



A Collective Song: A Music Center to Make Hearts Sing



Progress Report

Submitted to

Rebuilding Alliance

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Background

The ongoing crisis in Palestine has severely affected the cultural life, in terms of cultural participation and production, and has shifted the attention of most of local and international actors to humanitarian and emergency responses as well as to political and economic reconstruction processes. Both cultural rights and needs of the Palestinian society -although enshrined by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights- have been neglected for long amidst the ongoing crisis affecting all aspects of Palestinians' lives. Palestinian people are deprived of their basic rights; they are deprived of their rights to survive, be safe, belong and develop and hence to have opportunities to lead stable and rewarding lives. Palestinians in general are deprived from their basic rights enshrined by the UN human rights conventions and instruments including their cultural rights.

As stated by the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity "The flourishing of creative diversity requires the full implementation of cultural rights as defined in Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in Articles 13 and 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights." The ESNM, through its diverse programs, advocates cultural rights as an integral part of basic human rights and creates a conducive environment to the flourishing of creative capacities and diversity that can sustain public life in Palestine through: 1) enabling children and youth to learn music and thus enjoy their right to relax, play and participate in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities, and 2) empowering the society in general to practice their cultural right to participate in cultural life and artistic production.

The Edward Said National Conservatory of Music

<http://ncm.birzeit.edu/>

The Edward Said National Conservatory of Music (ESNM) is built around an ambitious vision of having a lively and creative musical culture in every Palestinian home. At the heart of the ESNM philosophy is the belief that musical education, underpinned by the permeation of quality music throughout Palestinian society, and supported by appropriate cultural infrastructure, bolsters and invigorates Palestinian identity and culture. The ESNM works in three broad areas.

First and foremost, ESNM works in **Education**. Over a thousand students currently study music on the Regular Program in the ESNM's five branches in Jerusalem, Nablus, Gaza, Ramallah and Bethlehem. Both Arabic and Western music are taught, and the students receive individual instrumental lessons, theoretical classes and ensemble tuition as well as choir, Arabic percussion and music history. The students follow a structured program, completing courses and examinations, in an eight level program. The ESNM aspires to open branches in all the Palestinian governorates.

The Outreach Program is another vital part of the ESNM's educational work. Here, the ESNM goes to the heart of communities that have no music provision, and teams up with a partner organization in those communities to provide instrumental music lessons and activities on site. Some of these outreach activities will grow and be transformed into formal branches of

the ESNM. Around 200 children currently benefit from the ESNM's outreach program in Hebron, al Aqaba village in Tubas, and in the refugee camps of Shufat and Dheisheh. In addition to instrumental activities, the program reaches another 300 children in Jerusalem, Nablus, Bethlehem and Ramallah through the ESNM choirs program.

Supplementary musical activities are an essential part of the educational mission of the ESNM. The Conservatory runs several internal ensembles, including Arabic Music "takht" groups, classical chamber groups, orchestras and jazz bands, as well as two flagship orchestras whose members come from the Palestinian community worldwide, the Palestine Youth Orchestra and the Palestine National Orchestra. Music camps are held several times a year at the ESNM's Activity Center in the town of Birzeit, and revolve around intensive ensemble training in a fun environment. ESNM is also responsible for running the biennial Palestine National Music Competition, which aims to motivate and reward young Palestinian talent. Finally, part of the Conservatory's educational assignment is to publish educational material for music students. Theory textbooks, song collections, and collections of Arabic instrumental pieces are examples of its publications to date.

The second essential element in realizing the ESNM's vision is **building audiences**. The Conservatory runs five major music festivals: Layali al-Tarab fi Quds al-Arab, which is a festival of Arabic and Oriental Music; Layali al-Oud in Nablus, which celebrates oud as one of the most important oriental instruments; al-Bahar Festival in Gaza, which focuses on Arabic music and freedom songs; the Jasmine Festival in Ramallah, which focuses on classical and world music; and Layali al-Milad in Bethlehem, the Christmas Festival. The other component of audience building is through the ESNM's CD productions. So far the Conservatory has produced eight albums, which include children's songs sung by its young students, classical Arabic music performed by its teachers, and a CD and DVD of the celebrated al-Fawanees musical.

Thirdly, the ESNM is proud to be part of investing in **cultural infrastructure** in Palestine. From its beginnings in modest rented accommodation, the Conservatory now boasts two purpose-built branches in Bethlehem and Ramallah, and two finely renovated historic buildings which house the Nablus and Jerusalem branches. These buildings are wonderful resources, not only for the ESNM students but also for the wider community, with their well-equipped concert halls and rehearsal spaces for community choirs or ensembles. The new Ramallah branch includes a state-of-the-art recording studio, and the Bethlehem branch contains a string instrument repair workshop and factory, run by its professional Luthier.

Cooperation between Rebuilding Alliance (RA) and ESNM

Building on their shared mission, RA and ESNM joined efforts to work in a socially, culturally and economically marginalized community of Al Aqaba village in Tubas to rebuild their social and cultural lives by providing them with opportunities to express themselves, learn music, participate in cultural life, entertain and explore new experiences.

The Outreach Program aims at promoting the educational values that music offers, teaching music for children in addition to promoting resistance and stability of Palestinians living in their homes and neighborhoods that are threatened constantly by the security and political situation; while improving their psychosocial wellbeing in a creative and encouraging manner.

The project: A Collective Song: A Music Center to Make Hearts Sing is targets the Al Aqaba village to establish a music outreach program to introduce Al Aqaba children to music and music educations.

The project: A Collective Song: A Music Center to Make Hearts Sing

The outreach program in Al Aqaba, Tubas, was established in September 2015 and hosted by Al Aqaba Rural Women's Society. RA provided the financial support and ESNCM provided the necessary human resources, technical expertise, equipment, logistics and facilitation. Currently there are 39 children aged 5 to 10 years old out of which are 15 girls enrolled in the music program playing violin (27 students) and cello (12 students). The education program implemented by an academic supervisor and two teachers one for violin and one for cello. The students were introduced to music history and theory and then started to take music lessons on the instruments.

Considering the novelty of the music education in this community, the academic supervisor in consultation with ESNCM academic department based on previous experience, decided to concentrate on violin and cello for the first year, therefore, compared to the approved budget, four additional violins and one additional cello were purchased without exceeding the approved budget. The second year should introduce additional instruments expanding the scope of the education program.

As part of the project, the following instruments and equipment were provided to Al Aqaba village outreach program:

| Instrument | # |
|-------------------|----|
| 2.1 Violins | 22 |
| 2.2 Cellos | 9 |
| 2.3 Digital piano | 1 |
| 2.6 Music stands | 30 |

Al Aqaba outreach students were included in the ESNCM Outreach Strings who perform usually in the different events organized by the Conservatory. The first performance of Al Aqaba students within this framework was conducted in Naseeb Shaheen Theater in Birzeit University as part of the ESNCM's Orchestras' showcase on 23 April 2016. The Outreach Strings, which included around 200 students from the different outreach programs, performed three musical pieces: Hoe-Down, Tic Tic Yamesliman (Rahbani brothers) and Square Dance.



Results Achieved

- Music outreach program established at Al Aqaba, Tubas.
- 39 children introduced to music education enhancing their music skills.
- Al Aqaba children participating in ESNMCM music performances.
- Al Aqaba community more open to cultural life.

Through the outreach programs, there was a noticeable improvement in the psychosocial wellbeing of students their personality, attitude and behavior. They are happy to learn music. Moreover, students show a higher commitment towards music education and have developed the ability to perform to a diverse audience including their families and friends. Parents and families of students have more commitment towards music education of their children which is evident in their commitment to bring the children to music classes during the academic year as well as the summer program which often requires commuting from surrounding villages.

Pictures

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/qs451cvna5vzac/AADy8oSeqYIY2oYMqJ5N6QYXa?dl=0>

Summer Activities

An intensive summer program will be held starting the last week of July. Three sessions per week for three weeks to be followed by one concert to be held in Al Aqaba. Teachers and volunteers will organize substantial sessions for around four hours a day starting with developing the students' basic understanding of music theory to be followed by workshops and then training on instruments.

The way forward

Relying on the cooperation with RA, ESNM considers the outreach program at Al Aqaba, Tubas, very important in terms of targeting marginalized communities and expanding music education in Palestine facilitating access to music education and appreciation and positively impacting the subject community. The second year should focus on enhancing the music education of the enrolled students by expanding the scope and diversifying the program.

Financial Report 1 September 2015 – 30 June 2016

| | Description | Approved budget USD | | | Expenditure | | Balance |
|---|--|---------------------|-----------|--------|-------------|--------------|----------------------------|
| | | Unit | Unit rate | Amount | 29 Feb 2016 | 30 June 2016 | To be spent by 30 Aug 2016 |
| 1 | Human Resources | | | | | | |
| | Violin Teacher | 38 | 112 | 4,256 | 2,688 | 783 | 785 |
| | Cello Teacher | 38 | 94 | 3,572 | 2,256 | 657 | 659 |
| | Academic Supervisor | 8 | 166 | 1,328 | 830 | 249 | 249 |
| | Subtotal | | | 9,156 | 5,774 | 1,689 | 1,693 |
| 2 | Instruments | | | | | | |
| | Violins | 18 | 105 | 1,890 | 1,883.08 | | 7 |
| | Cellos | 8 | 530 | 4,240 | 4,323.08 | | -83 |
| | Digital Piano | 1 | 2,500 | 2,500 | 2,409.61 | | 90 |
| | Hi Fi audio system | 1 | 500 | 500 | 0 | | 500 |
| | Percussion set | 1 | 300 | 300 | 0 | | 300 |
| | Music stands | 30 | 25 | 750 | 1,000 | | -250 |
| | Subtotal | | | 10,180 | 9,615.77 | | 564 |
| 3 | Others | | | | | | |
| | Transportation | 38 | 50 | 1,900 | 483.29 | 857 | 560 |
| | Music books | 30 | 25 | 750 | | 750 | 0 |
| | Digital recordings | 40 | 10 | 400 | | | 400 |
| | Headphones, speakers and play system for library | 2 | 200 | 400 | | | 400 |
| | Subtotal | | | 3,450 | 483.29 | 1,625 | 1,360 |
| 4 | Admin costs | 7% | | 1,595 | 1,111 | 484 | 0 |
| | Total | | | 24,381 | 16,984 | 3,798 | 3,617 |

Budget Status USD

| Description | | Amount USD |
|---|-----------------|------------|
| Approved Budget | | 24,381 |
| Amount Received in two installments | | 19,553 |
| No | Date Received | |
| 1 | 6 December 2015 | 13,976.52 |
| 2 | 29 March 2016 | 5,576.52 |
| Total Expenditure as of 30 June 2016 | | 20,782 |
| Amount to be transferred by RA to ESNCM | | 4,827 |