

PRESS RELEASE

“hbs and partners showcase success stories of their EU-funded project at the Open Day in Jerusalem”

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Heinrich Böll Stiftung - Palestine & Jordan Office held today a public event to celebrate with its partners, beneficiaries, and friends the achievements of their EU-funded project that supports vulnerable communities in East Jerusalem

The event is part of a 3-million Euro project “**Advancing Rights of Vulnerable Palestinian Women and Children in East Jerusalem**”, funded by the European Union and implemented by hbs and its five partners: Arab Center for Agricultural Development (ACAD), War Child Holland, Right to Play, ArtLab, and Sawa. The main objective of this project is to enhance the human rights of vulnerable communities in the occupied East Jerusalem through improved social, psychosocial, economic, and cultural opportunities. “With the generous support of the European Union, we have reached thousands of people, giving to the Palestinian women and children of Jerusalem what they deserve: open spaces to express themselves, develop their skills and make their dreams come true. We will continue together fighting for their rights”, said **Dr. Bettina Marx**, the Director of hbs Palestine and Jordan Office.

During the Open Day, which was hosted at the YWCA, the partners exhibited their work and achievements in the framework of the project. Hundreds of beneficiaries attended and participated in the different activities engaging children as well as adults, including exhibitions and markets of hand-made products, artistic exhibitions, musical and dancing shows, games, theatrical plays, and many other surprises. “Today’s event highlights the role of Palestinian organizations in East Jerusalem in light of the daily struggles they face to improve the living conditions and build the resilience of Palestinians in the city,” said the **EU Representative Ralph Tarraf** at the Open Day in Jerusalem. “The EU has invested 60 million euros in the last 10 years in the East Jerusalem Programme. This is yet another evidence that we are committed to maintaining the viability of a two-state solution,” he added.

The event was well attended by both local and international public, as well as by local and international officials, including representatives of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education/ Jerusalem district. His Excellence **Adnan Al-Husseini**, Palestinian Governor of Jerusalem, underlined the importance of such projects and funds in East Jerusalem especially in



light of the current situation that makes it imperative to support the Jerusalem institutions and provide mechanisms and ways to sustain their work.

The Palestinians in East Jerusalem face serious human rights violations and are strongly disadvantaged when it comes to municipal services, social inclusion, employment, and access to healthcare and education. The Open Day was an event that reminded the Jerusalemite women and children that having fun and smiling are part of their basic rights and they should always remember it.

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