

Healing to Hope

التعافي من أجل الأمل

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



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**ANAR FOR EMPOWERMENT
& PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT**



Table of **CONTENTS**

Message from the President of the Board of Trustees	04
Message from Anar's Founder	05
Who We Are	07
Our Mission - Goals and Objectives	08
Context Summary	09
Establishment and Strategic Directions	12
Strategic Directions	15
Executive Summary	17
Stories of Anar	21
Board of Directors	23

Healing to Hope

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Message from the President of the Board of Trustees

Dear Friends and Supporters,

In these challenging times, the news emanating from Palestine is laden with sorrow, tragedy, and heartbreak. The reality of genocide unfolding in our homeland casts a long shadow of despair, one that will linger for generations to come. Yet, even amidst this devastation and anguish, we, as Palestinians, remain resolute in our commitment to rebuilding and forging ahead, for life itself is our greatest act of defiance.



Anar stands as a beacon of hope, a testament to our unwavering belief in healing and the resilience of our community. It embodies our dedication to nurturing our children and youth and to harnessing the collective strength of our people. While the specter of death and destruction looms large, it is essential to recognize the stories of hope, the emergence of new initiatives, and the promise of new possibilities.

I wish circumstances were different and that this annual report could be presented under brighter skies. Yet, therein lies the essence of healing – the ability to find solace and purpose amidst violence. As we navigate through these challenging times, I am hopeful that our next communication will be marked by tales of success, transformation, and the gradual process of healing, as we emerge from the shadows of genocide.

I extend my deepest gratitude to each and every one of you for your unwavering support and commitment to our cause. Your willingness to embrace our new initiatives and stand in solidarity with us not only embodies resilience but also fuels our collective determination to uphold life, justice, and hope.

Thank you for being a part of our journey toward healing and recovery.

Dr. Munther Isaac

President of the Board of Trustees

Message from Anar's Founder



Amidst the violence imposed by the Israeli occupation, we are committed to stand as a beacon of hope, resilience, and healing for the children and communities who bear the brunt of oppression.

Dear friends, colleagues, and partners,

As we reflect on this year, we are filled with mixed emotions of sadness, anger, frustration, but also resilience, courage, and hope. This year has been one of the most difficult ones for us as Palestinians, as we faced the brutal reality of living under occupation, oppression, and violence. We saw our brothers and sisters in Gaza endure a horrific war that killed thousands of civilians, including many children, injured thousands more, destroyed homes, schools, hospitals, and infrastructure, and left deep scars on the minds and hearts of the survivors, especially the children. We saw our lands being confiscated and colonized by illegal settlements, our rights being violated and denied, our movements being restricted and controlled by checkpoints and the wall, and our lives being threatened and attacked by Israeli settlers and soldiers.

We founded Anar in the summer of 2023, with a vision of creating a community-based organization that can support the mental health and psychosocial well-being of our people, who have been living with the legacy and reality of trauma. We understand that trauma is not only an individual problem but also a collective and political one that shapes our identity, our dignity, our culture, and our future. We understand that healing is not only a psychological process but also a social and spiritual one that involves our families, our communities, our faith, and our values. We understand that hope is not only a feeling but also a choice and a practice that demands our commitment, our creativity, and our solidarity. Little did we know that a war would break out in Gaza in October 2023, which made our work even more urgent and vital.

That is why we chose "Healing to Hope" as our slogan, because we want to inspire and support our people to heal from their trauma and to hope for a better future, even when the situation seems hopeless and uncertain. We want to offer our children a safe space where they can express their emotions, share their stories, learn new skills, access resources, build networks, and participate in activities that can enhance their well-being and resilience. We want to empower our people to reclaim their agency, their voice, their rights, and their dreams.

I want to thank you for your trust, your support, and your partnership in this journey. I want to invite you to read more about our achievements, our challenges, our lessons, and our plans in the following pages. I want to ask you to continue to stand with us, to work with us, and to hope with us, as we strive to make a positive difference in the lives of our people and our society.

Rami Khader

Founder & Executive Director of Anar





WHO WE ARE

Anar is a not-for-profit organization situated in Bethlehem, Palestine. Our work is centered on advancing the psychosocial wellbeing and resilience of children who have been impacted by violence and oppression. We are committed to improving the lives of these children through various programs and interventions that prioritize their mental and emotional wellbeing.

At Anar, we believe that community-based psychosocial support and creative expression are fundamental pathways to community development and healing. Through awareness, advocacy, and community-based psychosocial services, we aim to break the cycle of oppression and intergenerational trauma and build community capacity for collective resilience and hope.



Our Mission

Our work is dedicated to ensuring that the essential human rights of health and wellbeing are prioritized for Palestinian children and caregivers and the broader community. We strive to achieve this goal through participatory, holistic, and inclusive approaches to psychosocial support that are grounded in human rights and protection principles. By fostering collaboration and coordination with relevant stakeholders in the West Bank, we aim to create an environment that is supportive, responsive, and appropriate for our target groups.

Goals and Objectives

Anar is dedicated to empowering Palestinian children who have been adversely affected by oppression and conflict. Our goal is to foster their wellbeing, support their healing process, and assist them in realizing their full potential. By prioritizing the psychosocial wellbeing and empowerment of these children, we believe that we can make a positive impact on their lives and in their community.

To achieve this goal, we have set the following specific objectives:

Objective 1

To provide access to inclusive and gender-sensitive community-based psychosocial support programs for Palestinian children affected by violence and oppression.

Objective 2

To promote collective psychosocial support and healing by raising awareness and building capacity within the community, which includes practitioners, community leaders, youth, and volunteers.

Objective 3

To facilitate cultural and creative programming and interventions that promote community resilience, expression, and healing.

Context Summary

The occupied Palestinian territory (OPT) faces a protracted political crisis due to a long Israeli military occupation. This situation on the ground is aggravated by the non-compliance with international humanitarian and human rights law, especially the growing illegal Israeli settlements and land theft in the OPT, followed by growing settler violence. The implication is chronic protection challenges and humanitarian needs that require not only protection mechanisms but also political will by the international community to force Israel to adhere to international law.

The West Bank faced a severe deterioration of the humanitarian and protection situation in 2023, with a record number of Palestinian fatalities caused by Israeli military and settlers. OCHA reported that 476 Palestinians, including 112 children, were killed in the West Bank in 2023, which was the highest annual figure since OCHA began documenting casualties in 2005. This was a threefold increase compared to 2022, when 158 Palestinians were killed. The report also recorded a surge in settler violence, which led to 10 Palestinian deaths and 1,200 injuries, as well as the damage or destruction of 290 Palestinian-owned structures, which displaced 413 people and affected the livelihoods of over 11,000 others. The report also highlighted the increased restrictions on access and movement of many Palestinian communities, especially in Area C, where most of the demolitions and seizures took place.



(Photo: DCIP / Ahmad Al-Bazz)



(Photo: Alon Bernstein, Associated Press)

Palestinians families fleeing Gaza City and other parts of northern Gaza towards the southern areas, walk along a highway on November 9, 2023. (Photo: Mahmud Hams / AFP)



A report published in 2023 by The World Bank, titled “Mental Health in the West Bank and Gaza”, revealed four key findings about the mental health situation in the region. First, the report found that the population of the West Bank and Gaza suffered from a very high rate of mental health problems, such as depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Second, the report showed that the mental health problems varied by region and socio-economic factors, such as gender, education, income, and employment status. Third, the report demonstrated that mental health problems had a negative impact on economic outcomes, such as labor force participation, productivity, and earnings. Fourth, the report indicated that exposure to violent conflict and traumatic events was strongly related to poor mental health, especially among young adults aged 18-29, who had the highest rate of PTSD symptoms. The report also highlighted the need for more investment and intervention in the mental health sector, as well as the integration of mental health services into primary health care and social protection systems.

The Israeli war on Gaza has reached an unprecedented level, as OCHA’s flash update published on January 2, 2024 reveals. Out of the 2.1 million people living in Gaza, 1.9 million have been forced to flee their homes and seek shelter elsewhere. The death toll has risen to 22,185, of whom 5,153 are women and 7,729 children. Among the victims, 1,838 families have suffered multiple fatalities.

The economic situation was already difficult for the Palestinian people before 2023, but the war hit it with an even stronger blow. A report by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) reveals the devastating effects of the war on Gaza, as well as the impact of the Israeli blockade on the Palestinian economy and labor market. According to PCBS President Ola Awad, the war has disrupted all aspects of life and created a humanitarian, social, and economic crisis. She said that the unemployment rate in Gaza has reached more than 75% of the labor force, while in the West Bank it has risen to about 33%, the highest level in decades. The report shows how the war and the blockade have severely disrupted the economic structure and undermined the livelihoods of the Palestinian people.

<https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/west-bank-snapshot-14-december-2023>
 Mental Health in the West Bank and Gaza (English). Washington, D.C. : World Bank Group. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/099153502102330181/P17925303fca130e30936d016a378b6a1e9>
<https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-87>
 ILO Brief - Bulletin No. 2: Impact of the escalation of hostilities in Gaza on the labour market and livelihoods in the Occupied Palestinian Territory: Bulletin No. 2

(Photo: AFP / Said Khatib)

Establishment and Strategic Directions of Anar for Empowerment and Psychosocial Support

Anar for Psychosocial Support emerged from the vision of its founder, Rami Khader, who recognized the urgent need for an organization dedicated to aiding children, families, and communities facing the harsh realities of life under military occupation, particularly those affected by violence. The core intervention approach integrates psychosocial support with the transformative power of art, theatre, and play, providing a platform for individuals to express their emotions, thoughts, and creativity.

Assessment and Founding Phase (May - September 2023):

2023	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
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In May 2023, Rami and a team of volunteers initiated an assessment to gauge the necessity of psychosocial support in the targeted areas. The survey, extended to schools, organizations, faith-based institutions, psychosocial organizations, scouts, and entities catering to children and youth, engaged 500 children and 500 caregivers and community leaders. The overwhelming response highlighted both the need for such services and the prevailing vulnerability within the communities.

Based on the feedback, a decision was made to establish a not-for-profit organization. Between May and September 2023, efforts focused on forming a diverse Board of Directors capable of understanding the community's needs. Simultaneously, Anar's goals and objectives were defined, and policies were crafted to ensure strategic planning and legitimacy. The official registration process with the Ministry of Interior commenced, culminating in the approval and reception of official registration in the first week of September.



Structural Development (September 2023):

2023 | JAN | FEB | MAR | APR | MAY | JUN | JUL | AUG | SEP | OCT | NOV | DEC



On September 15, the Board convened for the first time, officially appointing Rami Khader as the organization's director and leader. In this pivotal meeting, various essential policies were approved, including the Administrative and Human Resource Manual, Financial Manual, Anar Bylaws, Code of Conduct, Child Protection Policy, and Governance of Anar. Additionally, a bank account was established.

Fundraising and Commitments (May - December 2023):

2023 | JAN | FEB | MAR | APR | MAY | JUN | JUL | AUG | SEP | OCT | NOV | DEC

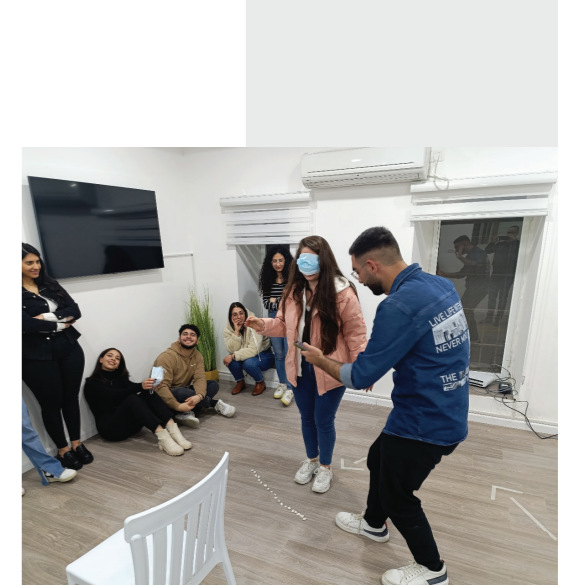
Throughout the establishment phase, Anar actively pursued fundraising initiatives, submitting proposals to various foundations. Remarkably, commitments were secured from four organizations, including Blossom Hill Foundation, Embrace the Middle East, HATD, and Global Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and United Church of Christ, while Anar was obtaining its official registration. These commitments, covering 70% of the organization's needs, signified long-term partnerships, ensuring the sustainability of Anar. While two main programs were funded, a partner is sought for the third program focused on art and healing as a community expression outlet.

Operational Approach and Office Setup (October 2023):

2023 | JAN | FEB | MAR | APR | MAY | JUN | JUL | AUG | SEP | OCT | NOV | DEC



In October 2023, Anar rented an office in Beit Sahour, which serves as its primary workspace. Embracing a decentralized operational model, Anar leverages technologies developed during the COVID era. This model enables individuals in various localities in the West Bank and Gaza to collaborate, serving their communities while maintaining remote connectivity with Anar's central team. The absence of multiple offices reduces overhead costs, ensuring funds are directed towards community support rather than organizational expenses.



Strategic Directions: (2023 – 2025)



1. Enhancing Service Quality and Impact Assessment:

Anar's primary strategic focus is the continual improvement of service quality through the effective implementation of its three programs. This involves a dedicated commitment to strengthening Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) practices. The organization aims to ensure positive impacts on children, caregivers, and communities while prioritizing the prevention of harm. As part of this direction, Anar plans to conduct a comprehensive evaluation by the end of June 2026, analyzing the three years of its interventions. The insights gained from this assessment will guide any necessary adjustments to Anar's direction, reinforcing its commitment to delivering impactful and sustainable psychosocial support.

2. Gradual Expanding Community Reach:

Anar's second strategic direction centers on a phased expansion of its community reach. Initially focusing on the southern part of the West Bank, specifically the governorates of Bethlehem and Hebron, the organization plans to progressively extend its services to the middle and northern regions of the West Bank and eventually the Gaza Strip. The expansion strategy will be carefully determined by Anar's board of directors and team, who will consider both financial feasibility and technical capacity. Fundraising efforts will not only cover operational expenses but also include securing a specialized vehicle for our mobile clinic to facilitate team outreach in areas with challenging terrains, especially communities near Israeli settlements and Bedouin communities.

3. Global Engagement and Sustainability:

Anar's third strategic direction involves the establishment of friend groups in various parts of the world, with a specific sister organization planned in the USA. This initiative serves a dual purpose: fundraising and fostering connections between Palestinian and American healers and artists. The friend groups will contribute to the financial sustainability of Anar, while also nurturing meaningful human connections. The envisioned branch in the USA will act as a hub for collaborative efforts, ensuring a bridge between cultures and leveraging the collective expertise of healers and artists from both Palestinian and American communities.



Executive Summary

Before registering with the Ministry of Interior, Anar conducted in April/May 2023 a comprehensive assessment of the psychosocial needs of the local communities in the West Bank. The assessment involved consulting with community-based organizations, community leaders, and relevant MHPSS agencies, as well as meeting with caregivers and children. The assessment revealed that there was a high demand for psychosocial support, especially in certain areas. The main recommendation was to adopt a community-led approach and empower communities and community leaders to address their psychosocial needs. The assessment also highlighted the importance of creating sustainable spaces for self-expression for children and families through art, play, and expressive mediums. This informed the design of Anar and its interventions in the community. The assessment covered six localities in the West Bank, including city, village, refugee camp, and bedouin communities.



Anar started its official work in September 2023 by partnering with Aida Youth Center at Aida refugee camp in Bethlehem. This partnership was part of Anar's outreach program to improve the abilities of civil society organizations and leaders to include psychosocial aspects in their programmatic goals and objectives. Anar trained 10 staff members and volunteers from the center on psychological first aid and intervention techniques, as well as self-care for first responders. Anar also helped Aida Youth Center to establish a safe space for mental health and psychosocial support for children in the refugee camp, serving 12 children and offering counseling for children and caregivers who needed more specialized services. The program would last for one year and would focus on developing the capacity of Aida refugee camp and creating a protection and psychosocial response committee in the camp. The goal was to provide a sustainable mental health and psychosocial support system in a refugee camp that faced frequent invasions and tear gas by Israeli soldiers.



We have trained 100 students from Bethlehem University on leadership from a psychosocial perspective as part of our efforts to enhance the capacities of youth and community leaders in MHPSS. The training aimed to raise their awareness about the importance of MHPSS in their communities and encourage them to play an active role in supporting local psychosocial support activities. The students learned about psychological first aid, community engagement, and leadership skills, and we hope that they will use their existing networks to help the most vulnerable in their community. The training was delivered in two full days and had a high attendance rate. We collaborated with the student affairs department at Bethlehem University for this training.

Executive Summary

Anar launched a project in November 2023 to enhance community-based protection mechanisms and psychosocial wellbeing for children affected by political violence in various communities, including refugee camps, Area C, and remote areas. The project aims to assist trauma and violence survivors in healing and recovery. We offer a safe space for children, caregivers, and community members to receive support and access the resources they need.

We target a variety of individuals, such as community leaders, children, and caregivers living in two areas in Bethlehem and Hebron governorates, including refugee camps, Area C, and remote areas. The first six weeks of the project were the preparation phase, during which we hired a psychosocial coordinator to assist with the implementation of the activities and work with local community-based organizations in the selected areas to form protection groups.

We collaborated with the Social Workers and Psychologists' Union in Hebron to conduct a full-day training on self-care techniques for 18 professionals who work in the field of protection, such as social workers, psychologists, and protection police officers. The training aimed to equip the practitioners with tools to take care of themselves while they serve vulnerable communities affected by political violence. The feedback from the participants highlighted the need to create safe networks for social workers and psychologists in the region and suggested that Anar expand the training to other groups who work closely with the affected communities, such as medical teams, first responders, and press members. These groups would also benefit from learning self-care and resilience skills. We plan to strengthen this group and involve them in our outreach to different communities, so they can continue to respond to the urgent needs in Hebron governorate.



In December 2023, we launched our second program, “Shababeek” Empowering Christian Youth Leadership and Promoting Psychosocial Support and Care Through Coaching and Mentoring. This program is designed to help Christian youth, aged between 18 and 28 years, from the Bethlehem governorate, to develop their leadership potential and improve their mental health and well-being. We provide them with comprehensive coaching and mentoring on various topics, such as leadership, spirituality, and psychosocial support. We believe that this program will enable the youth to overcome the difficulties and challenges they face in their daily lives and to become positive agents of change in their communities. We aim to pilot this project and develop a curriculum that can be adapted to different contexts and youth groups from various geographical areas in Palestine.

Anar customized a consultation and coaching workshop for FAID School For The Deaf organization in Lebanon as part of the first phase of initiation. The training was done in Amman Jordan through an agreement with the World Development & Relief organization, which is affiliated with The Methodist Church in Ireland. The aim of the training was to help the staff members of Faid Organization integrate psychosocial support into their programmatic goals, objectives, and activities.

Stories of Anar

Tamara Abu laban: A Palestinian filmmaker and Anar's board member

Tamara is not only a filmmaker, but also a storyteller. She grew up in Dheisheh Refugee Camp in Bethlehem, where she witnessed the horrors of political violence and human rights abuses by the Israeli army. She survived many hardships and traumas, but she never gave up on her dreams.



She pursued her passion for media and cinema, earning a BA and an MA in these fields. She also won several awards for her work, including the prestigious Synergos Award in 2016. She has worked with various TV channels as a film and TV producer and has shared her expertise as a lecturer at Bethlehem University. Tamara believes in the power of art and creativity to heal and transform lives. She joined Anar's board because she resonated with its vision and mission of healing communities affected by oppression and occupation. She uses cinema and filmmaking as a way of healing herself and telling the stories of her people. She is currently working on a film that reflects her own trauma and healing process. It is a film that speaks to the heart and soul of every Palestinian. To learn more about Tamara and her film, watch this pre-production teaser. <https://youtu.be/FTLd5TqmaTo?si=gcQMtJiuJf7Mlk9Z>

Rusaila Lutfi: A social worker at Aida Youth Center and a partner of Anar



Rusaila Lutfi works as a social worker at Aida Youth Center in Aida Refugee Camp in Bethlehem. She is our main partner in establishing a psychosocial unit at the center to serve the mental health and psychosocial needs of the camp. She received coaching and training from us to provide psychological first aid, home visits, and safe spaces for children who face violence regularly. She said that our coaching helped her gain more confidence in working with children and the community and in understanding and addressing their psychosocial needs. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vyh4AY9qVGc&t=1s>

A Story of Resilience and Hope

Waleed Abed and Taghreed are two of the many dedicated professionals who work tirelessly to support the mental health and well-being of their communities in Hebron Governorate, where violence and oppression are sadly common. Waleed is the director of the Social Work and Psychologists Union, and Taghreed is a volunteer and a member of the psychosocial support team.



They both joined a training session organized by Anar, that was specially designed for front liners who face high levels of stress and distress in their work. The training session focused on helping them release their stress and practice self-care activities that can enhance their resilience and coping skills.

Waleed and Taghreed were amazed by the impact of the training session on their personal and professional lives. They said that the training helped them feel more relaxed, confident, and motivated to continue their noble mission. They also expressed their interest in building a long-term partnership between Anar and the Union in order to provide systematic and regular psychosocial support for front liners who are vulnerable to secondary trauma.



Board of Directors



President - Dr. Rev. Munther Isaac: Palestinian Christian Pastor and Theologian, serving as pastor at the Evangelical Lutheran Christmas Church in Bethlehem and the Lutheran Church in Beit Sahour. He's the academic dean of Bethlehem Bible College and the director of the influential Christ at the Checkpoint conferences. Passionate about Palestinian theology, he speaks globally and is a prolific author.



Treasurer - Dr. Mohammad Awad: holds a Ph.D in Public Administration – Major in Nonprofit Management from University of Texas at Dallas – USA. Dr. Awad has more than twenty years of professional experience at National and International NGOs in developmental and humanitarian programming including program development and management. He now serves as dean of students at Bethlehem University.



Deputy President - Jackline Jazrawi: A dynamic leader with a diverse background in education, sports, and community development, she currently serves as a Project Coordinator at Right to Play organization in the Palestinian territories. Jackline was one of the six founders of women's football in Palestine, and her legacy as a leader in football, sports, and development is widely recognized. She has captained the Palestinian Women's national Football Team and now leverages football as a powerful advocate for justice, equality, child rights, and development.



Secretary - Osama Awwad: A media enthusiast and co-founder of Peace-by-Peace Tours Company and Diyar Theatre, he dedicates himself to social impact through acting, directing, and short films. His impactful work extends to the Care for You Organization, and he is a vital force in his community.

Board of Directors



Dr. Majeda Attallah: A resident of Beit Sahour, Dr. Atallah is a valued member of our board. She is a Clinical Pharmacist, holds a master's degree in theology, and is also a certified Counseling Psychotherapist specializing in Marriage and Family Therapy, as well as Mental Illnesses and Chemical Dependency Counseling.



Hunaida Iseed: A psychologist and supervisor in the mental health domain, she currently serves at Médecins du Monde-Palestine as a psychologist, supervisor, trainer, and focal point for PSEA. She is the Chairperson of the Palestinian Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies in Palestine, holding a master's degree in psychological and educational counseling. Hunaida is active in various professional unions, MHPSS working groups, affiliations, and international and local organizations. She is a certified trainer in diverse topics such as PSEA, self-care, MHGAP, Equip, and their modules of psychological interventions such as CBT and Schema Therapy.



Hanna Khair: A seasoned professional with a strong track record in audit and accountancy. And known for delivering exceptional audit services, Hanna has expertise in financial analysis, risk assessment, and compliance across various industries. A Certified Public Accountant (CPA), he remains committed to excellence, staying current with the latest accounting and auditing standards and continuously expanding his knowledge for the highest level of service.



Tamara Abu Laban: A Palestinian filmmaker from Dheisheh refugee camp in Bethlehem, she passionately tells people's stories through her films. With a BA in Media & Communication and an MA in Cinema, she's won many awards, including the Synergos Award in 2016. Tamara's work has been featured on prominent TV channels in film and TV production, and she shares her expertise as a lecturer in the interactive media department at Bethlehem University.