

Annual Report 2022



www.rwds.ps



info@rwds.ps



2 2964585



RWDS

The Rural Women's Development Society

جمعية تنمية المرأة الريفية



Table of Contents

| | | |
|----|--|----|
| 01 | About Us,Our Vision,Our Mission,Our Values | 2 |
| 02 | Our Strategic Objectives | 3 |
| 03 | Board of Directors | 4 |
| 04 | Our membership in networks and coalitions | 5 |
| 05 | Speech of the Chairwoman of the Board of Directors | 6 |
| 06 | Speech of the General Director | 7 |
| 07 | Our Locations | 8 |
| 08 | Our Projects | 9 |
| 09 | The most important achievements for the year 2022 | 25 |
| 10 | Success stories | 26 |
| 11 | Aspirations for the year 2023 | 29 |



About Us

The Rural Women's Development Society (RWDS) is a Palestinian non-governmental organization working in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. Its dates back to 1987 (first intifada), when it began as a women's group within the Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees (PARC). In 2001, RWDS became a separate entity, independently registered with the Palestinian Interior ministry under registration number: RA-287-C.

RWDS has a strong and respected presence among rural communities, with over 3,000 female members that form a network of 56 women's clubs. It is this unique structure, geographic broad expansion of large number of dedicated volunteers who distinguish RWDS from other Palestinian women's organizations.

We enhance the rights of rural women by fostering empowering and supportive bodies within their local communities. This is achieved through clubs, which highlight women's invaluable contribution to Palestinian society, by designing innovative projects on the topics of economic empowerment, political and social participation, and the prevention of violence.

We use education and community participation, as well as mobilization, skill-building, and advocacy as tools to develop women into strong, committed members and enable them as leaders within the rural community.

Our Vision

Equality between women and men, boys and girls in rural area in accordance with the Palestinian Declaration of Independence as well as international conventions and standards.

Our Mission

To grow a feminist movement led by Palestinian women who are capable of advocating and advancing the women's social, economic and political rights, especially in rural areas.

Our Values

The work of RWDS is governed by values that it seeks to embody in its daily practices and strategic work, as well as through the behavior of its leadership, management and employees including:

- Justice and work for the most vulnerable individuals.
- Equality
- Participation
- Transparency
- Volunteering
- Credibility
- Empowerment and non-bargaining



01

Our Strategic Objectives

RWDS 2019–2023 strategic objectives are as follows:

01

Enhancing the level of justice and equality between men and women and reducing violence against women and girls in Palestinian Society.

02

Promoting economic justice for women and girls in Palestinian rural areas

03

Improve the society's performance and efficiency, as well as raise the level of its representation and influence at the national, regional and international levels.

Community mobilization, lobbying and advocacy are essential parts of the methods RWDS adopts in its work towards achieving its goals. In addition, the association is committed to working not only with women and girls, but also with boys and men, as well as decision makers at the local and international levels



Board of Directors:

Randa Abed Rabo / Zain
Chairwoman

Laila Khashan
Vice president
(Gaza Strip)

Buthaina Mizyed
General Secretary

Hilda Issa
Treasurer

Khawla Dasoqi
Member

Lubna Matar
Member

Fathia Abu Amra
Member

Suhila Abu Amra
Member

Salwa Bannoura
Member

03

Supervisory Members:

-Warda Shabat

- Samia AL Tel



04

Our membership in networks and coalitions

RWDS seeks to expand its partnerships in organizations and local communities that work to serve community members. These include:



EURO-MEDITERRANEAN HUMAN RIGHTS NETWORK
RÉSEAU EURO-MÉDITERRANÉEN DES DROITS DE L'HOMME
الشبكة الأوروبية - المتوسطية لحقوق الإنسان



مركز نواصل لتمكين النساء
Women's Empowerment Center Tawasol



منتدى المنظمات الأهلية الفلسطينية لمناهضة العنف ضد المرأة
Palestinian Non-Governmental Organization Against Domestic Violence Against Women (Al Muntada)



الحداد الغرف التجارية الصناعية الزراعية الفلسطينية
Federation of Palestinian Chambers of Commerce, Industry & Agriculture



الائتلاف التربوي الفلسطيني
Palestinian Education Coalition

تجمع المؤسسات
التنموية النسوية
بيت لحم

Women's Empowerment Centers-
Bethlehem Governorate



(The Palestinian NGOs Network (PNGO-
شبكة المنظمات الأهلية الفلسطينية



ائتلاف سيداو - فلسطين
CEDAW Palestine



منتدى
النوع الاجتماعي
والحكم المحلي - فلسطين

Gender Forum in Local Governance-



Arab Women's Network Roa'a-



Ma'an News Agency-



Euro-Med Feminist initiative IFE-EFI-

05



Speech of the Chairwoman of the Board of Directors

It is an honor to write the speech of the annual report of RWDS for the third year in a row, and I hoped that it would be years of goodness, justice and freedom, but unfortunately they were all among the most difficult years that we have passed, first of which was the Corona pandemic 2020, and second was our loss of the role model, teacher and dear friend Nadia Harb in the year 2021, and the third It was the bloodiest year 2022 for the Palestinians, according to the United Nations report as it was the year of the martyrs, the martyrdom of Shirin Abu Aqelah, and the settlement exploitation.

In light of these turbulent times, the work of RWDS has become more necessary than ever to reduce the suffering, and build a future where justice and security prevail for all. Accordingly, the Society worked on well-thought-out development projects that it implemented throughout the year, which focused on strengthening the foundations and pillars on which it rests, to become the solid base supporting the achievement of more successes, as work was done to raise the quality and efficiency of performance, and to strengthen and develop the policy system, which was reflected in the growth in performance and the remarkable development in the status of the society, and most importantly in this structure that we all cherish as a board of directors and a public body, and what distinguishes us is internal family relations between the functional staff with the board of directors at all levels to create a spirit of intimacy and love to continue giving and excellence in order to reach our common goals.

**Chairwoman of the BOD
Randa Abedrabo / Zain**

06



Speech of the General Director of RWDS

The year 2022 represented the year of recovery from the Corona pandemic that struck the world and affected it in all aspects, and the most prominent global events represented the outbreak of the Ukrainian-Russian war, which in one way or another affected us as it diverted the world's attention from our national cause, and also affected the lack of funding by governments supporting private institutions, the concentration of support for the Ukrainian people and the accompanying significant rise in prices and the increase in poverty and asylum rates in the world as a whole. Regionally: The Arab countries are still succumbing to the concerns of the few internal wars, in addition to poverty, which rates are increasing significantly, and the fading of spaces for individual and public freedoms. Palestinian: The Palestinian situation has worsened in light of the continued unprecedented brutality of the occupation, whether in killing Palestinians or stealing their land and destroying their lives.

Despite this, the Rural Women's Development Society worked and continues to advance its work despite all these circumstances and complexities, as it targeted new sites and work groups. RWDS continued to implement our development projects as usual, and we built new relationships with new partners. New employees joined us, and we continued to build the capacities of women's clubs and organize the relationship with them. We renewed RWDS page and adopted a complaints system and a mechanism to volunteer with the society through it.

We will continue to serve entrepreneurs women at all levels as much possible, we will work this year to prepare the strategic plan for RWDS work for the coming years, all thanks to the chairperson and members of the board of directors who did not skimp on us with time, effort and advice, this is thanks to the women's volunteer clubs, thanks to whom we work better, and thanks to the distinguished staff of RWDS who belong to the society in thought and practice, and of course with the help of all the local and international partners who hold our hand to complete the journey and work better.

**General Director
Haneen Abu Fares**

Our Locations:



08

Projects



The Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation

Project: Strengthening the economic cooperation network in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to improve social, economic and independence capacities "convinio."

1/2019-1/2023

The project is implemented in partnership with the Agricultural Development Association and the FPS Organization.

Project objective: To contribute in improving endangered vulnerable rural communities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to enable them to access rights in a sustainable and equitable manner.

Implementation areas: Barqa, Jama'in, Beit Fureek, Beit Dajan, Al Manara/ Gaza

Target group: Women, girls, men and youth in the targeted locations



Civil Society in Development Danish Ministry of Exterior Affairs

Project: Project: Better Support and Increase of Legal Rights for Women Survivors of Domestic Violence in Palestine

The project is implemented in partnership with the Danish Danner Foundation

1/2021-12/2023

Women:

- RWDS targeted 180 women and mothers to participate in awareness workshops in six locations (30 women and mothers in each location).
- RWDS targeted 180 women to form support groups in six locations (30 women in each location).
- RWDS targeted 240 women in six individual counseling sites.

Men:

- RWDS targeted 210 men who participated in awareness workshops and meetings through the Pope's methodology.

Male and female students:

RWDS targeted 960 male and female students targeted in workshops distributed in 12 schools (6 in Hebron, 6 in Bethlehem), both male and female, targeting each of the ninth and tenth grades at a rate of (80 students from each school).

Project objective:

- Reducing and preventing domestic violence in six sites in Hebron and Bethlehem by targeting women, men and students.(both sexes)
- Adoption of Family Protection Law from Violence to protect the surviving women from domestic violence.

Implementation areas:

Bethlehem and Hebron governorates.





European Union

Project: Sustainable networks for the innovation of pioneering agricultural products in the Mediterranean.

9/2019–8/2023



The project is implemented in partnership with the Andalusian Union of Cities and Provinces - Andalusia- Spain as the main beneficiary, and other partners: (SLOW) Food Foundation for Biodiversity - Tuscany Region Italy, American University of Beirut - Lebanon, University of Sfax - Tunisia, Gozo Development Agency - Gozo Regional Committee - Malta, Women for Cultural Development (Namaa) - Jordan.

Project objective: To encourage the use of environmentally and socially sustainable production as well as production methods and to spread them throughout the Mediterranean region. It is expected that the quality, quantity and clarity of local agri-food products will be improved. As a result, the income of small rural enterprises will be increased - with a special focus on those which are run by women. Finally, jobs will be created in the newly established small and medium-sized companies in the agri-food field. Work will be done to strengthen and develop small-scale traditional agri-food value chains that will provide increased employment opportunities and greater social and environmental sustainability. The project will build on the proven expertise and methods of Slow Food.

Target group: small-scale producers and farmers of agri-food, public and local authorities, young university and institute graduates.



Areas of implementation:
agricultural areas in the
governorates of Jenin and Tubas



EU

Project: Promoting Inclusive Agricultural Growth to improving the Standards of Living and Strengthening the Capacity of Vulnerable Communities in Area C of the West Bank.

2/2019-5/2022

The project is implemented in partnership with Oxfam.

Overview of the project: Increase small incomes of farmers Men& Women) and use their lands in area C through building their abilities to have clean water.to manage resources and use of abandoned land.

Implementation areas: North and South West Bank





European Union



Spanish Agency for Development and International Cooperation and the European Union

Project: Enhance steadfastness and Economic Growth in Gaza Strip in the Agricultural Sector

10/2020 – 9/2023

The project is implemented in partnership with Agricultural Development Association "Agricultural Relief" – Job Creation Program – Action against Hunger International

project objectives:

It aims at improving the livelihoods of youth and farmers in the Gaza Strip by enhancing their opportunities to access the market, and in particular to enhance productive activities in Gaza by shifting towards market approach and sustainable job opportunities. Its implementation period is scheduled to continue for the next three years.

Target group: Women's Productive Units and the Palestinian and Women Entrepreneurs Platform

Implementation areas: Gaza Strip



AICS – Italian Agency for Development Cooperation

Project: Provision of Legal Clinics to GBV survivors and legal awareness workshops to communities and Families in the surrounding area of Nablus

11/2021 – 6/2022

The Specific Objectives:

- Improve access to quality services of legal and psychosocial support for women.
- Promote awareness of duty bearers at the local, national and international level, and of the structural causes of violations in order to endorse the implementation by duty bearers of policies that prevent such violations.
- Create positive trends and constructive environments about the role of women and gender concepts, ensuring gender equality.
- Promote the protection and upholding of rights of women and girls, emphasizing the focus on gender and child protection, through the strengthening of civil society.

Project objective: To provide legal clinics for GBV survivors and legal awareness workshops for communities and families in the surrounding area of Nablus.

Target group: survived women of violence.

Implementation areas: Nablus and Salfit governorates (Sabastia, Beit Furik, Farkha)





UMCOR

Global Ministries | The United Methodist Church

Global Ministries Churches

Project: Enhancing life skills and entrepreneurship for women and young women in Bethlehem and Hebron governorates.

1/2022-12/2022

Project objective: Enhancing the livelihoods of women and young women by increasing entrepreneurial skills and productive capacities and expanding marketing channels in Bethlehem and Hebron governorates

Implementation areas: Bethlehem and Hebron governorates.

Target group: Owners of small projects and productive cooperatives.





Empowers women.
Opens up perspectives.

The Feminist Peace Organization

Project Increasing the social inclusion and civic participation of young men, women and women survivors of violence in rural areas within the Hebron and Bethlehem governorates.

7/2022-12/2023

Project objective:

- Establish innovative and sustainable community mechanisms and initiatives led by youth (female and male) to work towards achieving gender balance and justice in rural areas in Palestine.
- Creating an enabling environment in the targeted communities to support gender equality, women's and youth rights, and participation in civic life.
- Pressure on political decision makers to contribute to changing policies and laws that impede gender equality, women's and youth rights, and participation in decision-making processes.

Implementation areas: Bethlehem Governorate "Nahhalin and Beit Fajar" Hebron Governorate "Halhul, Tarqumiya, As-Samu"

Target group:

1. Young men and women from the project's targeted locations
2. Women survivors of violence
3. Media and journalism students and graduates.



The Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

Project: Enhancing the Production and Marketing Capacities of Rural Women and Increasing Job Opportunities for Youth in the north of the West Bank, Implemented by: Rural Women's Development Society "RWDS", Supported by: (GIZ).

3/2022-8/2023

Project objective: Enhancing the productive and marketing capabilities of rural women and increasing job opportunities for young people in the northern West Bank

Implementation areas: In the northern governorates of the West Bank, specifically in 5 governorates: (Nablus, Jenin, Tulkarm, Qalqilya, and Salfit).

Target group: 20 associations, cooperatives, women's clubs and women's groups in the aforementioned governorates, with an average of 1025 direct and indirect beneficiaries, of whom 893 are women and girls.





The World Bank

Project: The Emergency Social Protection Project to Confront the Corona Pandemic (Covid-19) – Cash for Work in the West Bank”, which is managed by the Palestinian Employment Fund in partnership with the Ministry of Finance.

3/2022-4/2023

Project objective: Providing job opportunities for families affected by the Corona pandemic.

Implementation areas: West Bank.

Target group: 143 person who had been affected by the Corona pandemic





Manos Unidas

Project: Increase the water supply and improve the livelihoods of marginalized women.

12/2021 – 10/2022

Project objective: Improving access to water supplies and developing home farming for the most marginalized families who do not have access to water supplies from municipal lines, and maximizing the impact of previous projects..

Implementation areas: Al-Dhahiriya, south of Hebron, especially areas classified as C.

Target group: The main target group is women, especially women who support their families, in addition to marginalized families who are not connected to the water lines of the Municipality of Ad-Dhahiriya.



GLOBAL FUND FOR WOMEN

Champions for Equality.

Global Fund for Women

Project: To defy social violence against women

1/7/2022-30/6/2023

Project objective: To work on increasing the awareness of women, youth and clergy in 6 rural areas.

Areas of implementation: West Bank.

The target group: Women, male and female students from schools, clergymen, preachers, and members of local councils.





European Union

Project: rug and string

01/10/2022- 31/03/2023

Implementation by Rural Women's Development Society in partnership with the Palestinian Vision Foundation

Project objective: Preserving the Palestinian heritage and marketing heritage products continuously at the local and national levels.

The target group: 15 women and girls from the town of AlSamu' who want to learn how to make the Samu'i municipal rug and other ancient traditional crafts and have the ability to transfer what they learned to others.

Areas of implementation: Al-Samu' town .



Spanish cooperation

Project: Enhancing the status of Palestinian women as holders of rights and influential in decisions taken at all levels by calling for the adoption of laws and policies that support women's rights and gender equality in Palestine

01/11/2022 – 31/10/2024

This project will focus on the following outputs:

1. A Network of young lawyers and journalists is established in the targeted areas to promote gender equality and lobby and advocate for change in the judicial framework and practices that hinder women's public engagement.
 - Women participation in public spheres is increased by enhancing laws and demanding the enforcement of the 30% quota of women representation in local authority elections and the legislative council in Palestine.
2. Policies and laws about women inheritance and access to land and credit are influenced through lobbying and advocacy initiatives led by young lawyers and journalists in the West Bank and Gaza.
 - Women's knowledge about their inheritance rights and access to land and credit is increased in the targeted areas of the West Bank and Gaza.



Project objective:

1. Create innovative approaches and organized community mechanisms to influence and change judicial frameworks that impede gender equality and women's civil participation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.
2. Improving women's access to economic resources, with a focus on land and finance.



The target group: Ladies and girls

Areas of implementation: Ramallah: Yabroud, Qarawat Bani Zaid, Mazra' al-Nubani, and Arura.
Gaza Strip: Beit Lahiya, Khirbet Al-Adas, Al-Sawarha, and Wadi Al-Salqa.





Oxfam

Project: FAIR for ALL- Trade and sustainable value chains

01/04/2020-31/03/2023

Project objective: Contribute to more inclusive and sustainable trade and value chains in OPT and create an enabling environment that respects women and men small-scale producers and their rights, protects the environment and supports youth economic empowerment.

The target group: rural women and members of women cooperative, CSOs, small-scale farmers and youth

Areas of implementation: West Bank and Gaza Strip



GENERALITAT VALENCIANA

Project: Promoted the worker's rights of rural women in Jenin (West Bank) contributing to generate an equitable, inclusive and sustainable development in the area

1/5/2021-7/1/2023

The project is implemented in partnership with the FPS

General Objective: Promoted the worker's rights of rural women in Jenin (West Bank) contributing to generate an equitable, inclusive and sustainable development in the area of intervention.

Targeted group : women clubs , cooperatives , young female university graduates

Project targeted locations : Maithaloune , Anza , Birqin ,Deir Abu Deef , Jalboun , Faqqoua , AL-Jalameh





09

The most important achievements of RWDS for the year 2022

- Continuing to build the capacities of women's clubs and signing an agreement regulating the relationship with women's clubs and cooperatives
- Opening new relationships with new donors
- Providing a temporary job opportunity for a period of six months for one hundred and thirty-four young men and women affected by the Corona pandemic, within the "cash for Work" project funded by the International Federation
- The society succeeded, through the market "nabea al khairat", by helping women to promote and sell their products, as the percentage of sales during the year 2022, whether in exhibitions, markets, or booths that were placed in stores, amounted to a total of eighty-seven thousand nine hundred and nine shekels (87,909 shekels).



Success stories

Palestinian women entrepreneurs' platform Gaza Strip

It is known that one of the most important problems of women's work in the informal sector, especially women's work in the field of food processing, is the random spread, lack of organization, lack of knowledge of the size of the income and the failure to calculate this income resulting from this work in the national income, in addition to the lack of any kind of protection for women working in it, as well as the absence of a representative body that organizes work between production units, monitors their impact, and defends their rights.

The Rural Women Development Association has initiated the formation of a representative body for these production units in the Gaza Strip under the name "Palestinian Women Entrepreneurs Platform" as a creative idea and as an urgent need, with the aim of representing the production units that are members of this platform before the official authorities and international community organizations, this platform works to build women's capacities in the administrative and technical fields, and to develop production units "along the value chain of their products", it works as a pressure and influential body in national policies in favor of women's units and projects, which will maximize the impact of these production units and enhance their resilience in facing crises and disasters which the Gaza Strip is constantly exposed to, and increases the chances of marketing the products of its members, which reflects positively on the income levels of workers in production units, and contributes to the economic empowerment of women. Hence the idea of the Rural Women Development Association to establish a platform for Palestinian women entrepreneurs in 2020 - and it includes in its membership 44 production and cooperative units working in the field of food processing, the association also built an internal system and a strategic action plan, from which an operational plan for this platform emerged in line with the strategic plan of the association, taking into account the lessons learned from experience and the long history of work with these units.





The association searched for support for the platform to finance its plans and programs, write projects that are consistent with the platform's vision, mission and objectives, institutionalize the platform for Palestinian women entrepreneurs to enhance women's production and marketing capabilities, improve policies and laws, expand the scope of work of existing women's production groups, and replicate successful models, a number of graduates and new graduates in specializations related to the work of production units, which contributed to increasing the practical skills of university graduates in marketing, management and finance, which helped in building the productive capacities of production units in addition to increasing job opportunities for female graduates

Within the framework of the project: "Building the capacities of women who lead projects and cooperatives, and improving the living conditions of women and young women in the Gaza Strip", work has been done to prepare a strategic plan for the Palestinian Women Entrepreneurs Platform, which was implemented by the Association for the Development of Rural Women with the support of the European Union and Spanish cooperation AECID

The platform for Palestinian women entrepreneurs has a license to operate in the southern governorates, and includes 44 production units operating in food processing Today, the platform has become a reference for women's work in the field of food processing in the Gaza Strip, which included individual success stories for many production units attributed to this platform. Many women's organizations are now working to imitate this model, and we wish them success



Success story 2

Meet Ranan Nairat, a 26-year-old graduate in Health Administration and Hospital Service from Al-Quds Open University. After participating with RWDS in training course about cooperatives management and financial management organized in late 2021 through the Project " Strengthening female-led cooperatives and improving professional opportunities of young women in Jenin Governorate, Palestine." funded by Generalitat Valenciana through Fundació Promoció Social (FPS)

Ranan's life took a 180-degree turn. Before the Project, she had no knowledge or experience in cooperatives. However, RWDS offered her the opportunity to work in cooperatives and engage in agricultural Projects.

To Ranan's surprise, she was offered internship employment in February 2022 for 10 months. This opportunity was life-changing for her. Not only did it provide her with financial stability, but it also helped develop her personality and confidence. She even assisted her family with their financial matters and supported her sister to complete her university education.

"I never imagined that I could communicate and cooperate with others so effectively. Before, I was a different person, but the training Project transformed me into a confident and capable individual. Today, I can face any challenge that comes my way, and I owe it all to RWDS, MY dream is to have full job opportunity and offer opportunities for other graduates in my community ". Said Ranan

Through RWDS training Project, Ranan gained skills in communication and cooperation that she never thought possible before. Today, Ranan is a transformed person, confident in her ability to face any challenge that comes her way. Her success story is a testament to the power of training and opportunity in changing lives for the better.





11

Aspirations for the year 2023

- Opening relationships with new partners.
- Focusing on building the capacities of women's clubs and their structure and developing their work.
- Expanding RWDS audience base.
- Continuing to build the capabilities of the crew and providing them with additional privileges.
- Work on preparing the special strategic plan for RWDS for the years 2024-2028

