

ANNUAL REPORT 2015

Atfaluna Society for Deaf Children



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Acknowledgements

Another year has passed by and Atfaluna Society for Deaf Children (ASDC), continues to attain further achievements demonstrating that with the strong will of its staff and true dedication of its supporters challenges can be overcome.

Atfaluna Society represented by its board of directors, staff members, students and beneficiaries; convey their most sincere gratitude to everyone who took part in supporting the society's programs and projects; Countless people with disabilities and their families across the Gaza Strip now have access to healthcare, education and a chance for a better life thanks to your continuous contribution.

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Atfaluna Society for Deaf Children Overview

Atfaluna Society for Deaf Children, a registered Palestinian NGO located in Gaza city, has been working in the field of deaf education and allied services since 1992. Literally thousands of people with disabilities, particularly deaf people, children and adults and their families are served annually at Atfaluna through academic education, audiology, speech therapy, income generating programs for the deaf, vocational training, parents', teachers' and community training and awareness programs, and a host of other services and programs.

Atfaluna Mission:

To improve the lives of the deaf persons in the Gaza Strip through social, economic, cultural, and civil empowerment

Atfaluna Memberships and Regognitions:

- Atfaluna is an active member of the Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations Network (PNGO)
- Atfaluna is a member in UN-OCHA child protection cluster and the disabled sub-cluster
- Atfaluna is a member of the CBR Arab Network
- Atfaluna is the first prize winner in the Palestine International Award for Excellence and Creativity under the Institutional Excellence Category for year 2014
- Atfaluna is the second prize winner in the NGOs contest for year 2013 in the childhood sector initiated by the Ministry of Youth and Sports for its commitment in serving deaf children and protecting their rights
- Atfaluna received the Welfare Association Prize for Gaza for year 2014 to honor the organization's role in serving the deaf Gazan community

Atfaluna Fact Sheet 2015 :

- **24,320** persons received preliminary hearing screening through Atfaluna Community Outreach Program (**20,019** children of whom **11,180** females and **13,140** males; **4,301** adults of whom **1,889** females and **2,412** males)
- **912** persons were diagnosed with varying types and degrees of hearing loss (**373** children of whom **192** females and **181** males; **539** adults of whom **227** females and **312** males)
- **180** deaf and hard of hearing persons received free-of-charge hearing aids (**318** devices) and hearing aids batteries (**318** packages) (**140** children of whom **83** females and **88** males; **40** adults of whom **13** females and **27** males)
- **23** hard of hearing students aged between 5 and 7 years were integrated into government and UNRWA schools (**8** females; **15** males)
- **167** deaf and hard of hearing children aged between 0 and 5 years received early intervention services including communicative, cognitive, and social skills (**69** females; **98** males)
- In the academic year 2015/2016, **50** deaf and hard of hearing students were enrolled at Kindergarten level (**21** females; **29** males); **169** deaf and hard of hearing students were enrolled at Primary level (**73** females; **96** males); **76** deaf and hard of hearing students were enrolled at Secondary level (**38** females; **38** males); **25** deaf and hard of hearing students graduated from Atfaluna School (**10** females; **25** males)
- Daily hot lunch meals offered to the **295** students enrolled at Atfaluna School for Deaf Children (**132** females; **163** males)
- Non-curriculum activities were implemented for deaf children enrolled in Atfaluna School including arts and drama classes

- Sign language training courses of various levels were provided free-of-charge for family members of deaf persons and other community members
- **210** persons with hearing and physical disabilities aged between 18 and 35 received employability skills training in the fields of sewing, embroidery, furniture making, culinary arts, graphic design, photography, jewelry making, hairdressing for men and women, and shoe making (**102** females; **108** males)
- **40** persons with disabilities obtained inclusive apprenticeship opportunities in local restaurants and carpentry workshops throughout the Gaza Strip through which **19** persons obtained permanent job placements (**8** females; **32** males)
- **23** individual and **2** collective small business projects were established in the fields of poultry and goat farming, hairdressing, and mobile food carts for a total of **32** persons with disabilities (**13** females; **19** males)
- **50** university students and graduates were permitted to volunteer for experience at Atfaluna School and Early Intervention Unit
- Psycho-social services including psychological counseling sessions, home visits, and distribution of humanitarian assistance to needy families

ASDC Key Events during 2015:

- **May, 2015:** In a ceremonial event, ASDC celebrated the “**Welfare Association Prize for Gaza**” for the year 2014. The prize was awarded to ASDC to honor the organization’s role in serving the deaf community and offering sustainable development services to them.
- **May, 2015: On the 23rd of May 2015,** ASDC staff enjoyed a day off from work at one of Gaza restaurants to celebrate Atfaluna Society 23rd Anniversary.
- **September, 2015: Deep water well pump along with a medium scale water desalination plant were installed at ASDC.** This initiative has guaranteed the provision of sustainable, clean, and healthy water for the 400 deaf children in the Society’s care and hundreds of other beneficiaries enrolled in the Society’s programs.
- **December, 2015: in a closing ceremony ASDC celebrated the accomplishment of The First Phase of the project entitled: Income Generation program for Deaf Youth in the Gaza Strip” (ATFALUNA RESATURANT).** The first phase of the project included the establishment of a restaurant entirely staffed by deaf youth. Along three years; the deaf youth had gained the needed skills and the qualification to start up the second phase of the project in which they will run their own small projects without any intervention of ASDC.

Capacity Building Trainings 2015:

- **April, 2015: (75) Training hours in Fundraising Development Planning for a number of (25) participants from directors, project officers and financial officers from (6) different CSOs in the Gaza Strip.** The course was conducted as part of the project **“Improving the Socio-economic Status of Disabled People in the Gaza Strip within an Inclusive Development Approach”** Co-funded by EC and CBM. Aiming to build stronger fundraising programs and presents a framework for assessing operational activities, examines the responsibilities of the fundraising departments, discusses program support types, covers emerging trends, and offers advice from the field for fundraising executives.
- **May 2015: (36) Training hours in Constituent Involvement Planning was conducted for a number of (22) social Workers and Public Relations Officers.** The course was conducted as part of the project **“Improving the Socio-economic Status of Disabled People in the Gaza Strip within an Inclusive Development Approach”** - Co-funded by EC and CBM. The training course aimed to activate the role of constituents in the work of CSOs to raise awareness and gain the community support and cooperation in their work.
- **September, 2015: (64) Training hours of TOT in professional disciplines of psychosocial support for (20) service providers in professional discipline of psychosocial support.** The course was conducted as part of the project **“Hearing Screening and Psycho-social Intervention for Deaf Children and their Families in the Gaza Strip”** Co-funded by CBM and MBZ.
- **December, 2015: (30) training hours in assessment and intervention skills for social work practice for a number of (25) deaf and hearing services providers.** The course was conducted as part of the project **Hearing Screening and Psycho-social Intervention for Deaf Children and their Families in the Gaza Strip”** Co-funded by CBM and MBZ.
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- **December 2015: (48) Training Hours in provision of basic psychosocial care for deaf children for a number of (50) family caregivers.** The course was conducted as part of the project **Hearing Screening and Psycho-social Intervention for Deaf Children and their Families in the Gaza Strip”** Co-funded by CBM and MBZ.

Atfaluna School and Kindergarten

Schooling for deaf children starts at kindergarten level and continues onto primary and middle school. The educational process in the school depends on a dual language system which includes speech and Palestinian Sign Language.

Total Number of Students for the year 2015-2016	295
Total Number of students in the kindergarten	50
Total Number of Students in the Primary Level	169
Total Number of Students in the elementary level	76
Total Number of Graduates	25
Total number of new students enrolled for the year 2016- 2017	34

During the Year 2015, many distinguished activities were marked:

- **In coordination with Fekra Arts Institute and Basma Society for Cultures and Arts**, a total of eighty (80) deaf students from grades four till six took part in drama, design and video editing of cartoons workshops to give the deaf children a space to express their feelings and share their memories .
- **In Coordination with Al Qattan Center for Child**, a total Number of (14) deaf students were enrolled in Drama Trailing course.
- **In Coordination with Nutuf Organization for Environment and Community Development with Arab Youth Climate Movement AYCM Palestine**, Atfaluna students implemented green roofing initiative; targeting the roof of Atfaluna Society for Deaf Children.
- **In coordination with Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations (PNGO)**, Atfaluna deaf students participated in a march headed to UNSCO in the occasion of the international day of people with disabilities.
- **The celebration of Arab Deaf Week** and International Reading Day took place on the 15th of April in where many educational and recreational activities were organized.



- A total number of (46) of university students including the Al-Quds Open University, College of Ability Development, Al-Azhar University, University College of Applied Sciences, and the Islamic University received work experience opportunities at Atfaluna School.



Key Regular Services at Atfaluna School and Kindergarten:

- Home visits to the families of students enrolled in the school to provide them with social, psychological and guidance services .
- Regular family counseling sessions
- Providing a daily hot lunch to the deaf students enrolled in the ASDC kindergarten and school, The meals they receive assist them in maintaining their concentration in class and energy levels throughout the day.
- Provision of non-curriculum activities including library sessions, arts and crafts classes
- Provision of financial and in kind donations for needy children enrolled in the school through sponsorship programs and humanitarian assistance .



Early Intervention

During the year 2015, the early intervention program targeted a total of **167** deaf and hearing impaired children (1-5) years old from all over the Gaza Strip and their family members. Through the program different activities were implemented to help the children be more balanced, confident, initiative and obviously more involved in their family circle. The different activities of the program ensure that deaf children acquire language and achieve age-appropriate communicative, cognitive, academic, social, and emotional development. Additionally, it empower the parents to take positive actions on behalf of and with their deaf children.



Services being provided through the program:

- 1) **Home-based educational sessions:** A total Number of **580** home visits were carried out to children enrolled in the program ; The primary goal of the home visits is to help the family members to communicate with their child and encourage his or her development in a cozy atmosphere where the child can accrue with emotional support, information sharing, observations and feedback on how to adapt interactions, deaf mentoring, and sign language lessons. The early intervention specialist work closely with the family to identify the child needs and set individual intervention plans.
- 2) **Speech therapy sessions:** a total number of **1855** speech therapy sessions were carried out during the year 2015, to assist the deaf children in communicating in oral language and boost the children's potential for better acquisition of oral/verbal skills, able to better interact with the family and community.
- 3) **Counseling sessions:** a total number of **20 group counseling** sessions and a number of **1400 individual counseling sessions** were conducted for a mothers of deaf children enrolled in the program

- 4) **Social Services for deaf children and their families: Total number of 118 social visits** took place during the year 2015; to reduce the emotional suffering among the children's mothers in particular and lessening stress of the children. The deaf children were also provided by medical assistance such as ear molds, batteries for the hearing aids, medications, etc. This kind of assistance relieved the heavy social and economic burden on the deaf children and their families.

- 5) **Training Courses a total number of 80 parents of deaf children** were benefited from three sign language course and TOT early intervention course.

Palestinian Sign Language Training Program

The sign language training program at ASDC offers sign language training to all persons of the community with special emphasis on family members of deaf persons and other service provision staff members including doctors, social workers, private and public school teachers, police officers and university students.



During the Year 2015, the following activities were marked:

1. Conducted nine (9) beginners, intermediate and advanced level sign language training courses for a number of (108) deaf family members and other community members
2. Conducted a special designed sign language course for a total number (22) employees of Bank of Palestine in the Gaza Strip
3. Special academic designed sign language course for number of 122 teaching staff of Islamic University and Al-Quds university in the Gaza Strip.
4. Provision of sign language interpretation in court, police stations, hospitals, etc.
5. Take part in formulating pressure groups to advocate in support of deaf persons and their rights
6. The production of sign language awareness brochures and the participation in a variety of sign language awareness activities

Audiology and Speech Therapy Clinics

The audiology and speech therapy clinics at ASDC provide a number of comprehensive services to the community from all age groups and areas of the Gaza Strip. Services provided include preliminary hearing screening, diagnostic testing, hearing aid fitting, ear mold production, hearing aid repair and maintenance as well as speech and language therapy. The department



consists of an audiology clinic, speech and language therapy clinic, mobile clinic and a social services office where patient's social needs are discussed. The Audiology and Speech Therapy Clinics known by its high quality equipment and the use of new testing protocols which not only reduced the waiting time for each patient but insured more accurate results.

Main Achievements of the Clinics:

1. The successful integration of (23) students with hearing loss in government and UNRWA schools
2. Conducted preliminary hearing screening through the community outreach program for 24,320 community members of which 20019 are children and 4301 are adults
3. Conducted diagnostic testing in the ASDC outpatient clinics for 2028 community members of which 1,624 are children and 1,012 are adults
4. Performed ABR testing for 732 children under the age of 5 years
5. 912 person tested were diagnosed with varying degrees of hearing loss of which 373 are children and 539 are adults
6. The fitting of 318 hearing aids for 160 persons with hearing loss
7. Carried out speech and language evaluation sessions for 1,812 children younger than 15 years of age (992 females and 818 males) of which 1,233 are children aged between 5 and 10 years and 326 children aged between 11 and 15 years.

8. A number of 10 awareness lectures in the field of hearing disabilities and speech and language delays were conducted throughout the year for community members in coordination with other community based organizations.

9. Provision of medical supplies and equipment for the beneficiaries of the outpatient clinics in particular and ASDC in general through the clinics social work.

- Home visits to families receiving services from the outpatient clinics were conducted, to evaluate the social and economic conditions of families nominated for free of charge services at ASDC



Crafts and Furniture Production Unit

Atfaluna Society for Deaf Children continued in the year 2015 to impress its customers around the world with designing and producing high quality crafts and furniture pieces. Atfaluna Crafts targeted the local, national, and international markets to promote and sale the handcraft products through its on-line catalogue as well as in an in-house shop in ASDC building.

During the year 2015, Atfaluna Crafts production Unit took part in several local and international fairs:

- ✓ **May, 2015:** participating in Europe Day in Ramallah, organized annually by the European Union, where ASDC had the chance to display and sell Atfaluna Crafts products to the guests of the event.
- ✓ **October, 2015:** participating in the Craft Exhibition Organized by the Palestinian Monetary Authority, with offering 20% discount to the public.
- ✓ **November, 2015:** participating in the Bazar of Palestinian Women Entrepreneurs, Organized by the American House in Jerusalem.

The following Promotional Campaigns has also took place during the year:

- ✓ **23% Discount** to the public in May 2015 for three days in the Atfaluna Crafts Shop in celebration of Atfaluna's 23rd anniversary.
- ✓ **20% Discount** in October 2015, on all Atfaluna crafts and furniture products.

The following designs and patterns were added to the Atfaluna Crafts product collection in 2015:



The flowing item is most popular craft product of the year where a number of 140 bag were sold during 2015.

women bag made by Majdalawi fabric which a traditional Palestinian cloth woven by a male weaver on single treadle looms, using black and indigo cotton threads combined with silk threads in fuchsia and turquoise



If you'd prefer an armchair tour of Atfaluna Crafts, we'd be pleased to have you visit ASDC website, www.atfaluna.net, where you can read about the Society's work and do on-line shopping in the Atfaluna Crafts Boutique. In spite of the very difficult situation that exists in the Gaza Strip, Atfaluna can most of the times ensure shipment of goods anywhere in the world.

Vocational Training Unit

Atfaluna Society for Deaf Children believes in the importance of training and preparing people with disabilities to become productive and independent persons and support them to obtain a permanent income. Atfaluna vocational training Unit is an income generation program which focuses on training, rehabilitation, and job creation for the people with disabilities and marginalized persons in the Gaza Strip.

ASDC is working hard to promote the abilities of PwDs in the community throughout inclusive job creation programs and innovative income generating programs run by ASDC, all supported by advocacy and networking with representatives of the private sector, Ministries and employment creation agencies implemented by international organizations to locate job opportunities for deaf youth in the different sectors and try to maintain them



Through the year 2015 the following achievements were marked:

- A total number of (215) person with disabilities obtained training courses in the fields of sewing, embroidery, furniture making, upholstery, culinary arts, graphic design, photography, jewelry making and hairdressing .
- A total number of (40) person with disabilities obtained apprenticeship opportunities in local restaurants, food production shops, and carpentry workshops throughout the Gaza Strip in which (19) person of them obtained permanent job placement.
- The establishment of (20) small projects. Projects are in the fields of: poultry farming for women and men, hairdressing for young women, and mobile food carts. These fields were identified by the beneficiaries themselves based on their competencies.



all the above supported by job counseling and guidance workshops and awareness lectures on inclusive development for community members including employers and managers of businesses



“ I run my own projects from home now, but I will work hard to expand it and have my own sewing factory” Kefaya Al-Shami, 33 years old, recipient of sewing project.



“The feeling of being independent and self-reliant is undescrivable.”Mohammed Zorob, 27 years old , recipient of poultry farm project.

Social and psychological Services

The unit offers services to persons with hearing and speech problems and involves the entire family in the treatment process. The services offered by the department assist children from early childhood stages of hearing loss identification and continues on with them during their educational process and later on in their lives. Cases are referred from other departments within the society as well as from other specialized service providers including private clinics and UNRWA.



Key Department Activities during 2015:

1. A total number of (1450) Individual and group psychological counseling for deaf adults and their family members were conducted
2. A total number of (50) Home visits were carried out to a number of deaf youth and their families
3. A total number of (25) A number of awareness workshops were conducted for a number of 850 deaf youth, their families and other community members
4. Received a number of (50) university students and graduates who were permitted to volunteer for experience in ASDC and maintained their supervision
5. Coordination and networking with local service providers where a number of 200 persons were referred to other service providers and number of 370 persons were received at atfaluna in need of services .
6. The coordination and follow up with representatives of the private sector, Ministries and employment creation agencies implemented by international organizations to locate job opportunities for deaf youth in the different sectors and try to maintain them
7. The distribution of humanitarian assistances provided by donors through the organizations projects .