

Where to Go



The Youth Village

By Bassam Almohor



It's made for youth. An idea was born and implemented on a hill north of Kufr Ni'meh (20 kilometers northwest of Ramallah): to build a hut to allow young people to come closer to and learn about nature and, in the process, be productive. Later on, more huts were added, the property was expanded, and more young people from all over the country started to come to volunteer in this community-building project. As Adel Sabaneh, head of operations at Sharek Youth Forum, says, "Building in this village will never end."

On an area of 35 dunums (8.6 acres), the youth village now includes a variety of facilities, huts for sleeping, treehouses, halls, a dining area, sports pergolas, rock-climbing areas, and playgrounds. Currently, a three-story building is under construction to be used as a dorm for girls and to host other sports activities.

The village is located on a hill between Kufr Ni'meh in the south, Kharbatha Bani Hareth to the north, and Ras Karkar to the east. (Location: 31.93510 N, 35.09097 E.) At the top of the same hill, an illegal Israeli outpost was recently constructed, making it more challenging for this pioneer village to expand upwards. But organizers and their students are determined to stay, expand, develop, and educate.

Through Sharek's Tamayaz project, which seeks to reach university students from all over the country, the village is alive most days of the week. Like bees in a hive, young



people are busy working in the village, fixing things or building a new shack, or just competing in a game. A lovely lady from the neighboring village is busy by the entrance as she bakes the ever-tasty *mana'eesh* (that smells better than heaven!) and welcomes every visitor to taste her homemade bread.

When you enter the village, you're reminded of your identity, your history – and all those villages destroyed by the Israeli occupier in 1948. The roads and the shacks in this little village are named after destroyed Palestinian villages. But not only that, the village teaches self-reliance, independence, teamwork, and environmental preservation, as things are reused and recycled. There is an outstanding activities program for students who come for a day or for several days. No one escapes being part of the busyness.

The view of Wadi a-Dilb below is so refreshing. In April, the hills are adorned in their most vibrant colors. It's paradise.

The Youth Village can currently house 90 students. In normal years (pre-COVID), it received between 6,000 and 7,000 visitors. However, the village is not a park or a tourist attraction. It's an educational institution open to schools, universities, and other organizations or groups that wish to conduct training programs or offer a meditation session. But the village welcomes people to visit,

to learn about the project, to be inspired, and to volunteer.

Reaching the village is a journey by itself. A lovely dirt road that stretches 2.7 kilometers from the neighboring Kharbatha Bani Hareth village meanders through olive groves and bushes, overlooking the gentle green hills of west Ramallah. Once east of the hill, it crosses a quiet valley to the other hill from the west, overlooking the coast. Then, as it leads through evergreen pine trees, upwards to the east, you can begin to hear voices and other sounds. The winding road ends with the lovely, welcoming scene of dark brown wooden huts among the pine trees.

Visits to the village are by prior arrangement only and can be booked through Adel Sabaneh at 059-9362964, or Maher Abu Hakmeh, activities coordinator, at 059-841-0942, or by visiting the website, sharek.ps, or the Facebook page, @yvillage.

Bassam Almohor can be reached at almohor@gmail.com, +972-59-753-4681, or through Facebook @ [tourismore](https://www.facebook.com/tourismore).



SCAN
TO SHARE

