

Manal Tuffaha

Born and raised in Nablus, 18-year-old Manal Tuffaha is a start-up founder. Her life has not always been easy because Manal has a little sister with special needs whom she always strove to protect. She found it hard to fit in and make friends, an issue with which she struggled until tenth grade. The turning point came when Manal joined the Bridge Palestine Program and AlNayzak Organization, formed friendships, and began to express herself more freely. Being able to make an impact by volunteering made Manal happy and she realized that such engagement is actually a way to help yourself. Manal finished high school with a *tawjeehi* grade of 96.7 and chose to study chemical engineering, her true passion.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Manal defied doubts and fears and established her own startup: MOM, Meal of the Mood. She chose this name to highlight the connection between the foods we consume and our various moods (a topic she finds particularly interesting as a chemist) and because mothers play the main role in preparing our meals. MOM helps women increase their income by cooking. For 18-year-old Manal, embarking on this endeavor was anything but easy. But finding that many women are eager to be part of her startup has made her realize that all the struggle is worth it.

Volunteering and engaging in extracurricular activities helped Manal find her true self. So, while she is running her startup, she keeps volunteering: She works as a tutor and teaches classes in English, programming, and technology for school students. She is also a member of debating clubs, and tutors in a board game initiative in Nablus (Fiction Café), where she not only coaches but also learns new games brought along by participants.

With MOM, Manal has participated in the Hult Prize Challenge on Food for Good and reached the regional round. She gives credit for her achievement to her parents, friends, and her experiences during voluntary work.



Suheil Abu Arafah

At a very early age, Suheil Abu Arafah was fascinated by finance, trade, the global market, and technology. Witnessing how greatly interested he was in those areas, his parents made sure to enroll him in all related extracurricular activities, such as technology and coding hackathons and summer camps. Suheil was also one of the children who interacted with the Science and Technology House, the first of its kind in Palestine, and its exhibitions. Through a variety of extracurricular and volunteering activities, his interest grew. Later on, he was able to tutor both robotics and coding and became interested in augmented reality.

Not long afterwards, Suheil decided to initiate different activities so as to spread the culture of his interest among other adolescents his age. Through summer activities and youth initiatives, Suheil encouraged his friends in their newfound interest. Seeing the effect he had on others, Suheil chose to



continue to volunteer and participate in all extracurricular activities he came across. Hence, in 2016, he joined Al Nayzak's Voluntary Unit, through which he volunteered in many camps and centers, including as a leader in the Frères summer activities and as a tutor in "Abna' Al-Quds" Center, where he taught and transferred his knowledge to children. As a teenager, Suheil and a group of young entrepreneurs started to create e-trade websites.

After finishing high school, Suheil decided to follow his passion and study financial technology. Nowadays, he is a self-reliant, independent young man who studies and works, going to university in the morning and working in the afternoon. In addition to working, being an excellent university student, and volunteering to fulfill his passion, Suheil is a football player and has been participating in tournaments for years, winning many medals.

Hadeel Abu Zayed

The year 2019 was not at all an ordinary year in the life of 23-year-old Hadeel Abu Zayed. She was appointed coordinator of the Social Development Forum's youth program, the organization where she volunteered after obtaining her BA in accounting from Al-Azhar University. With job opportunities scarce in the Gaza Strip, Hadil had engaged in volunteer work to build her skills until she became the officer in charge of all the Forum's volunteers.

In 2020, Hadeel joined a team of volunteers to respond to the needs of Gazans after the outbreak of COVID-19. She and other volunteers launched a national anti-pandemic campaign, using the hashtag #fight_Corona to provide information and raise public awareness. The campaign used several digital platforms and partnered with community initiatives and pertinent institutions to motivate citizens to take the vaccine.

The year 2021, however, was not what Hadeel had dreamed of. Instead of another year of her moving forward in her career through community interventions, the 11-day brutal Israeli aggression paralyzed life in Gaza, claiming lives and destroying buildings, and forcing Hadil and her family to flee their home.

Fear of the shelling, however, did not stop Hadil, and on 21 May, a few hours after the ceasefire was announced, she responded to Gaza Municipality's call to help remove the debris of the assault. Hadeel and her volunteer friends launched the initiative *hanaamirha*, "We will reconstruct," to clear the rubble left by the attacks. She became a member of the campaign's coordinating committee and the representative of her forum.

Hanaamirha brought hope back to Hadeel. Thousands of Palestinian youth responded to the call and took to the streets to clean up. "We proved that the Israeli destruction, irrespective of its level, cannot undermine our energy, our love nor our belonging to Palestine," she asserts, reiterating, "We shall remain here to build our nation and protect our homeland, banking on the strength and incredible energy of our youth."

