
**IBTIKAR FOR
EMPOWERMENT AND SOCIAL
ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

ANNUAL REPORT

2023

(JANUARY-OCTOBER)



ابتكار للتمكين والريادة المجتمعية
Ibtikar for Empowerment and Social Entrepreneurship

**PREPARED BY
IBTIKAR TEAM**

WHERE WE ARE NOW

We are being most impactful since 2019. Congratulations to everyone!

In 2023, Ibtikar for Empowerment & Social Entrepreneurship has reinforced its role as a catalyst for transformative social impact and entrepreneurial innovation within Palestinian territories. Our diverse and ambitious projects – SHELEADS, Future Social Innovators, The Palestinian Puppet, Social Change Study Circle, Climate Change Study Circle, and the nascent Youth Business Coaches project – have collectively charted new pathways for empowerment, building community resilience, and nurturing a culture of sustainable development. Throughout the year, each initiative has been meticulously designed and implemented to address the unique challenges faced by our communities.

These projects have not only fostered individual and collective growth but have also promoted inclusive economic participation, environmental stewardship, and the revitalization of cultural heritage.

SHELEADS program has particularly been instrumental in transforming the lives of Palestinian refugee women, enabling them to become champions of social entrepreneurship and economic innovation within their localities.

Future Social Innovators project has taken a two-pronged approach to empower the youth. By cultivating their skills in social innovation through

adapted training and personalized tutoring sessions, we have nurtured a generation of empathetic leaders and creative thinkers committed to societal progress and the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Palestinian Puppet project has not only been a celebration of cultural identity and a novel approach to education and social dialogue but also a source of job opportunities for less-served women. Through the power of storytelling and the art of puppetry, we have ignited conversations around critical social issues and engaged the community in heritage preservation. At the same time, we have provided valuable employment opportunities for women who have historically faced challenges in accessing decent work conditions.

The Social Change and Climate Change Study Circles have been thriving forums for knowledge exchange and action planning, confronting societal and environmental challenges with informed perspectives and collaborative efforts.

The preliminary phase of the Youth Business Coaches program has laid the foundation for a robust support system dedicated to mentoring young entrepreneurs, ensuring they receive the guidance and resources necessary to succeed in an increasingly competitive and globalized marketplace.



Ibtikar, translating to 'innovation' in Arabic, symbolizes a mission driven by the empowerment of communities through social entrepreneurship and quality education. By providing interventions and pioneering projects that catalyze change, Ibtikar plays a pivotal role in promoting sustainable growth and development in diverse sectors.

2023 PROJECTS AND INTERVENTIONS

This report is a comprehensive reflection of our dedication and commitment over the past year. It details the progression, achievements, and expanding influence of Ibtikar's initiatives, evidencing the remarkable strides we have made towards empowering communities, fostering innovative solutions to complex problems, and driving forward the agenda for sustainable change.

SHELEADS

SHELEADS project has stood as a beacon of social transformation, promoting entrepreneurship and cooperative models among Palestinian refugee women in the Southern West Bank. Throughout 2023, we have witnessed remarkable strides in women taking leadership roles, thereby bolstering socio-economic conditions and cultivating community well-being. By creating collaborative spaces and engaging key stakeholders, SHELEADS has been instrumental in instigating sustainable community changes and deepening the understanding of social entrepreneurship as a means for social reform.

Future Social Innovators

Our two-stage project aimed at children and young adults has successfully completed its mission:

- **Social Innovation Training:** Over a 5-month period, 85 students from Bethlehem were engaged in training to harness social innovation for societal betterment, resulting in the development of valuable human rights, civic engagement, and ethical skills and initiatives aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals.
- **Semi-Individualized Tutoring Sessions:** In an effort to mitigate academic and well-being loss, Ibtikar implemented after-school support for 30 students in need, facilitated by trained university students. This initiative not only enhanced the students' academic capabilities but also contributed to their personal development as confident individuals capable of change.

The Palestinian Puppet

Our "Palestinian Puppets" initiative has rejuvenated a cultural heritage, transforming it into a tool for social change. This innovative program combined the art of puppetry with narratives of empowerment, thereby enabling communities to engage with their heritage while addressing contemporary social issues.

The initiative has not only breathed new life into our cultural heritage but has also served as a catalyst for social change. This program is offering valuable job opportunities to underserved women while allowing communities to reconnect with their heritage and confront pressing contemporary social issues.

2023 PROJECTS AND INTERVENTIONS

Social Change Study Circle

The Social Change Study Circle has been a platform for intellectual exchange and learning. The circle convened regularly, bringing together women thinkers and activists to deliberate on strategies for effecting change in their local contexts and beyond.

Climate Change Study Circle

The Climate Change Study Circle, another of our robust discussion forums, fostered an informed community of practice. Participants developed localized strategies to address environmental issues, emphasizing the importance of sustainable practices and climate action in Palestinian society.

Youth Business Coaches

In its inception phase, the Youth Business Coaches program began with the training of young professionals, preparing them to guide the next generation of Palestinian entrepreneurs. This project has laid the groundwork for a specialized department dedicated to ongoing business coaching, reflecting Ibtikar's commitment to sustainable economic empowerment.

Additional Activities

Throughout the year, Ibtikar engaged in a multitude of activities, including workshops, seminars, and community outreaches, each echoing our core mission to instigate social innovation and entrepreneurship. These events have not only enhanced the capacities of individuals but have also strengthened community bonds.



THREADS OF CHANGE

SHELADS I and the Palestinian Puppet Project

The tapestry of the Palestinian Puppet project is a vivid illustration of how social entrepreneurship and innovative thinking forge new frontiers in sustainable development and community enrichment. In the bustling workshops housed within Ibtikar's Bethlehem office, a collective dream materializes into vibrant reality. Here, 15 women from the historic heartlands of Bethlehem and Hebron have not only learned to create but have also woven their stories into the very fabric of their creations.

Each meticulously crafted puppet is a chapter in a larger saga of empowerment—a saga penned by Ibtikar in collaboration with these women, transforming their lives one stitch at a time.

The project, a brainchild of the SHELEADS I initiative, has rapidly evolved into a symbol of pride and prosperity. It provides more than employment; it offers a newfound sense of autonomy to 15 women who had once seen limited prospects, illuminating a path out of the shadows and into the spotlight of recognition, resilience and self-sufficiency.

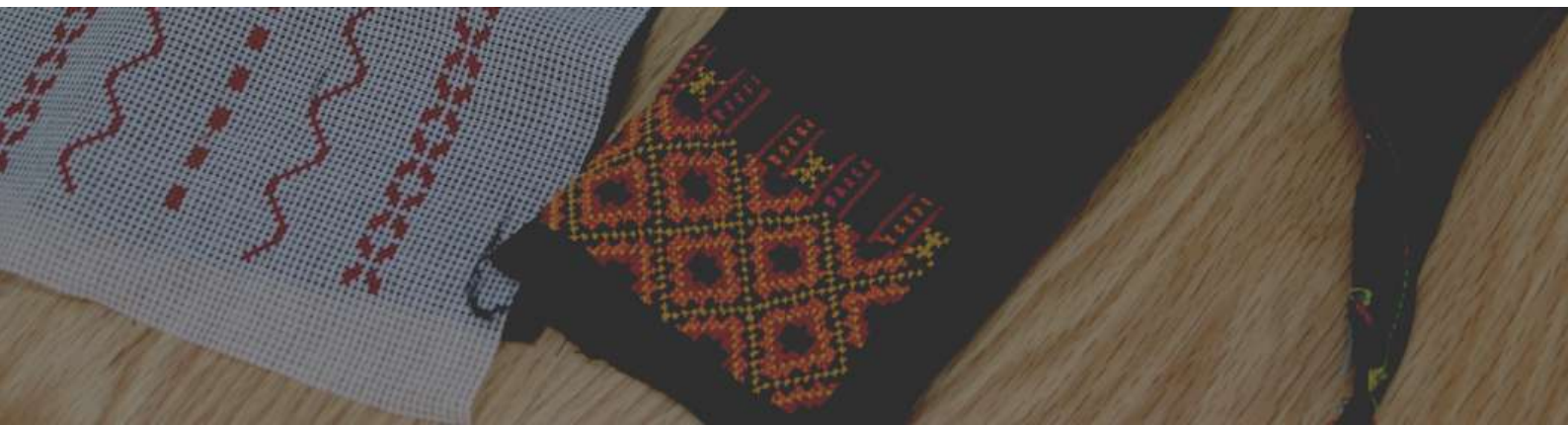
Today, the Palestinian Puppet project transcends its economic dimensions; it narrates a profound transformation where once-marginalized women now lead a movement that weaves together the social and economic strands of their communities.

The echoes of their success reverberate beyond the confines of their workshop, sparking a vision where the principles of social entrepreneurship can be harnessed by more women, advocating for societal transformation. Ibtikar, the catalyst of this remarkable journey, remains committed to nurturing the seeds of potential sown within these artisans. The organization's support system is unwavering, imbued with the aspiration to proliferate this empowerment model, thereby fostering a sustainable cycle of growth and self-reliance.

The Palestinian Puppet project's narrative is an ongoing testament to the transformative power of dedication, solidarity, and Ibtikar's profound impact. The project is not the culmination but a pivotal chapter in a larger narrative of empowerment that Ibtikar is authoring with the women of Bethlehem and Hebron—one puppet, one story, one life at a time.

As Ibtikar's vision for expansion continues to unfold, the aim to reach out to more women awaiting their turn to shine remains steadfast. With each puppet sewn and each tale knitted, these exceptional women are not only reclaiming their narratives but also crafting new legacies for the generations to come.

This story is a living fabric, interlaced with hope, resilience, and the indomitable spirit of women bound by ambition and fostered by an organization that steadfastly believes in their boundless potential.



THE BLOSSOMING OF NEMEH MALASH WITH IBTIKAR

Nemeh Malash's entrepreneurial journey is a vivid illustration of what can be achieved when determination meets nurturing support. With no prior experience in project management or training, Nemeh's venture began as a seed planted in the fertile ground of Ibtikar's "Supporting Women Entrepreneurs" program—an intensive entrepreneurship training designed to empower women like her.

The training she received was the first of many catalysts in her transformation. Under Ibtikar's wing, Nemeh developed her project idea beyond its humble beginnings of organic farming. She aspired to cultivate healing herbs, distill pure essential oils, and create therapeutic soaps tailored for diverse skin types.

In recognition of her potential, Ibtikar awarded Nemeh a grant to initiate and nurture her project. This grant was the lifeblood that nurtured her aspirations to fruition, allowing her to lay down the roots of her business. She began by planting the herbs, watching as they grew, a parallel to her growing expertise and confidence.

Nemeh's natural talent in crafting medicated soaps, born out of necessity for her son's health, blossomed into a range of natural beauty and household products.

Her shampoos, crafted to combat hair loss and dandruff, and her citrus-based cleaners, were not only effective but also a pledge to her commitment to the environment.

The local success of Nemeh's products was just the beginning. With Ibtikar's continued mentorship, even three years after the project's conclusion, she has not only sustained her business but has also seen it thrive. The ongoing guidance has been instrumental in scaling her operations and elevating her sights to national and international horizons.

Nemeh's story is a powerful endorsement of Ibtikar's mission to support and cultivate women entrepreneurs. The grant and sustained mentorship she received have been cornerstones of her success. As she looks to the future, her journey serves as an inspiring narrative of how targeted support and personal resolve can break barriers and shape an entrepreneur's path to success.

Nemeh Malash, once a fledgling entrepreneur, now stands as a symbol of achievement and the embodiment of Ibtikar's ethos—where belief, dedication, and continuous learning forge the path to enduring success.



2023 IN FIGURES

In 2023, Ibtikar continued its mission of empowerment, education, and community development, achieving significant milestones and impacting numerous lives. Here are the highlights from the year

Women's Empowerment through Training Programs:

357 women benefited from Ibtikar's comprehensive training programs, equipping them with essential skills and knowledge.

Collective Projects Initiated:

Two cooperative ideas emerged from the extensive training programs, promoting collective project development. One cooperative has already begun its operations on the ground, contributing to local community growth.

A remarkable collective women-led project was initiated from scratch, resulting from Ibtikar's extensive training programs and involving 15 women who received the training. Ibtikar proudly hosts this project at its premises, enabling these women to bring their vision to life.

50000 Euro have been raised to support these projects.

Nurturing Young Creativity:

Ibtikar's innovation and creativity training workshops reached out to 440 children, fostering their creative thinking and problem-solving abilities.

Supporting Higher Education:

10 university students received valuable training opportunities, practical paid training experiences, and partial scholarships, enhancing their academic and career prospects.

Recovering Lost Learning:

Ibtikar provided tutoring sessions to 35 primary school children, aiding them in recovering lost educational ground.

Fostering Partnerships:

Ibtikar forged four new partnerships with local and international organizations, including Palestine University, Alquds Open University, the French consulate, and the Pontifical Mission Library.

Entrepreneurship Mentorship:

Throughout the year, Ibtikar mentored and coached a total of 76 collective and individual entrepreneurship projects and initiatives, facilitating economic growth and self-reliance.

Empowering Refugee Women:

Ibtikar directly trained and targeted 289 refugee women from five different refugee camps, empowering them with essential skills and knowledge for a brighter future.

Strategic Collaborations

Academic Partnerships: Collaborative ties were forged with, Palestine University and Alquds Open University.

Global Connections: New partnerships with the French Consulate, Action Aid, the Pontifical Mission Library, Caritas, the World Bank and Japan Social Development Fund through the Palestinian Heritage Trail have been established to enhance global collaboration.

Impact and Outreach Metrics

Total Training Hours: The year witnessed a cumulative 1,070 hours of dedicated training. Direct Beneficiaries: Ibtikar's programs have directly impacted 842 individuals. Indirect Beneficiaries**: The wider community impact is estimated to benefit around 5,052 individuals (assuming each direct beneficiary positively affects six others (av. Palestinian family size).

CONCLUSION

Ibtikar's work serves as a testament to the potential for transformative impact when passion, creativity, and dedication come together

In 2023, Ibtikar has not only sustained its commitment to empowering communities but has also expanded its reach and deepened its impact. Each project has been a step towards nurturing an ecosystem of innovation, leadership, and change. As we reflect on our journey, we acknowledge the collaborative efforts of our partners, the unwavering determination of our team, and the relentless spirit of the communities we serve. Together, we move forward, invigorated and more resolved than ever to continue our mission into 2024 and beyond.

As we conclude another impactful year, we take pride in our collaborative successes and the tangible difference we have made. Ibtikar for Empowerment & Social Entrepreneurship remains steadfast in its mission to pave the way for a future where every community member can access the tools and opportunities to thrive and contribute meaningfully to the fabric of our society.

Acknowledgements

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all stakeholders, participants, volunteers, and the broader Ibtikar family for their relentless support and contributions towards a thriving and socially innovative year.

