

Theatre Day Productions (TDP)

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Courtesy of
Theatre Day Productions

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Areas of work/programs

The official education systems in Palestine have no statutory drama curriculum in the offing without any secure entitlement for drama lessons by qualified drama teachers.

Given this reality, TDP works with the education systems, with parents' groups, and with like-minded organizations for children and young people in the midst of the dire circumstances in Palestine.

Emergency aid interventions

TDP's drama and theater work has been successfully used for relief and recovery projects, giving children and women a chance to relax and re-find their coping mechanisms while recovering from trauma and loss of perspective.

"I go to the theater because I want to see something new, to think, to be touched, to question, to enjoy, to learn, to be shaken up, to be inspired, to touch art."



A quick look at TDP projects

NEW - The Theatre Club Café will be a hub for young people (15–25 years old) that will function as a safe space for meetings and discussion. The café is an outlet for generating ideas and exchange of innovative community initiatives, a place of cultural, social, and commercial entrepreneurship.

Youth perform and debate with their peers in the Kids for Kids program. TDP archives.



The mission
Theatre Day Productions (TDP) aims to make drama, theater, and creative activities a regular part of the lives of young people in Palestine so that they can find their individual voice and discover their sense of self and creativity. TDP activities help to provide the foundation for the peaceful development of Palestine, one with respect for human (children's) rights and civil society. In addition, TDP recognizes and supports the role of women and girls in cultural work and performing arts as an agent for vitality and transformation in Palestinian society.

TDP has set in motion both a youth theater company and an actors training program. Most of its work focuses on children and youth in the Gaza Strip, although there is a TDP presence in the West Bank as well as some activities.





Scene from the dance play *Identity*. TDP archives.

NEW - Connecting to the private sector will be done through the creation of a package of well-developed drama services that can be used by any company or institution for team-building. Role-playing will be the tool used for human-resource development and interaction with the public.

Training and production includes a three-year curriculum that creates new actors/drama teachers who work directly with children and schoolteachers. A one-year curriculum creates new drama animators for emergency aid and relief. TDP has over 50 graduates of the three-year curriculum.

Performances for youth followed by interactive drama workshops. The choice of themes for the theater plays produced by TDP are derived from the daily life of Palestinian children. They are themes relevant to the community or based on (or inspired by) the ideas of the day. TDP creates original plays and sometimes uses works taken from Arab cultural heritage or literature. There are 180 performances each year for approximately 30,000 children.

Workshops in free expression are for youth (ages 9–16) and are made to give youth a chance to work in-depth on the creation and presentation of their ideas, fantasies, joys, fears, hopes, and dreams. At present, TDP runs workshop programs for drama and video-animation.

Drama workshops are offered to groups of 15–20 children at a time. No two workshops are ever the same as the theme of each workshop comes from what is on the minds of the participating children. At the end of each workshop, a public presentation is given for family members, friends, and the school from which the children come.

Video-animation workshops allow groups of schoolchildren to make simple video-cartoons based on their own stories and fantasies. Each week, a group of 20–24 children stimulates the free flow of their fantasy with team cooperation to produce their cartoons. Children are in charge of the complete production process of their cartoons.

Drama and animation festivals are yearly events that bring together 15 groups of 20 children from one neighborhood for a festival; performances by the children are for all participating children, their teachers, their parents, and TDP fans.

Plays with kids for kids. Everyone has the potential to make art. During a two-month project, school kids create the content for a new play that they will perform on-tour for their peers. Performing and improvising nourish the imagination and stimulate a search for creative solutions to problems on all levels.

The women's leadership program trains young women to gather stories from four generations of women. From this exchange, material is collected for

storytelling plays that are then shown to women in a forum setting. Following the performances, women are invited to react to and share their own stories in this all-women's setting. In special workshops, women can self-assess their stories regarding the daily risks they face and possible actions for change.

TDP impact

Children use their imagination, cognition, and creativity when participating in TDP's drama program, which helps them to problem solve, encourages them to consider a broad range of possibilities, and promotes their narrative/language competence while being in a safe environment.*



Women in rehearsal for a new show. TDP archives.

Workshops for teachers are held yearly for schoolteachers of all disciplines and all grades during which they are taught to use storytelling as a teaching technique.

Drama awareness/advocacy campaigns are held every other year for senior staff, education administrators, supervisors, and national or regional department heads within the education ministry in order to highlight the importance of theater and drama in school life.

Advanced-training and international-exchange workshops that focus on fields connected to youth theater and drama education are led by guest teachers, from Palestine or from abroad, and offered to TDP trainees, graduates, and staff alike.

TDP is well-connected as a member of the Palestinian Performing Arts Network (PPAN) and works with 80 civil-society organizations throughout the Gaza Strip.

Visit <https://vimeo.com/120414566> to watch TDP's *From the Wings* (in Arabic with English subtitles).

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*The impact of Theatre Day drama work was measured qualitatively and quantitatively in two separate independent studies:
"The DICE has been cast" – 2008–2010 <http://www.theatreday.org/ayyam/usrdocs/GreenPaperConsortium.pdf> and
"The Measurement of Drama Impact in Gaza" – 2006 <http://www.theatreday.org/ayyam/usrdocs/gazameasurementreporteng.pdf>.