

# Newsletter Edition 55 November/December 2025



## Project region Israel/Palestine



It's hard to believe but the hopeful reports of peaceful coexistence between Palestinians and Israelis that we receive from our friends and partners in Jerusalem are repeatedly at stark odds with the headlines in our media.

The photo at right shows this year's graduation ceremony for the Hebrew University of Jerusalem's "Good Neighborhood Program." The number of students from the university's neighboring town of Issawiya - which can be seen through the window of the university building - as well as from other East Jerusalem neighborhoods participating in the university's Sadara preparatory program continues to grow steadily. Since these programs began, the number of Palestinian students at the Hebrew University has increased from 80 to more than 500.



Palestinian students who are able to study at the Hebrew University face the challenge of mastering Hebrew before beginning their studies there. However, unlike at



Palestinian universities in the West Bank, a degree from the Hebrew University opens career opportunities in Israel without additional qualification hurdles.

Progress like this is made possible by the courage, energy, and commitment of individual leaders. In this project, two such leaders are Malaka Arafat, principal of a high school in Issawiya, and Prof. Elisheva Baumgarten, former head of the Mandel Institute at the Hebrew University and now Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, both pictured at left. Without their tireless efforts, the recent advances in these important integration initiatives would not have been achieved. Thank you.

Our financial support for these projects over the past five years is just one building block in the broader work of promoting education and mutual understanding.

## **Help for young people in and from the Gaza Strip – we are also needed!**

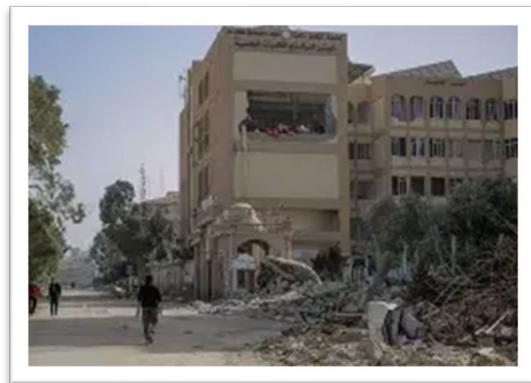
The large-scale bombing of the Gaza Strip by the Israeli army has now ended and a new phase of cleanup and revitalization is beginning, even though much remains uncertain and insecure.

We have decided to offer our help to young people in and from the Gaza Strip. We have made initial contacts, and through a contact at the German association, Friends of Al-Quds University - who in turn is connected with students from Gaza who have fled to Cairo - we have also been able to reach several students there.

One of them is Sara, a 26-year-old refugee who wants to complete the bachelor's degree she began at Al-Azhar University



*Al Azhar University Gaza before the war*



*Al Azhar University Gaza since the war*



in Gaza by pursuing a master's degree abroad, with the aim of building a career as a laboratory physician. The immediate task is to find a suitable university in Germany or elsewhere in Europe. If she is able to navigate the complex process and overcome the bureaucratic hurdles, we will support her with a scholarship. A few days ago, we received the following email from the Gaza Strip itself:

*"Peace be with you. From the heart of Gaza, from the heart of suffering, we, the students Hayat (...), who achieved a grade point average of 91.6 in the 2007 high school graduation exams (science branch), and Sama (...), who achieved a grade point average of 80.9 in the 2006 high school graduation exams, managed to realize some of our dreams amid the rubble and bombs. However, the rest of our dreams remain lost in our city. We emerged from the rubble of our destroyed homes. We were driven out of our houses and apartments almost ten times and moved from place to place until we settled in an uninhabitable tent, amid the whistling bullets, the noise of grenades and rockets, and the fire of the Zionist occupation. We lost many members of our family and miraculously escaped death several times. We live in extremely harsh conditions and find no one who shows us even a spark of compassion. We struggle to earn our daily bread. My dream, Hayat (...), is to study dentistry, and my cousin Sama's (...) dream is to study nursing. However, given the economic situation and the difficult political situation in our country, it seems that these dreams will remain just dreams. With all our hope, we ask you to consider the circumstances in which we live and to help us, even if it is only a small contribution, so that we can realize our dream and escape our painful reality."*

Once our hearts began to beat again after a brief pause, we took the initiative to help both of them in every way we could. We wrote to Al-Azhar University in Gaza to let them know that we are prepared to cover their tuition through a scholarship. We are still waiting for a response, but we hope this will be possible. As always, anyone who would like to support this effort is warmly invited to do so.

## **Lots of Good News from Our Scholarship Recipients**

We have been supporting **Noor** from Jabal al Mukaber/East Jerusalem with a scholarship since the beginning of 2022 until her graduation as a laboratory physician at Al Quds University in Abu Dis/Palestine. She has now written to us as follows:

Since early 2022, we have been supporting Noor from Jabal al-Mukaber in East Jerusalem with a scholarship. We are pleased to continue that support through her graduation as a laboratory physician at Al-Quds University in Abu Dis. She wrote to us as follows:



*“Dear Thomas, I am delighted to inform you that I have finally completed my bachelor's degree in medical laboratory sciences at Al-Quds University, despite the length of the journey and the obstacles I had to overcome, thanks to God and your continuous support. It was a path full of darkness, but in the end, it inevitably reached the light. Despite all the thorns I encountered on my academic journey, I also found some flowers and optimism, such as my family and your institution, which were the greatest source of support and hope for me and my family. I thank you from the bottom of my heart. I hope that one day I will be able to help young people achieve their goals. I also hope that you can help my little sister, who started university last year and is now on her way to achieving her goal. Kind regards, Noor*

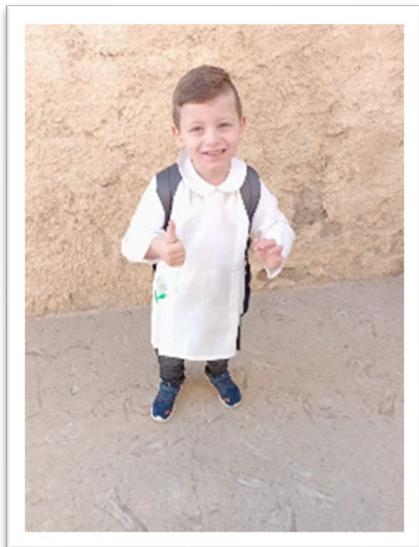
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In contrast, **Fatima** began her studies in public relations at the Arab American University in Ramallah, Palestine in October. Fatima is enthusiastic about studying and living at the university. She writes to us frequently, for example:

*"Dear Thomas, I hope you are well. I want to tell you that I am currently on top of the world because I am at my university. I am very happy in every way—I enjoy my studies, and I believe that I will be successful because I have obviously chosen the right place. That is why I want to tell you today how happy I am to be part of this university. I am making good progress, have made new friends, and two weeks have already passed since the first day of class. I even wish the weekend would be over soon so I can go back to university."*



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**Shrouq**, the mother of two young children and a medical student at An Nahjah National University in Nablus, Palestine, writes the following: *“Dear Thomas, I hope you and your family are well. I would like to express my sincere thanks once again for your continued support and generous commitment to financing (...) the second semester of my clinical studies. Your kindness means a lot to me, especially in these difficult times. (...) I am also grateful for your understanding, as my financial situation has deteriorated significantly. I am often unable to afford the travel costs to the university, particularly due to the long and changing routes, which make transportation very expensive. Unfortunately, this has caused me to miss some clinical days, which I now have to make up individually so that I can successfully complete the first clinical course and take the theoretical final exam at the end of the*

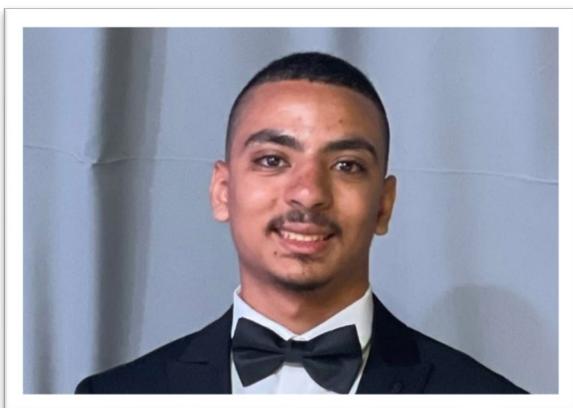


*year. I would also like to thank you very much for your support with my son's kindergarten fees. He is very happy in his first year of school. Without your contribution, he would not have been able to attend kindergarten, as it essentially covers the entire fees. Your support has made a significant difference for him. I have also attached a photo of Orabi from his first days at kindergarten, in the hope that it will give you a little impression of how happy he is. My son is also very sensitive to health issues; in addition to his asthma, he often gets sick. Since the beginning of the school year, he has been in the hospital twice and, in addition to his regular monthly asthma treatment, often needs new medications depending on his health condition. Your support has made this time a little easier for us, and I am very grateful to you for that. Thank you again for your generosity, trust, and understanding. Your support makes a significant difference to my academic career and my family's life, and I am truly grateful to you. I wish you and your family all the best. Sincerely, Shrouq”*

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We have been able to finance **Chantal's** nursing studies at the Arab American University in Jenin, Palestine, since 2022. At the end of her studies, she writes to us as a happy nurse:

*“Dear Thomas, I hope you are well. I am writing to thank you from the bottom of my heart for everything you have done for me over the years. Thanks to your generosity, I was able to complete my nursing training and am now preparing for the state nursing exam. Without your support, I would not have been able to reach this point. If I could thank you in person, it would be an honor to have that opportunity one day. (...) Thank you again for everything you have done for me. I am eternally grateful to you. Best regards, Chantal.”*



Hatem's story is special but highlights a challenge we repeatedly encounter in our scholarship program for Palestinian students: communication. We have supported Hatem since 2022 in his medical studies at Al-Quds University in Abu Dis. He is now in his fifth year, in his third clinical semester.

During our visit to Jerusalem in February 2025, we spoke with him in person about the importance of regular reporting as part of his scholarship. We were therefore surprised not to hear from him for an extended period. Under the rules of our program, this lapse would normally mean the end of his funding.

As it turned out, Hatem had taken a part-time job at a local supermarket to earn extra money and reduce the burden on our program, and he overextended himself. We made clear that he should have discussed this with us beforehand. When awarding scholarships, we often face the question of how to evaluate part-time work. Working can be a responsible choice, but only if it does not interfere with studies. Given the demands on a medical student in a clinical semester at a Palestinian university, especially under current conditions, it was foreseeable that this arrangement could lead to difficulties.

Hatem understands this, and we are resuming his scholarship.

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Naor was able to begin his bachelor's degree at the Hanns Eisler Academy of Music in Berlin at the start of October. Initially, it was far from certain that he would be able to do so. A hand injury from an accident earlier this year almost derailed his plans. After consulting many doctors in Israel, he was told repeatedly that his musical career - one he has worked toward for years as a clarinetist - might be over.

Devastated, he regrouped and took his recovery into his own hands, committing himself to training and targeted exercises. At our concert in Leonberg in September, he and his friend Yali proved that he was well on his way to recovery. Now, at the Hanns Eisler Academy of Music in Berlin, he has fully resumed his studies and is overjoyed to be in the place he has long hoped for and worked hard to reach. He is already surrounded by an international community of fellow students and has made many new friends. We are truly happy for him.



## **Young Social Workers from and for East Jerusalem - a Very Successful Project**

This Jerusalem Foundation project is central to our work in the Israel/Palestine region. The Jerusalem Foundation, founded and led by Israeli Jews, is dedicated to advancing the common good of the city of Jerusalem. It runs a wide range of initiatives and is supported by partners around the world. What we find especially valuable is its consistent commitment to peaceful coexistence among Israelis and Palestinians and among Jews, Christians, Muslims, and other religious and ethnic communities in the city.



The social hardship in Palestinian neighborhoods in East Jerusalem is unmistakable. Many, indeed, most Jews from West Jerusalem rarely enter these areas. Segregation, limited shared civic responsibility, ongoing tensions, and, above all, a lack of social support for young people are among the first realities one encounters when visiting these neighborhoods. It is clear how vital well-trained social workers are in this context, particularly those who themselves grew up in these communities. This project is designed to address that gap, and step by step it is beginning to do so.



The program consists of three parts:

1. Students from East Jerusalem complete a three-year degree at the Paul Baerwald School of Social Work & Social Welfare at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and receive a full scholarship throughout their studies.
2. The students commit to completing internships (in their second and third years of study) in the social services in East Jerusalem.
3. The students commit to taking working as social workers in East Jerusalem's social services for at least three years after graduation, and the city administration commits to employing them full-time.



*The first graduates of the project together with the project leaders and project management*

The Jerusalem Foundation's October 2025 report states:

*"Thanks to our generous donors, the first group of ten intelligent, dedicated young people from East Jerusalem have now completed their training as social*



*workers and are about to start their careers in East Jerusalem's social services. Dozens more participants (enrolled in this program) are well on their way to joining them to meet the urgent needs of their community and contribute directly to improving the well-being of the local population."*

We are among these donors. Together with the Berlin-based FORS Foundation, we finance needs that go beyond the Baerwald School scholarships, such as technical equipment, language support, and individual support for students through project management.

## Outlook:



**Our next trip to Israel/Palestine from March 25 to April 7, 2026, is booked.**

## Project region East Africa/Uganda



A lot is happening there, but we will not be covering it in this newsletter. We will share an update in our January 2026 issue.

In the meantime:

We are still looking for two usable, no-longer-needed laptops (Windows 10) for St. Jude School in Kikondo, Uganda.

*"You can take everything from me, but not what I have gained through education in my head."*

*(Robyn, 19 years old, scholarship holder from South Africa)*



### **Have we sparked your interest in our work?**

Visit our website at [www.fam-hoene.de](http://www.fam-hoene.de)! Contact us at [stiftung@fam-hoene.de](mailto:stiftung@fam-hoene.de) or by phone at +49 7152 3537299!

If you would like to support our work, whether by providing information about educational projects worthy of funding or in any other way, we would be delighted to hear from you. If you would like to support us with donations or endowments, you can also do so on a project-specific basis. We guarantee that your donation will be used in full, exclusively and directly for the project of your choice. In the case of project-related endowments, we ensure that the income attributable to your endowment is used exclusively for the project you have selected.

If you would like to do so, you will find the necessary information on our website. Our donation account at the **Kreissparkasse Böblingen (BIC BBKRDE6BXXX)** has the **IBAN DE17 6035 0130 00011098 14** .

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