



December 2018

Dear friends,

During this Christmas we tell the world publicly: “Celebrate Christmas – but don’t forget today’s Bethlehem.”

Among the many issues of concern for today’s Bethlehem there is one in particular to which AEI’s Sumud Story House wants to give special attention during this Christmas and actually the whole year of 2019. Since over a decade 182 Palestinian Christian and Moslem landowners are unable to access their lands which are located in a large area of over 700 hectare to the north of Bethlehem. The Israeli authorities’ reason for closing the lands and denying access to the landowners is ‘security’, since the Wall cuts those lands. (Rather, the Wall is a source of *insecurity* for Palestinians).

AEI’s Sumud Story House, where groups of Palestinian women weekly come together, is located close to this wall. Though we have many cases which need testimony and support, AEI wants to take up this case close to our office and in front of our very eyes.

We will raise attention to the landowners’ and their families’ plight by developing supportive relations between *communities abroad* and the *northern Bethlehem community including the landowners*. Such relations support people’s morale and help crossing walls. The landowners have the right to access their own lands. With your help AEI can support their cause.

Please inform us whether you know a local community in your country – a church, neighborhood, women’s group, club– that can be approached to help bringing across the call of the landowners and their families about their right to access their own lands. Just write to us (info@aeicenter.org) and we will send you more information about the Sumud Story House and this action.

Thank you for not forgetting present day Bethlehem!

Arab Educational Institute

The AEI team wishes you...

- Just peace will come and stay, when the whole world live the spirit of Christmas everyday and when they take the walls away. Merry Christmas from Bethlehem. (Rania Murra)
- May the closeness of friends, the comfort of home, and the unity of our nation, renew your spirits this Christmas and the New Year festive seasons. (Elias Abu Akleh)
- We'll lighten a candle for people taking care of the earth, their soul and their sumud. (Toine van Teeffelen)
- May the Prince of Peace, enlighten me, every human being and the whole world leaders on the path to justice, freedom, peace and prosperity. (Roger Salameh)
- During the Advent, Christmas and New Year Seasons, I appeal to our Almighty God to strengthen my faith, hope and love in Him, in my humanity, in my homeland and in my responsible citizenship. (Fuad Giacaman)
- May the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ, who was born in this country, stand permanently by those who work for freedom and justice. (Fabian)



Video

Share this remarkable Bethlehem Christmas wish with your friends!

[In English](#)
[In German](#)
[In Dutch](#)

Advocacy

Raising voices across Walls

AEI is presently involved in a series of training sessions and local advocacy actions by Palestinian youth. They include groups of school children and young women groups. The advocacy is supported by the European Union and Cafod. Topics addressed by young female groups include drug use (Aida camp), women's voice in media (Khan al-Ahmar), local transportation facilities (Walajeh village), cleaning up garbage (Artas). School youth focus on buying Palestinian products, supporting local employment, financial cuts at UNRWA, and the Wall. See here the background of the advocacy actions:

Palestine-Family.Net

Birzeit University Museum expands wealth of digital archive items in partnership with Arab Educational Institute

Recently AEI agreed a Memorandum of Understanding with BirZeit University Museum. The MoU promotes the use of www.palestine-family.net – a cultural documentation of a great many stories and photos on Palestine managed by AEI. [Click here](#) to see stories and photos and www.palestine-family.net

International volunteer

Bethlehem as new home

I've been in Bethlehem as a volunteer for more than three months now. My name is Fabian, I'm 19 years old and I'm from Dresden in Germany. After completing my high school graduation this summer, I decided to come to Bethlehem for a year to learn Arabic, see the country, and get to know the Palestinian culture. [Click here](#) to see for more about volunteering at AEI

Mission Statement

Sumud and Strategy

AEI will focus its educational mission statement on strengthening sumud in Palestinian society. Here is a [blog](#) with an attempt to understand this concept's various dimensions

Games

Games as a tool of sumud

AEI is going to promote the rights of 182 Palestinian landowners who lost access to their lands due to the building of the Wall in northern Bethlehem. See: [Card game](#)

Celebrations

AEI celebrations

The Arab Educational Institute celebrated Christmas, Prophet Muhammad Birthday, the Palestinian Teacher's Day and the Universal Deceleration of Human Rights in the presence of the government and private schools network as well as the Ministry of Education, national and local society representatives.



Resources and more

[Click here](#) for more about AEI's **Sumud Story House**:

[Click here](#) for info about AEI's **inter-religious school project**, 'Citizenship and Diversity: Christian-Moslem Living Together',

As part of this project, AEI compiled a new **book** with short stories about Moslem-Christian living together collected and written by students from West Bank schools in the Bethlehem and Ramallah regions. [See here](#) the complete 130-page book in PDF:

A 20-minute **documentary** about children's life near the Wall made last year by Rinske Bosch for Dutch TV (IKON, series Mensjesrechten), English subtitled, in cooperation with AEI and Al-Rowwad in Aida camp:

<https://vimeo.com/143601177>

Helpful for school lessons.

For an overview of AEI's **wall posters**, [see here](#)

Supported by ArtLab in East-Jerusalem, AEI facilitated the making of two brief **animation cartoons**, in English, made by Palestinian children from the Bethlehem area:

1: [The Horse](#)

2: [MMI](#)

A 9-minute **video about the [Wall Museum](#)** around Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem:

And further

Join a Journey to Palestine

Comments on journeys organized by AEI:

"It has been a very educational experience which gave me more understanding of the situation in Israel and the Palestinian territories." "I now know, that I didn't know anything of the situation

*here at all.” “I’m very much inspired by the friendly people and their optimism.” - by **Alfred Keienburg** (67) Essen, Germany*

*“Visiting the Sumud Story House was the best beginning of a very moving, intriguing week.”
“Through the choir we could really feel what Sumud means.” “This trip was so perfectly organised. I was so impressed. The program was amazing.” “This trip was very special and unique, as is the country. Through the AEI we really got a very profound insight.” “It was very emotional and depressing, but with every encounter we heard: there’s hope, there’s Sumud!” -
by **Katarina** (24), from Germany*

YouTube video about [AEI](#) (4 min), made by Fadi Abou Akleh.

Wall story posters for sale

AEI has story wall posters for sale in the format 24/34 cm.

It concerns the following stories: Bethlehem, Surfing, The pigeon, I caught his hand, Hug, Laundry, Rescue, Stand-off.

For all posters, [see here](#)

Youth and women’s stories on Wall posters

Two AEI publications include English poster stories attached to the Wall around Rachel’s Tomb.

Price: 20 shekel or 5 Euro, excl. postage. Copies can be ordered via info@aeicenter.org

Palestine-Family.net

[Palestine-Family.net](#) features many visual and written items about Palestinian heritage and history.

Arab Educational Institute

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Please do not hesitate to forward this mail to others whom you think are interested.

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