



## SHAREK Newsletter September & October 2007

### **Sharek Overview**

*Sharek Youth Forum, a leading Palestinian organization run by youth and for youth, works to enhance Palestinian society through youth empowerment.*

*There are three core programs that Sharek implements in the field. The first one, "A step forward", aims to empower youth through facilitating their entry into the labour market. In addition, as part of A Step Forward, Sharek has launched 2 units: the "Dynamic Human Rights Unit" [DHRU] to raise awareness on human rights and provide youth with legal assistance and advice and the "Youth Business Support Unit" [YBSU] to foster entrepreneurship and business incubation. Moreover, "Bridges", Sharek's second program, focuses on establishing services in remote areas of the West Bank and Gaza Strip for child development. Lastly, there is "Partners", a program devoted to the capacity building of youth organizations and to the support of youth initiatives.*

### **Sharek's latest Actions**

#### **Participation in the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty: October 17**

On the occasion of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, Sharek participated in the National Coalition for the Eradication of Poverty, along with a number of other local organizations. The motto was 'Stand Up and Speak Out against Poverty and Inequality' and the activities involved several meetings with officials from the Ministries of Labour, Social Affairs and Youth and Sports in order to encourage the development of better policies in fighting poverty.

Furthermore, that day Sharek visited schools and carried out various activities involving children such as role-plays and story-reading. In addition, Sharek's staff participated in a

march in Ramallah and took part in the events in the Cultural Palace organized to commemorate the day.

#### **Joining of the iDISC and MENAinc Incubator Networks: October 24**

As part of Sharek's participation in the MENAinc Conference in Bahrain from the 22-24 of October 2007, Sharek joined the Middle East and North Africa regional network of business incubators (MENAinc,) as well as the infoDev Incubator Support Center (iDISC.) Joining such networks will contribute greatly to the advancement of the organization's work in business development through the activities of the Youth Business Support Unit, consequently providing enhanced economic opportunities to Palestinian youth.

#### **➤ A Step Forward program**

#### **Signing of a memorandum of understanding and cooperation with the Career Unit of Al-Najah University, Nablus**

In September 2007, Sharek Youth Forum signed with Al Najah Career Unit a memorandum of understanding for establishment of a "Career Unit" as well as series of trainings to help newly graduate students while they are approaching the labour market.

#### **Signing of a cooperation agreement with Al-Quds Open University for establishing a Career Unit**

In October Bader Zama'reh, the executive director of Sharek Youth Forum, and the Dean of Students Affairs Muhammad Shaheen signed a cooperation agreement in order to establish Zeit a Career Unit in Al-Quds Open University based in BirZeit. The agreement assures that partner institutions and companies will coordinate with Al-Quds University by visiting the Unit to identify valuable students to work with them and by sending an overview regarding the available positions. Moreover, the agreement describes the methodology on how the Unit will implement courses for the benefit of group of students on specific majors.

### **Launching of the Youth Business Support Unit**

At the beginning of October 2007, under the umbrella of A Step Forward, Sharek Youth Forum launched a new Unit called "Youth Business Support Unit". The unit aims to contribute to the reduction of poverty among Palestinian families, particularly those headed by youth through fostering entrepreneurship and business incubation. By supporting families in developing new sources of revenue through the set-up of small businesses, the project will significantly contribute to the empowerment of youth and to the long-term development of Palestinian society.

#### ➤ **DHRU**

### **Video conference meetings to discuss the right of youth to political participation.**

Since the establishment of the project the DHRU staff has facilitated communication and discussion amongst youth from the West Bank and Gaza Strip through video-conferences. The series of video-conferences carried out in October were dedicated to the right of youth to political participation. The Palestinian elections law from 2005 was discussed in relation to the youth sector and then participants of the video conference formulated strategies to increase youth's involvement in the legislative process. The participants agreed on the following recommendations to the ministry: the amendment of the elections law to lower the age for candidates to the PLC from 28 to 25 years of age, and for candidates to the municipal councils from 25 to 23 and the introduction of a quota system for youth to ensure that young candidates have a real and fair chance of being elected.

### **Implementation of 64 workshops on human rights in 16 refugee camps**

During the month of October, a series of interactive training workshops were held in several refugee camps across the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Volunteer-trainers that had been trained by the DHRU staff in August gave the workshops. In each location, four workshops were carried out targeting refugee youth from 15 to 18 years of age. The goal of these workshops was to raise awareness about

human rights and to give a general introduction on the concepts of humanity, needs and rights.

#### ➤ **Bridges program**

### **Establishment of 3 playgrounds under the umbrella of the "Safety Playground Project"**

During September and October 2007, Sharek Youth Forum established three new playgrounds: two in the West Bank (in Silwad and Ramallah) and one in the Gaza Strip (in Al-Maghazi). As part of the openings, Sharek staff together with the local partners carried out various open-air activities with the involvement of many children living in the area.

### **Graduation ceremony in Salfeet for 80 child beneficiaries of "Shababeek" project**

In September 2007, Sharek organized a graduation ceremony at Salfeet Municipality as part of "Shababeek" IT project. The project was implemented in cooperation with the Siraj IT Centre and Salfeet Municipality engaged a total of 80 child beneficiaries.

#### ➤ **Partners program**

### **Launch of a project on "Cartoon Production" for child rights**

In October 2007, Sharek Youth Forum in cooperation with "Abna' Al Balad" society in Nablus, launched a project of cartoon film making on child rights. Participants were trained on how to design and produce films and as a result many shows and films focusing on child rights were created. One of the remarkable examples of the project is the filming of "I am here" which seeks to support the rights of disabled children. Also, as part of "Cartoon Production" children started to implement media forum at the city council.