



Annual Report Palestinian Circus School 2016-2017



In this report you can find information about:

In this year report, we present you with an overview of our work and achievements in the school year 2016-2017, starting on September 1 and ending on August 31.

For more information about our work in general, our approaches, our work in the past and daily updates, we invite you to read more about us on our website www.placircus.ps and to like our Facebook page: [The Palestinian Circus School](#)

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Introduction

2016-2017 marked **10 years** since the first circus workshop in Ramallah that later would become The Palestinian Circus School. What started with a workshop with a few Palestinian and international circus people and 10 young Palestinian enthusiast students, has grown into a professional circus school, with workshops all over Palestine, with average 300 students on a yearly basis and with our own productions and performances reaching audiences all over Palestine and the world, showing the beauty, the creativity and the dignified struggle of young Palestinians.

To celebrate this marvelous story and its' 10th anniversary, we organized our very first **Palestine Circus Festival – United in Freedom**, a real international circus festival bringing together artists from Palestine, Africa, Europe and South America, bringing 45 shows; including 19 shows for children in different schools all over Palestine, reaching a total audience of 23400 people of all ages from the heart of Ramallah, Al Bireh, Nablus, Jerusalem, Jenin, Bethlehem, Hebron and many surrounding refugee camps inside and around these cities.

And as much as we felt accomplished and proud of what the Palestinian Circus School has become and means for so many people now, we could not but feel sad and rebellious at so many moments, for the cruel absence of our colleague, brother and friend Mohammed Abusakha, who was still wasting his days away inside an Israeli prison since December 14, 2015. His administrative detention without any charge or trial for all these months was extended twice during the last year. Only in June 2017, was his detention extended a last time for 3 months and on August 30, 2017, the very last days of our working year, our team could finally share the joy of bringing AbuSakha back home, to his family and to the circus school. [Here](#) you can read more about Abusakha's detention and liberation.

Like every year, we want to extend our most sincere gratitude to all people and institutions that continue to support the Palestinian Circus School, with all small and larger donations and voluntary support, keeping the flame of hope, pride, dignity and cultural resistance in Palestine alive. For making us reach out every year again to the hundreds of children, youth and families that we inject with our virus of recognition, mutual respect and trust. We have energy and inspiration for many tens of years to come. **THANK YOU!**

The Palestinian Circus School hopes it will be able to continue counting on your support to make it happen together with us. For more information on how you can support us, have a look [here](#).

About us



Vision

A free Palestine in which Palestinians engage in a dynamic cultural and artistic life that embraces creativity, freedom of expression and diversity as the main pillars for a just and inclusive society.

Mission

By teaching, creating, performing and programming circus arts, the Palestinian Circus School strengthens the creative, social and physical potential of Palestinians, seeking to engage and empower them to become constructive actors in society and raises local and international awareness about the positive Palestinian potential and its different challenges.

More about the history and all programs of PCS on [this link](#).

The staff in 2016-2017

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Shadi Zmorrod | General Director |
| Jessika Devlieghere | Deputy General Director |
| Sinan Mansour | Financial Officer |
| Mousa Jiriys | Resource Development Officer |
| Rana Nasser | Coordinator |
| Hanya Abdallah | Secretary |
| Alaa Jayousi | Technician |
| Nayef Abdallah | Educational Program Coordinator / Head Trainer |
| Noor Abu AlRub | Trainer/Performer |
| Mohammad Abu Taleb | Trainer/Performer |
| Ahmad Abu Taleb | Trainer/Performer |
| Motasem Ghaith | Trainer/Performer |
| Alaa Abu AlRub | Part time Assistant Trainer |

Board of Directors

- President: Dr. Yousef Al Rimawi
- Vice President: Ms. Elham Zeineh
- Treasurer: Mr. Raed Sadeq
- Secretary: Dr. Shadia Makhoulf
- Member: Ms. Nicole Zreineh
- Member: Mr. Maher Al Shawamreh
- Member: Ms. Iman Nijem

We express our utmost gratitude and thanks to all local and international volunteers for sharing their valuable time and experience with PCS. Special thanks to the festival volunteers who contributed to the success of our festival and to:

Joke: a hullahop artist

Rameen: photographer

Andreas: juggler

Chiara: Tissue instructor

2 acrobatic artists from CODARTS, the Rotterdam Circus School in Holland

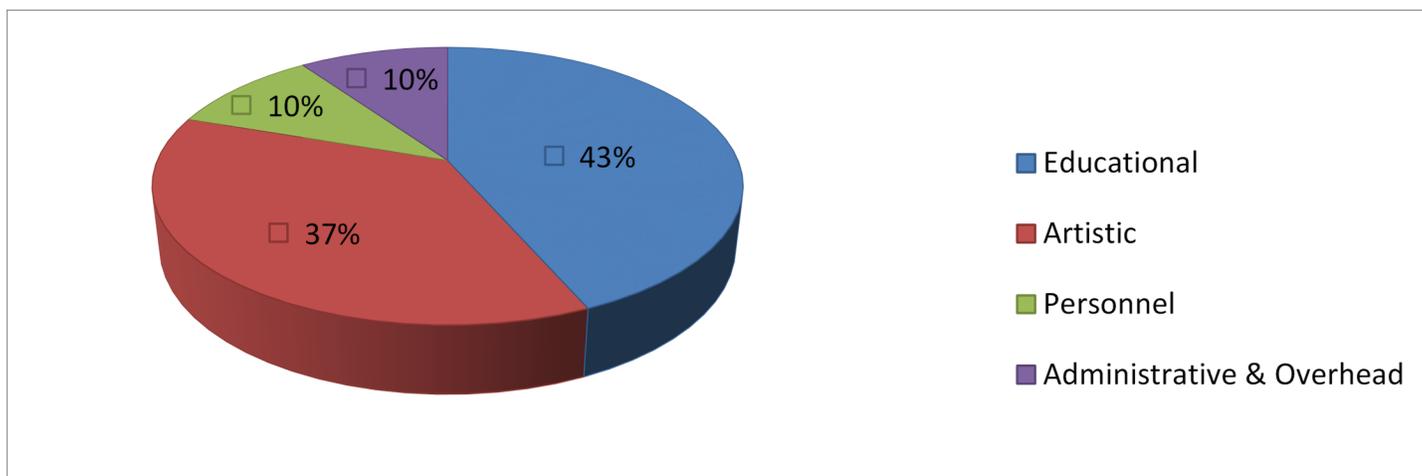
You want to volunteer with us?? Click [here](#)



Financial Overview 2016-2017

The total expenditures of the activities for the year 2016-2017 were 1,718,304 NIS.

The total expenditures breakdown based on the nature of the activity as shown below:



Sinan Mansour
Financial Officer

Educational Activities

[Click on this link for a general introduction about the philosophy and approach of PCS in its educational work.](#)

Circus Clubs 2016-2017:

This year, PCS had 281 students in total; of which 160 males and 121 females following 20 circus clubs on weekly basis in Ramallah, Birzeit, Jenin, Al Fara'a Refugee Camp and Jerusalem.

In **Birzeit**, we had 6 clubs with a total of 72 students, 35 males and 37 females, between 6 and 26 years old.

With the **outreach program**, we spread the circus beyond the borders of Birzeit.

We bring circus to other cities and refugee camps, to children and youth with intellectual disabilities and to the girls of a social rehabilitation center. From our first days of training in 2007, we decided to go out of Ramallah, since we wanted to become a school for all Palestinians despite their geographic or social background. We have been working in Hebron, Jenin, and Al Fara'a Refugee Camp for many years where we have been in the process of establishing permanent hubs of training. We also bring children and youth from Al Jalazone Refugee Camp to Birzeit, work with around 35 girls every year since 2008 at the Girls Rehabilitation Center in Jenin. In addition we teach circus to two groups of students from the Star Mountains and Al Nahda Centre where this year, we worked with 24 students with mental disabilities.

The Outreach program this year included 12 clubs with a total of 209 students; of which 125 males and 84 females during weekly clubs in:

- **Ramallah:** 4 clubs with 34 students at the Episcopal Technological and Vocational Center (ETVTC)
- **Al Fara'a Refugee Camp:** Two groups in cooperation with the Palestinian Theater of Al Faraa and Salah Khalaf Center. An advanced group with 8 students and a beginner group with 27 students.
- **Jenin:** three clubs; two in cooperation with the Freedom Theater with 11 students and one in cooperation with the Girls Rehabilitation Center with 34 students.
- **Al Jalazone Refugee Camp:** 13 students (2males and 11 females)
- **Star Mountains:** 12 students with mental disabilities (5males and 7 females)
- **Al Nahda:** 12 students with mental disabilities (10 males and 2 females)
- **Jerusalem:** two clubs in cooperation with the Palestinian National Theater, Terres Des Hommes, Palvision and Madrasati Falasteen; one with 27 students (15males and 12 females) and the second one with 12 students (all males)

From time to time, PCS also organizes specialized workshops in different circus disciplines to advance the technical skills of students and other people. This year, two specialized workshops were organized; an acrobatic workshop with 14 students (7males and 7 females) and an aerial workshop with 10 students (4 males and 6 females)

Accessible for all

With the PCS we continue to invest strongly in the 'circus for all' idea. In our vision we state that we want to contribute to a just and inclusive society. For us this means that all Palestinians, despite their different backgrounds and abilities, are welcome at the circus school. Each and every individual in Palestine has equal rights to the opportunities we want to offer. Each and every person can contribute something precious to our beautiful Palestinian society. And by seeing this, and bringing all people on board of our school, treating all with equal respect, we continue to spread the message of **unity in diversity**.

The main strategies we use to make circus possible for all are:

- To welcome all children and youth from all religious, political, social, economic and gender backgrounds.
- A scholarship system, that allows people to pay the fee they can afford, and to never exclude anybody on the basis of financial possibilities. Read more about our scholarship system [here](#)
- The outreach program, where the circus trainers travel weekly to different locations which would otherwise have no access to the circus offer.
- The development of partnerships with specific recognized organizations that work with more vulnerable groups in our society. In this sense we have developed a strong partnership over the last years with the Social Rehabilitation Centre for girls in Jenin and with Star Mountain Rehabilitation Centre and Al Nahda Centre which both work with people with intellectual disabilities. PCS is always open to new partnerships and will actively engage in developing new relations to invite more people into our circus family.
- To open our doors for anybody who feels like passing by, come and see a training, and by organizing many shows for free or for very democratic prices to allow all to enjoy the circus magic.



Open Days

As part of its educational program, and to celebrate [World Circus Day](#), PCS offers its students in all training locations, the opportunity to show the skills they have learned throughout the year to their friends and families.

Between May 6 and 18, seven open days were organized, reaching an average of 800 people, in:

- **Birzeit:** 2 open days @ PCS premises
- **Jerusalem:** 1 open day @ The Palestinian National Theater (Al Hakawati)
- **Jenin:** 1 open day @ the Girls Rehabilitation Center

Summer Camps

The summer is the best period in the year that allows us to work on a more intensified way with our students. [Read more about our summer camps here](#)

This year, a summer camp was organized in each training location, reaching a total of 170 students from:

- Yalla Nilaab groups (Birzeit and Ramallah): from June 11 to 15 for 18 students
- Moon/Sun groups (Birzeit, Ramallah, Al Jalazone Refugee Camp, Jenin and Al Faraa): from July 3 to 13 @ PCS premises for 46 students. This camp was organized in the framework of a long term cooperation, funded by Erasmus+ and Provincie Vlaams Brabant, with Circus Zonder Handen-Belgium, where we exchanged experiences of using circus as a tool for more social inclusion and for developing positive identities. 15 trainers from Circus Zonder Handen and from Cirkus In Beweging arrived to Palestine on July 1 to animate a summer camp for PCS students together with our team of trainers.
- Jerusalem @ the Palestinian National Theater (Al Hakawati) from July 18 to 27 for 23 students
- Jenin in cooperation with Al Najda Women Association at Jannah Kindergarten from August 8 to 13 for 42 students
- Al Faraa Refugee Camp at Al Faraa Youth Club from August 15 to 21 for 41 students

- **Jenin:** 1 open day @ the Freedom Theatre
- **Al Faraa Refugee Camp:** 1 open day @ Al Faraa Girls Elementary School
- **Ramallah:** 1 open day @ the ETVTC

In addition to two last trainings for students of Star Mountain Rehabilitation Center and Al Nahda and their families.





Artistic Activities

Productions and Performances

Spreading circus arts in Palestine and introducing Palestinians to a new form of performing arts, is an important quest for PCS. In order to fulfill this goal, PCS produces shows and organizes tours both locally and internationally. You can read more about the why and how of our artistic work [here](#)

Palestine Circus Festival—United for Freedom

On its 10th anniversary, the Palestinian Circus School organized its first international circus festival called Palestine Circus Festival under the slogan “United for Freedom”. From 6 to 14 of October and from October 31 to November 4, we brought together over 60 circus artists from Argentina, Mexico, Chile, Uruguay, Colombia, Morocco, Germany, Denmark and Palestine.

This festival aimed at spreading joy and pride among the Palestinian population, and at raising a general awareness of the role circus can play in Palestine in strengthening the personal, social and national identity through the active participation at the social circus trainings and the artistic creation.

The festival was a huge success, reaching a total audience of 23400 people. Implemented activities included:

- 45 shows including 19 school shows
- 2 conferences (a press conference and a conference on Social Circus)
- 1 couch talk at DHIP
- 4 workshops for PCS students

More than anything, the festival was very well received by the audiences. Thousands of school children and families across the country were amazed and charmed by the local and international performances. We brought the circus to schools, to main public squares, to the streets and to many different theatres.

The success of the festival was our main motivation to decide on making it a bi-annual encounter for Palestine. Our next festival is already scheduled for September 27 to October 6, 2018.







Production “Coffee in Town”

The new creation of 2017 was directed by Paul Evans from the UK and funded by the European Union under the program: United in Circus. The choice of PCS to work with an international circus director, was to bring our shows to another level, and to allow our artists to be exposed to a very professional experience in directing circus shows.

Paul Evans is a Circus and Theatre Director and Choreographer, whose work is grounded in artistic research, for which the company Flying Diplodocus was formed. Paul seeks to make work that: questions, provokes, investigates issues and is socially conscious; whilst also entertaining. With a background in Gymnastics, Circus, Singing and Theatre, Paul combines diverse knowledge to create new approaches to working, including new approaches to integrating voice and physicality. Paul is also Co-Artistic Director of Crashmat Collective, a company that changes the relationships between performer and audience. Paul has worked internationally in a variety of forms and styles and is a long-term collaborator with NoFit State Circus.

5 weeks of intensive work, from July 17 until August 23, resulted in the new production of 1 hour including 7 of our artists. 2 try-out performances followed the creation period at the Nablus Circus Days on August 24+25. The show will be performed over 50 times in the next 2 years, locally and abroad. [To read more about the production](#) and the program of performances you can always follow us on our website under the artistic program.



About the show:

People come together in the same space and time, sharing a collective experience, but each has their own story to tell. Some enjoy the coming together, others seek a moment alone with their own thoughts and feelings. Ultimately it is their joy, celebration and humanity that brings them together, to share in a coffee and a memory or two. The possibilities that they hold inside give us a pause, to join with them, breathe and live life without limit.

Using circus, theatre and choreography, Coffee in Town is a family show about people, what they have in common and what they have to offer the world.

Cooperation with the different partners:

Local Cooperation

PCS has developed a very substantial network over the years. Our educational and our artistic program would not be where it is today without the precious cooperation with the Ministry of education, the many schools and local and international institutions, youth centers, women centers, theatres, local authorities and many more.

*PCS is since many years an important part of the **Palestinian Performing Arts Network**. After being an establishing member it became active member of the board of Directors of the network. Please read more about the Palestinian Performing Arts Network [here](#).*

Due to its increasing recognition, PCS is invited on many occasions to be part of different activities organized by third parties. An overview of the activities in which we shared in 2016-2017:

- **Days of Cinema 2016**

Two films on circus were presented at PCS in cooperation with FilmLab in their annual film festival.

- **International day for people with disabilities**

On December 1st, our students from the Star Mountain Rehabilitation Center and Al Nahda had a performance of 20 minutes At PRCS theatre in Al Bireh.

- **Al Harah Theater**

PCS hosted a Christmas theater show under its tent on December 17. "Batreeq Al Tareeq" had a morning show for school children and an evening show for the general public!

- **Music Concert Worldstars**

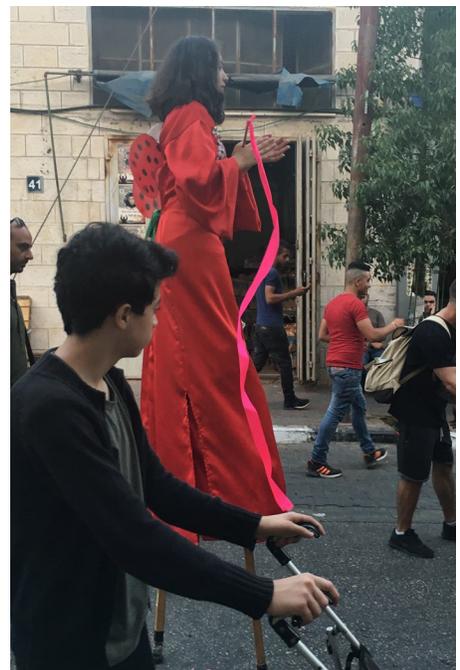
In cooperation with the Danish House in Palestine (DHIP), PCS hosted a music & circus performance and a workshop in rhythm by "The worldstars" band from Denmark in January.

- **Charitable event at Ramallah Hospital**

One of PCS assistant trainers participated at a charitable event organized by a group of volunteers for sick children at Ramallah hospital on March 7.

- **EU launching event**

The EU organized a cultural program under our tent in Birzeit on March 10 on the occasion of launching cultural programs in Palestine. The event included a presentation by XY company, PCS, Al Kamandjati, and Sarreyet Ramallah.



- **Event for blind people**
PCS participated at an event organized by AlQabas School for blind people on 13/4/2017.
- **Mother's Day**
On March 23, PCS participated in an event organized by Al Nahda on the occasion of Mother's day.
- **Trio Jubran Marathon**
40 artists participated at this charitable event in support of women with breast cancer. PCS participated in the event with individual performances of acrobatics, Chinese pole, tissue, and juggling.
- **Nineth Heritage Week**
On July 13, some trainers from PCS and Circus Zonder Handen performed a joint show at the festival.
- **Medecines du Monde**
From August 7 to 13, PCS offered circus workshops for around 21 ex-detained children from Beit Um-mar and Al Aroub Refugee Camp.
- **Wein A Ramallah**
PCS participated at the opening parade of Wein A Ramallah festival on 17/8/2017.
- **Nablus Circus Days**
In cooperation with Nablus Circus School and as part of a project funded by the EU, PCS performed its latest circus production twice during "Nablus Circus Days" on the 24th and the 25th of August.
- **Philharmonic**
Circus workshops in Jericho and Bethlehem.



International Cooperation

- **National Dance Academy - Italy**

An agreement of cooperation was signed between the National Dance Academy in Italy and several organizations in Palestine including: PCS, Ramallah First Group (Al Sarreyeh), Birzeit University and Edward Said Conservatory. Our cooperation with them allows one trainer from PCS to travel to Italy for 15 days in September 2017 and 2 students from the Dance Academy to train in Palestine for 4 months in January 2018.

- **Circus Zonder Handen and the Province of Vlaams Brabant**

Circus Zonder Handen is the social inclusive circus school of Brussels that organizes circus activities for everybody above 4 years old. Working in the center of the Belgian capital it opens its doors for all people, from all walks of life and wants to offer a space where all young people can meet and connect in quality and dignity.

PCS and Circus Zonder Handen engaged on a 2 year cooperation based in its shared foundations at the level of their vision and mission. Together we felt we have many similar challenges and therefore many opportunities to learn from each other. With the support of the Province of Vlaams Brabant and the ERASMUS+ program of the EU, we were able to bring our trainers together to exchange about our methodologies and train during several workshops.

The entire exchange was also followed by two renowned Belgian journalists and will result in a **documentary and a full film, called “What happened in the tent’** which wants to serve as an inspiration in both Palestine and Belgium for other organizations to make a radical choice for inclusivity and make **living together in diversity** a daily reality.

Capacity Building

- **Exchange with Circus Zonder Handen**

In the framework of a long term cooperation between PCS and Circus Zonder Handen, a circus school from Brussels, Belgium; 12 circus students and trainers from CZH arrived to Palestine for an intensive workshop from December 25 to January 4.

- **Roundhouse workshop**

PCS hosted a group of circus artists from the Roundhouse from May 16 to 27. A 10-day workshop with PCS trainers and assistant trainers on different circus disciplines including acrobatics, banquine, juggling, acrobalance, hand to hand, chinese pole, straps and aerials. A group of students from Assirk Assaghir from Nablus also participated at the workshop.

- **Zentrum Bewegte Kunste workshop**

A third workshop with Zentrum Fur Bewegte Kunst (ZBK), Germany was organized at PCS from 10 to 15 of April for PCS trainers, assistant trainers and social workers from The Star Mountain Rehabilitation Center and Al Nahda association. The workshop aims at building the capacities in teaching circus to children and youth with intellectual disabilities.

- **XY Company**

Some PCS students participated in a workshop with XY company together with trainers and students from Assirk Assaghir in Nablus in March.

From August 28 to September 9, a masterclass workshop with artists from XY was organized at PCS premises for trainers/artists from PCS and Assirk Assaghir

- **Workshop with Anders Bischoff**

A juggling workshop with the Danish trainer Anders Bischoff who volunteered with us from November 19 to December 10

- **Caravan Workshops**

PCS is an active member of the European Social Circus Network **CARAVAN**. As part of CARAVAN program "CIRCUS+" , a training program in Youth and Social Circus Pedagogy, two of our trainers traveled to Tampere-Finland in February, to participate in Caravan workshops on the Act of Teaching, and to Belgium in June to take part in a workshop on Management and Steering of Teaching. The 2 workshops are part of a series of 4 workshops that will conclude in September 2017. The knowledge and gained skills will be shared with all the trainers team of PCS to continuously advance our pedagogical framework and allow us to serve our students even better.





Donors/ Supporters

There would be NO circus school in Palestine without the precious support of all our donors, supporters and partners. We are very grateful for the large belief and trust all these people and institutions have in our work. Thank you for all the donors and supporters for their contributions to the success of all our activities and to our first International Circus Festival:

- **Drosos Foundation**
- **Caritas**
- **European Union**
- **SIDA in the framework of the Palestinian Performing Arts Program (PAN)**
- **Poppies for Peace – Klaprozen voor vrede**
- **The “Friends of the Palestinian Circus School”, Belgium and the many organizations and individuals donating through them**
- **CKU/DHIP**
- **Birzeit Pharmaceutical**
- **The National Bank**
- **Ministry of Culture**
- **Goethe Institute**
- **SDC**
- **ICRC**
- **Palestina Solidariteit**
- **Provincie Vlaams Brabant**

You are always welcome to join the family of supporters to guarantee that our work will continue and be able to make real changes in the life of our children and youth.

See [here](#) how you can support us!!

PCS in the Media



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AUDIO / NEWS SEGMENT

Palestinian Circus School uses art and performance to tackle social issues

NOVEMBER 7, 2016

The audience at the Palestinian Circus School's 10th anniversary international festival. (Photo credit: Lena Odgaard)

In the Palestinian West Bank a circus school just marked its 10th anniversary with a big festival. It invited circus troupes from around the world to participate. But in Palestine, even doing circus presents a challenge. Lena Odgaard reports.

[Download Audio](#)

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In the words of a Palestinian: Interview Shadi Zmorrod



Palestinian reality is debated across the globe. However, often by international academics, journalists and politicians. The Danish House in Palestine has invited a number of Palestinians representing different outlooks and areas of expertise to share their perspectives.

The problem of the occupation is not only the violence that it generates. It is what it does to people. The wall is inside the head. Occupation will not control my life - I will keep creating and I will keep believing. That is my form of resistance.

Every Palestinian child faces the occupation - we have lost trainers and students and it runs through every aspect of our lives. We wanted to create a safe and healthy environment for the children of Palestine and out of that vision grew the Palestinian Circus School.

When we started up many years ago we were just a few people in a room on top of a local bar. Today the school has a total of 321 students across the West Bank, performs for large audiences under our tent in Birzeit outside Ramallah, and all around the West Bank and we visit and receive international circus schools and artists who want to train and perform with us.

We are not just here to make beautiful movements - we are working to ensure equality between boys and girls, to unite Palestinians across social classes and geography and above all, we are working to create hope for a new generation. We don't just need a person who can juggle perfectly with three balls, we need the perfect balanced person on stage. Someone who can improvise when he drops the ball and deal with the situation with the same flow of energy. It's about growing as an individual through working in a group and achieving a common goal.

YouTube Search

Joud Abu Leil

Today's show was very nice, and we had lots of fun

Palestinian Circus School brings a smile to families in Jerusalem

311 views

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Published on Apr 29, 2016

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Posted by admin on Dic 21, 2016 in News dal Mondo | Commenti disabilitati su PALESTINE CIRCUS FESTIVAL 2016 - 'United for freedom'

A Review of The PALESTINE CIRCUS FESTIVAL 2016 - "United for Freedom"



Celebrating ten years since its foundation and the many achievements, the Palestinian Circus School organized the first circus festival of its kind in Palestine. More than 34 international and 30 local circus artists participated in this festival; that took place between 6-14 October 2016. More than 45 shows were organized, half of them were for general audience and the other half were for students of private, public and UNRWA schools (in the refugee camps). The festival toured Jerusalem, Ramallah, Al-Bireh, Jenin, Nablus, Birzeit and Al-Far'a refugee camp.

It should be pointed out that the Gazan circus artists could not get permits to enter the West Bank, therefore they did not participate in the festival. As well, two of the international groups did not participate, because the delay of permits for one group and the denial of the other group. "Nafsi Africa" from Kenya did not get permits, except for one member, Kennedy Owino, who traveled from

Articoli recenti

- Giornata mondiale contro la violenza sulle DONNE | Circolo Arci Ravaciano
- La Carta Europea di San Gimignano alla Festa della Toscana 2017 (San Gimignano, 30 novembre)
- Reportage di la Repubblica (09.11.2017)
- Il Doposcuola di Carretera Central
- Asta di beneficenza per "Terre di Siena per il Centro-Italia"
- Cesvot - convegno "GIOVANI IN TRANSITO. Le nuove frontiere del volontariato giovanile"

#circondofestival #diritti #dirittideiminori #dirittitumani #migranti #minoristanierinonaccompagna #profughi #rifugiati Adriano Scarpelli Alessandro Grazi Alessandro Masi architettura Arci arcì Siena Arci Toscana Art-Gold Boliva Associazione Carretera Central Associazione Didee bambini



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