

Tomorrow's Youth Organization

Innovative Approaches to Child and Community Development

Tomorrow's Youth Organization (TYO) is a non-profit, non-governmental organization that works in disadvantaged areas of the Middle East, enabling children, youth and parents to realize their potential as healthy, active and responsible family and community members.

The first TYO Center is located in Nablus, a large city in the northern West Bank, and is maintained by [An Najah University](#). TYO, one of the few international organizations with a significant presence in Nablus, is committed to providing world-class programs and services for the city's most underserved residents.

The work of Tomorrow's Youth Organization is governed by three main principles:

- respect for the value of childhood, based on the UN's Convention on the Rights of the Child
- a holistic view of the individual, family and community
- belief in the power of cooperation to unite people across divides within and between communities

Our vision: TYO Nablus is a flagship center to be replicated in other communities throughout the Middle East. We aim to establish at least six TYO Centers by 2013, directly reaching no fewer than 10,000 children and families each year, and multiplying our impact community-wide through strategic program design and public events. These six Centers would employ about 100 community leaders, and engage dozens of international staff and volunteers annually. They would allow us to train upwards of 500 student leaders annually, making a significant contribution to human capital among the infamous youth bulge in the region. We are also developing a satellite model that will enable us to reach smaller, remote communities by dispatching staff headquartered at local TYO Centers.

TYO pursues its mission through four areas of activity:

Learning through Holistic Play: Through our **Core Child Program**, TYO offers an innovative non-formal education program for at-risk children aged 4-8, including child-centered activities in art, health, IT and sports. Our goal is to promote healthy emotional and cognitive development within a safe space, in pursuit of the significant health, academic and economic benefits that early childhood programming has been proven to have. We are working to add full meal provision and formal educational support through one-on-one tutoring.

Learning and Leading through Service: TYO trains local university students to support TYO teachers and provide positive role models for children as part of the **Youth Service Learning** initiative. Volunteers earn academic credit and a university tuition grant, as well as invaluable practical experience.

Strengthening Individuals, Strengthening Families: We invite **Family Involvement** in order to promote strong family units that are capable of supporting healthy children. Mothers, in particular, are an essential target of TYO's work. Building capacity and health among mothers – children's first and most enduring teachers – has a major and sustained impact on children's well-being, and reaches large numbers of children, given family sizes in Nablus. We are currently piloting courses for moms in Nablus in English, fitness, nutrition, computer skills and effective parenting. We also offer summer programs for children older than 8, with special attention to girls, and are designing activities to engage more fathers.

Building Community Capacity for Change: People drive change as a **Community**. Institutions close to the people play an important role in such change. TYO offers educational, cultural and recreational activities like festivals, health awareness activities and sporting events open to all community members that are designed to facilitate positive change. The mere existence of an open and safe space like TYO generates valuable social capital that makes Nablus a safer, healthier and more productive place to live. Direct contact with community members and cooperation with local organizations ensures that TYO's work always reflects the capacities, needs and interests of our constituents.

We also consider the international community to be essential to our work. By recruiting international staff and interns to work at the center, and pursuing strategic collaboration with other international organizations, we offer Nablus's most marginalized residents innovative and high-quality resources.

Why TYO?

Education: Education and human capital development is a widely acclaimed priority for marginalized groups in the Middle East. TYO is making a strategic investment in this region's next generation by providing a modern, holistic and forward-looking approach to cognitive and emotional development. Our activities foster the skills and outlook necessary for the region's underclass to take on the challenges facing them. With these resources, otherwise marginalized individuals are able to take on leading roles as agents of positive change.

Target population: TYO's programs are designed to target strategic groups within the communities where we work: young children, university-age youth, and women. By working with four to eight year olds, we are one of the first institutional influences on the children we target. The lasting impact of quality intervention at this age is well-documented, particularly as an antidote to challenging circumstances such as violence or poverty. Our university-age volunteers work with are on the verge of entering the work force, and perhaps even more importantly, they are about to become parents. By sensitizing them to childhood as a unique phase of life, and to the importance of play for cognitive development, TYO's programs have a built-in ripple-out effect. Finally, women are an important target because of their integral role in the family. The majority of women in our target communities are under-educated and under-employed. Basic knowledge about health and child development, combined with self-confidence and other life skills, represents huge value added for these women, and in turn their families (women have been shown to re-invest 90% of any income in their family, versus 30% among men).

Community-based: By establishing community-based, grassroots institutions, all under the supervision and control of TYO's Board in the US, we are able to promote community-driven change. We do not shy away from deep divides within and between communities, but rather work to mitigate these rifts by bringing people together for the common good of children.