



Australian Foundation for Palestinian Children Olive Kids

Annual Report - 2018-19

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The Australian Foundation for Palestinian Children (*Olive Kids*) 2018-19 annual report presents the achievements of the foundation on key projects and initiatives.

Director's Note

At the annual dinner this year, I reflected on 3 words, all starting with the letter R; Reality, Responsibility and Rights.

The daily **reality** of the children of Palestine has progressively worsened over the years, under occupation and/or blockade for those in Gaza. Children suffer post-traumatic stress, poor health care, lack of clean water, financial distress and poor education.

The last 12 months have been devastating after the United States government ended all funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the primary UN body that operates schools and health clinics in Gaza and the refugee camps. The conditions of Palestinians children on the ground are alarming, amplified by the hundreds of recent children injuries in the lower limbs.

We all have a **responsibility** towards the children of the world, in Australia and everywhere, and Palestine should be no exception. We have the responsibility to contribute and help end their suffering. It is this sense of responsibility that continues to drive and motivates the Olive Kids team.

At Olive Kids, we believe in **rights**, and we also believe that defending children's rights to health, education and freedom is a human language that everyone is able to speak and understand. A language that more Australians than ever are speaking today, not allowing it to be clouded by the politics of power, division and fear.



We are going to continue to educate our fellow Australians about the reality of Palestinian children, hope that they make it their own responsibility as it has been ours and work with us to defend their rights.

Amin Abbas

Child Sponsorship Program

The child sponsorship program has been Olive Kids' main ongoing program since 2009 and has continued to expand with the ever-growing demand for support for the children, the most marginalised segment of the community in Palestine and particularly in Gaza. The number of children sponsored has now reached 370 after our annual dinner in June 2019, reflecting the desire of our growing community of 270 sponsors to help the most vulnerable of Palestinian children, however also setting an ongoing new challenge for a volunteering organisation.



The new additions to the program continued our focus from 2018 of assisting yet again an even more marginalised segment, orphaned children with disabilities and complex needs.

Over the last 6 months, we have increased our collaboration with Al-Amal Institute, given the ongoing growth of the program and its administration requirements, with the program now contributing over \$220,000 annually to the children of Gaza. We established a more frequent meeting cadence with Al-Amal, bringing mutual benefits in coordination of ongoing and new initiatives in the program.

This year we also digitised and improved the process of from Al-Amal, with 300 children's reports received, translated by our diligent volunteer translator team and distributed to sponsors. We also received letters of thanks and artworks by the children for the sponsors which were very well received and appreciated.





Building on enhancements of payments processing automation in 2018, 2019 saw the introduction of a new website allowing sponsorships to be setup online, with 30 sponsorships setup through the site to date. The 2019 fundraising dinner also saw the successful trial of a digital app developed pro bono for Olive Kids, providing a better experience for sponsors joining the program at the dinner.

Given the expansion of the program, Olive Kids will look into new ways of managing both ends of the process, streamlining our engagements with Al-Amal and the Children and also enhance our tools and processes with our sponsors. The child sponsorship program volunteer team doubled in size over the last 24 months, and the next phase will involve a focus on further expanding the team and reviewing the tools and processes used. A focus area in 2019-20 is the implementation of a CRM system, allowing us to better serve & communicate with our sponsors while simplifying current processes for our growing team.

Clothes Drives

Olive Kids continued its efforts in the 2019 financial year to collect high quality clothing and toys for Palestinian children in refugee camps in Jordan.

The clothes and toys collected through the program are to be distributed in collaboration with the Jeresh Camp Women Centre, a community organisation operating on the ground that has been selected and recommended by UNRWA.

A shipment was sent in June and is targeted to arrive late July to Aqaba port in Jordan. This donation will be the final shipment for the foreseeable future as it has been determined that resources are currently better spent elsewhere, in addition to the recent challenges relating to customs and administrative efforts at the receiving end of the aid.

Clothes drives are popular among our supporters and an activity we started from our early days. Olive Kids has ceased the current format of this initiative and is moving to targeted aid and business donations in future.





Medical Missions

Collaboration with the Union of Health Work Committees (UHC) continued during the year with further expansion of the current collaboration to explore prosthetics, an undertaking as part of our 2019 campaign. The planned 11th medical mission to Gaza has been rescheduled again due to the political instability and border crossing closures.

The mission is now planned in 2020 and will be led once again by paediatric surgeon Prof. David Croaker and his team. Efforts are also continuing to mobilise an additional orthopaedic surgeons mission to address the excessive number of lower limbs injuries, however, this continues to be a challenge given the circumstances in Gaza.

Fundraising Events

11th Annual Fundraising Dinner



In 2019 Olive Kids held our 11th Annual Fundraising Dinner and launched the #LetsAllJoinIn campaign. This year's event was even bigger than last year's, with tickets selling out a week in advance.

At the 10th Annual Fundraising Dinner in 2018, we raised over \$150,000 AUD to complete the construction of the Olive Kids wing at Al Amal Orphanage in Gaza.

This year's goals were focussed on enabling access to sports for disadvantaged children, while also expanding the child sponsorship program:

- Raise \$10,000 to fund our medical mission to Gaza
- Raise \$60,000 to fund prosthetics for Palestinian Children
- Raise \$10,000 to fund high quality crutches for Palestinian children



- Raise \$20,000 to fund sports participation programs, including the purchase of 1000 soccer balls
- Sponsor 100 additional children, including children with special needs through the Olive Kids Child Sponsorship Program (which provides financial support for basic necessities for more than 290 children in Gaza)

On the night 4 of the 5 goals were met, with only 35 out of 100 children still requiring sponsorship by the end of the night. Since the event there has been a marketing push to ensure that these children are also sponsored.

Once again, the event was held at Peninsula in Docklands, with dinner catered by Dineamic. This year's dessert was catered by Kunafeh House, who provided traditional Palestinian knafeh, and Cupcake Central who provided vegan and gluten free cupcakes.

In keeping with the Let's All Join In theme, the entertainment for the evening was provided by local Palestinian talent. MC for the night was our own Jeanine Hourani, with stunning vocals provided by singer Heba Tayeh and traditional Palestinian dabke lead by regular supporters Jafra Dabke.

This year's dinner was sponsored by Achieve Homes (Platinum), Liberty Builders (Platinum), Yarra Consulting Group (Gold) and MCCA (Bronze).

The final amount raised was **\$135,677**.

Shout for Good

This year we have implemented ANZ's new fundraising platform Shout For Good. This platform allows donors to make regular and once-off donations to Olive Kids. Through this platform, supporters or "shouters" can choose to donate the value of everyday items to support the cause, just as if they were "shouting" a good mate. They can do this by donating the cost of an everyday item (such as a cup of coffee), donating the cost of a custom charity item (such as a set of crutches) or donating a custom amount.

This platform also integrates with handheld terminals that can accept card payments, of which we had access to 20 terminals on the night of the fundraiser. This allowed for seamless card transactions, instant receipts generated for donors via email or sms, and data collection (amounts raised and details for reconciliation) which made collecting payments throughout the event smooth and effortless. It also streamlined reconciliation after the event, greatly simplifying the process. This platform can be leveraged throughout the year with potential to expand the scope of our ongoing campaigns.



Projects

Construction of the Olive Kids Wing at Al-Amal

Olive Kids' largest campaign to date has been to fund the construction of a new wing of the building at the Al-Amal Orphanage in Gaza. This project started in 2018 and continued in 2019 with an expected completion date in late August 2019.



The overall contribution of Olive Kids is in excess of \$400,000, leveraging the funds raised over two fundraising events to deliver on our commitment to help Al-Amal host the youngest children with a purpose built facility.

The Olive Kids wing is intended for children under 5 years of age, and Olive Kids has also committed to furnish the rooms to host the young children.

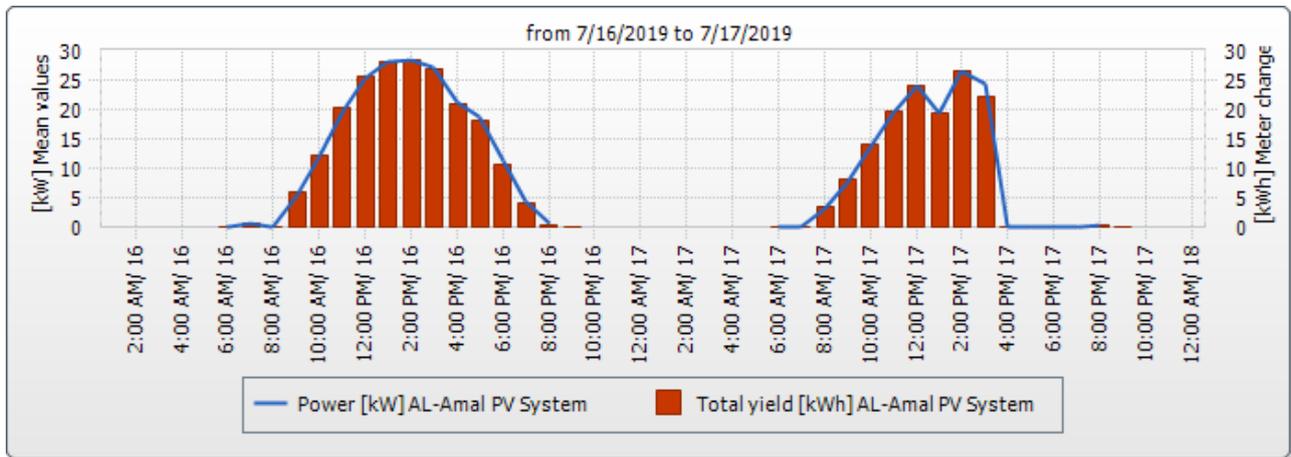
Olive Kids looks forward to sharing the news of the opening of the wing over the coming weeks with our generous donors and supporters.





Solar Project in Gaza

The Olive Kids funded solar panel system at the Al-Amal Institute continues to help the center manage and mitigate the impact of electrical power cuts. Regular reports on the system are received by Olive Kids, confirming the return on our earlier investment.



FY20 Focus

As international donor contributions continue to shrink due to further politicisation of aid and the funding of programs that help Palestinian children continue to be squeezed, the challenges for Olive Kids to meet the increased needs on the ground will continue to grow.

In financial year 2020, Olive Kids will focus on delivering on our commitments for two of our major campaigns; the completion and furnishing of the Olive Kids wing at Al-Amal (2017 and 2018 campaigns) and prosthetics and sports inclusion programs (2019 campaign).

The former is expected to be completed in the first quarter of the financial year given the expected completion of construction in August 2019. The project, the largest and most ambitious, is expected to have the wing operational with young children within weeks of the completion date given the long waiting list of children.

The latter is likely to begin within the next 12-18 months, and will involve new agreements and collaboration arrangements. This collaboration will involve existing partners like the Union of Health Workers Committee, and also new ones that will be vetted and validated.

During the coming months, we are also going to review our children sponsorship program, an activity that has become an annual challenge given the increase of the children we sponsor. Maintaining our 100% volunteering as we expand our work requires unending innovation, energy and passion for the cause, none of which the Olive Kids team is short of.



In addition, we are scoping an education-based program to provide supplementary support to children with learning difficulties. The program is planned to be delivered in partnership with Al-Amal with support from appropriately qualified teachers.

We will also be looking at enhancing our communication channels in this coming year. This has already started with new additions to the social media/marketing team, and will extend to involve more frequent updates and connection with our members and donors.

Finally, our volunteers are our strongest asset, a team of passionate individuals that have grown in capacity and contribution in FY19, and we are confident that we will witness further growth in FY20.

Olive Kids Board

