

Background

From the heart of the Kalandia Refugee Camp, and on the main Jerusalem/Ramallah Road, Kalandia Camp Women’s Handicraft Cooperative (KCWHC) is a towering lighthouse, still standing to illuminate the path for women who have lost everything after the 1948 Nakba (catastrophe) and the generations that follows.



KCWHC is a leading Palestinian NGO, started in 1956 and formally registered on 16th of September 1958. It is the first women society to be established at the Palestinian refugee camps level in the Middle East region. KCWHC started with 12 Palestinian women activists, who all adhered to the laws, values, and principles of the International Co-operative Movement. Back then in 1958, the Co-operative owned a small UNRWA room shelter at the entrance of the Kalandia Refugee Camp. Nowadays the Co-operative is productively buzzing, with its members, staff, and serving beneficiaries, occupying a large three-floor building, as a result of continuous expansion and the efforts of its members to accommodate a variety of educational, cultural, vocational training, productive income generating and humanitarian initiatives, and other projects.

The KCWHC currently provides more than 300 Palestinian women with job opportunities to hand-stitch embroidery and tailoring in their own homes in several camps, villages, and towns. At its peak, the Co-op provided up to 3,000 women with full or part-time employment. Current active Members of the KCWHC are 58 Palestinian women, living across Palestine and some in the diaspora. The Cooperative is administered by its Executive Committee, 7 members elected by its General Assembly. Ever since its establishment, KCWHC has been efficiently and effectively pursuing its vision, mission and goals with a clear deep insight, purpose and always forward looking.



The Co-op prides itself on being guided by the international cooperative movements and fair-trade principles and other genuine values, which include: self-help; self-responsibility; equality; equity; solidarity; honesty; openness; social responsibility; caring for others; sincerity; simplicity; modesty; and commitment.

Our Vision

- 1.Preserving Heritage.
- 2.Cooperative Prosperity.
- 3.Empowering Women & Serving Marginalized Palestinian Families.

Our Mission

Sustainable Growth and Development of the KCWHC towards continued full self-sustainability, as well as Maintaining the Support of our Membership Base and the Communities we Serve.



Our Values

- 1.Preserve and revive Palestinian heritage by protecting, producing, exhibiting, and marketing Palestinian handicrafts & embroidery products both locally and internationally as to strengthen Palestinian cultural identity.
- 2.Collaborate with the public, private and NGO sectors to create income-generating and employment opportunities for Palestinian families, with a focus on women and persons with disabilities.
- 3.Empower and equip marginalized women, culturally, socially, educationally, and economically, therefore enabling them to proactively participate within their families, communities, and society, particularly those living in refugee camps and in rural areas.
- 4.Provide humanitarian assistance and sustainable income-generating projects for the vulnerable, contributing to poverty alleviating and supporting self-reliance in Palestinian communities.
- 5.Promote and advocate for cooperative laws, values, and principals by engaging children and youth within the community.

- 6.Strengthen the capacity and institutional development of the Cooperative, enhancing its assets and income for its members.
- 7.Opening international channels for exchange of knowledge, customs, culture, and traditions through planning and implementing programs for all ages



KCWHC’s Main Departments

Vocational Training Department: Aims to equip marginalised women with practical skills for viable livelihoods. It offers a range of hands-on courses including:

- Knitting & Sewing: Art of embroidery, tailoring, industrial sewing, knitting and quilting classes.
- Home Economics: Every day and life skills for efficient and healthy household and home management.
- Agro-Food Processing: Traditional as well as modern techniques for food preservation skills and practices.
- Cosmetics & Hairdressing: Training in personal care, beauty, and hairdressing salon services.

Community & Humanitarian Department:

- Children's Sponsorship Scheme and University Student Fund: Covering up the cost of education fees and basic needs for vulnerable children and youth through sponsorship projects.
- Literacy & Education: Courses in literacy, civic awareness, first aid, health & wellbeing, and general awareness lectures.
- Early Childhood Education: The Cooperative owns a fully equipped kindergarten named Takreem and summer camps for children.
- Youth Engagement: Empowering youth to actively participate and contribute to the Co-op's activities, fostering community participation and leadership experience
- Emergency/Humanitarian Aid: Aiding vulnerable groups to alleviate poverty and promote well-being.
- Awareness & Advocacy: Lectures and sessions on elections, labour laws, International cooperative movement laws and values, plus other pertinent topics.



Production Department:

This department focuses on local manufacturing, crafts production, food processing, supporting both cultural heritage and economic sustainability. Key units include:

- Industrial Sewing and Quilting Factory: Large-scale production of clothing, quilts, and textile-based goods

- Palestinian Embroidery and Handicrafts: Design and creation of traditional embroidered pieces and handmade crafts.
- Knitting Production: High quality knitted goods for various usage.
- Agro-Food Processing: Includes dried herbs, vegetables, pickles, and other preserved food products.



International and National Cooperation Department:

Seeks international channels and opportunities for cultural and experience exchange. Initiatives include:

- International programs for exchange of knowledge, culture, traditions, and habits between Palestinian people and the international community, inclusive of youth for participation.
- Global cooperation awareness by cooperating with other countries colleges and universities to hold certified training courses, demonstrating and studying the development of the cooperative movement worldwide.
- Implementing Business Start-up projects for the most vulnerable families to improve their life conditions through the establishment of income generating projects.
- Improve the life conditions of vulnerable people through upgrading their homes.

KALANDIA CAMP WOMEN'S HANDICRAFT COOPERATIVE

First women society to be established at the Palestinian refugee camps level in the Middle East region.



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KALANDIA CAMP WOMEN'S HANDICRAFT COOPERATIVE (KCWHC)



Preserving Heritage, Cooperative Prosperity,
Empowering Women & Serving
Marginalized Palestinian Families



Started in 1956 &
Registered in 1958
Located in:
The Kalandia Refugee Camp
Jerusalem