive Director, Activities coordinator and a local volunteer give a talk about Project Hope at the Palestinian Festival in Edinburgh.

In 2008 Project Hope was able to provide 3 training or cultural trips to Europe for the Palestinian volunteers.

1. One of Project Hope’s committed volunteers traveled to Scotland in June to participate in a conference on Human Rights hosted by Civicus Youth Assembly. The week-long conference consisted of lectures and discussions on health, poverty, equality and climate change. People from around the world attended this conference in Glasgow.

2. Project Hope’s Activity Coordinator and a long-term volunteer were awarded an EVS scholarship to travel to Scotland for a six-month stay. They left Nablus in

November of 2008 and will return in April of 2009. During their time abroad they will organize a Palestinian Cultural Festival to be held in Edinburgh. They have also opened a Project Hope store in the University in which they sell Palestinian products such as soap, olive oil and scarves. They work hard to represent Project Hope and spread awareness about the situation in Palestine.

C. INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERS

PALESTINE

International volunteers were involved with Project Hope in two ways: as members of its support branches internationally in Canada and the United Kingdom and other countries, and as volunteers in the programs and activities in the West Bank. Eighty-two regular International volunteers joined us in the West Bank in 2008, staying on average nearly three months. The majority participated in the English and French programs, though many became involved in other activities such as art and drama. The average number of volunteers per month was more than 6, however the number of international volunteers reached as many as 26 in the summer and stayed above 15 per month for the rest of the year, excluding the month of Ramadan in which classes and volunteers were reduced.

Table 15: Countries of Origin of the International Volunteers

International Volunteers’ Countries of Origin			
Brazil	Canada	USA	UK
Iceland	Ireland	South Africa	Netherlands
Italy	Scotland	Finland	France
Australia	Belgium	Switzerland	Hungary

While few volunteers were specialized or had

experience in ESL teaching, the volunteer body was highly educated; the majority had at least a Bachelors degree and in some cases volunteers were still studying.

The International volunteers were highly integrated into Project Hope's programs, working alongside their Palestinian colleagues on a daily basis. The International volunteers infused Project Hope with skills that are often hard to find in the local community. The International volunteers gave our students the chance to interact with a fluent speaker of English or French from a foreign culture. International volunteers with a background in the creative arts were of particular value because of the general dearth in skilled arts personnel in Nablus.

International volunteers covered their own expenses, including a small fee to help cover the volunteer accommodation. This used to be much more manageable because the cost of living in Nablus was until recently very low, allowing volunteers to live off of two dollars per day. However, the cost of food, transportation and other goods such as clothing and toiletries has risen considerably in the course of the past year. Now it is possible to live off of around 6 dollars per day as a minimum. Still, the biggest expenses are transportation from a volunteer's home country, usually a flight, and travel inside Israel/Palestine. In January of 2008 the International volunteer housing was located in the first floor of the office building, however in February it was moved to the former *Medecin Sans Frontier* apartment/office, which is across the street from the current office. In



the summer months of 2008, the large number of International volunteers required that Project Hope rent a second flat on the north mountain from May until August.

International and local volunteers and staff take a trip to the Badan valley to escape the heat of the summer.

Most International volunteers traveled out of Nablus on the weekends. Many were drawn to the countless historical, religious and contemporary socio political sites of Israel and Palestine. It was also advisable for them to have a break from the general stress of living and working in Nablus, one of the more conservative cities in Palestine. There were difficulties with travel due to the heavy restrictions on movement imposed by the Israeli military checkpoints. There was always the possibility of their being denied entry into Nablus on the whim of an Israeli soldier. On a number of occasions foreign nationals were denied entry, though we coped with this with relatively little disruption to our programs.

During the school year most of Project Hope's activities took place in the afternoon and early evening. Evenings normally consisted of social gatherings between our Palestinian and International volunteers which included a weekly dinner of traditional Palestinian food. This left the mornings largely open for the Internationals to do as they pleased, with the exception of the summer when the day started earlier and the new volunteer work in the schools which started in November. On occasion volunteers opted to volunteer with other organizations in Nablus during their free time, such as a medical doctor who volunteered at a hospital during the day. All Project Hope volunteers have volunteered for the Ecumenical Accompaniers who are stationed in Al

Yanoon village in order to record Israeli settler violence against the Palestinian villagers. Many spent the night or whole days at the site when their volunteers need support. In addition, a volunteer from Scotland sponsored by EVS attended a conference on non-violent action in Bethlehem for 12 days in November 2008. Other volunteers and staff were willing to cover his classes for this period of time so that he could gain this important experience and share it with the community in Nablus.

INTERNATIONAL

An international body of volunteers is responsible for the international administration Project Hope. This consists of the Canadian Board of Directors, advisors and regular volunteers supporting Project Hope in event management, outreach, volunteer management, interviews and advice for incoming

volunteers to Palestine, meetings with partner NGOs, translation, website maintenance and fund raising. The London-based organization was wound-down in 2008 to be replaced by a Scottish charity, which has a nascent Board of Directors.

Some members had to commit larger amounts of time on a weekly basis. A Los Angeles-based volunteer Webmaster needed to regularly update and maintain the Website until the hiring of a Webmaster in Palestine through the Bridge to the World program. The Treasurer on the Canadian Board must annually review the Nablus financial statement and then use the financial records kept by the Executive Director in Canada to complete an Annual Financial Statement for Project Hope. Groups of volunteers also became involved in the planning of both small and large events for Project Hope, most of which are to be carried out in 2009.