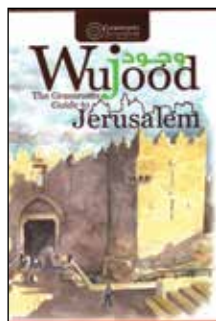




BOOK OF THE MONTH



Wujood



Grassroots Jerusalem, 2014
145 pages, \$30.00

Grassroots Jerusalem's *Wujood: The Grassroots Guide to Jerusalem*, is the first political tourist guide of Al-Quds (Jerusalem), the capital of Palestine. While emphasising the unique attractions offered by this age-old city, *Wujood* ("existence/presence") draws a picture of the realities of Jerusalemite Palestinian communities from a grassroots perspective. The guide invites visitors to take an active part in supporting the Palestinian struggle for freedom and justice, either by volunteering, supporting the Palestinian economy, or simply by comprehending the bigger picture of the political reality in the city today.

Wujood profiles 38 Palestinian communities within the historic Jerusalem district; Al-Quds as the Palestinians understand it – neither east nor west, defined by neither the Annexation Wall nor imposed municipal borders. For this reason, the guide also includes a list of 1948 *Nakba* displaced communities, listed by their original Arabic Palestinian names.

In line with the philosophy of Grassroots Jerusalem, *Wujood* identifies 78 grassroots initiatives and organisations that are leading the struggle for freedom and justice in Jerusalem. It is more than just a tourist guide to sites and places – it is an invitation to discover the real Jerusalem by meeting the people that make this city a vibrant and dynamic place to live. *Wujood* transcends your average tourist guide by providing suggestions on how to travel responsibly by supporting local economies and amplifying Jerusalemite community voices. It also directs those interested in supporting Palestinian communities to the organisations and initiatives that best

reflect the visions of these communities.

One unique feature of *Wujood* is that it includes a newly developed community-based map of Al-Quds. This map documents and preserves the Palestinian names of the neighbourhoods that make up Al-Quds. As the book states, the map is a direct response to the on-going Zionisation of the Jerusalem district: "Streets, public buildings and landmarks are gradually relabelled by the Israeli authorities and given Hebrew names. Thus maps used in schools ... for tourist and historical reference serve the historic Zionist narrative regardless of objective reality: 'A land without a people for a people without a land.'" (*Wujood*, p. 34)

Perhaps *Wujood's* greatest strength is that it was created through a participatory process with the communities that it profiles, acting as a megaphone for community voices. Inside this guide one will find ethical purchasing maps designed by local activists, photographs taken by local photographers, and community stories as told by community members.

There are several guides that provide a political context for Al-Quds, but none speak to the reader through the actual voices of the communities themselves, as this book does. *Wujood* is, finally, a magnificently framed portrait of this region through the lens of community resistance to occupation. This is a must-read for anyone who seeks to develop a critical awareness of the real story of Al-Quds.

Wujood can be purchased in Jerusalem at the Educational Bookshop and at Grassroots Jerusalem's office in Sheikh Jarrah.