

Registered Charity Number: 1133499

Sheffield Palestine Women's Scholarship Fund

ANNUAL REPORT AND UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS For the year ended 31 March 2025

Contents	Page
Committee report	2
Trustee Report	3-7
Examiners Report	8
Receipts and Payments account	9
Statement of assets and liabilities	10
Notes to Accounts	11

Sheffield Palestine Women's Scholarship Fund

Committee Report

For the Year Ending 31 March 2025.

The members of the Trustees during the year were.

Val Johnson - Chairperson

Sara Gowen - Treasurer/Secretary

Catherine Gaze

Hilary Smith

Beverley Booker

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Sheffield

S8 9DN

Bank

Virgin Money Bank

681 Chesterfield Road Sheffield

SB ORY

independent examiner

ENOVION Ltd

Ashlea,

High Street,

Calver,

Hope Valley,

S32 3XP.

Management committee's responsibilities for the financial statements

The management committee are responsible for preparing financial statements for each financial period which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the group and of the surplus or deficit of the group for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the management committee are required to:

a) select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently; b) make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.

The management committee are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the group and enable the management committee to prepare financial statements. The management committee are responsible for safeguarding the assets of the group and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention of fraud and other irregularities.

Sheffield Palestine Women's Scholarship Fund

Trustee Report

For the Year Ending 31 March 2025

This year's scholarships

With the ongoing war in Gaza, the Scholarship Fund has tried to continue our support for Gazan students awarded a scholarship just before the war broke out in October 2023. In 2024-25 we have continued to seek news on our students. We were able to contact **one student**, Malak Al Daour (see story below) who has been able to continue her studies online. We have paid her scholarship fees in this financial year. We have subsequently been able to contact a **further 20 students** who are studying online. We are currently processing payments for these students through Al Aqsa and Al Azhar universities (these payments will be in the next financial year – 2025-26).

Thanks to the incredible and ongoing generosity of our supporters we have been able to award scholarships to **13** young women in the West Bank.

We are enormously grateful to our partners in Palestine, who have continued to administer the Fund despite all the difficulties they face. And our students are amazing! Their determination and their dedication to their studies is a constant source of inspiration. We offer especial congratulations to the **4** students who graduated this year in the West Bank.

It's always been my dream – to use my education to defend my homeland

When we discovered, in late 2024, that one of our students in Gaza, **Malak Al-Daour**, had resumed her law degree at Al Azhar University, we were both amazed and overjoyed. There could be no better news.

We had featured Malak in last year's newsletter. Sue Piper, from the Saddleworth Palestine Women's Scholarship Fund, had met Malak in Gaza in the summer of 2023 and they had kept sporadically in touch. It was Malak who told Sue the tragic news that her friend Malak Khudair Jaber Ali, also a Scholarship Fund student, had been killed (as we reported last year).

In December 2024, Malak texted Sue to say that her family – who had been displaced many times from their home in Jabalia – were now living in a tent on the beach in Deir al Balah in central Gaza. Life, Malak wrote, was very difficult, even more so because her father had stayed behind in the north. But, despite everything, Malak was determined to resume her studies. As she'd told Sue in 2023: *I've always had the dream of using my education in law to defend my homeland within international institutions.*

But studying in a tent was never going to be easy. All classes and lectures are held online and Malak had to walk two kilometres a day to find an internet signal. Then the university told her that if she didn't pay her fees, she would be barred from sitting her course exams, all of which count towards her degree; and Malak couldn't pay the fees. Thankfully, as soon as we discovered that Malak had resumed her university course, we were able – through our key partner in Gaza, Mona El Farra – to award Malak a scholarship.

We now know that other Scholarship Fund students in Gaza have re-started their courses online. We are in contact with Al Azhar and Al-Aqsa Universities (both are providing online teaching) and, will be able to transfer the scholarship fund fees through them for the academic year 2024-25. We will report on these students in our next accounts.

You have our backs – you understand what we're facing

In the West Bank our four, final-year students are facing the same difficulties as they did a year ago. They are having to learn online, there's not enough face-to-face peer support, practical classes are haphazard and out of sync with the teaching of theory, and they are prevented from moving around freely by the Israeli army.

It's been especially difficult for two of our students, studying in Hebron, because they never know if they'll be able to reach the city. But whatever the obstacles, all four students are determined to graduate.

Nagham Khalayleh (*studying nursing at Hebron University*)

Your support made it easier for me to study and gave me a push to continue.

Iman An Najjar (*studying Arabic at Hebron University*)

Being a university student has contributed to major changes in my personality. I remember my first day at the university and how stressed and afraid I felt, not being familiar with the university and not having friends. But once I made close friends and my social circle expanded, these feelings disappeared to be replaced by feelings of belonging. Before university, I used to suffer from fear when talking to strangers, or when speaking in front of a group of people, and the university helped me get over this fear, because the tutor would often ask one of us to explain something to the other students.

The university tuition fees were high and I was worried about affording them, but when I received a Sheffield scholarship that helped my family to afford my university tuition for all four years of my degree.

After graduating, I hope to get a job in the Ministry of Education and to help my family with household expenses. I also want to help university students to afford their university tuition fees.

Qamar Kharroub (*studying IT at the Open University in Qalqilya*)

At university I was motivated to advance to a higher level. I have improved my computer and programming skills and my level of thinking and my ability to analyse things has become stronger.

The scholarship reduced the financial burden on myself and my family during a period of far fewer economic possibilities.

Asma Dakheel (*studying nursing at Al Quds University*)

Thank you. You have our backs. You understand what we are facing. Your help made it easier for me to register (the University will not register a student until payment is made) and you helped me to continue studying. My personality is now stronger, and I find it easier to socialise with different people.

Next year, when I graduate, I will try and find a job in a hospital, but I also want to explore the option of providing specialised skin care in a beauty centre. I have the medical knowledge, and a nursing qualification will give me wider opportunities.

In February 2025 we heard that our nine new West Bank students and their families had, as a result of the most recent Israeli assault on Jenin Camp, been displaced from their homes. The assault left the Camp in ruins. Each new student was interviewed in October 2024 and again in January 2025. Here, two of the students, tell their stories:

Noor Ighbareye *is studying computer systems engineering at the Arab American University of Jenin.*

October 2024: I chose computer engineering because it's essential to both computer hardware and software and because there are numerous job opportunities. When, after four years, I finish the course, I'll do my best to find a job where I can apply all the knowledge and energy I've gained during my studies. I will feel proud of myself then. I really hope I'll get the opportunity to establish my own, innovative tech company and I'd love to invent an application that would help solve everyday problems.

January 2025: I still go to the University even though there are random shootings and arrests. I walk because I can't afford a daily taxi. It takes me 20 minutes. I want to take the exams now rather than postpone and one month stuck at home has been enough. There are also spots in the camp where the internet is better, so when there's no shooting, I move around the camp to find a good signal. Lectures have been recorded and are online. I have started a new chapter in my life, the future is foggy, but we have to try and develop ourselves.

Dua Haboub *is studying nursing at Al Rawda University College, Nablus. She has three siblings, one still at school. Dua applied late to university and hoped, when she was interviewed at the beginning of January 2025, to start her studies by the end of that month.*

October 2024: Because of my family's financial situation, I need to complete my studies as soon I can and find work. That's why I chose a two-year course in nursing. Nursing seems very appropriate for the situation my country is going through. I want to serve my community through humanitarian work.

After graduation, I want to work as a nurse. I want to be independent and to be able to support my family and myself. I still have ambition even after all we've been through. Having obtained an excellent grade at the end of high school, I'm determined to complete my studies at college. After graduation, I want to further my career and study for a master's degree in nursing.

January 2025: I cannot leave the camp safely to go to Nablus and register for my course. The University has given me until January 28th to do this, but if I can't do it by then, I will have to postpone until September 2025. When I missed the first semester, I started a First Aid Course with the Red Crescent in Jenin, but I now cannot attend the course because it's held in Jenin city, and I cannot travel safely there.

My family has been displaced from our house in the camp as it was partially destroyed in recent clashes. The windows were all broken so it cannot provide shelter.

Fundraising

We have received funds through a range of fundraising activities including regular donations through standing orders to one-off events. We have continued to be supported with fundraising activities and donations by Saddleworth Palestine Women's Scholarship Fund, Bolton Socialist Club, Rotherham Friends of Palestine and the Derbyshire Dales Palestine Women's Scholarship Fund.

The Fund receives regular standing orders each month, which enable it to plan for future scholarships. The Fund is committed to ensuring that we support each student through to the completion of their degree. We have also received funding from a range of community events and one-off celebratory events. In 2024-25, these included:

- ✚ Ayman Eissa, who ran the Sheffield Half-Marathon.
- ✚ Kevin Hanson for continuing to donate the proceeds from the sales of his poetry book *The Olive Tree*.
- ✚ Maggie Norman for donating proceeds from the sale of her cards in her "stall over the wall" in Grindleford.
- ✚ Small Park BIG RUN – an annual fundraising which was online again this year.
- ✚ Organisational donations, including Thanet4Palestine and Littleborough Peace Group.

How the Fund works

The Scholarship Fund is managed in Sheffield by a small coalition of women working in partnership with the Sheffield Palestine Solidarity Campaign. In Gaza, the Fund has been managed for many years by a panel drawn from the Board of Directors of the Red Crescent Society and the Union of Health Work Committee. Admin support has been provided by the community organisation, Afaq Jadeeda. In West Bank, we work with a committee of women, who are active around women's education and employment. We route our payments for scholarships through the Teachers Creativity Centre based in Ramallah.

Because of the devastating war in Gaza, we were unable to award scholarships for the academic year 2024-5. We hope and plan to re-start an awards process in Gaza (one student has already received a scholarship, see page 1). Up until 2024, candidates for scholarships in Gaza were nominated by their local community centre when they were ready to start university or when they were in the first or second year of a course and unable to continue for financial reasons. There have always been strict selection criteria for the Scholarship Fund in Gaza, which include having attained 65% or above in high school grades, socio-economic background, commitment to the community, and personal and family circumstances such as a recent home demolition, or war injuries.

Our partners in the West Bank adapted these criteria for their own student selection process and, as in Gaza, they keep in contact with the scholarship students and help them overcome problems in completing their courses, i.e. not being able to afford transport, books, equipment etc. Our partners can sometimes access other small amounts of funding to cover these additional costs.

In Britain the Fund's supporters make donations or monthly contributions through a standing order and/or by organising or taking part in fundraising events. Any contribution is much appreciated. Standing orders are particularly welcome as they enable us to estimate our income more accurately and to plan.

Sheffield Palestine Women's Scholarship Fund

Examiners Statement

For the Year Ending 31 March 2025

I report on the accounts for Sheffield Palestine Women's Scholarship Fund which are set out on pages 7 to 9

Respective responsibilities of the management committee and the examiner

As the management committee you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. It is my responsibility to state whether matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with general direction given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the account by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters.

The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a "true and fair" view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no material matters have come to my attention which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- Accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act or:
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records

I have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Date: 14th May 2025

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Wood', is written over the printed name.

Andrew Wood
Enovion Ltd – Independent Examiner

Sheffield Palestine Women's Scholarship Fund

Receipts and Payments account

For the Year Ending 31 March 2025

Receipts	notes	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
	1		
Donations		17780	20526
Fundraising		22271	16911
Legacy			
Total Receipts		<u>40051</u>	<u>37437</u>
Payments			
Afaq Jadeeda			29946
Teachers Creativity Centre		14255	7537
Bank Admin Charges	2	50	50
Translation		100	
Independent examination		100	100
Newsletter		240	200
Fundraising costs			1015
Fees		3400	
Event Hire		235	
		<u>18380</u>	<u>38848</u>
Net Receipts/(payments)		21671	(1411)
Fund balances brought forward		46791	48202
Fund balances carried forward		68462	46791

Sheffield Palestine Women’s Scholarship Fund

Statement of assets and liabilities

For the Year Ending 31 March 2025

Assets	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Balance of bank account as at March 31	68462	46791
Liabilities	£	£
Independent examination	100	100

Committee member Sara Crown Dated 7/8/25

Committee member BQ Bodner Dated 7/8/25

On behalf of the management committee

Sheffield Palestine Women's Scholarship Fund

Notes to the Accounts

For the Year Ending 31 March 2025

1. Receipts and payments accounts

Because the level of income and expenditure is below £100,000, the group has opted for accounts prepared on a receipts and payments rather than an accruals basis. This is in line with Charity Commissioners guidelines for small charities and is more appropriate for this project

2. Bank Admin Charges

Charges relating to the cost of transferring money to Teachers Creativity Centre in Palestine.

3. Payment from HMRC for Gift Aid

A Gift Aid payment was received on 7th August 2024 for £3174.51.

