

Dreams on the verge of collapse

Islamic Relief gives a hand

Introduction

Most of Gaza's young men and women face the threat of unemployment once they graduate, as there are not many job opportunities! The rate of unemployment in the Gaza strip has reached 63 per cent among youth, (15-29, according to Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics), which constitutes the highest rate in the world, according to the World Bank.

Siege, blockades and three wars on the Gaza strip have ruined the Palestinian economy. Accordingly, youth in Gaza have lost potential job opportunities and some have consequently lost hope of ever finding work, ever having small businesses, ever travelling, ever getting married.



In addition to youth-focused projects, we at Islamic Relief Palestine (IRPAL) also believe that we can help youngsters by engaging them in a short-term hands-on experience within our operation.

This report sheds light on a group of young men and women who benefited from one of our youth-oriented empowerment initiatives. Benefiting youth were either previously-sponsored through our One-to-One Orphan Sponsorship Programme, distinguished university graduates or people with disabilities.



Holding responsibility

Zakaria Mushtaha very happily comes to work at IRPAL every morning.

"I have become able to do different administrative works, I have never worked on data entry or archiving; working in Islamic Relief has given me lots of practical skills", he said. "I feel happy and proud because I have learnt how to be a responsible person. As soon as I got paid my first month's salary from Islamic Relief, I rushed to buy things to meet the need of my family and buy medicine for my mother, who is unwell. There was no other source of income for my family."

Zakaria started work at Islamic Relief as a volunteer in Child Welfare Programme before getting a temporary job opportunity for three months in a Cash for Work project. He was previously an IRPAL sponsored orphan. "Islamic Relief has been always beside me and supported me from a young age up to my graduation from university.



Zakaria Mushtaha

I hope other young men especially those who are jobless can have the same support that I have received," he said. "None of my friends who graduated from university with me or a year before me have got a chance to work. They are desperate and disappointed. I feel lucky despite having only temporary work. I hope Islamic Relief helps me continue to work."

Hope after despair

Ruba Adaour was shocked by the lack of employment opportunities soon after she graduated from university. She said: "I graduated from the Department of Environmental Engineering and had hoped to obtain a decent job immediately after graduation due to my high grades and chosen major.

After graduation, however, I stayed for more than a year looking for work. I couldn't find any organization willing to give me an opportunity even to volunteer or get training." Ruba stressed that the biggest anxiety to any graduate was to find a place to sponsor and support them and so enhance their skills. "A year after graduation I found a job opportunity that matched my major, but it required several years of experience, so I was afraid to apply."



Ruba Adaour

"Hope has come back to me since I rushed to apply for IRPAL's training programme in the field of health awareness, and then worked in health awareness education. I'm currently working as a field monitor. I have become so confident after working for Islamic Relief," she said.

"Work has given my life back to me; Islamic Relief has brought me and my family hope again. I wish I could get a good job opportunity after my work with Islamic Relief ends."

Work brings my dreams true

Haya Abu Raya got a paid job with Islamic Relief straight after graduation, and through it has been able to get plenty of work experience. "Work has helped me keep in touch with my community," she said.

"I had no experience before in dealing with others but through my work with Islamic Relief, I dealt with all groups such as graduates, farmers, and others. My communication skills have improved." She added that the income helped with her family as well. My work salary helps meet all my needs such as clothes and toys for my youngest sister." Work has given Haya the opportunity to achieve her dreams.

"I have wanted to get a driving license since 2009, and since I started work with Islamic Relief I have been able to afford all the expenses and I will soon start learning to drive."



Haya Abu Raya

Work has changed my life

"I am strong enough and I can work and achieve all tasks if given the chance."

Hani Ereif started with these words. He had previously been involved in a traffic accident which left him unable to move or talk properly. After gradually improving, he found a six-month opportunity with Islamic Relief.

"After I finished the temporary work opportunity; I was jobless for four years. I was very disappointed and despaired so I was over the moon when Islamic Relief informed me of the temporary work again." He has been able to meet his family's expenses again through work. It has given Hani the chance to enjoy a normal life again. Hani said: "Thanks to Allah, I could overcome my fear; I became able to use public transportation to go to and from work."



Hani Ereif

Despite his speech difficulty; he can achieve all his tasks. "I was afraid that people wouldn't understand my way of speaking but all people with special needs are capable of work, but they don't get the opportunity. I wish to have the same employment options as other people."

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Study Dream!

Waseem Al Ghouli worked for one month for the Child Welfare Program, a department he had wanted to work in since he was very young. He said: "Islamic Relief provided me with welfare and sponsorship services. I used to like social workers' visits and my hope was to work with them.

" Waseem wishes to resume his university education but he still looks for a permanent work opportunity to pay for his tuition fees. "We can find hardly any work opportunities; my friends who haven't got work so far feel bored and have so much spare time they just feel frustrated. I do wish not to become like them," he added.

"Through my work, I have obtained a variety of experiences from Islamic Relief employees. I hope Islamic Relief gets us permanent work opportunities and supports us to have small businesses so we can sustain our families and achieve our dreams."



Waseem Al Ghouli

Waseem has two brothers; neither of whom have had any opportunity to work for years.

Gaza's graduates need jobs, not support, and help

Ameera Hassouna said: "Islamic Relief has supported me since 1999 when I was a kid, and they have continued their support by offering me an internship for a month and then a work contract for three months.

It is a great opportunity because other graduates like me do not even have the chance of an internship to gain experience in the labour market.

Despite this wonderful opportunity, it is not a permanent job so I might face unemployment after the three months and then will be sat there beside other graduates."



Ameera Hassouna

A chance to success

My internship at IRPAL was a rewarding experience and provided me with some new perspectives that I did not have during my studies.

The internship programme gave me a chance not only to work with IRPAL but also to learn from professional staff.

The experience I obtained during my internship with IR enhanced my abilities to compete in the job market as I am officially working in one of most important organisations specialising in microfinance.

I am proud of my experience at IRPAL, it has helped me to achieve my dreams and obtain a chance for a permanent job.



Wael Al Faqawi

Work gave me confidence.

Hiba Al Attar, who has Down's Syndrome, was delighted to receive a temporary job offer with IRPAL.

She said: "I am happy because I deal with people normally with no difficulties. I can work, and achieve my tasks on time, and everyone encourages me.

The work environment in IR is very supportive and my co-workers have helped me to develop my skills and abilities.

This is the first salaried job I have had. I didn't imagine I could find a job, so when I started working my family was so happy for me."



Hiba Al Attar

Zakaria, Ruba, Hani, Haya, Hiba, Ameera, Wael and Waseem are among others whom Islamic Relief has helped to get temporary work.

There are still hundreds of other youth waiting for an opportunity to get experience to help them get a permanent job.

Your support to Islamic Relief will contribute to giving youth hope for a better future.

Islamic Relief urges all international and large societal institutions working in the Gaza strip to employ youth to help them build a better future.