



# Newsletter May-August 2023



## Message of the Community Leader

During the past 14 years and since we started our L'Arche Community in Bethlehem "Ma'an Lil-Hayat", we have lived very beautiful moments together, and we cannot deny that we went through many challenges. However, being together as a whole community and as a family gives us hope that we are able to pull through and that in every challenge there is a lesson that we should learn and become stronger.



This year we were really saddened to say goodbye to one of our founding members "Kholoud" whom we lived with all our beautiful days and had a lot of challenges together. We all would love to wish Kholoud a peaceful, beautiful and joyful future in her next steps and we will never forget our moments together.

These days, like every year during this time, we start to prepare ourselves for the coming Christmas season in order to be able to sell our felt items to our faithful friends all around the world. This year is a bit different as we are facing a very critical and difficult financial situation. However, we are hopeful that things will get better and we are sure that with your support we will be able to get through this very difficult time.

Mahera Nassar Gharib



## Activities

From June 20-24, the International Federation Assembly of L'Arche took place entirely online on Zoom platform. Our delegate pair Yousef Al-Qass and core member Shukri Murra represented Ma'an in the meetings that ran from March 9. During the first four days of the assembly, a different theme and symbol was presented and acted by the Ma'an members. The themes were: Earth, Water, Air, and Fire.



For three days, Ma'an Lil-Hayat members participated in a summer camp in Murad Resort at the invitation of "Young Life". The time spent there was divided between swimming, singing and enjoying the many games and activities organized by the staff and volunteers of Murad and Young Life.



From July 28-29, Ma'an Lil-Hayat hosted two shows organized by Al-Harah Theater. The shows focused on the style of Makan theater, which appeared in the late 60s, and shed light on the importance of the historical and archaeological buildings in Bethlehem.



# Visitors

## Visit of Minister of Social Development

On May 24 Ma'an Lil-Hayat received at its center and Boutique Hotel Dr. Ahmad Majdalani, Social Development Minister of the Palestinian Authority, alongside his delegation and a number of charitable organizations.



## Visit of L'Arche International Middle East envoy

Ma'an Lil-Hayat welcomed L'Arche International envoy Mrs. Souzy Shenouda, who renewed the mandate of our community leader Mahera for another two years.



## Visit of Mrs. Saeda Al-Atrash

In June, Ma'an Lil-Hayat welcomed Mrs. Saeda Al-Atrash from the Ministry of Social Development to talk about collaboration opportunities to enhance the mission of L'Arche Bethlehem.



SUCCESS STORY



Meet Bilal! He has been with Ma'an for 2 years. When Bilal came to our community, he had some problems as a result of not being able to live normally with both of his parents. With the help of the assistants at Ma'an, Bilal is being accompanied to deal with and treat his problems. Now he does sports, participates in trips and his schedule is filled with activities well beyond his time at Ma'an Lil-Hayat.

## Tabgha Summer Camp

From July 24-29, Ma'an Lil-Hayat participated in a summer camp in Tabgha in Galilee. Twenty-six core members and seven assistants were hosted at Beit Noah for a week full of fun and exciting games and activities. Mr. Johannes Roelofsen, a Professor in special education from Germany, with three German volunteers as well as two American volunteers participated in the summer camp and helped the assistants of Ma'an.

As tradition goes every year, the core members were excited to go on a boat ride in the Sea of Galilee. Despite the hot weather that Tiberias is known for, everyone danced joyfully together to Arabic music and took selfies with the sea behind them. The day trip also included eating fish at a restaurant just in front of the harbor.

The summer camp was also an occasion for some of the new community members to experience working with the core members. It was challenging for them but constituted a great learning-by-observation opportunity. Partaking in the trip was a great way to know themselves and to realize how resourceful they are when faced with a problem.

*Thanks to our faithful friends from Scotland and Germany who helped us cover the expenses of the camp this year, with them our dream came true.*



## World Youth Day in Lisbon, Portugal

On July 30, our assistant Elen and core member Reem alongside board member Nadin traveled to France and then to Portugal to participate in the World Youth Day.

The program of their trip included various workshops as well as Holy Masses that they attended with the different L'Arche communities from France, India and Mexico. In Portugal, our Ma'an Lil-Hayat community took part in art and musical workshops, sports, dancing and mediation. At a certain moment during the workshops, the three participants from Bethlehem were able to perform a sketch show about the difficult and long journey that took them to get from Palestine to Portugal.

Elen, Reem and Nadin also visited the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima in Lisbon. Then they attended the welcoming ceremony and final Holy Mass presided by Pope Francis with the participation of one million young people who came from all over the world.



*World Youth Day in Portugal*

# Assistant Spotlight

*Last June we said goodbye to our dear Kholoud, one of the founding team members of Ma'an Lil-Hayat, who was part of L'Arche Bethlehem for 14 years. Here is some of what she said about her time with Ma'an.*

*Tell us about your start at Ma'an Lil-Hayat...*

My start at Ma'an Lil-Hayat was one of the most beautiful moments I experienced in my life. When we opened the center, it was a very strange feeling to learn how to work with the wool. We didn't know where we were going but we did the impossible to do our best. We didn't feel like we were at work. We felt like we were living as a family and we loved each other. Working together gave us energy, life and hope and this made us feel love.

I also remember the first core member that we welcomed. His name was Hilmi and it was a precious time when he arrived. He was not just a guy that we welcomed, he was a part of our family.

*What is one of your most beautiful memories at Ma'an?*

I have so many beautiful memories during my time at Ma'an Lil-Hayat. I experienced humanity, love, friendship and family. I wasn't only here to help and be an assistant but I was part of a family.

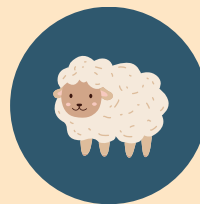
One of the most beautiful memories I had was a bit painful. It was my friendship with Sana'. I considered her like my daughter and I used to invite her to my house all the time. Her presence in life was important and when she passed away, I felt like a piece of me died with her. However, I'm happy that I got to experience life with her with happiness, joy and love. She left a mark on me and my perspective on life and how I see disability.



## Facts about Ma'an



325  
visitors



3998  
wool items  
produced



461  
hotel guests