

# West Bank/Gaza



## Background

Ruwwad is a Palestinian Youth Empowerment Project, implemented by Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC) and funded by USAID. Launched in 2005, Ruwwad carries the vision of providing Palestinian youth, ages 14–30, with opportunities to realize their potential and promote social change across the West Bank and Gaza. It is Ruwwad's belief that Palestinian youth are already empowered, carrying within themselves creative capacities for change. Therefore, the program's role is to provide platforms for youth to incubate their ideas and dreams and then launch them into reality.

Since 2008, the project has been implemented through three Youth Development Resource Centers (YDRCs), established by EDC as part of the U.S.-Palestinian Partnership Initiative. The YDRCs work with a network of 30 Affiliated Clubs (ACs) to provide opportunities for youth to develop their skills in a diverse range of fields. Through this comprehensive model, YDRCs have become indispensable resource platforms for Palestinian youth, empowering them to assume leadership roles in their communities and to work together to build a brighter future.



## Impact

The Ruwwad project has had the following impact on the Palestinian community:

- **1,239** youth have taken on leadership roles in their communities. Using new innovative skills gained from Ruwwad trainings, they have identified critical community issues and developed community service initiatives to address them. These initiatives have focused on issues such as access to health care, environmental degradation, and employment challenges facing people with disabilities.
- **3,630** youth volunteers have assisted in implementing different Ruwwad community-based activities.
- **27,396** youth participants have taken part in Ruwwad's extensive programming opportunities, including information and communications technology (ICT) classes, media trainings, robotics competitions, psychosocial and career counseling, environmental trainings, and voluntary activities.
- **79,340** individuals have benefited from community-based activities, many of which are led by youth leaders and volunteers.
- **543** youth have completed the Ruwwad internship program, gaining valuable on-the-job experience in their field of interest.



*Ruwwad has had a big impact on me and has shown me that youth truly can make a difference. This is what inspires me to continue my work and to empower others to be leaders as well.*

—Ruwwad youth leader

## My Story

Following the completion of one of Ruwwad's Leadership and Community Engagement Trainings in 2011, the participants were inspired and eager to use their new skills to go out and make a difference. Seven youth from the training were studying medicine at a local university; with Ruwwad's support and guidance, they began to implement mobile health clinics each week throughout the West Bank. Their efforts personified Ruwwad's belief that youth can lead the way in finding solutions to challenges in their communities.

On their days off from school, the students mobilized 145 local doctors and volunteers to implement "health days" in 12 rural villages. They provided medical checks such as blood glucose tests, blood pressure readings, and dental examinations to 1,189 people who otherwise would not have had access to this care. The events also raised awareness in the villages about important healthy habits and gave the students the opportunity to gain hands-on medical field experience.

One of the leaders of the initiative explained that this was just the beginning: "I want to establish an organization in the future which holds Ruwwad's vision. Ruwwad has had a big impact on me and has shown me that youth truly can make a difference. This is what inspires me to continue my work and to empower others to be leaders as well."



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## Components

Ruwwad implements programming at the YDRCs through four main components:

- The **Youth Development** component helps youth build innovative skills in areas such as leadership, community engagement, and ICT.
- Each YDRC is home to a **Media Center**, where youth gain hands-on media experience while raising awareness about community issues that they deem important.
- **Sub-grants** with local organizations have helped Ruwwad establish local partnerships and bring diverse programs to the YDRCs, including drama trainings, English language classes, and educational robotics laboratories.
- The **Capacity Building** component builds the institutional, technical, and programming capacities of the YDRCs to ensure that they will continue to serve as indispensable resource platforms long after Ruwwad comes to an end.



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