



Introduction:

The Union of Agricultural Work Committees is a civil, independent and non-profit Palestinian organization. It was established in the year 1986 following an initiative by a group of agricultural engineers, farmers and volunteers both males and females. Its priorities are essentially focused on social and economic empowerment of the Palestinian farmers in order to reinforce their steadfastness on their land and to achieve food sovereignty. The organization also contributes to protecting the land and providing legal support to farmers in cases of land confiscation orders. UAWC endeavors on advancing the agricultural sector through developing national policies to support farmers' rights. As an organization that has been working since over 30 years, UAWC is considered to be the one of the biggest and most important agricultural organizations in the West Bank. Gender equality and women empowerment are amongst the most important principles of our work, and we give them special focus when designing the projects and priorities.

Its achievements throughout the years are so many, including winning the Equator Prize, US Food Sovereignty Alliance Prize, Arab Thought Prize and most recently, the Energy Globe Prize. On the level of activities, UAWC has implemented thousands of interventions that have contributed to economic empowerment and humanitarian assistance, planted over 2 million trees, reaches at least 20,000 female and male beneficiaries on a yearly basis and finally has established the first Local Seed Bank in Palestine.

UAWC has two main branches in West Bank and Gaza with sub-branches in both regions. In West Bank, we are located in Ramallah, Nablus and Hebron, covering the center, north and southern part of the area.

Our activities mainly target small farmers and marginalized communities located in Area "C"; an area named according to the Oslo Accords signed in 1993. The West Bank was divided into three categories according to this agreement; Area "A", Area "B" and Area "C". In Area "A", the Palestinian Authority stands as the main control of affairs in this area including internal security, in Area "B", the Palestinian Authority hold administrative control but Israeli military control and Area "C" is under full control by the Israeli occupation.

Area "C" however constitutes over 60% of the West Bank and includes most of the agricultural land and natural resources necessary for a sustainable development. It also includes 300,000 approximately of Palestinians living in this area in difficult situations and danger of expel and confiscation to the favor of constructing Israeli settlements.

Volunteering at UAWC:

UAWC was established on the basis of voluntary work and thus we pay special attention to integrating this program as part of our projects towards the promotion of cultural exchange and voluntary work, especially amongst the youth.

UAWC is an accredited organization by the European Solidarity Corps to host and send volunteers and have been implementing this program for over 10 years. Our volunteers reside in accommodation facilities located in excellent location close to the city center. The programs of our volunteers differ depending on tasks and skills, UAWC is an organization that focuses on giving everyone the attention and chance they need without exclusion.

The first phase of the volunteering program in collaboration with Tumult and AFS is planned for the first three weeks of July (2nd until 21st), 20 days of volunteer mission including the days of arrival and departure. It will be almost the same for the second phase in August. The final program will be finalized; volunteers will mostly sleep in Ramallah facility while also passing some days in Hebron facility. This period of time is very dynamic in Palestine. It is summer

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vacation for schools and some of the university students. The weather can be hot in this time so if you are considering coming, we urge you to pack the SPF.

The Palestinian cuisine is very delicious, it is similar to the Lebanese, Syrian and Jordanian cuisine as these are all Levantine countries. Most of the traditional food includes rice and a type of meat (chicken, beef or fish) but there are also options for vegans.

Palestine, despite its difficult political situation, is a very welcoming place and the people here are friendly as long as there is mutual respect for the culture, social norms and traditions and political context.