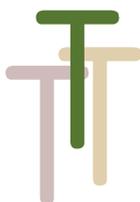


From Zero Cost to Zero Waste

Creative Palestinian Women Help Save the Environment



ICRC Courtesy of the International Committee of the Red Cross



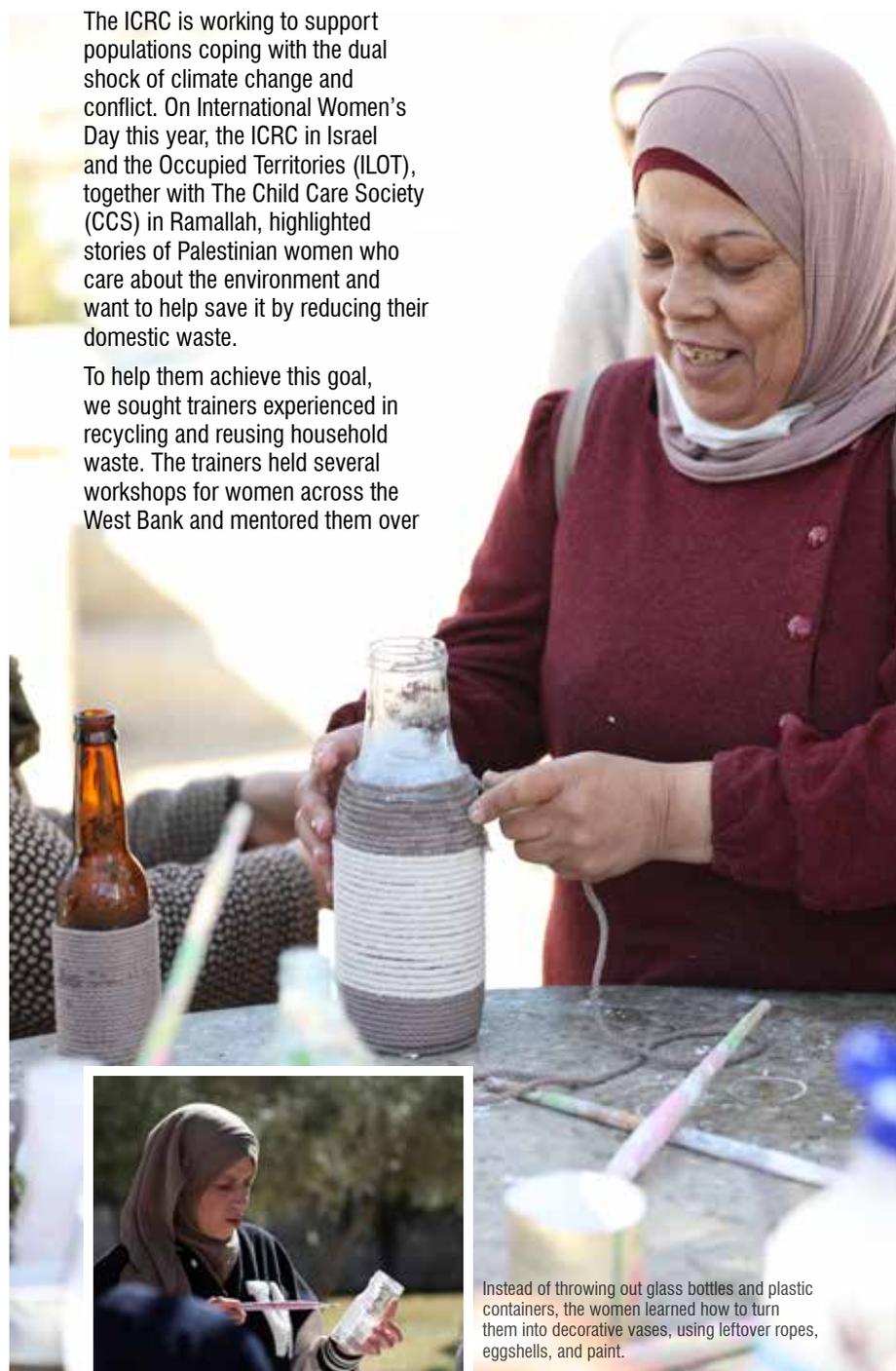
The humanitarian challenges that people face around the world are already being exacerbated by what is likely to be the defining challenge of the twenty-first century: climate change. The crisis has the potential to transform many aspects of our lives. Sadly, those who are already most vulnerable will be hit the hardest.



The women learned a new way to repurpose plastic grocery bags. Usually, they would use them for trash bins, but they realized that they could be even more creative! They learned how to cut and twist plastic bags to create ropes, which can then be braided into kitchen placemats.

The ICRC is working to support populations coping with the dual shock of climate change and conflict. On International Women's Day this year, the ICRC in Israel and the Occupied Territories (ILOT), together with The Child Care Society (CCS) in Ramallah, highlighted stories of Palestinian women who care about the environment and want to help save it by reducing their domestic waste.

To help them achieve this goal, we sought trainers experienced in recycling and reusing household waste. The trainers held several workshops for women across the West Bank and mentored them over



Instead of throwing out glass bottles and plastic containers, the women learned how to turn them into decorative vases, using leftover ropes, eggshells, and paint.



Using old electrical wires and beads from broken necklaces, the women were able to create new colorful accessories ready to be sold in the market!



two months to help them gain the knowledge and skills they need to turn domestic waste into products that can be sold in the market. They learned how everything from plastic bags to old wires, glass bottles, old clothes, soap-bar pieces, and even used frying oil can be given new life by applying a little ingenuity. Um Mufeed from Qaryut Village in Nablus says, “I didn’t have any idea about recycling and reusing. After participating in the workshops, I



The women had a lot of worn-out scarves and clothes. So, we helped them turn them into decorative cushions, blankets, oven mitts, pencil cases, dolls, and more.

gained many skills to turn household waste into useful products. For example, I reused old clothes and created floor mats and hairbands for my girls.”

Later this month, the participants got the chance to promote their sustainable products in a public exhibition in Ramallah. “Repurposing waste is good for the environment. With a little bit of creativity, we can make use of things that are no longer needed in the house instead of throwing them out. Also, we can increase our income if we manage to sell the new products,” says Um Rif’at from Qaryut.

The project is called “From Zero Cost to Zero Waste” and aims to raise awareness on how to help save the environment by repurposing domestic waste. It also helps women in affected areas boost their income by selling products created with minimal cost. “I want to use the techniques I learned in the workshops to minimize the expenses of my flower arrangement project. I think this will help me offer cheaper products to my customers and will add a unique touch to my business,” says Jalilah from Sinjil Village in Ramallah Governorate.



The women learned that they could repurpose frying oil to produce soap bars. They mixed used frying oil with sodium hydroxide solution and poured the mixture into silicone molds. After a period of six weeks, the women will have new, fresh, and aromatic soap bars.

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