



Y-PEER educators in the youth village in Ramallah during an interactive theater training.

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Youth-to-youth connection in the State of Palestine: let's talk about sexual health!

In many societies, subjects relating to sexual and reproductive health and early marriage are considered sensitive, private or taboo. The support of UN Youth Volunteers allows UN Agencies like UNFPA to better reach young people, and provide advice, education and support in a youth-friendly, innovative way.

UN Youth Volunteer Nour Hamayel is 26-years-old and has just completed a two-year assignment with the United Nations Population Fund ([UNFPA](#)) in her home country, the State of Palestine.

As national UN Youth Volunteer, Nour's primarily role was Y-PEER coordinator – facilitating conversations and activities in the State of Palestine on sexual and reproductive health and HIV prevention on behalf of the UNFPA-funded [Youth Peer Education Network](#).

The [Y-PEER Network](#) is active in 52 countries throughout the world. Its unique approach consists in alternative methods of education, such as

theater-based techniques, role games and simulations.

“ In Palestinian society, most subjects relating to sexual and reproductive health, and early marriage, are considered sensitive, private or taboo. UN Youth Volunteers allow UNFPA to discuss these topics with young people, and provide practical advice, education and support. –Noor Hamayel, UN Youth Volunteer Y-PEER Coordinator, UNFPA, State of Palestine



UN Youth Volunteer Noor Hamayel during Y-PEER's activities for the global 10 days of activism campaign against poverty and sustainable development (Mohammad Silwadi/UNFPA 2017)

Together with her colleagues, last year Nour reached 5,000 young people in schools and universities, 65 per cent of whom were from vulnerable communities: adolescent girls from refugee camps and Bedouin communities in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip.

From combating gender based-violence and child marriage to reporting on successes and challenges, developing innovative solutions to hosting information sessions on sensitive subjects, Nour has spent a considerable part of her two-year posting delivering impact to her community.

UN Youth Volunteers can play a unique and vital role for UN entities, particularly when it comes to strengthening existing youth-led programmes. Youth volunteers ensure youth perspectives and voices are incorporated and heard at every level. They connect with marginalized groups and engage at-risk young people more directly and effectively.

Through UNFPA, Nour cooperated with three Palestinian partner non-governmental organizations: [Save Youth Future Society](#) (Gaza), [Sharek Youth Forum](#) (West Bank) and [Burj Al-Luqluq Social Centre Society](#) (East

Jerusalem).

“ *One of my best experiences was digitally bringing together youth groups in Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem. They discussed and developed a national workplan, objectives, and efforts for Y-PEER. –Nour Hamayel*

Having the chance to work with both UN staff, and a wide range of local non-governmental organization partners, Nour strongly credits her colleagues with her development as an effective member of the team, working both in the field, and at UNFPA's Palestinian headquarters.

This had a profound, positive impact on the next challenge in her life – studying International Political Theory at the University of Saint Andrews in Scotland.

“ Working with youth from a range of backgrounds in challenging situations motivated me to push myself even harder. I immensely appreciate the support and guidance given by everyone I worked with, and the willingness to help me grow. –Noor Hamayel

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Arab States

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