



معاً للحياة



L'ARCHE®

Ma'an lil-Hayat

Newsletter Jan - Apr 2023

Message of the Community Leader

Since opening our doors in 2009, we have learned that **respecting** each other with all our differences is one of the most important values. **Mutual relationships** between people with and without disabilities are at the center of our identity and mission as a L'Arche community.



Since we opened, we have been overwhelmed by all our blessings – our core members, the team, our faithful volunteers from near and far, and numerous local and international visitors. We continued to be the first and **only wool-felting project** in Palestine through which we provide a creative means for the healthy integration of adults with intellectual disabilities into the local community, as well as an aid to **changing the vision** of our society toward people with disabilities.

After opening our Ma'an Lil-Hayat Boutique Hotel in June 2022, we started to feel the real success of this new step by **spreading our mission** worldwide. It was not just through the hotel guests, but also through so many **media, TVs, and radio stations** from all over the world. When they heard about our Hotel and the **inclusion** of people with disabilities in the working team there, many came to see and talk about this unique initiative. Many thanks to those who helped us **raise awareness** about the mission of the community, including Agence France Presse, [America Magazine](#), [Skynewsarabia](#), and many more.

We are truly grateful for all our blessings, including all of you, our friends, whose generous support and encouragement keep us going.

Mahera Nassar Gharib

Upcoming events and activities

Tabgha Trip

Our annual holiday trip to Tabgha on the Sea of Galilee will take place from 24- 28 July. We are currently applying for permits from the Israeli military and we are hoping that all our core members get the chance to participate in this trip.

WDY in Portugal

Core member Reem will be traveling with our assistant Elen and board member Nadine to Lisbon, Portugal to participate in the World Day of the Youth. The group will have a week to prepare for the WDY at the L'Arche community in France.

Activities



L'ARCHE COMMUNITY GATHERING

For two days, the board of directors and the assistants of Ma'an Lil-Hayat spent valuable time together joining in games and activities in a friendly and fraternal atmosphere. Some of the community members even prepared some lectures about important topics like "Relationships", "Companionship" and "Gratitude".

PALESTINE MARATHON 2023

The core members and the assistants of Ma'an participated in the Palestine Marathon in Bethlehem, this year in its 9th edition. Excitement was in the air even before the day of the Marathon as some of our core members went and received their running gear from the organizers. On the day of the event, everyone gathered in Manger Square and the marathon then started in the streets of Bethlehem.



MOTHERS' DAY

For Mothers' Day, which falls on March 21 in Palestine, Ma'an invited the mothers of our core members to celebrate this day with us. The day was a valuable opportunity for both the core members and their mothers to talk about their feelings and work together to make some gifts.

IFTARS

During Ramadan, Ma'an Lil-Hayat community participated in two Iftars (fast-breaking evening meal) in Dar Salah village. The first took place in the community and the other was in a restaurant at the invitation of the owner of the Dar Salah building.



Assistant Spotlight



Elen, how did you hear about Ma'an Lil-Hayat? Tell us the story...

I was introduced to Ma'an Lil-Hayat in 2010 thanks to my brother Shukri who was one of the core members. I was 15 years old when I attended one of

the parents' meetings. As the meeting concluded, Kathy Baroody, the former representative of L'Arche in Palestine, approached me and encouraged me to volunteer at Ma'an. I decided after that to come on my day off and since then I haven't left Ma'an one second.

Why did you decide to join Ma'an?

I felt that it was a calling from God and that it was my way in life. At 15 years old I did not have many ambitions, but my start in Ma'an was the beginning of this calling. I continued coming to Ma'an after

graduating from school. A year later I decided to continue my studies in community rehabilitation, after which I joined the staff of Ma'an Lil-Hayat.

What does Ma'an Lil-Hayat mean to you today?

It really means "together for life" for me. At Ma'an, we feel accepted without any constraints. Here I live my life authentically.

Success Story

Meet Mohammad! When he came to Ma'an Lil-Hayat's branch in Dar Salah in May 2018, he was shy and a little stubborn. He was also violent as a result of the environment he lived in and the people that surrounded him. He was received in our community with open arms and a plan was put to help him correct his behavior. With time, he became self-confident, he started making friends, and was loved by everyone.

We also saw that Mohammad has great potential and talent for two things: **cooking** and **dance**, especially **Palestinian "Dabkeh"**.



| Our Visitors

Dr. Sihem Badi, Tunisia's former Minister of Women's Affairs, and her family visited our community and stayed at our boutique hotel.



Eight trainers from the "Community Knowledge and Research Library" from Bethlehem visited our community and were introduced to our mission. They visited the workshops and animated some activities with the core members.

We welcomed **30 assistants** and core members from **L'Arche Le Sénévé** in France, who spent the time with our own staff, assistants, and core members.



New products



All Ma'an Lil-Hayat products can be bought by sending an email to arche.bethlehem@gmail.com




All products Catalog

Volunteer with us!



Do you have some spare time and you don't know how to use it? Become a volunteer at Ma'an Lil-Hayat and help make a difference in the lives of our community.





In June of 2022, we opened **Ma'an Lil-Hayat Boutique Hotel** in the presence of several representatives of the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and Bethlehem Municipality. With the hotel, we aimed to have **another income-generating project** that would help us sustain the work of our community.

The building of the hotel is located in the Old City of Bethlehem and is considered **one of the most important heritage sites** in the city. The 3-story property was designed and built between 1899 and 1910 by the **Palestinian Morcos Nassar** who studied architecture at the Sorbonne University in Paris.

In 2013, the building was bought by Ma'an Lil-Hayat and became the premises of the community's project for **people with intellectual disabilities**. In 2021, the Center for Culture Heritage Preservation (**CCHP**) supervised the renovation of the building, which was financed by the **Diocese of Cologne** and **Fondation Assistance Internationale**.

In March of 2023, the hotel was voted among the **best entrepreneurial projects** in Bethlehem and won a 750€ prize award for "its distinction in the 'Start your Business Competition' as one of the social businesses most voted by the project's stakeholders."

Since its opening in June of last year, the boutique hotel has received **1258 guests** who commended the hotel's architecture, amazing service and noble mission in hiring people with disabilities to work in the hotel.



Sponsor a core member



Meet Maram! She has been with our community for 13 years and ever since the opening of Boutique Hotel last year, she has been helping with housekeeping. Maram loves working at the hotel and would like to continue doing her job. Become a sponsor to help her continue to belong in the workplace so that her uniqueness is appreciated and seen.

Facts about Ma'an



584
visitors



14459
wool items
produced



552
hotel guests



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