



Annual Report

2025

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Leadership & Overview

01

Message from President of Board of Trustees

Amid the many urgent and overlapping challenges facing children in Palestine today, I have chosen to begin this reflection by focusing on one of the most pressing and deeply troubling realities: the detention of Palestinian children in Israeli prisons.



In a year marked by deepening hardship and escalating violence, this issue has continued to weigh heavily on our collective conscience. Across 2025, hundreds of Palestinian children have been held in Israeli detention at any given time, with estimates from human rights organizations indicating that between 150 and 200 children are in military detention monthly, while over 700 children are prosecuted annually through a system that falls short of basic child protection standards. Many of these children endure interrogation without the presence of a parent or lawyer, prolonged pre-trial detention, and experiences that leave lasting psychological and social scars.

Behind each number is a child whose sense of safety has been fractured, whose education has been disrupted, and whose place within family and community has been shaken.

At Anar, we could not remain observers to this growing reality.

In 2025, we took a deliberate and necessary step forward by initiating a focused program dedicated to the reintegration of children returning from detention. This program recognizes that release is not the end of a child's journey; it is, in many ways, the beginning of a complex and fragile process of healing and re-belonging.

Our approach is rooted in accompaniment. We walk alongside children as they navigate their return to family life, rebuild trust within their communities, and re-engage with education systems that often struggle to receive them. Through psychosocial support, family engagement, school coordination, and community-based interventions, we aim to restore not only wellbeing, but dignity, identity, and hope.

What we have learned through this work is both sobering and inspiring. The

trauma is real, deep, and ongoing. Yet so too is the resilience of these children, their families, and the communities that hold them.

This program reflects who we are as Anar. We do not wait for conditions to improve, we respond within them. We do not work in isolation, we build with communities. And we do not see children as victims alone, but as individuals with strength, agency, and the right to reclaim their lives.

As we present this annual report, we invite you to look beyond the numbers and into the stories of restoration that are unfolding. They are a testament to what is possible when care is intentional, when communities are empowered, and when we choose, collectively, to stand with children in their most vulnerable moments.

With gratitude for your continued trust and partnership,

Pastor Munther Isaac

President - Anar Board of Trustees



Message from Anar's Founder

Yet another difficult year has passed across our land and our people. In the face of continued violence, displacement, and uncertainty, our response as Anar was one of SUMUD, steadfastness in the face of oppression.

We refused to accept despair as the final answer.

Instead, we chose the harder path: to remain present with the most vulnerable in our communities. We did not wait for the war to end, or for violence to ease. We walked alongside children, caregivers, and communities as they lived through it.

In our group counseling sessions, children who had been carrying fear and anxiety began to smile again. A child who had experienced detention was able to return to school and slowly reclaim the life of a child. A mother who wakes each day fearing for the safety of her sons and daughters found a safe space where she could speak openly about her fears without judgment. An Anar counselor, after listening day after day to the heavy realities faced by families, found support and healing through our staff self-care sessions.

These moments are small on their own, but together they tell the story of why our work matters.

The year 2025 unfolded under extremely difficult circumstances: a genocide continuing in Gaza, increasing Israeli military operations and settler violence across the West Bank, and growing movement restrictions that continued to shape daily life for Palestinian communities. Despite this reality, our team remained committed to accompanying communities as they navigated trauma, loss, and uncertainty.

Throughout the year, Anar continued to grow in both reach and institutional strength. We expanded our presence to the northern West Bank, responding to urgent needs in communities affected by displacement. We launched the Anar Expressive Arts Unit, integrating creative and arts-based approaches into our psychosocial work to help children and communities process their experiences through expression and creativity.

At the same time, we invested in strengthening the organization itself. In



2025, Anar initiated a five-year strategic planning process to guide our future direction. We developed and updated six organizational policies and procedures, strengthening governance and operational clarity. We also digitalized our core systems—human resources, procurement, and project management—through the development of an online database that supports our field teams and enables us to expand our work with greater structure and accountability.

In a short time, we have grown significantly. And it has been the urgent needs of the communities we serve that have driven this growth.

Because the need to accompany our people is not something that can wait.

Across the West Bank, we have witnessed communities becoming more resilient, caregivers finding new ways to cope with intergenerational trauma, and children learning to understand and express their emotions. Through this work, we have also become closer to the people we serve, walking together through hardship with dignity and hope.

This report reflects not only what we have accomplished during the past year, but the collective resilience of the communities who continue to stand, endure, and care for one another.

Rami Khader

Founder and Executive Director of Anar



Executive Summary

In 2025, Anar substantially expanded and strengthened its work, responding to the escalating psychosocial needs of Palestinian communities by initiating critical new programs, significantly developing existing ones, and strengthening its partnerships and organizational systems. By opening a new field office, enlarging its staff, and extending its work into the northern governorates, Anar considerably widened its reach. By the end of year, Anar had supported 8,658 children and 3,471 caregivers. In total, 12,213 beneficiaries were served by Anar across the West Bank in 2025.

Three programmatic developments of key importance were set in motion in 2025: the refining and strengthening of Anar's Community Based Psychosocial Support (CBPSS) Program, the initiation of the Former Child Detainees Project, and the launch of the Expressive Arts Unit.

Anar's vision of psychosocial support is grounded in the belief that the foundation of effective and sustainable work is the empowerment of local community members to both identify and address trauma within their own communities. Instead of building primary reliance on "specialists" who may or may not be able to reach communities due to movement restrictions or military incursions, Anar has developed, in collaboration with UNICEF, a model of strategic accompaniment – Community Led Psychosocial Accompaniment Teams (formerly Community Based Self-Help Hubs). By collaborating with, listening to, and guiding community leaders in a structured co-design process that enables them to define, shape and implement their own psychosocial initiatives, Anar walks with communities throughout and beyond the process of responding to community needs, providing them with supervision, tools, training, consultation, and technical support.

The launch of the Former Child Detainees Project was a dream made reality for Anar in 2025. Through its partnership with Save the Children, Anar began to provide comprehensive psychosocial support to children who have experienced the profound traumas of arrest, detention, and imprisonment. Because the impact of



this trauma extends beyond the child, Anar also works with the child's family and community, seeking to address the fractures in relationship, trust, and identity, and supporting the children to reintegrate into school or vocational work.

The Expressive Arts Unit, a substantial expansion and refining of the Makan Program, grew out of Anar's commitment to the arts as a central medium of its work. The hiring of an experienced and skilled unit coordinator enabled this work to blossom, and made it possible to begin to offer a wide range of activities that employed many art forms, such as theater, music, puppetry, film, visual art, and storytelling.

Alongside these developments, "Hope Groups," a pilot project begun in 2024 focusing on psychosocial support to caregivers, showed significant success in 2025. This initiative, a collaboration with World Without Orphans, will be further expanded and tested in 2026. In the Children's Stories Project, another noteworthy endeavor, Anar staff co-facilitated a creative writing process with 15 children, providing psychosocial support, and guided them in the creation of stories about their lives under occupation. In 2026, these stories will be collected into a book for future work with children in Palestine. In addition, Anar was visited by artist and filmmaker Ben Rivers and creative arts therapist Reem Abu Kishk, who offered trainings in Play Back Theater and The Internal Family Systems methodology.

Psychosocial support is best implemented by those who feel supported and cared for themselves, and Anar's wholistic approach to its work acknowledges the deep importance of the mental health and wellness of its staff. Accordingly, Anar's staff self-care workshops, biweekly individual support/supervision sessions, monthly group support sessions, and, in collaboration with UNICEF, the launch of the Taamni Annak ("Talk to Me") TOT Training addressing burnout and secondary trauma, were all prioritized as part of Anar's core work in 2025. In addition, Anar's staff was supported with professional development trainings throughout the year.

Anar's work is collaborative - expanding and strengthening with the support and accompaniment of many people and organizations across the globe. Notably, in 2025 Anar's relationship with its sister organization, Healing to Hope, grew and solidified through shared work, purpose, and vision.

Context Summary

2025 brought continued devastation to the **Gaza Strip**. Bombardment and ground attacks, a sustained blockade of humanitarian supplies, repeated displacement, the systematic bombing of hospitals, schools, mosques, and displacement camps, as well as targeted strikes on ambulance teams, civil defense, health workers, and journalists, created a catastrophic situation for the men, women and children living there. By September, the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory (COI-oPt) had officially declared that Israel was perpetrating genocide in Gaza.¹

In March, Israel imposed a total blockade of all humanitarian goods, including food, medicine, and fuel,² and continued to severely restrict the entry of desperately needed resources for the rest of the year.³ Children were disproportionately impacted by the siege.⁴ By August, the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) officially declared famine in the Gaza governorate.⁵ By April, 650,000 children in the Gaza Strip were at risk of death from hunger and malnutrition.⁶ According to Save the Children, four out of every five children in Gaza entered 2026 still facing crisis levels of hunger.⁷

The health care system in Gaza was brought to near collapse in 2025. By the end of the year, all hospitals had been destroyed⁸ or damaged.⁹ According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the estimated number of people requiring long-term rehabilitation due to injuries had almost doubled, from 22,500 in July 2024, to at least 41,844 by September 2025.¹⁰ By December, at least 18,500 injured and chronically ill Gazans were in need of medical services that were not available.¹¹ According to the Palestinian Ministry of Health, 51% of essential medicines were currently at zero stock in the Gaza Strip.¹²

By the close of 2025, over 71,000 Gazans had been killed since October 2023¹³; nearly 30% of that total were children.¹⁴ 171,000 Gazans had been injured, and over 2 million had been repeatedly and forcibly displaced. Close to 81% of all buildings had been destroyed or damaged, and most of the population was trapped in unimaginable conditions within half of the territory.¹⁵ According to the Palestinian Bureau of Statistics, 58,554 children had lost one or both parents, and 17,000 had



Jaber Jihad Badwan, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

been left completely unaccompanied.¹⁶ “More than two years of war in Gaza have left many Palestinian children too weak to learn or play, and convinced they will be “killed for being Gazans,” reported the University of Cambridge.¹⁷ According to UNICEF, by the end of 2025, an estimated 1.1 million children remained in need of child protection services and psychosocial support.¹⁸



The genocidal war in Gaza has created not only a humanitarian catastrophe, but also a profound and escalating mental health crisis,”

“The genocidal war in Gaza has created not only a humanitarian catastrophe, but also a profound and escalating mental health crisis,” reports the Gaza Community Mental Health Program. “The suffering of children, women, elderly, and persons with disabilities goes beyond physical wounds - psychological trauma is widespread, severe, and risks becoming a generational legacy unless urgent action is taken.”¹⁹

In the **Occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem**, 2025 was marked by escalating violence, widespread arbitrary arrest and detention, intensified movement restrictions, illegal settlement expansion, and mass displacement linked to militarized operations. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Israeli forces routinely resorted to unnecessary or disproportionate use of force.²⁰ In total, 240 Palestinians were killed by Israeli forces or settlers in 2025; almost a quarter of this number were children. 3,982 Palestinians were injured, including 697 children, and 37,135 Palestinians were forcibly displaced.²¹ Access to education was significantly restricted,²² and the overall economic stresses for Palestinian families continued to be acute.²³



“There remains,” states the OHCHR, “a pervasive climate of impunity in relation to gross violations of international human rights law and serious violations of international humanitarian law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. These violations, together with pervasive and growing settler violence committed with impunity, are fundamental to the coercive environment that induces forced displacement and forcible transfer... raising serious concerns of ethnic cleansing.”²⁴



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2025 brought a marked escalation of Israeli settler violence across the OPT, including the killing of community members, the burning of homes, the



B'Tselem, [Israel demolishes a four-story building in Wadi-Qadum, East Jerusalem](#)

destruction of crops, the theft of farming equipment, and attacks on schools, children and teachers. 1,800 incidents of settler violence that resulted in casualties or property damage were reported by OCHA throughout the year - the highest daily average since OCHA began documenting these attacks in 2006.²⁵ Recurrent exposure to these attacks had a profound impact on the mental health of Palestinian communities, creating a climate of fear and chronic stress. The support, and sometimes participation, of the Israeli military, deepened this impact. According to OCHA, children were especially affected by these attacks, which caused trauma symptoms such as nightmares, panic attacks, and severe anxiety.²⁶ This intensifying violence was accompanied by the alarming expansion of Israeli settlements, which are illegal under international law. In 2025 the Israeli government approved 41 Israeli settlements, the highest number on record for a single year.²⁷ This unprecedented growth was accompanied by a significant increase in tension, fear, violence, and movement restrictions for Palestinians.²⁸ About 750,000 Israeli settlers now live in the OPT.²⁹

Arrest and detention continued to deeply impact communities in 2025. By September, 9,692 Palestinians



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were being held in Israeli detention or prisons, in which systematic torture, beatings, harassment, and dehumanizing conditions were consistently reported.³⁰ By Oct, 3,329 of those imprisoned were being held without charge.³¹ According to Defense for Children International, Palestine, among those held were at least 350 Palestinian children - the highest number since DCI-P began recording this data in 2008. Nearly half

of these children were being held without charge or trial.³² Children who were charged were most often accused of throwing stones, and conviction could carry a sentence of up to 20 years in prison.³³ Israel is the only country in the world that systematically prosecutes children in military court.³⁴

According to OCHA, home demolitions, military operations, and settler attacks led to the forced displacement of 37,135 Palestinians in 2025.³⁵ In January, Israeli forces launched military operations in the northern regions that resulted in the largest displacement in the OPT since 1967. 32,000 residents of the Nur Shams, Tulkarem and Jenin refugee camps were forced to leave their homes.³⁶ Settler attacks - including beatings and harassment, the burning of homes, the destruction of crops and the theft of livestock - as well as the imposition of "closed military zones" and building bans by the Israeli government, served to create an increasingly unlivable environment across the West Bank. 1,625 demolitions occurred throughout the year, the majority due to the lack of a building permit - despite the fact that building permits were nearly impossible for Palestinians to acquire.³⁷ More than 17,000 Palestinians were displaced by home demolitions in the West Bank in 2025.³⁸

"Israeli authorities' policies and practices are choking daily life for Palestinians in the West Bank. Children's homes are being demolished, their futures shattered, their lives torn apart. No child should grow up under the constant threat of violence, forced displacement, or military detention," stated Ahmad Alhendawi of Save the Children.³⁹

According to OCHA, an intensification of movement restrictions across the West Bank increasingly affected access to work, education, healthcare, and other necessary services. Significantly, these obstacles deepened social fragmentation,



Children's homes are being demolished, their futures shattered, their lives torn apart. No child should grow up under the constant threat of violence, forced displacement, or military detention"

impeding Palestinians' ability to maintain connections and support and furthering the isolation of communities. In February, OCHA documented 849 permanent or intermittent barriers that controlled and restricted movement, among them checkpoints, road gates, earth mounds, and roadblocks.⁴⁰

"The emotional burden on children is immense," stated Omar Bandak, project manager at World Vision. *"They are growing up in an environment of fear and unpredictability. We are seeing more children expressing symptoms of anxiety and depression, while caregivers themselves are overwhelmed and unable to provide the reassurance their children need."*⁴¹



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Program Development and Expansion

2025 was a year of significant growth for Anar programs. In response to the escalating need, Anar expanded its work into the north to include the Nablus and Tulkarem governates. Four additional counselors, two administrative assistants, and a project coordinator were hired, and a new field office in Hebron was opened. Anar's Community Based Psychosocial Support Program was further developed and strengthened, and two critical endeavors, the Child Detainee Project, and the Expressive Arts Unit, were initiated. The Children's Stories Project was implemented, and Anar's Staff Self-Care programming was further expanded. The Shababeek Program had another successful year, and, in collaboration with World Without Orphans, Anar piloted the caregiver support "Hope Groups" project. Anar's data management, systems, and procedures were significantly upgraded. Finally, Anar's working relationships with partner organizations continued to strengthen, including with Anar's US-based sister organization, Healing to Hope, which was granted its 501c3 status in June 2025.



02

01. Community-Led Psychosocial Support Accompaniment Teams

Anar's continued work in Community Based Psychosocial Support (CB-PSS) included both refining and broadening its reach in 2025, expanding to serve displaced communities in Nablus and Tulkarem, as well as strengthening existing programs in Bethlehem and Hebron. In collaboration with UNICEF, Anar's Community Led Psychosocial Accompaniment Teams model (formerly Community Based Self-Help Hubs) was further developed, to reflect Anar's commitment to providing support that is both deeply sustainable, and increasingly responsive to the particular needs of each community.

Anar's methodology, grounded in the belief that psychosocial needs, coping mechanisms, and protective factors are best understood by those living the experience, begins with facilitated discussions and assessments in each community. These sessions include dialogue with children, caregivers, community leaders, youth, adolescents, educators, and community-based organizations, in which participants articulate the psychosocial needs of their communities. Following the assessment phase, communities play a central role in identifying local youth leaders who are trusted, motivated, and positioned to contribute to psychosocial support efforts. An announcement online is also made to reach those who may not already be connected to community structures.

These individuals form the Community-Led Psychosocial Support Accompaniment Team, which then engages in training followed by a guided co-design process to develop psychosocial initiatives that respond directly to the needs identified during the assessment phase. Implementation of these initiatives takes place within the community and is led by Accompaniment Team members themselves, while Anar provides



ongoing supervision, mentoring, and technical support. Following implementation, the community members engage in structured reflection and learning processes that allow them to assess progress, share experiences, and adapt their approaches.

Anar's model intentionally decentralizes psychosocial support and places leadership within the social fabric of the community itself, allowing community members to gradually assume leadership while remaining connected to professional guidance and accountability mechanisms. This approach reduces community reliance on external actors and supports communities to be active agents in shaping their own collective psychosocial responses to the extreme stresses of their lived reality. As a result of Anar's work, by the end of 2025 there were 84 local facilitators serving their communities in Bethlehem, Hebron, Tulkarem, and Nablus.

Highlight: The Former Child Detainees Project

In collaboration with Save the Children, Anar's Former Child Detainee Project was initiated in the Nablus, Hebron and Tulkarem governates in 2025. This critical program aims to accompany and support children, aged 8-18 years, who have been directly affected by political violence, particularly those who have been arrested, detained, and/or imprisoned by the Israeli military. By providing comprehensive psychosocial support services to these children and their caregivers, this program supports them to reintegrate into their families and communities, and return to school or begin vocational work.

The experience of arrest, detention, and imprisonment is deeply traumatic for children, their families, and their communities. Often taken from their beds in the middle of the night, children are blindfolded, handcuffed, beaten, threatened, and humiliated. Once in detention, psychological and physical abuse continue, accompanied by interrogation, isolation, and often a lack of medical care for injuries inflicted during arrest. Often there is no formal charge against the child.

Researchers and local organizations have used the term "unchildling" to describe the process of Palestinian children being forced into premature, traumatized adulthood through the experience of arrest and detention. In profound ways, their childhood has abruptly ended, and many enter into a new experience of





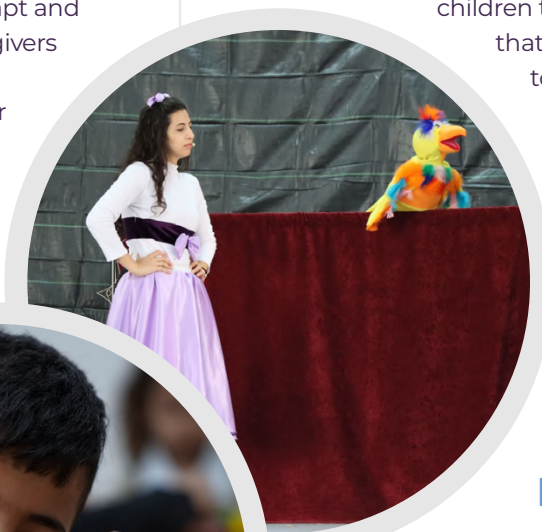
themselves and the world, marked by social isolation, loss of friendships, fear of repeated arrest, nightmares, depression, anxiety, and difficulty reintegrating into school. Significantly, these children often experience a devastating rupture of trust with their parents and communities, who were unable to protect them.

Through individual and group counseling, academic and career guidance, remedial education, and vocational training, Anar's Former Child Detainee Project seeks to address these impacts, by supporting the children, their caregivers, and their communities to adapt and build resilience. Community awareness sessions are given to engage caregivers and community leaders in promoting a supportive environment, while child-friendly recreational and arts-based PSS activities are offered to foster healing. Additionally, capacity-building sessions for staff and peer-support activities for children strengthen the overall impact and sustainability of the program. 263 children were supported in Anar's Former Child Detainee Project in 2025.

02. Expressive Arts Unit

Anar's foundational vision of using the arts to address trauma blossomed in 2025. The arts-based Makan program, which has served children across the West Bank since Anar's beginnings, was transformed into the Expressive Arts Unit, a multifaceted program, employing a wide range of artistic media and serving community members of all ages. The Expressive Arts Unit embodies Anar's deep belief in the unique and powerful capacity of the arts to facilitate psychosocial wellness and resilience.

In June, Anar trained 20 young adults in expressive arts facilitation, who in turn organized 4 art initiatives, implemented in Bethlehem and surrounding villages,



as well as in 3 local universities. Storytelling, music, theater, film, visual art, clay modeling, and handicrafts were among the art forms used in these initiatives. For young children, facilitators led sessions in which participants learned how to name and express feelings. Older children were given sessions along with their caregivers to creatively explore their relationships. Caregivers and elderly community members were offered sessions in which they learned handicrafts using materials easily found in the home. Finally, sessions with university students used film and collage to tell their stories, express feelings, and build relationships.

Theater and puppetry performances centered on the expression of feelings were also offered by Anar's Expressive Arts Unit in 2025. 15 performances in Bethlehem, Ramallah and Hebron delighted young audiences, drawing 150-400 children to each performance. This initiative was so well received that schools across the region have subsequently requested to host future performances. Finally, the Expressive Arts Unit organized an art and heritage event in Bethlehem's old city, that included traditional music, mural painting and other visual art, storytelling, and handicrafts. This event was very well received and drew a substantial, multigenerational crowd. In total, 3841 beneficiaries were served through the Expressive Arts Unit in 2025.

Anar Staff Well-Being and Professional Support

Anar believes that the support and self-care of its frontline workers is an essential aspect of its work. At the end of 2024, Anar's head psychologist, in partnership with UNICEF, participated in the Taamni Annak ("Talk to Me") program's Training for Trainers in Amman, Jordan. This methodology provides critical support to frontline workers, addressing issues such as burnout, secondary trauma, and self-care. Subsequently, Anar offered three Taamni Annak workshops, one for Bethlehem-based Anar staff, and two more for community accompaniment team members, Anar staff, and frontline workers from collaborating Community Based Organizations (CBOs). In 2026, Anar plans to expand this work to include Training for Trainers sessions for MHPSS professionals to provide this methodology within their own communities. In addition to the three Taamni Annak workshops, Anar staff participated in two self-care retreats, in



Jericho and Jordan, as well as ongoing biweekly individual supervision/support sessions for counselors. Monthly group sessions were also held to provide a space for collective support and shared learning. The staff of each Anar program also participated in a separate annual retreat called “Helping the Helpers,” as an additional opportunity for reflection, and much needed rest and recreation.

Professional support was also emphasized at Anar in 2025. In collaboration with Save the Children, Anar staff participated in a number of trainings, including Safe Identifications and Referral, Team Up (a play-based methodology for psychosocial support), the “HEART” program (an arts-based methodology), and training on engaging community facilitators in case management. In addition, Anar’s Psychosocial Support Unit Coordinator participated in the Child Protection and Safe Identification and Referrals Training for Trainers, co-led by Child Protection Area of Responsibility - State of Palestine and Save the Children International. Training for Anar counselors in the World Health Organization’s Problem Management Plus (PM+) methodology was ongoing.



Spotlight: Special Projects

03

The Children's Stories Project

Over the course of 5 sessions, Anar worked with 15 children, aged 6-14 years old, in a creative writing process that explored their experiences of living in Palestine. Co-designed by Anar's head psychologist and an experienced creative writing instructor, this project was designed not only to offer psychosocial support to these children, but also to create a resource for many others. Through this project, children from Aida and Dheisheh refugee camps, as well as from the Dar al Kalima school, wrote 30 stories about their lives. In 2026, 15 of these stories will be incorporated into a storybook titled "This is Our Life," in which follow-up activities and psychosocial recommendations, inspired by the children's stories, will be included. These stories and activities will address themes of emotions, self-confidence, school, friendship, safety, fear, and the experience of occupation, and will be used by children, caregivers, and professionals.



Play Back Theater and IFS

Anar was honored to host Dr. Ben Rivers, psychotherapist, artist and filmmaker, and Ms. Reem Kishk, creative arts therapist and certified trainer in Play Back Theater and Internal Family Systems therapy (IFS), for two weeks in 2025. Their 6-day intensive Play Back Theater training was attended by a number of Anar staff members, along with local artists from Bethlehem. In addition, Anar counselors participated in a 2-day internal introductory training on IFS.

Hope Groups

At the end of 2024, Anar began collaborating with World Without Orphans (WWO) to translate, contextualize and pilot WWO's caregiver support group methodology initially developed to serve Ukrainian refugees. In December 2024, Anar trained facilitators to lead a pilot project of the new Palestinian version of the program. In 2025, in collaboration with Parenting for Lifelong Learning and Oxford University, Anar initiated a randomized control trial of this methodology with 58 Palestinian caregivers in eight "Hope Groups." This research is ongoing, but initial results are positive and Anar plans to scale up this project in 2026.

Expressive Arts Training

In collaboration with the Social Workers and Psychologists Union in Palestine, Anar hosted expressive arts trainings for social workers and psychologists in several governorates including Salfit, Qalqilya and Tulkarm. The trainings, led by Dr. Khithm Edlebi, were well received, and enable these professionals to offer new expressive arts modalities in community psychosocial work.

Organizational Strengthening

2025 was a year of substantial organizational strengthening for Anar. Over the course of the year, the HR, Finance, and Governance Manuals were rewritten to reflect institutional growth and to refine systems and procedures. A detailed Procurement Manual was also developed to ensure consistency, compliance, and transparency in purchasing. In addition, Anar updated its Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for both Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH), and Feedback and Reporting systems. With UNICEF's support, Anar developed a database to more efficiently and securely organize, store and manage data; all documents are being digitized, optimizing data access and protection. Anar also created a Remote Work Protocol to effectively respond to emergencies and unexpected closures affecting staff movement. In September, Anar initiated its 2026-2030 Strategic Planning process, to develop and clarify guidance for goals and objectives, as well as organizational strategies to achieve them.



04

Stories of Anar

05

Haneen

Community facilitator, Tulkarm

My journey with Anar began with a deep and genuine desire to be part of work that creates a positive impact in people's lives. My decision to become a community facilitator was both personal and humanitarian. I had gone through a very difficult period due to experiences I had during the war. During that time, I suffered severe psychological pressure and distress that left me bedridden, and I underwent psychological treatment to cope with anxiety disorder, panic attacks, and other psychological symptoms.

With time, I gradually began to regain my balance. I tried to move beyond the impacts of that difficult period and apply what I had learned through my own healing process to work in service to others. I realized that what I had learned from my experience could benefit the community. For this reason, I decided to become a facilitator with Anar. Participating in community work with them gave me a real opportunity to transform a painful personal experience into a source of strength, and it gave me a deeper understanding of people's needs. It allowed me to provide assistance to others—something I once needed myself. I know how meaningful support can be for someone searching for a lifeline during difficult times.

I cannot overemphasize the important role my work with Anar played in helping me heal from the remnants of that painful experience. I became part of a cohesive and vibrant team full of dedication and generosity. Through this work, I was able to practice what I truly love: supporting and assisting those who need it.

Before starting my work with the association, I expected that my role would mainly involve facilitating simple activities or sessions. However, I quickly discovered that working in the field of mental health and psychosocial support goes far beyond that. It is about building trust with people and creating a safe space where individuals feel heard, understood, and valued, and where their emotions truly matter. I strongly believe that even though listening to others and standing by them may seem like a small act, in reality it can create a significant change in their lives—and in our own lives as service providers.



Buthania

Caregiver support group participant, Bethlehem

My name is Buthaina Ahmad Mohammad Abu Zheira. I am a housewife and mother of four sons and three daughters. I have 24 grandchildren – and a 25th is on the way, God willing. I love my family very much and caring for them is deeply important to me.

I learned about this group through other women who attend activities at the Darna Center. When I began to attend, I discovered that the meetings were very positive and engaging; they improved our mood and lifted our spirits. Jiana, our counselor, treated us kindly and created a comfortable space where everyone felt encouraged to participate and speak.

In our sessions, we would talk and share our experiences, and through this we made connections with women we hadn't known well before. The activities helped us express our feelings and think about aspects of our lives in new ways. We supported each other, and we became closer as a group.

Here in Palestine, we live under a lot of pressure because of many difficult circumstances. These meetings gave us a space to talk, share what we carry inside, and take a break from the stress. Personally, they motivated me to wake up early and finish my housework so that I could attend the meeting with Jiana. I was always excited to go and participate.

Over time, I felt a change in my mood and morale. I became calmer and started thinking about things in a more balanced way. I saw this being reflected positively at home in my relationships with my children and grandchildren.

I encourage all women to join groups like this. They help improve our well-being, give us positive energy, and lift our spirits. They provide a space for us to talk openly, meet new women, and exchange experiences with one another. This has a positive impact on our homes and our children.

I feel grateful to Jiana for her kind and respectful way of working with us - for always welcoming us with a warm smile. I hope these meetings continue, and expand to reach even more women.



Pamela

Expressive Arts session participant, Bethlehem

My experience was very beautiful. There were a lot of great sessions, and I loved all the activities I participated in. Sometimes I took my little sister to sessions, if it was appropriate for her age and easy for her, because she's younger than me. When you gave us cotton sticks and we used gouache colors in coloring, it was very fun, and I still keep all the drawings that we have done so far. I also love active activities; when I jump and run and do different movements, I feel very happy. When children come and see the activities, they will want to come more than once, and they will love the experience very much.



Strengthening Community Resilience in the Old City of Hebron

The Old City of Hebron, particularly in the vicinity of Al-Ibrahimi Mosque, is considered a highly sensitive area in terms of its geographical and political context. It is surrounded by several settlement outposts, which impose a complex and challenging living reality on residents. The area is characterized by high population density and limited infrastructure, alongside daily challenges related to the security situation and imposed restrictions.

Residents of the Old City face significant difficulties in freedom of movement due to the widespread presence of military checkpoints and electronic gates. These restrictions hinder access to essential services such as education, healthcare, mental health, and psychosocial support. They also directly affect the implementation and continuity of community-based activities within the area.

Given these challenges, coordination is often required to bring beneficiaries—especially in individual cases—to safer locations outside the Old City to ensure the effective and secure delivery of services.

In response to these conditions, Anar provided individual counseling for children and caregivers who face daily interrogations while crossing checkpoints and electronic gates. In addition, we collaborated with a local children's library to host group-based psychosocial support sessions, creating safe and supportive spaces for collective healing.

Furthermore, through our Community-Led Psychosocial Accompaniment Teams, we led community initiatives that supported caregivers in understanding how to listen to and respond effectively to their children's fears related to living in the Old City. These efforts aimed to strengthen caregiver-child relationships and enhance families' capacity to cope with ongoing stressors.

Alongside these efforts, a series of psychosocial interventions targeting children and mothers were implemented, providing safe spaces for emotional expression and helping to alleviate daily stressors. Despite the constraints, the local community demonstrated strong engagement and a clear willingness to participate.

These interventions have contributed to strengthening social cohesion within the Old City. Families have begun to cooperate more closely, and positive indicators of improved social interaction and psychological well-being—especially among children—have emerged. The activities have also helped to break the sense of isolation experienced in the area and build trust between the local community and supporting organizations.

Working in the Old City of Hebron is not merely about implementing activities; it represents a meaningful step toward enhancing community resilience and empowering individuals to face daily challenges with strength and adaptability.



People of Anar



06

Staff Quotes



As the mother of a prisoner, I have mutual feelings with the mothers, and I feel very close to them. I understand their emotions and the challenges that these families go through. It was very emotional and a great thing to see how providing a safe space can provide a great start for dialogue. Sharing helped them express themselves and feel that they were not alone in this experience."

Hanadi, Psychosocial Support Counselor, Hebron



"Anar places great importance on building relationships of trust with beneficiaries and working with them in a way that respects their dignity and privacy. This, in turn, enhances the effectiveness of the programs and brings them closer to the real needs of the community."

Mahmoud, Psychosocial Support Counselor, Tulkarem



One day, while returning from school, the soldiers stopped a child and took him into the camp for an entire day. He endured interrogation, physical punishment, and psychological abuse. After being released, the child was like a different child... with severe anxiety attacks, tension, hand tremors, and sleep filled with disturbing dreams. After he received psychological support from Anar... his parents expressed satisfaction and happiness with the child's progress, improvement, and recovery."

Waleed, Psychosocial Support Counselor, Hebron



Some children seemed shy and introverted; others were having difficulties expressing their feelings. Gradually, they began to feel safe within the group. By the final session, the children had become more engaged and much more confident in themselves. That experience made me realize just how important it is to create a safe space where children feel comfortable enough to express what they carry inside."

Sahar, Psychosocial Support Counselor, Hebron



One mother said to me: "I never trusted anyone. You taught me how to be someone who has value, someone who can trust and speak... you supported me in expressing my feelings and talking about them, and you helped me rediscover the meaning of life once again."

Hadeel, Psychosocial Support Counselor, Nablus



"In spite of all of the repetitive trauma, when I see people still adapting, still coping, still wanting to live, that brings me hope."

Jiana, Psychosocial Support Counselor, Bethlehem



Partnerships & Support



07

Partnerships and Support

Healing to Hope

Anar's partnership with its sister organization, Healing to Hope, has continued to strengthen. In 2025, Healing to Hope received their 501c3 status as a nonprofit organization, and their work expanded substantially. In June, Healing to Hope organized Anar's first US speaking tour, in which Anar director Rami Khader visited northern California, Minneapolis, Atlanta, and Chicago. Between June 13 and June 26, Rami gave 18 multimedia presentations in 12 cities, significantly widening the US network of support for the work of Anar.

Save the Children

Anar's partnership with Save the Children has been essential in the implementation of the Former Child Detainee Project. Anar also collaborated with Save the Children to provide critical capacity building and training for Anar staff in 2025.



University of Oslo

In December 2025, Anar and the University of Oslo's Solidarity Hub established a collaborative relationship to engage their complementary expertise to develop a framework aimed at strengthening psychosocial support, resilience, and educational initiatives for children affected by conflict and displacement. The scope of this collaboration includes art therapy, knowledge exchange, capacity building, research, and documentation.

Donors and Partners

- Blossom Hill Foundation
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
- Embrace the Middle East
- Healing Across the Divides
- Healing to Hope
- Mennonite Central Committee
- Presbyterian Disaster Assistance
- Porticus
- Save the Children
- World Without Orphans
- UNICEF
- University of Oslo