



Annual Report 2019

**Atfaluna Society for Deaf Children
(ASDC)**

Introduction

Atfaluna Society for Deaf Children, is a registered Palestinian NGO located in Gaza City, has been working in the field of persons with hearing disabilities education and allied services since 1992. Literally thousands of deaf children and adults and their families are served annually at Atfaluna through persons with hearing disabilities 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. The organisation currently employs 137 permanent staff members of which 60% are deaf. Atfaluna's services focus on serving persons with hearing disabilities in particular and the community in general. This focus comes in light of the inclusive development approach Atfaluna adopts to create an inclusive environment for persons with disabilities within an all-inclusive environment free of limitations.

Respect of human rights is a key component throughout the organisation. Atfaluna adopts the Convention of International Human Rights and International Laws as well as Palestinian laws in this regard. Due to this Atfaluna has developed several policies which guarantee equal rights for everyone and has worked on adopting it and publicizing it to organisations working in the field. It has also developed practical procedures to guarantee accomplishment and a comprehensive complaint system; **among these policies are:**

- **Child protection policy**
- **Neutrality and non-discrimination policy**
- **Conflict of interest policy**
- **Anti-corruption policy**

Atfaluna considers itself a learning organisation, it believes in the principle of change, it continuously works to modify its techniques and train its staff to keep up with changes and trends within the charity sector, administrative, financial, social, psychosocial, educational and vocational in line with world visions and keeping with the Palestinian setting.

The family environment at Atfaluna and close social bonds and high dedication and commitment which ties the Atfaluna staff together makes Atfaluna stand out as an exceptional model for the work of NGOs who continue to serve their communities regardless of difficulties and challenges.

Vision:

A Palestinian disability inclusive society where persons with disabilities enjoy their full rights.

Mission:

Atfaluna Society for Deaf Children is a non-profit organization that endeavours to empower persons with hearing disability as well as persons with other disabilities in the Gaza Strip and improve their quality of life within a disability-inclusive development framework.

Specific Objectives:

- **Provision of an educational environment suited to the needs and outlook of students with hearing disabilities**
- **Development of the life skills of people with hearing disabilities**
- **Building employability skills of youth with disabilities**
- **Support to early intervention services and early identification of hearing problems**
- **Awareness raising of local community towards people with hearing disability**
- **Organizing advocacy campaigns to support the rights of people with disabilities**
- **Reinforcing inclusive development approach in all services offered by the organisation to persons with disabilities**
- **Ongoing development of staff capacities to ensure best results are continuously.**

Through a host of programs offered within the organisation throughout the year the following programs offer high quality services to the Atfaluna community:

Sign Language Program

Sign language is the primary language for people with hearing disabilities, it is their mother tongue, it gives them the means to express their thoughts and communicate with their surrounding environment. Palestinian sign language is considered the corner stone for deaf culture in Palestine and which helped establish their independent identity. Year after year the language developed carrying with it, history of generations of people with hearing disabilities.

The sign language training program in ASDC welcomes all persons of the community with special emphasis on family members of people with hearing disabilities and other service provision staff members including doctors, social workers, private and public-school teachers, police officers and university students.



Aim of the Program:

The program aims to develop Palestinian sign language in a way which enhances and spreads sign language in order to ease communication and integration of people with hearing disabilities within their households and in the community as a whole. Bolstering the inclusion of people with hearing disabilities allows them to convey their thoughts and feelings and helps them in understanding their surroundings better therefore becoming an equal and important part of it.

The sign language training program works to:

- **Implement beginners, intermediate and advanced level sign language training courses throughout the year**
- **Conduct specialized academic sign language courses**
- **Update and develop sign language enabling it to keep up with other languages**
- **Offering sign language interpretation in courts, police stations, hospitals, etc.**
- **Take part in formulating pressure groups to advocate in support of people with hearing disabilities and spreading of sign language in addition to adaptation of public and private facilities to accommodate people with hearing disabilities**

Education Program

➤ Early Intervention

The early intervention program consists of a group of educational, rehabilitative, protective services offered to children with and without disabilities in need of extra developmental and educational assistance and is linked to early identification of problems or disabilities among young children.

The program is considered the foundation for other educational programs since it trains and rehabilitates the children socially, educationally and prepares them for formal education.



➤ Home-Based Educational Sessions

The home-based educational sessions are implemented as part of the early intervention services. Both mother and child receive training through a series of intensive activities which focus mainly on the mother who is guided through communication development enabling her to become the primary educator for her child with hearing disability at home. The program targets children from new-borns to five years old. Once they reach the age of five the child is enrolled in pre-school where the child begins the formal education system.

The early intervention program is implemented in all four geographical areas of the Gaza Strip and serves approximately 100 children annually. The program works to guide and assist families of newly diagnosed children with hearing disabilities during the early critical days through individually implemented plans and includes social guidance, counselling and home visits to the families. Parents are also enrolled in early intervention, communication, and sign language training in addition to awareness workshops for family members in various fields.

➤ Atfaluna Inclusive Nursery

This unit was newly established within Atfaluna in 2017, it offers the necessary healthcare, personal hygiene, nutritional and behavioural guidance for 15 children with and without disabilities aged younger than three years on an annual basis.

➤ **Atfaluna Inclusive Kindergarten**

The ASDC kindergarten is based on learning through play and educational play corners. It aims to create positive change within the children's hobbies, habits, skills and abilities from physical, mental, psychosocial, and social aspects through activities that mainly focus on self-care, developing communication skills using sign language and alphabets and creating self-acceptance among children with and without disabilities and their families. A total of 50 children with and without disabilities are enrolled within the program annually their ages ranging between 5 and 6 years of age.



Aim of the Program:

Providing children with and without disabilities aged between 0 and 5 years and their families with guidance, prevention, rehabilitation, education services to ensure the necessary interventions are available from the very early signs of any delays which may hinder a child's stable development within an inclusive development approach.

➤ **Atfaluna School**

Atfaluna School has been offering academic educational services for children with hearing disabilities in the Gaza Strip since the year 1992. The Atfaluna School is considered an educational model which endeavours to achieve inclusive development for students with hearing disabilities. The schooling system at Atfaluna 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 verbal and Palestinian Sign Language. The average number of students enrolled in the school is 170 students annually ranging in age from 6 to 17 years of age.



The academic curriculum consists of two main factors: (1) hearing loss rehabilitation subjects including auditory training and auditory speech training and (2) educational subjects including Arabic and English language, mathematics, geography, computer and information technology,

civic education, and science. Additionally, the students are introduced to non-curriculum subjects including arts, crafts, and drama.

To ensure the best possible educational environment is available for the students in class the number of students in each group is limited to 12 students at most allowing teacher and student to have close one to one communication. Each classroom is furnished with a large mirror and other visual tools to assist children with residual hearing to practice speech in class. The school has also adopted an educational moving class system which requires the students to change classrooms depending on the class schedule. The school operates five days a week from 8 am till 2 pm.

The Atfaluna School works hard to provide high quality services to the students with hearing disabilities through:

- **Development of special educational curriculums that accommodate the abilities of students with hearing disabilities due to lack of formal curriculums available to them on a national level. The curriculums are comprehensive and informative and specially formulated to suit the deaf student's needs including Palestinian sign language and speech language exercises.**
- **Provision of non-curriculum activities including library sessions, arts and crafts classes**
- **Provision of healthy and balanced nutritious meals for the students enrolled in the school throughout the academic year to ensure the students maintain their physical and mental abilities that allow them to concentrate in class and have the energy needed to fully cooperate during lessons. The lunch program at Atfaluna has proved vital to support the educational accumulation of the students which under the deteriorated conditions in Gaza has affected the majority of the deaf students' families.**
- **Social support and counselling for deaf children and their families to resolve issues preventing the inclusion of children with hearing disabilities within their families and communities**

Aim of the Program:

Achieving comprehensive cohesion for students with hearing disabilities and enabling them educationally and including them within the Palestinian society and attaining them their full rights.

➤ **Academic Teaching Staff:**

The Atfaluna School teaching committee consists of 45 teachers, 22 of which are with hearing disabilities. The team consists of administrators, educational supervisors, social workers and counsellors. The organization makes every effort to develop the teaching skills of its academic team in the school and has therefore, submitted its teaching assistants all of whom are with

hearing disabilities into five-year training program consisting of communication development and academic sign language. The organisation also regularly enrolls its staff in capacity development training to support their teaching skills.

➤ **School Social Services Unit:**

The unit employs a social worker and school counsellor as well as a counsellor assistant who has hearing disability. The unit offers several support programs for the students with hearing disabilities enrolled in the School that aims at improving their lives and improving their educational achievements through offering them social and psychosocial interventions in addition to building the students awareness as well as their families through individual and group counselling sessions and regular home visits. The unit conducts open days that include recreational as well as non-curriculum activities for the students as well as educational and recreational field trips.

➤ **Community Centre for Adult Education**

The community centre at Atfaluna works to develop the community through learning and training activities and as a resource for community information, services, resources, arranging and networking. The core concept of the Centre's idea is based on offering courses that aim at enabling, social transformation, quality of life through learning for life, fulfilling resources and social activities.

The activities within the Centre are flexible and susceptible to sharing and can be led by any member of society. While support procedures are in place and available through strengthening cooperation, networking and partnerships.



Main Responsibilities of the Community Centre

1. Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and building employability skills based on local market needs

Providing the community with TVET activities based on beneficiaries and local market needs through the vocational training program available in the Centre.

2. Information and Studies:

➤ **Community information and services**

- Feasibility studies and needs assessments
- Counselling and guidance services

3. Community Development:

- Local community activities “occasions, celebrations, world celebration days...”
- Promoting creative ideas and adopting and developing small discoveries

4. Organising and Networking:

- Enhancing ties among government and non-governmental organisations
- Enhancing ties with local and international universities
- Enhancing the concept of sharing and exchanging experiences among individuals and organisations
- Enhancing learning for life

Aim of the Program:

- Achieving the concept of learning for life
- Social and economic enablement of community members
- Improving communication and community social cohesion
- Enhancing and developing the community
- Prompt response to community demands

Vocational Training Program

The vocational training program is one of the ASDC programs which aims at enabling persons with and without disabilities in the Gaza Strip through vocational training which improves their chances at locating job opportunities within the local labour market.

The program offers short- and long-term training courses in a range of fields including: product design, sewing, embroidery, carpentry, furniture production, furniture painting, upholstery, painting on wood, pottery production, pottery painting, arabesque design, jewellery making, photography, fabric and rug weaving.

Participants of the vocational training courses also take part in job counselling workshops where they are informed about employment laws, the Palestinian disability law and



fundamentals of human rights. Business owners and employers are also invited to the workshops in an attempt to bring together the opinions, fears and ideas of both parties in order to minimize pre-conceptions about persons with disabilities limitations in the workplace.

Outpatient Clinics

The outpatient clinics in ASDC were established in the year 1993 to provide comprehensive and varied services to all age groups and from all areas of the Gaza Strip. The services provided include primary and diagnostic hearing testing, hearing aid fitting, ear mould production, hearing aid repair, speech and language therapy. The department includes the following clinics:



- **Audiology Clinic:** offers its services to the local community, the clinic employs audiology experts specialised in evaluating and diagnosing hearing problems and hearing aid fitting. The clinic also includes two labs one specialised in hearing aid repair and maintenance and the second in ear mould production. The clinic also employs a social worker which provides services to the clinic's beneficiaries.
- **Speech and Language Development Clinic:** the clinic consists of two units both offering speech and language development services to children enrolled in the Atfaluna early intervention program, the Atfaluna School and other students from outside Atfaluna in need of speech therapy sessions.
- **Outreach Community Hearing Screening Clinic:** the work of the clinic is part of ASDC's outreach services being offered to the community. The clinic offers free-of-charge hearing screening on a daily basis in local kindergartens, public schools, UNRWA schools, local organisations, local CSOs, across the Gaza Strip. During screening activities community awareness is carried out by an awareness expert and information filled brochures are distributed to the beneficiaries. Thousands of persons are screened for hearing loss on an annual basis through the outreach program. Referrals are made to ASDC outpatient clinics for further testing and diagnosis and often to other specialized doctors depending on the case.

Social Services Program

The program offers its services to adults with hearing disabilities and their families. The program receives cases transferred from the different departments of the organisation and other service provision organisations. **The program offers the following services:**

- **Provision of individual and group psychosocial sessions for adults with hearing disabilities and their families**
- **Provision of awareness and cultural workshops for adults with hearing disabilities and their families in day to day related topics.**
- **Networking with public and private sectors to locate job opportunities for the youth with hearing disabilities**
- **Referral of youth with hearing disabilities in need of services from other local NGOs**
- **Contributing to formulating pressure groups that promote the rights of persons with disabilities to employment opportunities**
- **Distribution of humanitarian assistance to needy families of persons with hearing disabilities and other marginalised groups (specially women) in the Gaza Strip**

Aim of the Program:

Improving the social and psychological aspects of life for persons with hearing loss and their families in the Gaza Strip.

Atfaluna Crafts

The Atfaluna Crafts production unit was established in the year 1998 to fulfil the needs of youth with hearing disabilities to rehabilitate and strengthen their skills. The program successfully trained thousands of persons and provided job opportunities to hundreds of them in the local job market. In addition to establishing small businesses for them. Since its establishment the program has been in continuous development. A number of units were established within the department and include:



- **The crafts production unit and includes crafts production units including: carpentry unit, sewing unit, embroidery, pottery production and design, painting on wood, rug and fabric weaving, in addition to the crafts and furniture shops located within Atfaluna and in external locations.**

The department employs 51 women and men with hearing disabilities, and is made up of five main workshops furnished and operating according to a comprehensive production system (design, production, marketing). The workshops include:

- **Carpentry and wood painting**
- **Sewing and embroidery**
- **Rug and fabric hand weaving**
- **Painting on wood**
- **Pottery production and design**

Stages of Production:

1. **Design:** each department is responsible for the product design of its products; a specialized team of employees put together creative new ideas linking between Palestinian tradition and modern designs. A sample of the new idea is made and viewed by customers who give their opinion on colour, shape and texture.
 2. **Production:** new designs and orders are processed by the production team who prepare the raw materials required to complete the order and proceed in preparing the order with utmost accuracy and care. The pieces produced include women's clothing, decorative items and furniture pieces.
 3. **Marketing and Sales:** the beautifully produced hand crafts are sold in Atfaluna's permanent showroom located in the ASDC premises. The products are sold locally as well as internationally via Atfaluna's online product catalogue. In the year 2013 Atfaluna launched its furniture showroom which sells hand crafted furniture pieces including dining rooms, living rooms, guest rooms, etc. All the items available in the showroom are produced by deaf artisans. All proceeds of sales are re-invested into the society to contribute towards covering expenses of the production unit.
- Work from home program supports more than 150 women and men with hearing disabilities and other marginalised women who graduated from the ASDC vocational training courses. The program provides them with the raw materials and tools needed to produce handicrafts which are then marketed and sold within the Atfaluna Crafts stores.

Aim of the Program:

Empowering deaf youth and improving their quality of life through vocational training and job creation.

Child Protection Unit

Since the year 2016 ASDC began to systemise its work in compliance with child protection as an important component of the organisations work. Working with large numbers of children has been a big part of Atfaluna’s work for many years, it was therefore important that the organisation took this important step in providing a safe environment for children. In 2017 ASDC formally adopted its own child protection policy in compliance with local and international standards. The organisation is completely committed to this policy throughout its programs and activities. The child protection services and activities at ASDC include:



1. **Formulation of a child protection committee assigned to follow up and ensure proper implementation of the ASDC child protection policy**
2. **Authorisation of behaviour foundation within ASDC**
3. **Establishment of a complaint follow up system specifically formulated for child harassment and abuse**
4. **Spreading child protection culture among local organisations**
5. **Implementation of many activities to increase student awareness as well as community awareness towards child protection, children’s rights and enablement.**

The child protection unit will continue to facilitate activities that contribute to spreading information about the unit’s work.

Inclusive Education Program

This program works to reinforce inclusive education opportunities within public schools and universities by networking and coordinating with the Ministry of Education, UNRWA education unit and Palestinian Universities. To achieve this the program works on training teaching staff, students and their relatives on concepts and procedures of achieving inclusive education within schools and universities. Since the establishment of the inclusive education program at ASDC in 2017 it has successfully included tens of students with disabilities in public schools and universities side by side with their non-disabled peers.

Aim of the Program:

Provision of an inclusive educational environment for people with disabilities in public and private educational facilities to guarantee equal opportunities for students with disabilities with non-disabled students.

Advocacy and Networking

The advocacy program began its work in 2011 to support persons with disabilities through activating social, economic educational, health and civil disability laws and gaining local community and decision makers support to create real change in the reality of persons with disabilities in benefit of the entire community.



Six pressure groups operate within the program consisting of persons with disabilities and representatives of civil society organisations. These committees work within a clear strategic plan that aims to create community mobilisation that believes in the cause being followed. Each of the committees has adopted an objective that it works on achieving. The objectives laid down as part of the strategic plan of the program include:

- **Spreading inclusive development principles and working on adopting the inclusive development framework that was developed by ASDC**
- **Integrating early hearing detection and intervention services for new-borns within the primary health care sector in the Gaza Strip**
- **Facilitating the mobilization and access of services for people with disabilities**
- **Reinforcing sign language within the Palestinian society**
- **Promoting the rights of persons with disabilities to job opportunities within the community**
- **Promoting deaf sports programs and activities**
- **Promoting the rights of children with disabilities to protection against violence, abuse, and exploitation**

List of Projects 2019

	Donor	Project Title	Budget
1	Islamic Fund	Improving the Quality of Services Provided to Persons with Disabilities in the Gaza Strip (2017-2018)	USD 36,961
2	Kuwait Fund	Improving the Vocational Education Environment in Atfaluna Society for Deaf Children for People with Disabilities (2017-2018)	USD 260,016
3	Kuwait Fund	Additional fund	USD 50,000
4	CBM Germany	Building a Sustainable and Social Business Model (2018-2020)	EUR 150,528
5	UNICEF	Pre-school and First Grade School Children in Gaza Assessed from Developmental Delays and Screened from Hearing and Speech Difficulties	USD 82,283.78
6	Save the Children	The Early Intervention Program for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children and their Families	USD 93,330
7	Mel Wolf Foundation	Promoting a Child Safe Environment in the Gaza Strip through Enhancing Child Protection Response Mechanisms	USD 33,250
8	BMZ	Improving the Psychosocial Resilience of Children with and without Disabilities in the Gaza Strip	EUR 400,412
9	UNDP	Vocational Training and Job Creation Program for People with Disabilities in the Gaza Strip	USD 90,000
10	Swiss Development Cooperation	Provision of Quality Services for Deaf and Hearing Impaired Students in the Gaza Strip	USD 50,000
11	GIZ	Economic Empowerment for Females with Disabilities	EUR 30,400
12	CCP- Japan	Vocational Training and Job Creation Program for People with Disabilities in the Gaza Strip	USD 169164
13	UNRWA	Hearing Screening in UNRWA Schools	USD 8,000
14	Islamic Relief	Speech Therapy Services	USD 18,800
15	Humanit'Aide	Supporting Special Deaf Education Classroom 1A (2018/2019)	Euro 5199.40
16	MECA- David Halaby	Supporting Special Deaf Education Classroom 4A (2018/2019)	USD 14,276
17	Church of Scotland	Supporting Special Deaf Education Classroom 4B (2018/2019)	GBP 3,986.45
No.	Donor	Project Title	Budget

18	Lady Fatemah Trust, UK	Supporting Special Deaf Education Classroom 7A (2018/2019)	USD 14,250
19	Lady Fatemah Trust, UK	Supporting Special Deaf Education Classroom 7B (2018/2019)	USD 14,250
20	Lady Fatemah Trust, UK	Supporting Special Deaf Education Classroom1B (2018/2019)	USD 16,445
21	Lady Fatemah Trust, UK	Provision of Much-Need Empowerment for Mothers of Children Undergoing Kidney Dialysis	USD 28,760
22	Lady Fatemah Trust, UK	Ramadan Iftar	USD 20,000
23	LOPC	LOPC Classroom Academic Year (2018/2019)	USD 24,961
24	PA.IS France	Provision of Early Detection and Intervention Services for Deaf Children (between 0 and 5 Years) and their Families in the Gaza Strip- Still pending	USD 35,000
25	CCP- Japan	Supporting Special Deaf Education Classroom 2A and6A (2019)	USD 30,000
26	NDC	Enhancing the Inclusive Education for Students with Disabilities Enrolled in the Ministry of Education Schools in the Gaza Strip	USD 839,576

Atfaluna Society for Deaf Children works to achieve the strategic objectives it defined based on community needs within an inclusive development approach:

Strategic Objective1: To empower persons with disabilities to overcome excluding barriers, improve their participation and claim their rights within the framework of Disability Inclusive Development

Result 1.1 Persons with disabilities are empowered in the society

Outcome 1.1.1 Children with hearing disability are educationally empowered

1.1.1.1 Educational capacities and skills of children with hearing disability are developed

- Conducting 38 follow up visit for the deaf students enrolled in public schools resulted in an increase in their self-confidence and independence as well as increased social interaction with non-disabled students in class and school. The follow up also assisted them in overcoming various challenges and obstacles
- Participation of 3,409 students with and without disabilities in 128 inclusive event and activities to promote interaction and better communication between the children
- Participation of 599 students with and without disabilities in recreational events which reduced stress among the children and promoted better interaction among them
- More than 38 follow up visits were conducted throughout the academic year to ensure the students with hearing disabilities enrolled in public schools received the educational and phycological support they need in coordination with their school administration and teachers
- 70% accomplishment of the adapted Ministry of Education curriculum suited to the abilities of the students with hearing disabilities
- (10) Ten handwriting training sessions were given to some of the grade 9 students to improve and advance their skills at Arabic writing



1.1.1.2 Early Childhood Services are provided

- Preliminary evaluations were conducted for 66 children aged 1 to 5 years who were enrolled in the early intervention program at Atfaluna. The evaluations were conducted based on the global SKI*HI early intervention program which supports age appropriate language, literacy, cognitive, and social-emotional development
- 792 educational sessions were conducted for the children enrolled in the program of which both child and mother attended
- 66 children successfully graduated from the program and were enrolled in the Atfaluna kindergarten for the academic year
- Auditory rehabilitation for 40 children with sensory moderate hearing loss, who benefit from auditory training to reach normal hearing, giving them practice on accumulating their hearing memory and distinguishing sounds in preparation for school interaction and development



1.1.1.3 Capacities of parents to communicate with their hearing-impaired children are built

- Implementing (3) three educational sign language courses for parents of students with hearing disabilities enrolled in the Atfaluna School. The training courses focused on teaching parents' signs based on their children's class curriculums
- Implementing a number of meetings and workshops for parents of students enrolled at the Atfaluna School to discuss educational, behavioural and social topics. More than 90 mother and father took part in these activities
- Participation of parents both mothers and fathers in several library activities with their children throughout the academic year including storytelling, role playing and cutting and gluing activities
- Hearing aid follow up for 150 children fitted with hearing aids and care advice for parents on proper use and care of hearing aids to guarantee prolonged use



Outcome 1.1.2 Children with hearing disability and their family members are psychosocially empowered

1.1.2.1 Psychosocial conditions of persons with hearing disability and their families are improved

- Throughout the year a large number of psychosocial activities were carried out with the Atfaluna School students and their family members, the activities included: individual and group counselling sessions, debriefing activities, behavioural interventions, family counselling, and home visits
- Offering psychosocial intervention services to children and their family members through implementing recreational activities movement games, competitions in addition to individual and group counselling sessions
- Preparing and implementing social and psychosocial interventions for persons with hearing disabilities throughout the year
- Developing emergency psychosocial and social intervention plan in coordination with ASDC partners including: Nawa for Culture and Arts Association, Tamer Institute for Community Education, Union of Healthcare Committees, and SOS Village
- Offering psychosocial, educational and behavioural workshops for students with hearing disabilities enrolled in public schools and their family members and benefited 587 parents and had clear impact on the student's educational achievement during the year.
- Conducting 50 home visits to families of students enrolled in the Atfaluna School and in need of home counselling
- Three training courses were conducted for parents and Atfaluna staff in the field of needed support to children and their families within an inclusive approach
- Networking with organisations offering services to persons with hearing disabilities to create a referral system to cover the needs of persons with hearing disabilities
- 100 home visits conducted to families in need of psychosocial family support
- Participating in three training courses focusing on measuring tools, and psychology social support through an inclusive approach



- Individual and group psychosocial sessions were carried out for 100 family members who have children newly diagnosed with hearing loss. The sessions were key to ensure family acceptance of their children's hearing loss, how to support their children in their developmental process and how to use the hearing aids, maintain and care for them
- Offering case management for 39 children with and without disabilities in partnership with Tamer Institute for Community Education
- Conducting 1,204 group counselling sessions for children with and without disabilities based on international standards for psychosocial interventions through expressive art, drama, story reading, and psychomotor activities as well as 91 individual counselling sessions.
- Conducting 5 training courses for 60 adolescents on peer support to children with and without disabilities with the aim to enable them to provide psychosocial support to them in school and out of school

Outcome 1.1.3 Children with hearing disability have access to auditory services

1.1.3.1 Auditory access of persons with hearing disability improved

- Hearing aid fitting for 200 children with hearing disabilities who struggle educationally due to their hearing loss. Fitting the hearing aids supported the students in acquiring spoken language, communication skills and education
- Reporting good improvement in students hearing abilities who were fitted with hearing aids
- Ear mould production for 50 children with hearing loss enrolled in speech therapy sessions, early intervention program and school education
- Hearing aid maintenance and repair for 250 cases

Result 1.2 Opportunities of persons with disabilities to participate and access rights are improved

Outcome 1.2.1 A society conscious of the rights of persons with disabilities

1.2.1.1 Awareness towards the rights of persons with disabilities has been raised

- Implemented two training courses in the field of inclusive development approach and inclusive behavioural actions within school environment and the rights of children with hearing disabilities. The trainings targeted 42 teachers, behavioural counsellors and special education teachers
- Building the capacities of 25 teachers and educational counsellors in means of communication with children with hearing disabilities through implementing sign language training
- Conducted 16 awareness workshops for 497 parents of children enrolled in public schools towards inclusive education, development problems in children and rights of children with disabilities to education.
- Distributed 1,800 awareness brochure to teachers, students and parents of students enrolled in public schools
- Participation of 4,025 child in a number of events and initiatives across the Gaza Strip to raise community awareness towards persons with disabilities. The initiatives included “I’m not alone”, “we stand in solidarity”, interactive path, mural drawings, and “daddy read to me campaign”.
- Conducted focus group sessions with disabled people organisations and civil society members to identify community awareness needs towards the rights of persons with disabilities
- Conducted 20 awareness workshops towards the rights of people with disabilities in participation of persons with and without disabilities



1.2.1.2 Societal partnerships to advocate for changes in policies and regulations are concluded.

- Coordinating and planning with the counselling and special education main administration in the Ministry of Education to socially and educationally enable children with hearing disabilities included in public schools
- Partnering with several local civil society organisations including Tamer Institute for Community Education, Nawa for Culture and Arts Association, Union of Healthcare Committees, and SOS Village to implement inclusive activities

- Partnering with Qattan Foundation, Women’s Affairs Centre, Teeba and Jusur Al-Amal School, Aisha Association, Weam Association and United Palestinian Appeal
- Signing agreements with universities in the Gaza Strip with the aim to spread sign language and enlist it as a university subject to be taught within the universities.
- Membership in the higher committee for audiologists
- Sharing ASDC’s experience in child protection with 25 organisations working in the field of children with disabilities education and offering advice for them in preparing child protection procedures. Additionally, four organisations received direct direction from Atfaluna towards children with disabilities protection procedures.
- Conducting an annual consultation meeting with partner organisations, family members and persons with disabilities to formulate comprehensive emergency plans
- Coordination meetings with representatives of the Ministry of Education, governorate supervisors, school principals and counsellors to agree upon the inclusion process and adaptation of school facilities for students with hearing disabilities

1.2.1.3 Protection system for children with disabilities has been prepared and deployed

- Prepared executive plan for child protection activities which covers all areas of the Gaza Strip through the project “Improving the Psychosocial Resilience of Children with and without Disabilities and their Families in the Gaza Strip”
- Prepared psychosocial and social interventions forms and evaluation forms related to psychosocial interventions for children with and without disabilities and their relatives in the Gaza Strip.
- Implemented necessary interventions for protection of children with disabilities through proper reporting and investigating procedures in reported cases of abuse or neglect within the school
- Organised two workshops for the child protection committee to discuss child protection cases in the Gaza Strip
- Implemented two training courses in child protection and psychosocial first aid to build the capacities of teams in the field of child protection for children with and without disabilities.
- Conducted three workshops for Atfaluna school staff about positive child protection procedures and correct channels of communication and reporting of abuse





- Developed a child protection system for children with and without disabilities in coordination with local partner organisations working in the field of childhood
- Awareness workshops for 587 family members of children with and without disabilities in the field of child protection, positive parenting, and promoting psychosocial health
- Conducted life skills training for 568 children with and without disabilities to enable them in legal, cognitive and skills aspects
- Conducted inclusive activities for 3,409 children with and without disabilities to promote communication between them
- Implemented 6 recreational days for 959 children with and without disabilities and included drawing, singing, silent drama, traditional dance, physical activities competitions, clowns and puppets activities
- Designing and developing safe inclusive toys with the help of children with disabilities with the aim of promoting interaction between children with and without disabilities. Instruction manuals were prepared for each toy.

Strategic Objective 2: To strengthen Atfaluna's sustainability within the framework of Disability Inclusive Development

Result 2.1 Atfaluna's effectiveness, quality and accountability are strengthened further

Outcome 2.1.1 Disability inclusive development is adopted and mainstreamed across Atfaluna's work environment and interventions.

2.1.1.1 Atfaluna's institutional performance is strengthened further

- Physical adaptation of the Society's facilities to improve accessibility for persons with physical disabilities to all the services offered
- Developing case management tool in the outpatient clinics to ease follow up of improvement in persons with disabilities after interventions are provided
- Participation in a number of committees specialised in persons with hearing disabilities through membership head of higher national committee for audiology and auditory rehabilitation and head of national committee for new born hearing testing project
- Partnering with local companies to purchase services offered by the audiology unit in Atfaluna
- Offering psychosocial services for 87 service providers



2.1.1.2 Quality of Atfaluna's interventions is improved

- Participation of ASDC School teachers in several workshops directed towards classroom management, behavioural and educational problems among students and other class related topics.
- Comprehensive communication training was given to the teachers of students with hearing disabilities to improve and further develop their teaching skills and communication techniques in class
- New teaching tools were designed and incorporated to support the teaching process and ease the passing of information to the students in the various classes.
- Improvement of 80% in speech language abilities of students who received speech therapy sessions and resolved verbal communication problems for children fitted with hearing aids reaching development levels that permit them to enrol in public schools. This is based on achieving normal to mild degree hearing loss with the help of their hearing aids and based on test results carried out for them

- Improved quality of services offered by the outpatient clinics at ASDC by having availability of accurate and highly advanced testing by using Aided free field testing (ABR) – Automated ABR and Bone conduction.
- Implemented annual quality of service survey to measure level of beneficiary satisfaction from Atfaluna services offered

Result 2.2 Resource mobilization for financial sustainability is improved.

Outcome 2.2.1 Atfaluna’s income base is grown

2.2.1.1 Diverse strategies for financial sustainability to realize the adopted social business model are employed

- Discounts reaching up to 25% on Atfaluna Crafts products throughout the year and in celebration of Eid-UI-Adha, Mother’s Day, Eid-UI-Fitr, and ASDC’s Anniversary which contributed to increasing revenues by 11% in comparison to 2018.
- Atfaluna Crafts took part in “Women Entrepreneurs Exhibition” which was organised in the Ambassador Hotel in Jerusalem and contributed to widening ASDC’s customer base.

Strategic Objective 3: To become a catalyst and recognized resource in the field of Disability Inclusive Development.

Result 3.1 Atfaluna is effectively influencing the Disability Inclusive Development agenda

Outcome 3.1.1 Atfaluna positioned as a centre of excellence that nurtures and promotes Disability Inclusive Development

3.1.1.1 Innovative working modalities and disability inclusion solutions relevant to the Palestinian context are developed

- Implemented a number of community and organisational meetings to spread awareness towards persons with disabilities inclusive development approach
- Participation in training workshops organised by the Office of the High Commissioner – Geneva - about the rights of persons with disabilities and the rights of children
- Participated in a training course on the use of the United Nations online website with the aim to access United Nations Reports about the rights of persons with disabilities and the Palestinian annual report
- Presented a report about monitoring of violations of children’s rights to the Palestinian Center for Human Rights

3.1.1.2 Capacities of development actors around disability inclusive development through training and advisory services are improved

- Meetings with education sector representatives to raise awareness towards inclusive development approach
- Organising 13 meetings with representatives of the Ministry of Education, heads of councils, supervisors, counsellors, school heads, to discuss ways of achieving inclusive development approach within education sector
- Participated in a workshop on means of applying inclusive development approach, through formulating child protection ideas

Strategic Objective 4: Enhance lifelong education opportunities for community members within an inclusive framework

Result4.1: Life long education concepts are promoted and accessed

Outcome 4.1.1 Persons engaged in life long education is increased

- Preparing a needs assessment of psychosocial, professional and social needs of persons with disabilities
- Benefiting 204 person with disabilities from vocational trainings implemented at Atfaluna throughout the year in various fields including: culinary arts, sweets making, sewing, embroidery, furniture making, upholstery, graphic design, employability and life skills training
- Mediating 202 internship opportunities for person with disabilities through the livelihood program
- Implementing 700 individual and group job counseling sessions for youth with disabilities in preparation for the job market and implementing 188 workshops related to this
- Conducting 119 life and employability skills trainings to build the capacities of youth with disabilities
- Completing 77 job counseling workshops for business owners and employers to raise awareness towards the rights and needs of persons with disabilities
- Conducting 1,900 individual counseling sessions and family interventions for persons with disabilities and their families
- Implementing 120 visits to local organisations, businesses aiming to raise awareness of employers towards inclusive development approach and rights of persons with disabilities



- Conducting 200 coordination visits to employment areas with the aim to hire persons with disabilities with vocational training skills and 220 monitoring and follow up visits
- Supervision of 50 university students training within the different organisation departments
- Implementing 96 small business management trainings for persons with disabilities with the aim to guide them on successful business establishment
- Participation with DVV Germany in participatory rapid assessment training in partnership with UCAS and Future Home.



The training was conducted in Jordan and required application of the training on 31 persons with and without disabilities with the aim to identify their needs for trainings

- Conducting 9 inclusive group events in participation of 42 youth with and without disabilities
- Conducting a workshop to select the target group of the community center for adult education with participation of 8 staff members of the organisation
- Implementing a participatory workshop about adult education using inclusive development in participation of 20 person with and without disabilities
- Celebrating the launching of the community adult education center in Atfaluna Society for Deaf Children with participation of 80 persons with and without disabilities
- Participation in an evaluation workshop of DVV Germany



Challenges and Difficulties Faced by ASDC in 2019:

- 1. Difficulty in locating work opportunities for persons with disabilities due to lack of conviction and awareness of employers and business owners towards the abilities of persons with disabilities**
- 2. Inability of parents of Atfaluna School students to provide educational and transportation fees for their children due to severe poverty**
- 3. Lack of awareness of school teachers in general towards inclusive development approach, child protection and maintaining of other unhealthy habits towards children**
- 4. Ongoing instability in the Gaza Strip due to limitation on borders, lack of external funding, economic isolation from the outside world**
- 5. Inability to provide certain raw materials for the crafts production units and outpatient clinics.**

Success Stories

Hend Al-Shaer, Taking her First Steps towards her Independence



“I am very pleased with my first opportunity for training in culinary arts and sweets making, I am very excited because it is about time for me to practice what I learnt” Hend expressed her feelings using sign language after receiving a training opportunity in culinary arts in Atfaluna Society for Deaf Children.

“I completed my university education from the Islamic University in Gaza. I received a diploma in creative information technology. University time was full of hard work and efforts, but I constantly thought about my future, and what I would do and where? Today this opportunity has been given to me to prove my skills in culinary arts and gain hands on experience in the field”.

Aisha the trainer and direct supervisor for Hend during her training explained “Hend is very committed and motivated to learn, she takes initiatives and completes her tasks perfectly. I am pleased at how Hend uses her creativity from her university degree in her cooking recipes and turns simple recipes into creative tasty meals”.

Hend is one of tens of youth with disabilities who benefited from the activities of the project *“Economic Empowerment of Female Youth with Disabilities”* funded by GIZ – Germany. The project aims to economically and socially empower youth with disabilities through an inclusive development approach through their inclusion in society; giving them the opportunity to integrate in the job market and provide a source of income, in addition to raising awareness towards the rights of persons with disabilities within an inclusive society for all.

Sahar gives hope and optimism using her hands



Sahar Abu Ouda (35 years old) a woman with hearing loss lives in the Buraij Refugee Camp with her family of five members. Sahar is one of several women who benefitted from the work from home program run by the crafts production unit at Atfaluna.

Sahar has a strong passion for embroidery and has always been attracted by the various forms of traditional Palestinian embroidery. After completing training in the arts of sewing and embroidery at Atfaluna Society for Deaf Children her skills were greatly developed enabling her to produce high quality professional embroidery pieces.

After successfully completing the training Sahar enrolled in the work from home program which supports approximately 150 women with hearing disabilities and other marginalised women from across the Gaza Strip. The program aims to enable young women and men with hearing disabilities socially and economically through social and job inclusion giving them the experience and skills needed and confirming their ability to produce and create artistic pieces.

Sahar's work from home is considered a vital lifeline for herself and her family. She has grown independent and contributes well to her family needs.

Using sign language Sahar expresses her happiness by saying *"I am very proud of myself; I work in the field that I love and develop my skills on a daily basis. The Atfaluna Crafts customers admire and buy the embroidered products we hand make and this pleases me greatly"*. She adds *"I truly hope this program continues; it represents an important source of income for hundreds of women just like me. It also works on spreading the Palestinian identity and preserves it from diminishing"*.

Atfaluna Visitors



Visit from the GIZ – Germany Office



Visit from the Swiss Development Cooperation – Head Office



Visit from Save the Children



Visit from Head of Mission of the Representative Office of the Federal Republic of Germany



Visit from the World Food Programme Head Office



Visit from the Acting European Union Representative



Visit from UNICEF Main Office



Visit from the Swiss Development Cooperation – Gaza Office

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