

## Palestinian Village Camps (PVC)

### Breaking Down Walls to Build Bridges

**Mission:** Palestinian Village Camps aims to help young adults who have less access to education in rural areas. We work to develop the students' English language. In addition, we work to break the cultural norm of separating males and females to foster better communication in society.

**Description:** We host week-long English language classes in different Palestinian villages. So far, we have launched our first successful pilot in Burqin (Jenin) and plan to expand to more villages -- each having a camp during the winter and summer intersession.

**Collaboration:** Our current partnership is between Al Quds Bard College and the Municipality of Burqin. As our initiative expands, we will include the municipality of each village involved.

**Goals:** First, we want to make an impact on our students; specifically, widening their English language skills through Language and Thinking techniques. Second, we want to instill confidence and erase the idea that language is the obstacle for our students. Lastly, we hope to create a comfortable relationship between males and females while still respecting the boundaries set in the villages.

**Challenges:** We have experienced difficulty gaining trust and respect from the local community due to our age. As college students entering a village, we have had to prove ourselves and the skills we are able to offer during our sessions. Also, many of the student organizers come from cities around Palestine and have different cultural practices; thus, acceptance of new or unfamiliar customs on both sides exists. Lastly, securing funding, commitment and organizing accommodations ahead of time is a significant challenge.

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