



جمعية أجيال
للإبداع والتطوير
Ajyal Association
for Creativity & Development



Ajyal for Creativity and Development

2023

1. Ajyal Association for Creativity & Development: WHO WE ARE

Ajyal Association for Creativity & Development (ACCD) is one of the leading non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the field of youth and children empowerment across the Gaza Strip. Ajyal thrives to improve qualities of youth who are facing double marginalization and enable them to actively play a positive role in the development of Palestinian community.

Ajyal was established in 2003 and registered in the Ministry of Interior under registration number 7329, it aims to contribute at Palestinian society development through providing a series of innovative interventions and pioneering projects. With more than 18 years of working experience, ACCD has successfully forged many partnerships with international and local organizations in pursuit of its mandate and achieving desired change at the individual and community levels.

Over the last 10 years, ACCD has achieved a quantum leap in the quality of provided services and its responsiveness to youth, children and women concerns, needs and priorities. In addition, ACCD adopted an inclusion approach in services provision and is investing all possible efforts and resources to ensure that "No One is Left Behind".

2. REVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF THE CONTEXT OF OUR WORK

The Operating Environment

The Palestinian community, mainly young generation, have grown tired of the political situation in Palestine after almost two decades of stalled peace talks and failed attempts to revive the peace process. The internal Palestinian conflict has also played a major part in this regard; young Palestinians have shown signs of dissatisfaction about the performance of the living conditions, after more than 15 years of disputes and heated speech exchange without any signs of a breakthrough. Combined with their growing resistance to inherited cultural norms and patriarchal teachings that have limited their involvement and participation in socio-political processes, young Palestinians feel excluded and marginalized by various structures of power. In 2021 another layer of complications with the unfortunate spread of COVID 19 and the alarming rise in unemployment among Palestinian youth.

This socio-political and economic reality had a remarkable impact on the attitudes and performance of the young generation in Palestine, and on their willingness and social interaction to participate in community development processes. The absence of credible attention towards youth and children and lack of innovative tools to ensure their active participation at all levels and by different stakeholders have weakened their hope on a better future, leaving them exposed to partisan and ideological rhetoric and narratives.

There is a palpable sense of hopelessness and desperation among the population in Gaza, which is eroding coping mechanisms and resilience, while rising violence and tension are fueling concerns of a renewed escalation of hostilities. To date, the poverty rate in Gaza has reached nearly 64 % and deep poverty more than 42 %. Annually, around 20,000 youth (women and men) graduate from different Universities in the Gaza Strip. Only 1% of them are employment at public jobs and there are no available data on employment in the private, non-governmental organizations and informal sectors.

The economy in Palestine faces structural socio-economic problems, including inequitable growth and high unemployment (20-25 % and higher for women), with no signs of the government being able to curtail this or turn it around. The government is facing an exceptional situation where it governs with limited control of movement of goods and people over Palestine. According to a recent Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) consumption and poverty study (2018) poverty has increased to 29 %. Households headed by female constitute about 10.1 % of the Palestinian households in 2021. Poverty rates among individuals living in female-headed households stood at 30.6 % compared to 29.2 % between those living in male-headed households.

3. OUR WORK GOING FORWARD: STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Vision

A pioneer organization aims to empower youth and children to actively build their promising future.

Mission

Ajyal Association for Creativity & Development in the Gaza Strip is a rights-based, independent, non-governmental and non-profit organization that aims to empower youth and children (women, men, girls and boys) through well-designed interventions responding to its target groups rights, issues and priorities using innovative techniques and approaches such: capacity development, skill rehabilitation, job creation and awareness raising and advocacy and lobbying by creating local, regional and international partnerships.

Core Values

ACCD believe and promote the following values in all that we do: Accountability, integrity, transparency, equality, justice, rule of law and inclusion.

Strategic Niche

ACCD's Strategic Niche is premised on empowering youth and children (women, men, girls and boys) through strong engagement in defining, owning and driving development efforts based on their concerns, needs and priorities. Specifically, our programmatic focus for 2022-2024 is structured around the following key areas:

- **Education:** The skills gap between the educational services provided by universities and needs of labour markets are amongst the main challenges facing youth (women and men). Annually, around 20,000 students (50% are women) graduate from universities in the Gaza Strip. Among them, only 1% are employed at public jobs and there are no available data on employment in the private, non-governmental organizations and informal sectors.
- **Socio-economic empowerment:** The fragile living conditions of Gaza residents have been further undermined by the deterioration in economic conditions due to the subsequences of COVID-19 cuts around the world and in particular in Palestine, as well as the cancelation of the social security support provided to 1200 families and a 30 percent reduction for the rest of the social security beneficiaries, imposed by the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) since 2018. Overall, the majority of Gaza residents are living under severe socio-economic conditions and limited access to no stable source of income.
- **Protection:** The deteriorating humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip has exacerbated Gender-based Violence (GBV) in all its forms, including sexual violence, domestic violence and forced marriage, resulting in a continued acute need for GBV multi-sectorial services; in addition to that, the psychological conditions of different community members and specially youth and children (women, men, boys and girls) are collapsed as a result of unstable political situation and the renewed conflicts against the Gaza Strip.

Strategic Goals and Results

In the coming three years and advised by ACCD's Vision, Mission and Theory of Change, our work will be tailored to achieve the following objectives and results:

Strategic Goal 01: Improve the Organization Environment at Ajyal Association for Creativity & Development.

At the organizational level and building on our core strengths, ACCD continues to be committed to strengthening the quality of the services provided to youth and students in a manner that is more responsive to their needs and priorities on one hand and to market needs and opportunities on the other hand. Achieving this goal will lead to the realizing the following three interlinked results

- **Ajyal Association for Creativity & Development applying innovative approaches in the field of counseling:** ACCD will design and provide demand-driven counseling services to youth and children

(women, men, boys and girls) using innovative and practical tools and approaches. The counseling services will cover a variety of fields such as: career, academic, legal and psychosocial counselling. Furthermore, ACCD will leverage its various partnerships with other actors to enable accessible and quality counseling services provision, hence such services will be delivered at high schools, universities, sister organizations as well as ACCD offices.

- **Ajyal Association for Creativity & Development visibility as the voice of youth and children (women, men, boys and girls) recognized across the Gaza Strip:** ACCD will focus on strengthening its online visibility over the 3 coming years by developing a visibility strategy that focus on optimizing outreach using new technologies and techniques. The use of audio-visual accessible designs for the production of all produced visibility publications will be central to ACCDs work to ensure that the key messages are properly and dissemination within the community in formats accessible to all.
- **Ajyal Association for Creativity & Development having a greater influence on the decision-making process towards issues, rights and priorities linked to youth and children (women, men, boys and girls):** ACCD will focus on establishing advisory group for its work and substantiate its role in actively discussing and putting forward youth and children (women, men, boys and girls) priorities and needs. Key activities to be held through the group will include: ongoing reflection meetings, hearing sessions for youth and children (women, men, boys and girls) as well as advocacy and lobbying efforts.

Strategic Goal 02: To contribute at improving quality of youth and children lives;

Under this goal, ACCD aspires to improve the quality of youth and children (women, men, boys and girls) lives in the Gaza Strip through improved social position, economic status and equitable access to multisectoral services, in particular education, protection and economic. Achieving this goal will lead to the realizing the following results:

- **Youth and children social interaction, psychosocial status and wellbeing enhanced:** ACCD will encourage and motivate youth and children (women, men, boys and girls) to play an active and crucial role in their communities through peer-to-peer learning, community initiatives and voluntary days;
- **Living conditions and economic situation of Youth have improved:** ACCD will provide youth (women and men) with economic empowerment opportunities such as temporary job opportunities, SMEs, freelancing and outsourcing awareness, internships, on-job-training and labor market skills matching;
- **Youth (women and men) have positive attitudes towards advocacy and lobbying, community mobilization and initiatives:** ACCD will implement activities that improve youth (women and men) attitudes and behavior towards their communities through the various initiatives which pushing for a greater influence and involvement towards their rights, issues and priorities;
- **Youth have high competencies in freelancing and are able to compete at local and international markets:** ACCD will provide youth (women and men) with regular orientation, training, capacity development and counseling services in the field of freelancing and outsourcing. In addition, ACCD will implement advanced practical capacity building programs and coaching and mentoring sessions.

Strategic Goal 03: To contribute in an increased responsiveness of decision-makers/ duty bearers towards youth and children' issues, rights and priorities.

At the community level, ACCD during the coming three years will engage in systematic and structured advocacy efforts aimed at better sensitizing the community towards youth and children (women, men, boys and girls) concerns, needs and priorities. Achieving this goal will lead to the realizing the following results:

- **Community has an increased sensitization towards youth and children (women, men, boys and girls) equitable access to different services:** ACCD will focus on building the capacities of youth and children to enhance their actual participation at all levels. In parallel, ACCD will engage in awareness raising efforts aimed at changing the views and beliefs of decision makers on the importance of equitable access to of youth and children (women, men, boys and girls) by encouraging the application of inclusive approach that respond to youth and children pressing priorities.

- **Universities have better practices towards promising professions:** ACCD will work with universities to build a momentum around market relevant and trending/promising educational fields with the ultimate objective of increasing youth opportunities to access the labor market.
- **Decision makers at Universities and Colleges have positive attitudes towards inclusive education:** ACCD will work closely, in a participatory approach, with a number of universities and colleges to co-define key issues affecting inclusive education for students with disabilities and facilitate an inclusive education Advocacy Campaign in universities and colleges for the rights of students with disabilities to higher education services
- **Targeted private entities have improved practices for enhancing youth (women and men) access to opportunities within the private sector:** ACCD will focus on enhancing the role that the private sector may positively play in supporting youth (women and men) access to decent job opportunities within the provide sector, including: incubation, on-job-training and employment.

Alignment with Sustainable Development Goals

Our strategy is aligned with U.N. transformative 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Leave No One Behind which is driven by our strong belief in the role of the civil society and its organization as enablers for the realization of this agenda. Specifically, our work is in full alignment with the following Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):



EDUCATION is the first strategic niche of ACCD's 2022 -2024 strategy where we aspire to enhance the quality of learning environments at all levels through: (i) innovative avenues for enhancing the quality of provided educational services at universities in the Gaza Strip; and (ii) academic counseling efforts targeting high-school students.



Women and girls are ACCD's main target group, thus **GENDER EQUALITY** is central to our 2022 -2024 strategy. Through our advocacy work and across all interventions, ACCD focuses on the right of women and girls to equitable access to services. Moreover, ACCD invests in building the capacities of women and girls by equipping them with skills and knowledge to claim their rights and activity contribute to the change process.



SOCIO-ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT is the second strategic niche of ACCD's 2022 -2024 strategy where we focus on improving the living conditions and quality of lives for youth and children through innovative methodologies and approaches that best cater the differences in youth and children potentials and interests. Empowering youth and children from the Gaza Strip will highly contribute to increasing the GDP in Palestine as youth represent 60% of the population.



Most recent reports and publications by international organization¹ point out that women, persons with disabilities (PWDs) and children are amongst the most vulnerable groups in the Gaza Strip, particularly in terms of disparities of opportunity, income and power. ACCD's 2020 -2022 strategy places great emphasis on advocating for the rights of these vulnerable groups, in particular women, children and PWDs, to contribute in **REDUCING INEQUALITIES** within the Palestinian community.



OCHA describes the situation in Palestine at large and the Gaza Strip in particular as a protracted protection crisis marked by the systematic denial of Palestinian rights and continuing conflict. Driven by the worsening humanitarian situation and sharp deterioration in living conditions, strategies of most actors working in the Gaza Strip prioritize lifesaving, relief and infrastructure interventions. ACCD believes that working on actions promoting **RIGHTS, JUSTICE AND PEACE** are just as important as



ACCD believes in **MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PARTNERSHIPS** that brings the experience, expertise and resources of different actors to work together in an integrated manner in pursue of positive change. ACCD's 2022 -2024 strategy devised a number of working modalities and approaches that will encourage forging partnerships with various relevant actors to: (i) maximize impact; (ii) ensure proper and complimentary services provision while avoiding any potential duplication; and (iii) capitalize on successes and lessons learnt for others to

¹ International organizations including: OCHA, United Nations (UN), Humanity & Inclusion (HI), Save the Children and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women).

humanitarian actions. Accordingly, our 2022 -2024 strategy and within our theory of change approach, ACCD focuses on advocating for favorable policy changes for youth and children.

inform our work.

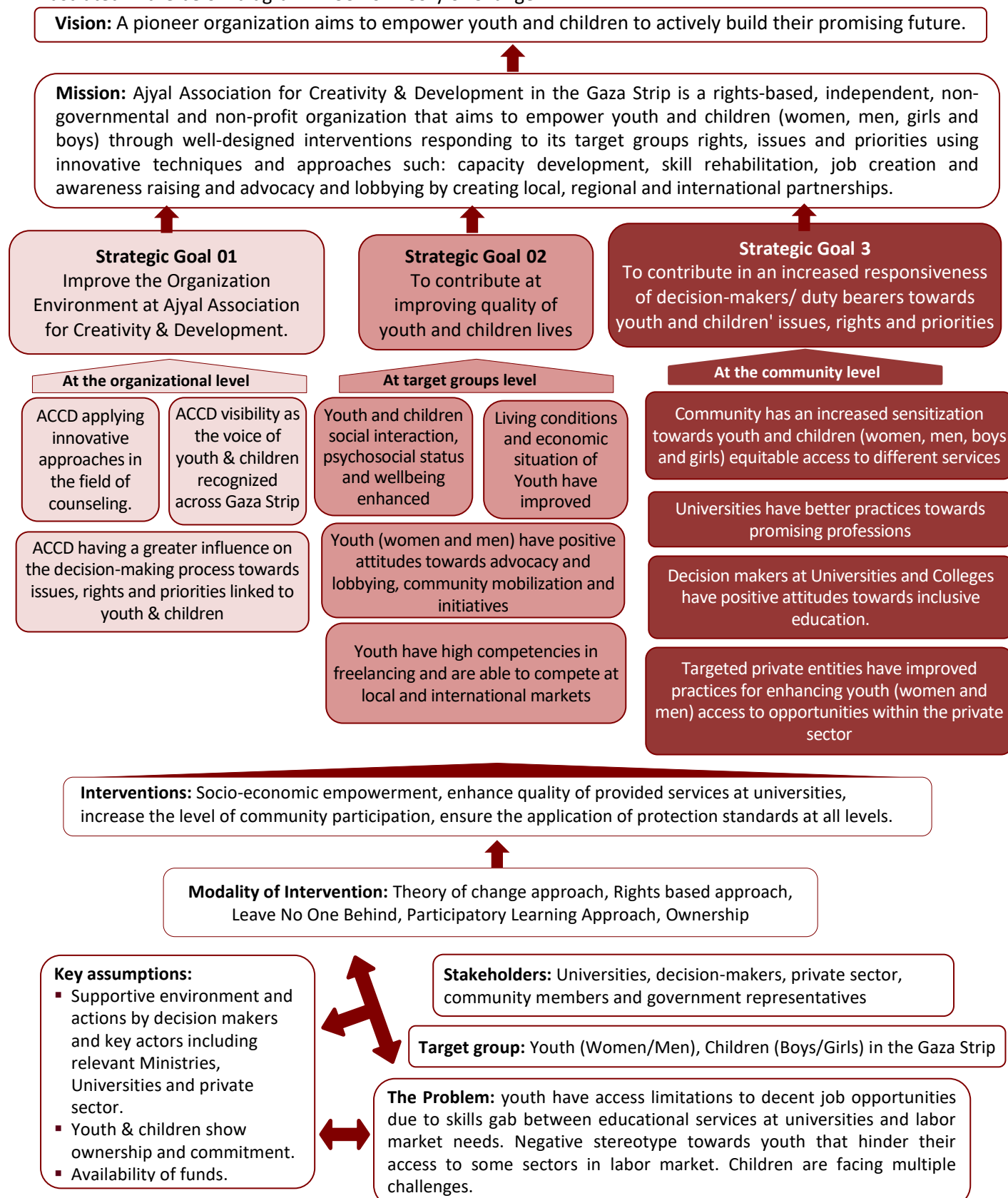
Cross Cutting Issues

As part of the strategy, the following approaches and/or crosscutting components have been taken into consideration:

- **Inclusion/Diversity as an asset in a rights perspective:** women's and men's, girls' and boys' different background, experiences and abilities have all been recognized by ACCD as assets and are valuable to the strategy. They will be actively and continuously included and respected during the strategy development process;
- **Participatory approach:** ACCD adopts a participatory approach to further the role of various stakeholders through reflections and ongoing review of the strategy development outcomes. They will also be engaged in the strategy implementation, ACCD considers this as a fundamental aspect as it will ensure ownership and protecting the rights holders. During the strategy development process, participatory techniques have been used, based on generating learning and knowledge;
- **Human rights-based approach:** ACCD work throughout the strategy development process with a focus on human rights where actors and participants will not be treated as mere recipients of development aid (or beneficiaries) but as holders of rights, responsibilities and obligations;
- **Conflict sensitivity approach:** ACCD has taken into consideration the conflict sensitivity approach to gain a detailed understanding of the operational context, stakeholders and interventions, and the interactions between the two, in order to ensure that both have a positive impact on conflict dynamics. In other words, to ensure that the stakeholders' actions minimize negative impacts and maximize positive impacts on conflict;
- **Safeguarding approach:** ACCD will make sure that the implementation of the strategy will ensure that everybody enjoys the right to be safe no matter who they are or what are their circumstances. In other words, that all actors involved are being protected from harm, abuse or neglect; and
- **Environment sustainability:** ACCD took every measure possible to ensure that during the strategy development process does not cause unintended negative environmental effects, or where unavoidable, to minimize and mitigate potential impacts.
- **Child Protection Policy:** we at Ajyal Association for Creativity & Development adopt zero tolerance approach to child abuse and child pornography. We are seeking to reduce risks of child abuse by persons engaged in delivering aid program activities. The policy's overall goal is: To protect children from abuse of all kinds in the delivery of services. The policy follows four guiding principles: 1. zero tolerance of child abuse 2. recognition of children's interests 3. sharing responsibility for child protection 4. use of a risk management approach.
- **Do No Harm Principle:** we at Ajyal Association for Creativity & Development trying our best to ensure that all of over interventions being provided without causing harm Reflections on a review of Humanity & Inclusion's practices.

4. THEORY OF CHANGE

The causal relationships shaping our theory of change discussed earlier in this document is further illustrated in the below diagram “ACCD’s Theory of Change”.



5. Membership

- Anna Lindh Foundation.
- Cluster Protection - United Nations.
- Cluster Education - United Nations.
- Palestinian NGO Network.
- General Federation of Cultural Centers
- Child Protection Network - Palestinian Authority.

6. Funders and Partners

- Catholic Relief
- Islamic Relief – UK
- Islamic Relief -Canada
- Swedish development partner
- NGO Development Center
- Palestinian Investment Fund
- AL-TAAWON Foundation

7. budget

	year	The amount is in US dollars
1	2020	511,129
2	2021	355,056
3	2022	480.347

8. List of projects

	project name	year	Funders	Target group
1	Youth empowerment	2023-2019	IM Swedish	600 young men
2	Together we learn 1	2019	NGO Development Center	200 children and 200 mothers
3	Together we learn 2	2020	Islamic Relief – UK	200 children and 200 mothers
4	Child-friendly community centers	2020-2018	Catholic Relief	1000 children and 1000 mothers
5	Multispectral humanitarian emergency response - Farah program	2023-2020	Catholic Relief	750 children and 750 mothers
6	Psychosocial support project for the most affected children and their families in the Gaza Strip	2021-2020	Islamic Relief – UK	200 children and 200 mothers
7	enhance the access of pregnant women and newborn women to health services	2023-2022	charity	7 medical centers were provided with medical equipment, 250 pregnant women were provided with health services, 50,000 people were educated

8	Wajd program for orphans	2021-2019	AL-TAAWON	400 orphan children
9	Building the resilience of adolescents in the Gaza Strip	2021-2020	Catholic Relief and the Canadian government	400 children and 400 mothers
10	improve Access to high-quality WASH services in Pre- Schools services	2024-2023	Islamic Relief & IR South Africa	Rehabilitation of 620 kindergartens
11	Positive youth development	2022	Irish Representative Office in Palestine	900 women
12	Young leaders	2022	Palestinian Investment Fund	Developing a business incubator for youth and building the capabilities of 120 young people