



IBTIKAR FOR EMPOWERMENT & SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Building livelihoods. Sustaining heritage. Growing community leadership.

Organization Profile 2026



About Us:

A Palestinian community for economic agency, resilience and belonging

Ibtikar for Empowerment and Social Entrepreneurship is a Palestinian non-governmental organisation established in 2019 in Bethlehem and registered under number BL-3462-E. We work across the Bethlehem and Hebron governorates in the southern West Bank, reaching refugee camps, villages affected by settlements and the separation wall, and communities in Areas B and C where opportunity, services and markets are hardest to access.

Ibtikar is more than a programme implementer. It is a long-term support community in which people enter through one opportunity and continue to learn, earn, lead and support others. A woman may begin with vocational training, develop a product, receive business coaching, reach customers through Ibtikar's markets and buyer relationships, and later mentor another entrepreneur. A young participant may become a facilitator or coach. An educator may carry a methodology into classrooms long after a funded activity ends.

This continuity is central to our impact. Many women who first joined a training now earn essential household income through Ibtikar's artisanal department. Coaches who once came through our programmes now accompany new entrepreneurs. Artisans work within a shared system for design, quality, production, payment and market access. The result is not a sequence of disconnected beneficiaries, but a growing family of women, young people, educators, coaches and community partners who strengthen one another.

Our work responds to the realities created by the prolonged Israeli occupation, the war on Gaza, the fragmentation of Palestinian communities, movement restrictions, land dispossession, settlement expansion, economic dependency, the loss of employment and household income, rising care burdens, digital harm and psychosocial strain. These are not temporary conditions or background context. They shape people's access to work, education, services, markets and safety, and they determine what we build, where we work and how we sustain support.

We combine vocational and enterprise training, sustained business coaching, psychosocial support, educational programmes, community-based delivery, market development for women artisans, and consultancy for institutions. Each part reinforces the others so that knowledge can become income, confidence can become leadership, and a short intervention can become a durable local resource.

Core Sustainable Development Goals



Ibtikar Vision of Change

Ibtikar works to empower the next generation to address society's needs and achieve better wellbeing for all.

Ibtikar Mission

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 eco-systems guided by the United Nation Sustainable Development Goals.

Our Model For Lasting Impact

Training is valuable, but training alone rarely creates a durable livelihood. A woman can leave a course with real knowledge and still face weak pricing, limited branding, care responsibilities, movement restrictions, psychosocial strain, and no dependable route to customers. Ibtikar works across the whole pathway from learning to earning and from participation to leadership.

- 1 Listen** and respond. Programmes begin with needs expressed by communities, entrepreneurs, educators and participants. Delivery is adapted around geography, mobility, care responsibilities and emerging crises.
- 2 Build** practical capability. Participants gain market-relevant vocational, enterprise, digital, educational and leadership skills that can be used immediately.
- 3 Accompany** people over time. Local coaches and facilitators help participants apply learning to real decisions, setbacks and opportunities. Psychosocially responsive practice, safe spaces and referral pathways protect well-being throughout that process.
- 4 Create** routes to income and opportunity. Product development, fair and timely payment, community markets, wholesale relationships, digital sales and institutional partnerships connect capability to real demand.
- 5 Keep** capacity in the community. Educators, artisans, coaches, facilitators and young leaders multiply what they learn. Their knowledge and relationships remain locally rooted after a project closes.

This is how Ibtikar turns a course into a livelihood pathway, an artisan into part of a market ecosystem, and a participant into a community resource. A project has an end date; the relationships, skills and structures it builds should not.



What Our Reach Creates

Ibtikar's impact cannot be represented by a collection of old activity counts. Our reach is cumulative and relational: people return, move between programmes, become producers, mentors or facilitators, and bring knowledge into their households, schools, businesses and communities. We therefore describe our impact through the capacities and systems that remain.

Economic agency and dignified livelihoods

Women strengthen vocational and business skills, develop products, improve pricing and financial management, reach customers and earn income. Home-based and informal enterprises gain sustained coaching instead of being left alone after training. Artisans participate in a shared system for design, production, quality, payment and access to local and international markets.



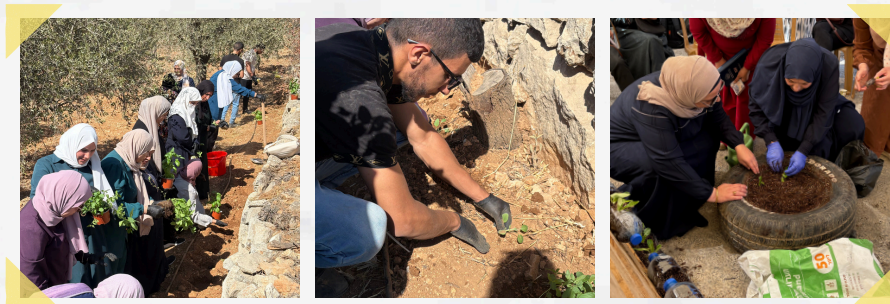
Education, identity and youth leadership

Children gain safe spaces for learning, expression and connection to Palestinian identity. Educators and youth facilitators gain methods they can continue using in schools and community settings. Young people are supported not only as participants, but as coaches, mentors, facilitators and designers of community solutions.



Community resilience under occupation

Families and communities strengthen practical capacity in food production, agriculture, water use, household livelihoods and collective enterprise. Delivery is decentralised and adapted to checkpoints, mobility restrictions, care responsibilities and unequal access to services. When needs change, Ibtikar changes its response.



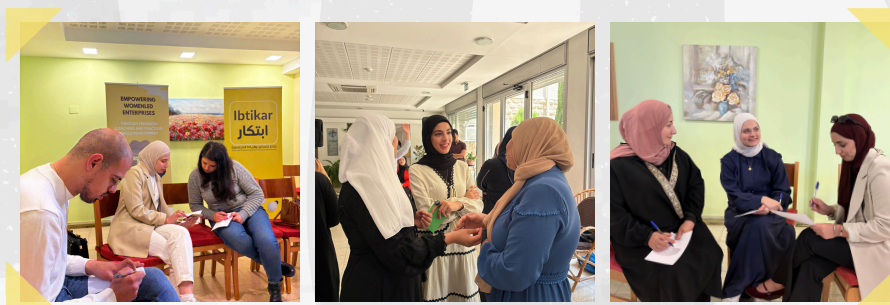
Safety, well-being and social support

Economic support is connected to psychosocial well-being, safe learning environments, digital safety and referral pathways. Ibtikar recognises that people cannot sustain livelihoods or leadership while the pressures surrounding them are ignored.



A community that multiplies impact

The organisation's deepest reach is the network it has built: women artisans, entrepreneurs, coaches, educators, young leaders, volunteers, institutions, buyers and community partners who remain connected and support one another. Ibtikar's role is to strengthen this network so that knowledge, opportunity and solidarity continue circulating beyond any single grant.



A Path To Resilience 1&2

Water, sanitation and agricultural resilience in the southern West Bank

Developed with Mercy Relief, this programme strengthens household and community resilience through practical learning, material support and pathways towards collective enterprise.

Across Bethlehem and Hebron, Ibtikar has delivered vocational courses in household water and sanitation practices, treatment and reuse of greywater, sustainable agriculture, mushroom cultivation, beekeeping and honey production, recycling household waste into animal feed, and basic dairy processing.

Courses are held within or close to the communities they serve, including locations accessible to participants from Bethlehem, Hebron, Dura, Beit Ummer and Al-Aroub camp. Delivery is shaped around people's availability, care responsibilities and the movement restrictions imposed by the occupation.

Training is paired with tools, materials and inputs so participants can put new practices to work at home and in their communities. These practices include composting, seed preservation, natural pesticides, mushroom cultivation, beekeeping, producing animal feed from household waste, and making cheese and labneh for household use and sale.

The purpose is practical adoption, not course completion. Participants apply new knowledge to food security, household expenditure, environmental practice and income generation, and their experience informs the next stage of delivery.

When participants identified greywater treatment and reuse as an urgent need that was not included in the original plan, Ibtikar organised the additional learning at its own cost. This is what responsive programming means: the plan serves the community, not the reverse.

The programme continues to evolve towards supported group enterprises so that practical learning can lead not only to household resilience, but also to shared businesses and longer-term community-owned livelihoods.



Training of Facilitators (ToT) – AGFUND

In partnership with Aflatoun International and with support from AGFUND, Ibtikar equips educators and youth facilitators with participatory methods in life skills, financial education and psychosocially responsive practice. They are prepared to work as trusted mentors for children's emotional, social and practical development.

Facilitators carry the learning into schools and community centres in refugee camps, peripheral villages and urban communities across Bethlehem and Hebron. They adapt the material to short school hours, mixed-age groups, movement restrictions and the emotional realities children are living through.

This is the local-leadership principle in practice: invest deeply in educators and facilitators, enable them to reach children within trusted community settings, and keep the capacity in those settings afterwards.



Empowering Digital Resilience: Combating Online Gender-Based Violence in Palestine

Supported by Expertise France as part of the Laboratory for Women's Rights Online, an initiative of the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs.

This project strengthened digital literacy, online safety and legal awareness among women, girls and young people in Bethlehem, Hebron and surrounding underserved communities.

Participatory, trauma-informed workshops for women, girls and young people covered digital privacy, secure communication, online abuse, reporting options, social media safety and protections available under Palestinian law. The programme also engaged men and boys as part of a wider community response to technology-facilitated gender-based violence.

Participants strengthened their digital literacy and confidence in recognising and responding to technology-facilitated gender-based violence. The work connected individual skills to institutional awareness and public discussion, helping make online safety a shared responsibility rather than a private burden carried by women and girls.

The project also developed an Arabic-language digital tool to help users identify harmful content, report abuse confidentially, and find information on Palestinian cyber law. The tool requires further testing, a data-protection review and a sustainability plan before wider release.



Empowering Women-Led Enterprises Through Enhanced Coaching and Practical Skills Development

Building on Ibtikar's Youth Business Coaches model, this work accompanies women entrepreneurs across the southern West Bank with tailored training and sustained coaching. It addresses barriers identified through direct experience with women-led enterprises rather than relying on generic business-development assumptions.

The accompaniment works at the level of the enterprise itself: pricing, financial management, branding, product development, digital marketing and customer engagement. Coaches stay with entrepreneurs as they make decisions and encounter setbacks, allowing learning to become business practice rather than notes in a folder.

The programme also deepens Ibtikar's coaching unit. Coaches accompanying women-led enterprises receive continued development in coaching, facilitation, advanced problem solving and design thinking. Building a Palestinian coaching unit rather than importing short-term expertise is what allows this work to continue after any single project closes.

The programme is directed particularly at women working in informal, home-based or marginalised settings, and at collaborative settings where women entrepreneurs learn from one another rather than competing in isolation.



Empowering the Next Generation Through Storytelling

In partnership with the United Network of Young Peacebuilders, Ibtikar brings heritage-based storytelling into schools and community spaces across the southern West Bank.

Using traditional Palestinian puppets, children explored fear, hope, belonging and identity — and spoke about feelings that are difficult to put directly into words. The workshops offered safe, culturally grounded space for expression and reflection, strengthening emotional awareness, self-expression and confidence.

The work matters most in communities affected by settler violence and instability, where children have almost no access to creative psychosocial space. By joining cultural heritage to structured activity, the programme supported children's well-being while deepening their connection to identity and community.



SHELEADS II

Empowering refugee women in the Bethlehem governorate

Implemented by Ibtikar in partnership with the Strengthening the Influence of Palestinian Refugees on their Living Conditions programme, commissioned by GIZ on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development.

SHELEADS II worked with refugee women and women living in underserved communities through an approach that brought skills, enterprise support, market access, mentoring and psychosocial care into one connected programme rather than treating them as separate needs.

Women strengthened practical and vocational skills, developed enterprises and tested products in open-air markets where they could meet customers, make sales and gain visibility. Entrepreneurs received individual mentoring from youth business coaches trained by Ibtikar, while youth-led initiatives including Her Lens and We Lead Marketing supported branding, storytelling and outreach.

In collaboration with UNRWA, structured psychosocial support and referral pathways were integrated into the programme, recognising that economic participation and well-being cannot be separated.

The model has since been taken up by other Palestinian organisations.



Short Interventions and Emerging Work

Diaspora for Palestine — SEED Palestine Catalyst. Young participants developed early-stage responses to community needs through an intensive innovation process using design thinking, Lean Canvas, business modelling and pitching, supported throughout by Ibtikar mentors.



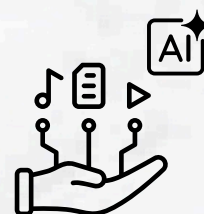
Innovation and social entrepreneurship for young Palestinians. Individual mentoring helps young people turn ideas into workable projects through proposal development, funding pathways and practical support during implementation.



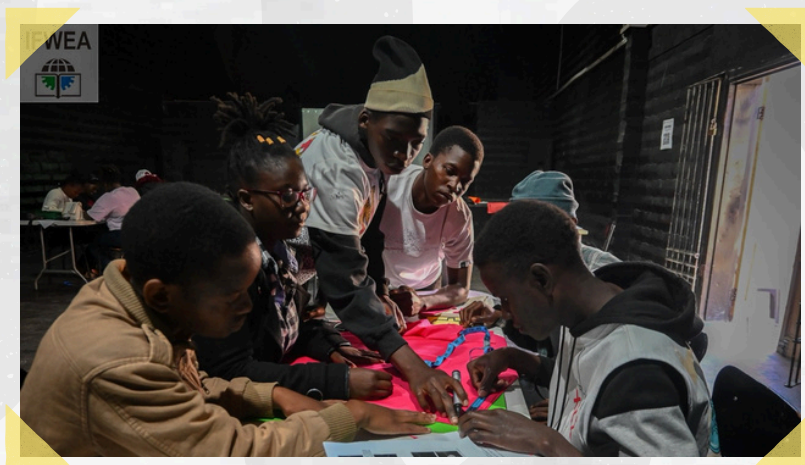
Training and consultancy for institutions. Ibtikar delivers social entrepreneurship and human-centred design courses for Palestinian institutions, including Al Nayzak's Horizons Academy.



Media literacy and artificial intelligence. Workshops for women entrepreneurs on using artificial intelligence tools for content creation and marketing, alongside sessions for Bethlehem University students on marketing awareness and distinguishing generated images from real ones.



Dolls and handcrafts as tools for learning. With IFWEA, Ibtikar ran an advanced course on using dolls and handcrafts for storytelling, education and community awareness, combining practical crafting with the design of awareness-oriented narratives.



Heritage as Livelihood and Living Memory

Each Palestinian puppet carries the dress and visual memory of a particular city or village. It is more than a decorative object: it carries the skill and experience of the woman who made it, a story of place, and a form of cultural knowledge passed forward through work.

A permanent exhibition space at Ibtikar, located on the Palestinian Heritage Trail, presents the growing collection alongside other heritage products. It connects visitors to the makers and turns cultural encounter into direct economic support for women artisans.

Alongside the puppets, artisans produce embroidered purses, bags, accessories, glass jewellery, leather pieces and tatreez work. Every purchase contributes to a larger outcome: income entering a household, a woman strengthening her economic agency, skills remaining in active use, and Palestinian heritage continuing as a living and evolving practice.

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An Artisanal Ecosystem Built Around Women



What began as a small group of women has grown into a wide livelihood network of artisans from villages, refugee camps and marginalised communities across the Bethlehem and Hebron governorates. For many, this work is a principal source of income and a critical means of supporting their households through severe economic uncertainty.

Ibtikar treats that responsibility seriously. The organisation maintains a reserve so artisans can be paid directly and in full when their work is completed, without carrying the risk of delayed buyer payments or international transfers. This is not a minor administrative choice. It protects household cash flow and places the dignity and security of producers at the centre of the business model.

The department is not a temporary craft project or a channel for selling one season's stock. It is an integrated economic ecosystem designed to help women produce consistently, improve quality, develop market-ready collections, collaborate across disciplines, and build sustained access to local and international buyers.

A growing producer community. Ibtikar maps, verifies and expands its artisan network with consent recorded for each producer, creating a stronger foundation for communication, production planning and opportunity sharing.

Shared design and production capability. Artisan groups including Golden Hands, HB Leather, Habaq, Bent Alshams, Darzet Thoub and Tatreezna work with professional design support to complete market-ready products. Collaboration across groups combines skills such as crochet, leather and tatreez, allowing women to pursue opportunities that isolated producers could not fulfil alone.

The infrastructure a sustainable market requires. A product catalogue, a payment gateway that works from Palestine, point-of-sale and barcode systems, coordinated quality control, logistics, and direct digital marketing give the artisan network the operating foundation of a serious social enterprise.

Relationships, not one-off transactions. Ibtikar's pieces reach buyers through partners in Europe and North America, including relationships sustained over time. Coordinated orders distribute opportunity across the artisan community and demonstrate the production capacity that collective systems can unlock.

A community that stays connected. The department gives artisans more than orders. It provides a place to exchange knowledge, solve production challenges, learn from one another and remain connected to a wider community. Economic resilience grows through these relationships as much as through any single product.

An Institution Built to Stay

Ibtikar's growth is measured not only by the number of activities delivered, but by its ability to remain useful, trusted and responsive over time. A wider portfolio, deeper partnerships and real market activity require strong people, sound systems and the discipline to protect quality as responsibilities increase.

People and relationships. A committed core team works with volunteers and a wider network of trained coaches, facilitators, educators and artisans. Cross-training and delegated programme leadership build second-line capacity, while continued relationships with participants preserve trust and local knowledge.

Systems and accountability. Roles are clarified, workflows documented, programme and management reviews linked, and outcome monitoring centralised so institutional knowledge does not sit with one person and growth does not weaken accountability.

Financial and programme sustainability. Product sales, paid institutional services, repeat wholesale relationships and diversified partnerships are developed alongside grant-funded programmes. This mixed model reduces dependence on a single source of support and keeps locally built capacity active between funding cycles.

Responsiveness. Ibtikar adapts when evidence or community feedback shows that a plan is incomplete. Delivery moves closer to communities when mobility is restricted, schedules change around care responsibilities, and support expands when participants identify a practical need. Responsiveness is not mission drift; it is how the organisation remains accountable to the people it serves.

We hold ourselves to honest measurement. Our evaluations showed that short training rarely produces a durable livelihood, which is why sustained coaching and market access became central to the model. Coaching notes and sales records reveal recurring gaps in pricing, branding, financial management and customer access, and programmes are redesigned against those realities. Participant feedback is why delivery is decentralised and schedules adapt to care responsibilities and movement restrictions.

Our next stage of institutional development is focused on stronger longitudinal evidence: distinguishing unique participants from repeat engagement and indirect reach; applying consistent baselines for income, enterprise survival, confidence and well-being; tracking enterprises beyond the funding period; reporting earned and grant income separately; and protecting staff well-being under prolonged occupation and war. These investments will make the long-term value already visible in communities more rigorous, comparable and easier for partners to understand.



Affiliations and Memberships

Ibtikar belongs to global networks of worker educators, peacebuilders and social enterprises. These are memberships rather than funding relationships, and they matter for two reasons: they give our team continuous access to methodology, training and peer learning that no single project budget could buy, and they put a Palestinian organisation in rooms where this region is usually discussed in its absence.

IFWEA — International Federation of Workers' Education Associations. Through its affiliation with this international federation, Ibtikar has taken part in the Study Circles for Social Change programme and the Young Global Activists Programme, and delivered an advanced course on using dolls and handcrafts as tools for storytelling, education and community awareness.

UNOY Peacebuilders — United Network of Young Peacebuilders. A member of this global network of youth peacebuilding organisations. Empowering the Next Generation Through Storytelling was delivered in partnership with UNOY.

Anna Lindh Foundation. A member of the Euro-Mediterranean network for intercultural dialogue, through its Palestinian national network.

YEU International — Youth for Exchange and Understanding. A member organisation of this Brussels-based network for non-formal education, and featured as Member Organisation of the Month.

Aflatoun International. A member of the Aflatoun network, delivering social and financial education for children. Training for facilitators supported by AGFUND was delivered in partnership with Aflatoun.

United Nations Global Compact. A participant, committed to the Compact's principles on human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption.

Euro-Mediterranean Women's Foundation. Listed within the Foundation's network of organisations working on gender equality across the Mediterranean.

Union of Cooperative Associations for Savings and Credit. Ibtikar's Chief Executive Officer holds a seat on the board.



Partners and Supporters

Ibtikar's work is made possible by funders and programme partners who have supported it across several years.

Institutional funders: GIZ, on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development; Expertise France, through the Laboratory for Women's Rights Online of the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs; the French Consulate in Jerusalem; Mercy Relief; AGFUND; the Turquoise Mountain Trust; and, through the artisanal work, the World Bank, the French Development Agency, the Government of Japan and the Japan Social Development Fund.

Programme and delivery partners: UNRWA, Aflatoun International, the United Network of Young Peacebuilders, IFWEA, and Palestinian institutions including Bethlehem University and Al Nayzak's Horizons Academy.

We invite partners to invest in systems that last: women-led livelihoods, ethical and reliable market access, locally rooted coaching, community education, psychosocially responsive practice, and the institutional capacity that holds these elements together. Partnerships are chosen where financing, expertise, technology, institutional access or market opportunity strengthens what communities and programme teams have already identified, while Palestinian leadership and ownership remain central.

Our thanks go to every participant, staff member, volunteer, coach, facilitator, institution, funder and market partner who has given time, trust and expertise to this work.





Partner with a Palestinian organisation that stays:
building livelihoods, strengthening local leadership,
sustaining heritage and growing the community
systems that make resilience possible.

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