

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

JANUARY - December

Ibtikar
ابتكار

ابتكار للتمكين والريادة المجتمعية
Ibtikar for Empowerment and Social Entrepreneurship

PREPARED BY
IBTIKAR TEAM

Ibtikar is a Palestinian Youth-led NGO that was established in 2019 in Bethlehem-Palestine. Ibtikar offers innovative youth programs, corporate training sessions, and consulting services to foster social innovation and entrepreneurship in the community. Additionally, it promotes education for social innovation by developing programs for teachers and students, aiming to inspire a qualitative improvement in the educational atmosphere. Strategically, Ibtikar aspires to enable Palestinians to use their creativity to address social issues effectively and contribute to building a fairer, more caring, and equal society.

We believe that education for social innovation and accessible quality education foster well-being among young people, women, and the entire Palestinian community. This, in turn, helps build a strong, inclusive, empathetic, and connected nation. At Ibtikar, we empower and support teachers, students, young people, and women to realize their potential as social innovators, change-makers, and entrepreneurs, equipping them with the skills needed to tackle social challenges in their communities.

Ibtikar's vision aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), striving to leave no one behind. Our strategy envisions Ibtikar as a catalyst, enabler, and facilitator of change, maximizing impact and creating social value. Through education, empowerment, civic engagement, social innovation, entrepreneurship, and advocacy, Ibtikar works to build better, inclusive educational and entrepreneurial ecosystems for all Palestinians.

Vision of Change

Ibtikar empowers the next generation to address societal needs and achieve improved well-being for all.

Mission of Ibtikar

Ibtikar connects and inspires teachers, trains and mentors change agents and innovators to become global problem-solvers who can contribute to better Palestinian entrepreneurship and educational ecosystems, guided by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.



1,005

Individuals were benefited directly.

5,025

Indirectly impacted.



Ibtikar in 2024

In 2024, Ibtikar proudly continued its mission to empower Palestinian communities through social innovation, entrepreneurship, and education. Since its founding in 2019 in Bethlehem, Palestine, Ibtikar has worked to foster creativity and provide sustainable solutions to societal challenges. This year, we took significant strides to expand our impact, aligning our work with the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and building on our successes from previous years. Through innovative projects, strong partnerships, and a steadfast commitment to our vision, we have transformed lives and strengthened communities across the region.

At the heart of Ibtikar's mission is a belief in the transformative power of education and social innovation. We envision a society where teachers, students, youth, and women become agents of change, driving progress and addressing critical issues with ingenuity and purpose. This report provides an in-depth look at our 2024 achievements, showcasing the programs, partnerships, and people who made this year remarkable.

Fostering Empowerment Through Key Projects

One of the cornerstones of Ibtikar's work is our ability to design and implement impactful projects that respond to the unique needs of Palestinian communities. Each project represents a step toward sustainable development and reflects our dedication to inclusivity and resilience.

SHELEADS II

SHELEADS II exemplifies Ibtikar's commitment to empowering women, particularly refugees, by equipping them with the tools and skills to transform their lives and communities. In 2024, this program directly impacted 1220 women in Bethlehem, offering light vocational training that focused on practical skills like handicrafts and entrepreneurship. These sessions helped participants develop small businesses, and as a result, 36 women successfully launched micro-projects. To ensure long-term success, 16 of these women are receiving one-on-one mentoring from youth business coaches trained by Ibtikar.

Collaboration with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) further strengthened the program. We managed to provide 94 women with 30 hours of psychosocial support, enhancing their emotional well-being and resilience. Additionally, we developed an informal referral system to guide women in need towards our psychosocial support and training programs, ensuring they receive timely and appropriate assistance. This partnership is designed to empower women and enhance their overall psychosocial and economic well-being. By fostering economic independence and emotional strength, SHELEADS II has proven to be a transformative force in the lives of Palestinian women. This work has been achieved as part of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Development (BMZ) funded programme "Strengthening the Influence of Palestinian Refugees on their Living Conditions PART II" implemented by GIZ in partnership with "Ibtikar for Empowerment and Social Entrepreneurship".





The Palestinian Puppet Project

At Ibtikar, culture and heritage are not just traditions to preserve they are tools for resilience, identity, and innovation. Through the Palestinian Puppet Project, we combined cultural preservation with economic empowerment by engaging 48 refugee women in the creation of handmade puppets and traditional Palestinian embroidery items, such as keffiyeh bags, coin purses, and makeup pouches. These unique crafts not only offered a source of income for women living in marginalized communities, but also became powerful instruments of storytelling and cultural pride.

The project extended far beyond craftwork. Through a series of interactive storytelling workshops held in schools and community centers, the puppets became a bridge between generations connecting children to their heritage in creative and emotionally meaningful ways. A unique feature of the project is barcoded storytelling, which integrates technology to share the personal narratives behind each puppet. It allows each piece to carry a story that can be accessed digitally, creating a direct connection between global audiences and the women who made them.

These puppets and the stories behind them have now traveled across borders, reaching audiences in Europe, Asia, and the Americas. With every puppet and every embroidered piece, the project carries the voice of Palestinian women to the world, sharing not only beauty and tradition, but also resilience and hope. In a time of growing hardship, this initiative stands as a reminder that culture is not only something we protect it's something we live, share, and pass forward.





Empowering The Next Generation Through Story Telling

In collaboration with the United Network of Young Peacebuilders (UNOY), and through flexible funding support, Ibtikar implemented a grassroots storytelling project that offered a safe and creative space for Palestinian children to express their emotions, process their experiences, and reconnect with their cultural identity.

The initiative reached 181 children surpassing the initial target through 12 sessions held in schools, libraries, and child centers across the Southern West Bank. Each workshop used traditional handmade puppets as tools for expression, allowing children to share stories and feelings they often struggle to voice. Through simple activities grounded in imagination, the children explored themes of fear, hope, and belonging building emotional resilience in a supportive environment.

The sessions were designed around two core days: the first focused on familiarization and building trust; the second encouraged children to lead their own narratives using the puppets. Each workshop ended with a reflection activity that helped children identify and communicate how they felt in their own words.

In places deeply affected by instability such as communities exposed to frequent settler violence the sessions provided a moment of safety, relief, and emotional connection. The project's strong turnout and the children's deep engagement underscored the urgent need for more safe spaces for emotional expression and healing.

This initiative highlighted the powerful role of flexible funding in supporting locally led, responsive programs that meet real and evolving needs on the ground. As Ibtikar continues to seek further support to sustain this work, the storytelling project remains a clear example of how cultural tools can help children reclaim their voices and begin to heal.



Youth Business Coaches Project

The Youth Business Coaches Project addressed systemic barriers to entrepreneurship by empowering young people to become mentors and innovators. Participants from Bethlehem, Hebron, and surrounding areas received comprehensive training to develop sustainable livelihoods and mentor their peers. Partnerships with local businesses and universities enhanced the program's impact. Implemented in partnership with the French Consulate, fostering an inclusive economy and cultivating a new generation of entrepreneurial leaders. This initiative is not just about economic empowerment; it is about creating a culture of mentorship and collaboration that strengthens the entire community.

The Youth Business Coaches Project empowered 28 youth, surpassing its target of 20, through a comprehensive 150-hour training program on business development, mentoring techniques, and social innovation. These trained coaches each provided 250 hours of tailored mentorship over six months to 20 youth-led and women-led projects, resulting in 85% of mentees reporting measurable growth in revenue and operational capacity. The initiative also established a dedicated mentoring and coaching department at Ibtikar, serving as a sustainable hub for ongoing entrepreneurial support. This department not only created employment for 10 coaches but also provides structured resources, mentorship, and guidance to ensure the continued growth and development of youth and women-led projects. With its focus on fostering long-term collaboration, innovation, and capacity building, the department positions Ibtikar as a central driver of entrepreneurship in the Southern West bank. Networking events in Bethlehem and Hebron further amplified the project's impact, connecting over 70% of participants with community-based organizations and stakeholders. Despite challenges such as political instability, the project achieved significant economic and social outcomes, building a foundation for resilient livelihoods and a culture of mentorship in the West Bank.



Future Social Innovators project

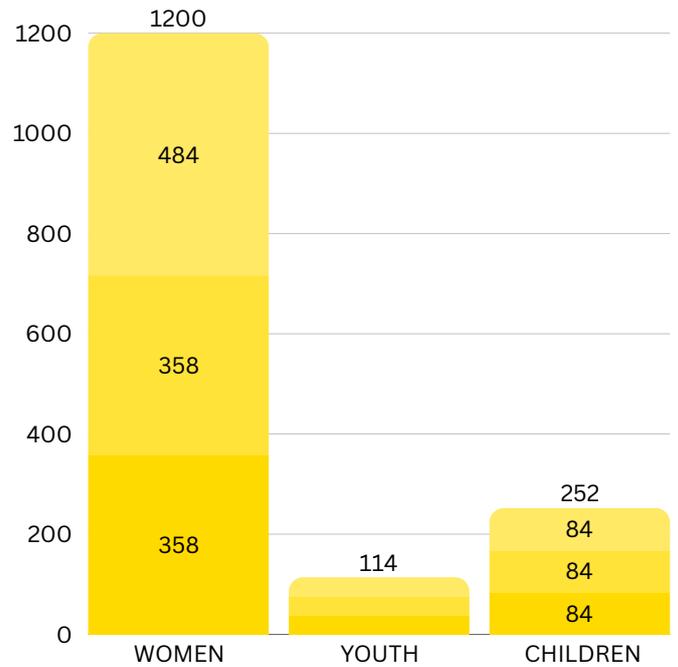
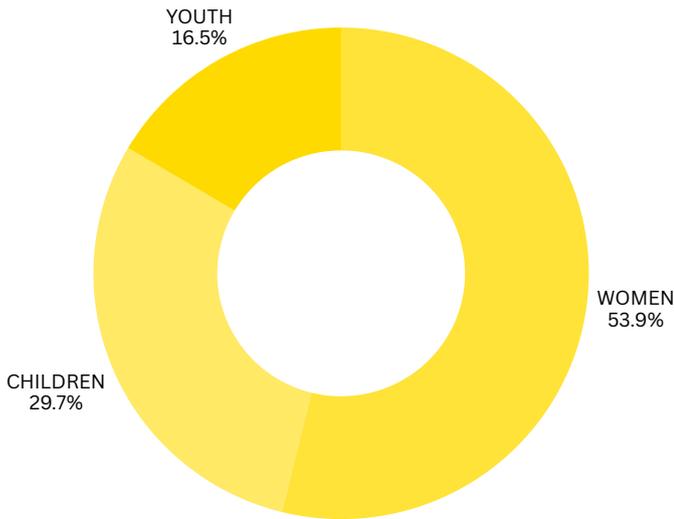
Our Future Social Innovators Initiative focused on preparing youth to tackle global challenges through social innovation. This year, 85 students participated in training sessions that emphasized design thinking, financial literacy, and climate change mitigation. The program's after-school support component reached 30 students, providing them with personalized guidance to enhance their academic performance and personal development. By nurturing creativity and critical thinking, this initiative equips the next generation to lead with purpose and vision.

Additionally, a new initiative was introduced to empower women and youth entrepreneurs in the southern West Bank, focusing on fostering sustainable growth and community resilience. We also organized storytelling workshops in collaboration with Aflatoun as part of the Palestinian Puppets - Empowering the Next Generation through Storytelling project. These workshops used Palestinian puppets to engage and educate children, promoting creativity, cultural preservation, and education.

Additionally, this year saw the launch of a new initiative empowering women and youth entrepreneurs in the southern West Bank. By addressing the unique challenges faced by local enterprises, this project fosters sustainable growth and innovation while strengthening community networks.

Capacity Building Training Program

In collaboration with esteemed partners such as the Milton Foundation and Aflatoun International, Ibtikar delivered training programs that emphasized SDGs, non-formal education, and community leadership. Participants emerged as skilled trainers and advocates for social innovation, ready to inspire and empower others in their communities. This program underscores our belief in the ripple effect of knowledge when one individual is empowered, they can spark change that resonates far and wide.



Impact in Numbers

In 2024, Ibtikar achieved significant milestones that reflect our dedication to empowerment and innovation. We delivered 2150 hours of training for the youth business coaches, directly benefiting 1,005 individuals and indirectly impacting an estimated 5,025 people in their families and communities. Our efforts were bolstered by expanded partnerships with organizations such as UNRWA, local universities, and international collaborators, ensuring the sustainability and growth of our initiatives.

Strengthening Partnerships for Sustainable Growth

Collaboration is at the core of Ibtikar’s success. This year, we expanded our network of partners to include local universities, international organizations, and grassroots initiatives. These partnerships not only enhanced the effectiveness of our programs but also ensured their sustainability. By working together, we have built a strong foundation for continued innovation and impact.

Cumulative Impact and Contribution to Change

Since its inception in 2019, Ibtikar has grown into a cornerstone of social innovation and empowerment in Palestine, creating a legacy of change and resilience. Over the years, our organization has reached thousands of women, youth, and educators, equipping them with the tools to drive transformative change in their communities.

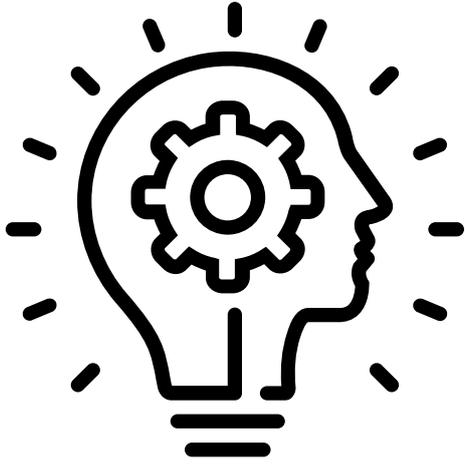
In empowering women, Ibtikar has focused on building economic independence through initiatives like vocational training, mentorship, and psychosocial support. Programs such as SHELEADS and the Palestinian Puppet Project have helped women establish small businesses, gain financial stability, and reclaim their roles as cultural custodians and community leaders. To date, hundreds of women have launched micro-projects, contributing to their families' well-being and broader economic resilience.

Our dedication to fostering social entrepreneurship has created a ripple effect that extends beyond individual participants. Through initiatives like the Youth Business Coaches Project, we have nurtured a culture of mentorship and collaboration, ensuring that the skills and knowledge imparted are passed on to peers and future generations. This has led to the development of an inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem where innovation thrives.

Ibtikar's cumulative impact is also evident in the integration of social innovation into education. By training teachers and students, we have instilled critical thinking, creativity, and a sense of agency in the next generation. Programs like the Future Social Innovators Initiative demonstrate our commitment to addressing global challenges through local solutions.

The transformative power of our work lies in its alignment with the U.N. 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, emphasizing inclusivity and leaving no one behind. From marginalized women in refugee camps to ambitious entrepreneurs, Ibtikar has been a catalyst for hope and progress. Our collective efforts since 2019 have laid the groundwork for sustainable growth, ensuring that every initiative contributes to a fairer, more empathetic, and connected society.

Over the years, Ibtikar has empowered thousands of women, youth, and educators, equipping them with the skills and resources needed to become agents of change. Our project, such as SHELEADS II, the Palestinian Puppet Project, and the Youth Business Coaches program, have not only fostered economic resilience but also enhanced community cohesion and cultural preservation. By integrating education with social entrepreneurship, we have made significant strides toward a fairer and more inclusive society, ensuring that no one is left behind.



Looking Ahead

As we look toward 2025, Ibtikar remains committed to scaling its initiatives and addressing emerging societal challenges. Our goals include expanding training programs to reach more educators, youth, and women; strengthening existing partnerships while forging new collaborations; and launching innovative projects that respond to the evolving needs of Palestinian communities.

For example, Empowering Women-Led Enterprises (EWLE) project will continue its efforts to support women entrepreneurs, while SHELEADS II project will further advance its vocational training and psychological support journey. Additionally, a new project set to launch in February will address tech-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV) through "Empowering Digital Resilience" project. This project aims to empower women and girls in Palestine by fostering digital literacy, creating innovative technological solutions, and providing legal and reporting support. By promoting digital resilience and raising awareness of legal rights, this initiative aspires to create a safer and more inclusive online space for women and girls, contributing to global efforts to combat gender-based violence in digital environments.

Our vision for the future is clear: a society where education and innovation empower individuals to create lasting change. By staying true to our mission, we will continue to inspire hope and transform lives.

Acknowledgments

None of this year's achievements would have been possible without the unwavering support of our donors, partners, and participants. Your belief in Ibtikar's mission has fueled our success and inspired our journey. Together, we are building a brighter, more inclusive future for all.





+972 59-875-6808



Ibtikar Palestine



ibtikarpal@gmail.com



ibtikar.palestine



ibtikarpal



www.ibtikar.ps

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