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Week 36: Education Funding and Policy

WEEK 36 SEP 3 TO SEP 9 **EDUCATION FUNDING AND POLICY**

As of 2015, 82% of Palestinian youth age 15-17 were enrolled in education.

East Jerusalem has a classroom shortage of 3,794.

36% of Palestinian youth in East Jerusalem drop out of school.

Average class sizes in UNRWA schools in Gaza increased to 41.2 students in 2018-19.

Sources: UNRWA, PASSIA, Ir Amim, UN

<http://kuminow.com/EducationFunding>

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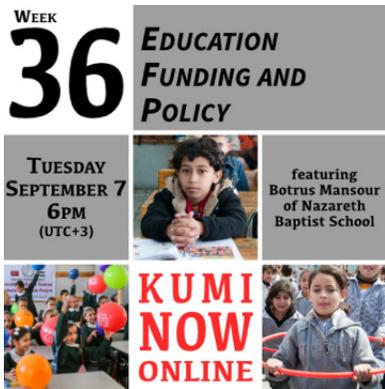
Dear Kumi Now supporter,

On Tuesday **Wisam Salsaa**, manager of the **Walled Off Hotel**, spoke about art as a method of nonviolent resistance against the Israeli Occupation. The replay of the session is now available on [YouTube](#) and on [our website](#). The website includes his bio, the advocacy instructions, and links shared during the gathering.

We would love it if you could share the session with your community. You could use language such as:

Last week we learned about art as a form of nonviolent resistance against Israeli Occupation. Our guest was Wisam Salsaa, manager of the Walled Off Hotel. Learn more in the latest Kumi Now online gathering. <https://youtu.be/YTJhbINXOYM>

Next Online Gathering



September 7: Week 36 - Education Funding and Policy

[Full information on the gathering is here.](#)

It's that time of year! Students across Palestine and Israel, and around the northern hemisphere, have headed, or are about to head, back to school. Sadly, Palestinian citizens of Israel face discrimination when it comes to education funding from the State of Israel. Jewish, Christian, Muslim or Druze: all deserve a quality education and equal support from the state. Here's what you need to know about education funding and policy in Israel and Palestine, and what you can do so that, together, we can pressure Israel to end its unequal treatment of its citizens' education.

We will be joined by **Botrus Mansour**, director of **Nazareth Baptist School**. Botrus is the author of *Looking from the Precipice: Reflections from Nazareth of a Palestinian Christian Evangelical* and *When Your Neighbor Is the Savior*.

Time: Tuesday, September 7, at 6:00pm East Jerusalem, Palestine time (UTC+3) That's...

- Pacific (Seattle/Vancouver): 8am
- Central (Chicago): 10am
- Eastern (New York/Toronto): 11am
- Atlantic: 12pm
- Newfoundland: 12:30pm
- Greenwich (London): 4pm
- Central Europe (Paris/Stockholm): 5pm
- South Africa: 5pm
- Manila: 11pm
- Sydney: 1am (+1 Day)
- Auckland: 3am (+1 Day)

Zoom Meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/94679502800> (There might be a quick registration form, and please set an alarm for yourself for Tuesday.)

Remember, if you'd like to receive a reminder about the gathering an hour before it begins, please use the [registration form at the bottom of the page](#).

This Week's Kumi Now Entry

Please note: To match the dates in the book, we will now be posting a new entry each Friday, and this newsletter should go out each Friday or Saturday.

Sharing and publicizing: The graphics in this newsletter are designed to be the perfect size and shape to share to Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. So each week you can help the cause simply by sharing these images online. It's one more option you have to help.

Kumi Week #36: Education Funding and Policy

Week 36 of Kumi Now is now available [on the website](#). In April of 2019, Adalah reported that "Israeli authorities are requiring all high school students—Jewish and Arab—to pass an online government propaganda course that promotes racist ideology before they are allowed to participate in overseas class trips." According to Adalah, "One question asks, for example: 'How do Palestinian organizations use digital social networks?' The correct answer of four possible choices is 'encouraging violence.' Another question asks students to identify the origins of modern anti-Semitism. The exam's correct answer is 'Muslim organizations' and the BDS movement."

This is one example of anti-Palestinian bias in the Israeli school system and a reminder the road to peace requires participants on both sides be educated in a truthful manner

and taught to be critical, caring thinkers.

The Palestinian Authority is equally guilty of bias within the school curriculum. For example, in 1999, Nadia Nasr wrote that a review of the Palestinian curriculum found “it is gender-biased and reinforces the traditional roles of females and males” while only hinting at the issues regarding the teaching of Israel.

Researchers at Bethlehem University, Tel Aviv University, and Harvard worked to measure the bias level of each curriculum and in 2013 published the report “Victims of Our Own Narratives? Portrayal of the ‘Other’ in Israeli and Palestinian School Books.” They found significant issues on both sides, including:

- “Both Israeli and Palestinian books present unilateral national narratives that present the other as enemy.”
- “Historical events, while not false or fabricated, are selectively presented to reinforce each community’s national narrative.”
- “There is a lack of information about the religions, culture, economic and daily activities of the other, or even of the existence of the other on maps.”

However, bias in the curriculum is just a portion of the education puzzle, and minority students within Israel are often faced with a system that ignores or is hostile to their own backgrounds and further discriminates based on funding, while students in East Jerusalem are denied the classrooms they need to learn; West Bank students face threats to their schools, settler violence, and checkpoints; and Gazan students suffer huge class sizes and facilities damaged by war and blockade.

Please read the essay on this issue and the story of the 2015 Christian School Strike. And here are a few more facts for you:

WEEK SEP 3
36 TO SEP 9 **EDUCATION FUNDING AND POLICY**

Just the facts... *As of 2015, 82% of Palestinian youth age 15-17 were enrolled in education.*

UNRWA operates 711 elementary and preparatory schools across the West Bank, Gaza, Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon.

UNRWA schools serve over 539K students.

Average class sizes in UNRWA schools in Gaza increased to 41.2 students in 2018-19.

In 2018, the UN documented 111 cases of interference (threats of demolition, clashes between students and security forces, teachers stopped at checkpoints, and violent actions of Israeli forces and settlers) to education in the West Bank.

East Jerusalem has a classroom shortage of 3,794.

36 classrooms are constructed each year in East Jerusalem; 70 are required to accommodate natural growth.

13% of East Jerusalem Palestinian youth drop out each year, compared to 1% in West Jerusalem.

31,485 school age children in East Jerusalem are unaccounted for in municipal data.

36% of Palestinian youth in East Jerusalem drop out of school.

45.4% of Palestinian students in East Jerusalem study in unofficial schools.

Sources: UNRWA, PASSIA, Ir Amim, UN

<http://kuminow.com/EducationFunding>

Understanding Education Funding and Policy: Just the Facts...

- UNRWA operates 711 elementary and preparatory schools across the West Bank, Gaza, Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon.
- UNRWA schools serve over 539K students.
- Average class sizes in UNRWA schools in Gaza increased to 41.2 students in 2018-19.
- In 2018, the UN documented 111 different cases of interference (threats of demolition, clashes between students and security forces, teachers stopped at

checkpoints, and violent actions of Israeli forces and settlers) to education in the West Bank affecting more than 19,000 children.

- As of 2015, 82% of Palestinian youth age 15-17 were enrolled in education.
- 36% of Palestinian youth in East Jerusalem drop out of school.
- 13% of Palestinian youth drop out of schools in East Jerusalem each year, compared to 1% of youth in West Jerusalem.
- East Jerusalem has a classroom shortage of 3,794.
- 31,485 Palestinian children of compulsory school age in East Jerusalem are unaccounted for in official municipal data and records.
- 36 classrooms are constructed each year in East Jerusalem; 70 are required to accommodate natural growth.
- 45.4% of Palestinian students in East Jerusalem study in recognized but unofficial schools.

Sources

- [“Palestinian Youth with a special focus on Jerusalem”](#) from **PASSIA**.
- [“What We Do: Education”](#) from **UNRWA**.
- [“The State of Education in East Jerusalem: Discrimination against the Backdrop of COVID-19”](#) from **Ir Amim**.
- [“Palestinian children’s education deeply impacted by ‘interference’ around West Bank schools, UN warns”](#) from the **UN**.

Learning More

To go deeper, we will be developing an extensive list of [Additional Resources](#) at the bottom of this week’s entry as well as a [YouTube playlist](#) on the subject.

Once you understand the situation you’ll want to get involved. Here’s the Kumi Action for this week:

Kumi Action



Take a photo of your school, or a shelf of books in your school library. Use a marker or Photoshop to black out 71% of the school/books and share it with the text “We’d miss this much of our education if our school was a Palestinian school in Israel.” Post it in your school library and halls, etc.

Or send a book about justice (any book would do, but you could send *Blood Brothers* by Elias Chacour) to the Ministry of Education and suggest in a note in the cover, “Since you find it difficult to do the right thing and fund Palestinian schools properly, I thought you should read this book. You can then add it to a school library somewhere in Israel. It is needed.”

Take your school/library photos and photos of your books and inscriptions and post them to social media along with your messages. Include a link to [this page of the Kumi Now website](#) along with the hashtags #EducationFunding, #KumiNow, and #Kumi36.

You Should Know

One or two people, companies, or organizations generally related to the issue of the week you should know, and how you can follow them online.

Pilgrims of Ibillin and the Mar Elias Educational Institutions

Pilgrims of Ibillin was founded as a US-based nonprofit in 1995, to be a friend, supporter, and



interpreter of the Mar Elias Educational Institutions in Ibillin, Israel, located in the Galilee region on the Israeli side of the Green Line. The Mar Elias Schools were founded in 1982 by Father Elias Chacour (a three-time Nobel Peace Prize nominee) to accomplish two intertwined purposes. The first is to provide a superior academic education for young Palestinian citizens of Israel, girls and boys alike. The second is to provide an educational setting where Jews, Christians, Muslims, and Druze would be equally valued, and where nonviolence and creative problem-solving are both practiced and taught.

You can learn more on their [website](#) and follow them on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).



Nazareth Baptist School

The **Nazareth Baptist School (NBS)** was established as a primary school in 1935-1936 school year by Rev. Hanna Beshoti, pastor of the Baptist Church in Nazareth and supported by the Southern Baptist Mission in the United States. When the Second World War erupted, the school was closed. NBS was reopened by the Baptist Convention in Israel after the end of the war and the establishment of the state of Israel in 1949. Fuad Haddad, a local Nazarene, took on the position of Principal and General Director from 1991 until 2004. Botrus Manosur is the current General Director of NBS.

You can learn more about the Nazareth Baptist School on the [website](#).

Upcoming Weeks

And here's what we have coming up in September so you can plan ahead and decide how you want to be a part of Kumi Now:

KUMI NOW ONLINE: SEPTEMBER, 2021

Week 36	Week 37	Week 38	Week 39
			
September 7 <i>Education Funding and Policy</i>	September 14 <i>Bethlehem</i>	September 21 <i>Blockade of Gaza</i>	September 28 <i>Bedouin Rights</i>

EVERY TUESDAY | 6PM PALESTINE TIME | KUMINOW.COM

Each week below will have an online gathering with a guest or guests speaking on the topic. The time and Zoom link are the same each week.

The weekly newsletter will always contain reminders of the upcoming online gatherings and the Zoom link. But if you're like me and need a reminder right before the sessions begin, you can [register to receive a reminder email one hour prior to each online gathering](#). And no more digging through your inbox looking for the Zoom link! Just [use the registration form at the bottom of the page](#).

September 14: Week 37 - Bethlehem

[Read the full entry online.](#)

Rachel's Tomb, at the north end of Bethlehem, is of



religious significance for Christians, Jews, and Muslims alike. But Israel has illegally annexed the tomb area, enclosing it with a wall and denying Palestinians access. Israel approved plans to enclose Rachel's Tomb on September 11, 2002. As we mark this travesty of what should be a Palestinian cultural and religious site, open to all, here's what you need to know about the effects of occupation and Jewish settlement on Bethlehem and what you can do.

For our Kumi Action we will spread the work of the Wall Museum around the world so that everyone knows about the realities of Bethlehem.



September 21: Week 38 - Blockade of Gaza

[Read the full entry online.](#)

The Kumi Now community celebrates International Day of Peace on September 21 by standing together for the part of Palestine most in need of peace: Gaza. Implemented in 2006, the Israeli blockade of Gaza was intended to punish Hamas for their victory in the 2006 elections. However, the reality is that children, families, and ordinary citizens are most punished by the blockade.

For our Kumi Action we will spread the message #FreeGaza on every piece of paper or other location we can in order to raise awareness for Gaza.



September 28: Week 39 - Bedouin Rights

[Read the full entry online.](#)

Refugee Bedouin communities in Palestine and Israel have experienced decades of home demolitions and forcible transfers along with virtually non-existent services. In September 2011, Israel adopted the Praver Plan. One of its goals was to relocate 40,000 to 70,000 Negev Bedouin from their chosen homes to government-mandated lands.

For our Kumi Action we will send some sheep to Israel's Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development.

You Should Watch or Read...

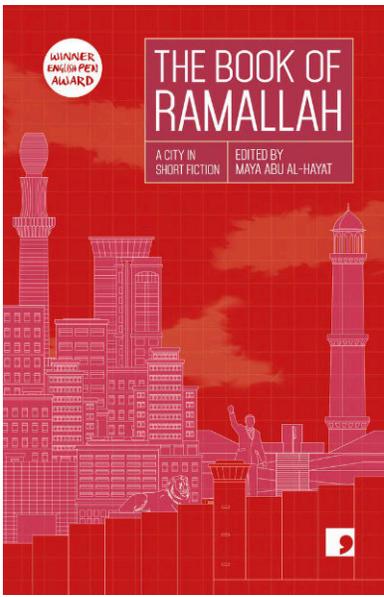
One (or maybe two) recent or not-so-recent film, book, video, article, or other piece of art that you should consider reading or watching this week. Have a recommendation? Let us know.

The Book of Ramallah: A City in Short Fiction

The Book of Ramallah: A City in Short Fiction was edited by **Maya Abu Al-Hayat**, director of the Palestine Writing Workshop. This book won an English PEN Translates Award 2020.

This short story collection features 10 stories all set in Ramallah. From the publisher's site:

"Unlike most other Palestinian cities, Ramallah is a relatively new town, a de facto capital of the West Bank



allowed to thrive after the Oslo Peace Accords, but just as quickly hemmed in and suffocated by the Occupation as the Accords have failed. Perched along the top of a mountainous ridge, it plays host to many contradictions: traditional Palestinian architecture jostling against aspirational developments and cultural initiatives, a thriving nightlife in one district, with much more conservative, religious attitudes in the next. Most striking however – as these stories show – is the quiet dignity, resilience and humour of its people; citizens who take their lives into their hands every time they travel from one place to the next, who continue to live through countless sieges, and yet still find the time, and resourcefulness, to create.”

Order it from your favorite bookshop, or [directly from the publisher](#).

What's Next

We hope to see you in the online gathering on Tuesday, after which you'll receive another newsletter next Friday/Saturday, focused on our next topic, [Bethlehem](#). As always, there is more to come!

Sincerely,

The Kumi Now Team

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