



Credits Alter Eco

ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN PEACE INITIATIVES

The tensions between Israel and Palestine have recently culminated. Again they were drawn into the logic of war. Yet, in daily life there are Israelis and Palestinians who work together in fair trade projects to achieve closer relations between their communities.

SINDYANNA OF GALILEE

The fair trade organisation Sindyanna of Galilee was founded in 1996 by two women: Hadas Lahav, a Jewish Israeli journalist, and Samia Nasser, a Palestinian teacher. They received the support of the Hanitzotz publishing house, which brings together pacifist militants from the two communities

Alongside producers

Sindyanna of Galilee develops support activities for producers and value for Palestinian products with economic actors and

consumers in Israel and Palestine and also in Europe and the United States. To do so, the association works with olive, soap and spice producers (small farmers, mainly Arabs, who do not receive state aid or any of the economic support provided to other farming sectors) to whom they offer the best prices for their products. It also organises training and finances various social projects.

The organisation became a member of WFTO, the international network of fair trade organisations, in October 2003.

Militants for peace

Sindyanna of Galilee works alongside the Hanitzotz publishing house and the Palestinian Workers' Advice Centre (WAC)¹,) to fight for the recognition of Arab rights in Israel and to search for alternative solutions to the current Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

In parallel, Arabs, Jews and international volunteers work together under the Sindyanna umbrella to stop expropriation of land and the removal of trees through olive tree planting campaigns.

The organisation also makes a significant effort to develop agricultural infrastructure and to help farmers improve the quality of their olive oil.²





With support from BTC's Trade for Development Centre

Thanks to support from the Trade for Development Centre of BTC (€ 7,500), Sindyanna of Galilee has hired a professional food engineer to set up a quality control system. It has also contributed to improving the quality and hygiene manual for workers responsible for za'atar raw materials production and processing. It has also ensured the transfer of information to consumers and the training of the people who will continue the work after the project ends.

For women by women

By supporting the projects of women's associations in Israel and the West Bank, Sindyanna of Galilee hopes to promote a necessary coming together of the communities and to denounce the difficult living conditions of Palestinians who suffer both from the Israeli occupation and the inflexibility of traditional Arab society.

PEACE OIL

The Peace Oil project is the fruit of a joint effort by the main Israeli and Palestinian fair trade organisations: Sindyanna of Galilee, Green Action and Canaan Fair Trade.

These three organisations came together in 2005 to offer American and European consumers superior quality olive oil made jointly by Israeli and Palestinian producers. Sold by Olive Branch Enterprise, a Palestinian organisation located on the West Bank, Peace Oil partakes of a strong vision: *"Build economic interdependence between peoples by creating mutually beneficial business partnerships providing a practical incentive for peace."*⁵

Nasser Abufarha, founder of Canaan Fair Trade and the Palestinian Fair Trade Association: *"We have given farmers hope. A economic exchange that recognises Palestinian farmers' rights and respects the value of their connection to their land, after marginalisation under Israeli occupation, is a major accomplishment."*⁶

To find out more: www.peaceoil.net

This is an abstract from the brochure *Fair trade in conflict regions/zones* from the Trade for Development Centre.

Notes

1. www.wac-maan.org.il

2. Oxfam-Magasins du monde : "Sindyanna, un engagement politique et économique", 9 janvier 2009

3. Astrid Bouchedor, "Mobilisation en marche pour la Palestine", Oxfam - Magasins du Monde

4. Oxfam-Magasins du monde, Ibid.

5. www.peaceoil.net.

6. Quoted in *The Guardian* van 24 avril 2009: Mark Tran, Palestinian olive oil bucks UK recession - Sales expected to double this year after Gaza conflict - Product gets Fairtrade certification for first time - www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/feb/24/palestinian-olive-oil

"A minority of women work in farming. They must often go through intermediaries who take them to their place of work and who collect money from their salaries (they often take 40%)," explain Michal Schwartz and Asma Agbarieh-Zahalka, two WAC managers who work with Sindyanna of Galilee to promote women's emancipation and support their professional projects.

Michal Schwartz goes even further. She believes that these women can play a part in change for the liberation of society and contribute to greater solidarity between Arab and Jewish workers.

Sindyanna of Galilee provides very concrete support. Arab women are able to take part in educational projects provided at cultural centres managed by both Jewish and Palestinian volunteers. A basket-making workshop was recently set up to provide women from poor communities with employment so they could stay in their villages, continue to work in the fields and take care of their families.⁴

To find out more:

www.sindyanna.com

www.befair.be

