

Abdullah Yacoub

“In order to develop yourself and reach the highest positions and jobs, you can’t simply depend on a university education, even though that’s important,” admits Palestinian expatriate businessman Abdullah Yacoub. These words became a reality for a driver at one of Abdullah’s companies in Dubai, UAE. After encouraging the driver to develop his skills through a number of intensive training courses, Abdullah witnessed the driver’s rise to become a department head.

Lead International is one of Abdullah’s most important projects. Based on humanitarian concerns, it offers training in leadership and management skills. Lead International has helped many Palestinian youths who were unable to complete their university education due to the conditions of the first and second intifadas and the ensuing economic hardships under which many people were suffering.

Born in 1946 in Budrus, a village northwest of Ramallah, and currently residing in the United Arab Emirates, Abdullah is not only interested in promoting youth who have not completed their university education. In fact, he has continued the journey of his father – Yacoub Abdullah – who established schools in the villages west of Ramallah before the *Nakba*. Unlike his father, Abdullah did not become a teacher, but he completed his father’s mission in his own way. Aware of the conditions at government schools, Abdullah provided heating equipment for schools in Ramallah and donated fully equipped school bags and two computer labs to two schools in Budrus. And when he discovered that many students suffered from poor vision, he provided funding for eye examinations, prescription glasses, and vision-correction procedures for about three thousand students and staff at several government schools in the Ramallah and Al-Bireh district. This led to the establishment of Madad, a nonprofit foundation that provides educational services in Palestine.



To motivate excellence and creativity among outstanding high school students, Abdullah established the Ostaz Yacoub Award (named after his late father), a monetary donation towards their university education. He also created a football league for villages affected by the annexation wall in order to lift the children’s spirits.

Abdullah graduated from Ramallah High School in 1964 and holds a university degree in social services from Jordan. He served as director of the Ramtha Youth Center until 1968, and joined the Palestinian Liberation Organization in the same year to work in its Foundation for the Welfare of the Families of the Martyrs of the Palestinian Revolution. In 1975, he moved to Kuwait and began to work at a low-level job in a shipping company. His career took him to Dubai where he established his own logistics company in 2001. Since then, his business has been flourishing and growing abroad. The geographical distance has not prevented him, however, from giving back to his country or serving the people of his homeland.

Abdullah is married to Mariam Ajami. They have four children.

