



# THE PALESTINIAN CIRCUS SCHOOL مدرسة سيرك فلسطين



*2010 was another year of devastating injustice for the people in Palestine. Violence, increase in settlements, arbitrary imprisonment, house demolitions and restrictions in movement have again dominated the lives of the population. While the international community continued on the illusionary road of negotiations, insiders started to say it clearer every day: 'the peace process is dead', asking less process and more peace. Since 20 years now, we are 'negotiating' peace and a just solution. When negotiations started in 1991, still most of the elements for a possible solution were present on the ground. 20 years later, little to nothing is left to negotiate about. It is all being 'eaten' by the facts on the ground the Israeli occupation has enforced on the oPT.*

At the circus school we continue defying the negative energies with an alternative for children and youth by offering them a positive constructive outlet.

## **VISION**

The Palestinian Circus School wants to contribute to strengthening a constructive and dynamic Palestinian identity and culture and a fair society. The Palestinian Circus School is convinced of the powerful impact the arts have in these areas. It therefore participates in and encourages the development of the circus arts in Palestine.

The Palestinian Circus School will also explore and create new artistic interactions with other performing arts in Palestine and in the international scene.

By developing circus arts in Palestine, the Palestinian Circus School opens new windows to the world for Palestinians and opens a door for the world to Palestine.

## **MISSION**

The mission of the Palestinian Circus School has three axes:

### **PROFESSIONAL**

To train young people to become professional circus artists or trainers

### **CIRCUS ARTS IN PALESTINE**

To spread circus arts all over Palestine

### **SOCIAL**

To use the circus arts as a social tool to develop the creative potential of Palestinians, seeking to engage and empower them to become constructive actors in their society.

**THANK YOU to all our donors and supporters to make our work in 2010 possible.**

**drosos (...)**



And to all individual supporters, volunteers, interns, circus initiatives and artists and all associations who kept fundraising for us and/or who came to the oPT to work with us on a voluntary basis!

**In this year report you can find information about:**

1. TRAININGS
2. SHOWS
3. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION
4. CAPACITY BUILDING
5. STRATEGIC PLANNING
6. THE NEW PREMISES OF THE PALESTINIAN CIRCUS SCHOOL
7. PCS IN THE MEDIA IN 2010

More information on our website: [www.palcircus.ps](http://www.palcircus.ps)

## 1. TRAININGS

In 2010, we continued training average 90 children, adolescents and adults between 10 and 25 years old in Ramallah and Jenin on a weekly basis. The training program included 4 circus clubs: the advanced group, the beginners group, the Jenin girls and the Training of Trainers group. All groups were trained by 3 Palestinian trainers and by visiting international teachers until July. From September until December they were trained by one local and two international trainers.

### THE ADVANCED GROUP

In 2010, the advanced group consisted of 28 girls and boys from Jenin, Hebron and Ramallah, between the ages of 10 and 20.

During the weekly workshops the students were introduced to trust games, intermediate and advanced levels of juggling, acro-lifting, acrobatics, aerials, stilts, clowning, dance and theatre. In May the students showed their family and friends the skills they learned during the yearly open day organized at the school. Moreover, they took part at the 2 week intensive summer school in July, held by the school since 2007, where they developed their own Mobile Circus show and toured with it for an additional week in 5 West Bank cities.



Two advanced students training acrobatics



A normal training day in Ramallah

### THE BEGINNERS GROUP

In 2010, the beginners group consisted of 17 girls and boys from Ramallah and Al Bireh, between the ages of 10 and 17.

During the weekly workshops our beginner students were introduced to trust games, and basic level of juggling, acro-lifting, acrobatics, aerials, stilts, clowning, dance and theatre. Also the beginner students showed their family and friends the skills they learned at the yearly open day organized at the school.



Beginners group taking a clowning workshop



Beginner students practicing a pyramid

## JENIN GRILS



Jenin girls performing at the family day in Jenin

In 2010, the Jenin girls' group consisted of 35 female students from the Social Rehabilitation Centre in Jenin, all between the age of 16 and 20.

During the weekly workshops the girls were introduced to trust games, basic level of juggling, acro-lifting, and acrobatics. Our main aim though in Jenin, is to use circus as a social tool with the girls. We offer the girls different tools to build their self esteem and to tissue stronger friendship relations amongst each other based on trust and mutual respect. As the advanced and beginner students, the Jenin girls were given the opportunity to show their family and friends in June their skills in circus arts during a family day organized at the Social Rehabilitation Centre.



A normal training day

## TRAINING OF TRAINERS GROUP

In 2010, the Training of Trainers (TOT) group consisted of 10 young adults, 8 boys and 2 girls, between the ages of 18 and 25.

Our main aim in this group is to give the students enough pedagogic tools to enable them to teach new beginners of the school from 2011 onwards. During the weekly workshops the students were introduced to trust games, basic levels of juggling, acro-lifting, acrobatics, aerials, stilts, dance and theatre and in the pedagogic of teaching these skills. The TOT also participated at the open day organized at the school.

The group will finish its training program in May 2011, and no other TOT groups will be open for the next school year. Among these students the PCS will recruit new trainers to start working with the school in September 2011.



TOT students cooling down in Ramallah

## SUMMER SCHOOL 2010

From the 19<sup>th</sup> of June until the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, 28 of our advanced students from Ramallah, Jenin and Hebron, along with our 3 local trainers and a French volunteer juggler, were engaged in a creative process to make a show for the Palestinian people. The students practiced every day for more than 8 hours their best techniques to develop the "Mobile Circus 2010 show" dealing with a topic chosen by the students themselves: the life of young people in the Palestinian streets.

The summer school took place at the Evangelical Episcopal Technical and Vocational Training centre (ETVTC) in Ramallah and was mainly supported by the Swedish Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), as well as other funders.

## 2. SHOWS

This year the PCS **produced** one new professional show: "La Wein" and one new student show: "The Mobile Circus 2010".

It **performed** a total of 18 shows:

- 9 times Circus Behind the wall
- 6 times the Mobile Circus
- 3 times La Wein

A total audience of average 10.000 people enjoyed our shows locally and abroad.

### MOBILE CIRCUS 2010:

As mentioned above at the end of June our students from Jenin, Hebron and Ramallah under the direction of our 3 local trainers and a French volunteer juggler worked on a Mobile Show to tour the West Bank. The show was performed 5 times in Nablus, Jenin, Hebron, Ramallah and Al Fara' Camp between July 5 and July 9. The show was also presented during the World Education Forum in Al Bireh, on October 30. An average of 4500 people came to see the shows.



Mobile circus show in Al Bireh



Mobile circus show in Jenin

### PERFORMING CIRCUS BEHIND THE WALL @ CIRCAIRO IN EGYPT

In October, the PCS traveled again, to Cairo this time. We were invited by [Al Mawred Al Thaqafy](#) to participate at the first circus festival in the Middle East! We performed the show twice, at El Genaina Theatre and at the Balloon Theatre. Some 1250 people attended the shows.



PCS performing in CirCairo

Our teachers and students also gave a workshop for the kids of a child centre in the Darb Al Ahmar neighborhood, a very densely populated neighborhood in Cairo, with a very impoverished population. Children's possibilities for exposure to creative activities there are very limited.



PCS trainer and students during the workshop

## PERFORMING CIRCUS BEHIND THE WALL IN ITALY AND FRANCE

Between July 13 and August 10 a team of 12 members of the Circus School traveled to Europe to perform Circus Behind the Wall, twice in Italy and 5 times in France. The show was performed for a total audience of average 3500 people.

Shows in Italy took place in **Senegalia**, where we were invited by the Municipality; and in **Torino**, participating in the festival Sul Filo del Circo organized by the Scuola di Circo Vertigo.

Shows in France were organized in **Toulouse @ the LIDO** (Centre des arts de Cirque) in the framework of the Municipality Cooperation between Ramallah and Toulouse. The team of the PCS was received by the Municipality and was hosted there for almost a week. The show was performed twice for a sold out LIDO circus tent!

We also performed in **Rouhling** at the festival annexed to the youth circus exchange the

PCS is involved in since 2009, which takes place each year in a different country. Read more about the exchange in the International Cooperation sector.

We also performed in the beautiful historic and artistic framework of the **Chateau de Malbrouck** in Manderen, North France. There we took part in the annual open air street art festival "les Inattendus".



Circus behind the Wall show in Toulouse



A pyramidal from the show

## LA WEIN PRODUCTION

After several intensive months of experimenting and pushing the borders of imagination, our three local trainers: Mays Hajjaj, Fadi Zmorrod and Nayef Othman supported in artistic direction by Shadi Zmorrod, developed the second production of the Palestinian Circus School, a contemporary circus show for youth and adults that respond to the desire of the PCS to engage in a profound dialogue with other arts, like dance, music and theatre. The live music was performed by Benjamin Payen, Carlo Mascolo, Maddalena Pastorelli and Nicolas Dobson.

A first try out was presented in Bethlehem in Dar Alnadwa on May 14 2010. With a public rather surprised but at the same time impressed with the performance. The official premiere was presented in Al Kasaba Theatre in Ramallah, on June 12 and 13 2010, where a great feedback was received from the public.



La Wein performance at Al Kasaba Theatre

## 3. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

### VISIT OF THE IRISH CLOWNS WITHOUT BORDERS



From February 19 till 24, 4 Irish Clowns came to join the PCS during its weekly circus trainings in Ramallah and Jenin. We organized performances for them in the following locations reaching up to 1000 children and their parents with a lot of laughter:

- Refugee Camps of Jenin, Al Jalazon and Al Amari
- The African Community Centre in the old city of Jerusalem
- The Child Happiness Centre in Hebron
- At our own circus premises in Ramallah



A training with the Irish clowns

## RECEIVING A FESTICLOWN DELEGATION

After the quite embarrassing story for the Israeli Government in May 2010, while returning a clown at Ben Gurion airport for having links with 'terror groups', a Festiclown delegation with 4 people made it to Palestine in October.

Between October 24 and November 7, they toured around the West bank and East Jerusalem, making shows to Palestinian children and youth and giving our students workshops in clowning and laughter therapy.

**Festiclown Palestine** is a cooperation between Festiclown Spain, The Palestinian Circus School, The Union of Health Work Committees and Human Supporters in Nablus. Between October 2010 and October 2011, several caravans will come to Palestine to give workshops in clowning and laughter therapy to promote Palestinian clowns and laughter therapy experts. The program will end with a small festival in September 2011.



Festiclown show in Jenin Rehabilitation Centre



Festiclown show in Jalazoun camp

## TRIO: FRANCE-GERMANY-PALESTINE EXCHANGE

Between July 29 and August 6, the students participated in **Rouhling, France** in an international circus workshop annex festival together with the German youth circus Jokes, and the French youth circuses: Cirque Eole and Ecole des Arts du Cirque et de la Rue DeOt'enbAs, in the framework of a three year cooperation that started in 2009 between Germany, France and Palestine. Every year the groups meet in a different country.

In 2011 we will welcome the French and Germans in Palestine!!

## 4. CAPACITY BUILDING

Building the circus school is first of all 'building' its people. Sending out our trainers and students to receive intensive professional trainings abroad and receiving professional circus teachers and artists in Palestine are our main strategies to increase the capacities of our people. In 2010 we engaged again on different activities within this area.

### LIDO AGREEMENT

In July 2010, we performed in Toulouse under the circus top of the LIDO school. Not only was the show a big success, but the LIDO school also became more enthusiast in cooperating with us. The first large project for cooperation was developed in the framework of the Municipality cooperation between Ramallah and Toulouse. Around 15 students of the professional program will come to work with the most advanced students of the PCS during the summer school in 2011. At the same time they accepted to host one of our Training of Trainers students from September 2010, for 1 full year in a preparatory training program.

## OUR STUDENTS AND TRAINERS ABROAD

In September two of our local trainers left for a period of two years to deepen their knowledge and skills related to the field of circus and arts in general.

**Fadi Zumord** was accepted to start professional circus studies in La Scuola di Cirko Vertigo in Torino, Italy.

**Mays Hajjaj** will pursue studies in cultural management in Toulouse.

Also some of our students have found their way to professional circus school abroad.

**Mohammed Abukeshek**, a former Training of Trainers student, left to Toulouse, France, to take part at the LIDO school for a preparatory year.

**Ashtar Muallem** is now in her second year of professional circus education in the Centre National des Arts de Cirque in France.

All of them will one day come back to pass on their knowledge and skills to our students.

## TRIO EXCHANGE

As mentioned under the international cooperation, 12 members of the PCS participated at a circus exchange workshop in Rouhling in the framework of a 3 year cooperation project aimed at strengthening the circus skills of all partners involved. Our team got introduced to new techniques and learned a lot of the daily trainings with their peers. These exchanges also play a big role in building up a network for future intensive workshops in Palestine and abroad.

## 5. STRATEGIC PLANNING



*During the planning with Jan Rok Achard*

Two intensive strategic planning sessions of each time two weeks, were held in June and November 2010, under the very inspiring and dedicated guidance of performing arts and circus consultant **Jan Rok Achard**, former general director of the National Circus School of Canada, Quebec. The strategic planning was a fully collective exercise of all the team members and resulted in the compilation of a 4 year strategic plan that will pave the way to the inauguration a professional circus school in Birzeit in 2014.

## 6. LET'S BUILD A CIRCUS SCHOOL IN PALESTINE

After four years of looking for a suitable place to train from and jumping around from one place to another, but also of dreaming and working hard, we finally found a place we can call "ours". Hanna Nasir, founder of Bir Zeit University and owner of a historic building in the centre of Bir Zeit, has donated the building and the surrounding land to the PCS for a period of minimum 15 years. On December 15, 2010, the **Belgian Federal Government** has approved phase I of the development of the future premises of the Circus School. In March 2011 the rehabilitation and restoration part of the

historic building will start and we expect to be operating from our own premises by January 1, 2012!



*The historic building in Bir Zeit*

Read more about the history of the project here: <http://buildacircus.over-blog.com/>

## 7. MEDIA

### ARABIC

**Diwan Palestine** (October 2010)

[مدرسة سيرك فلسطين تطلق مهرجاناً على مدار العام](#)

**The Website of the Embassy of the State of Palestine in Egypt (October 2010)**

[فلسطين تشارك في المهرجان الدولي لفنون السيرك في مصر](#)

**Reuters Arabic** (June 13, 2010)

[لون "عرض فلسطيني يجمع فنون السيرك والموسيقى" والتمثيل](#)

### ENGLISH

**Palestine Note** [Palestine Circus School launches one year project](#) (October 28, 2010)

### FRENCH

**France 3.fr** [Le cirque de Ramallah à Toulouse](#) (July 27, 2010)

**La Dépêche Toulouse.** [Cirque sans frontière au Lido](#) (July 20, 2010)

**Toulouse.fr** [L'école de Cirque de Ramallah au Lido](#) (July 2010)

### ITALIAN

**Rete Eco** ["La wein?" La ricerca del senso del vivere](#) (June 18, 2010)

**Teatro Le Serre** [Scuola del Circo Palestinese in Circus Behind the Wall](#) (July 2010)

### DUTCH

**VRIJ NEDERLAND** De Palestijnen moeten opstijgen (August 14, 2010)

<http://palcircus.ps/VRIJ%20NEDERLAND.pdf>

## **Board of Directors**

Asmahan Abd Al Hadi –President

Iman Nijem, Treasurer

Yousef Rimawi, Secretary

Raed Sadeq

Ilham Zaineh

Shaher Aruri

Maryam Yanni

## **Staff in 2010**

Shadi Zmorrod, Founder, General Director

Jessika Devlieghere, Founder, Executive Director

Farah Saleh, admin and coordination assistant

Nayef Othman, Trainer & performer

Fadi Zmorrod, Trainer & performer

Mays Hajjaj, Trainer & performer (till August 2010)

Krista Fatka, Trainer (since September 2010)

Florent Finot, Trainer (3 months)

Jamal Fawadleh (accountant)

## **Contact Information:**

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