

**Embargoed: Wednesday 9 December 2015, 00:00 GMT**

**PRESS RELEASE: Palestinian children charity wins international award for outstanding work**

Local Palestinian charity Theatre Day Productions (TDP), which uses the art of performance to address psychological effects of war for children, is to receive a 2015 Stars Impact Award.

The Palestinian Territories have long been battered by conflict, violence and economic sanctions causing profound psychological effects on their most vulnerable, particularly the children and youth.

In the Gaza Strip, many children have lived through three wars in less than a decade. Across the territories, all children have only known a life under occupation.

In times of conflict, art is often relegated to the bottom of the priority list but it is in fact during such trying times that avenues of self-expression are most needed to heal the trauma suffered by war-affected children.

TDP was established in 1995 to create a professional theatre and drama education programme for children and young people, first in Gaza and later in the West Bank through its East Jerusalem office.

TDP runs workshops in Free Expression, Drama and Animation as well as a theatre club for children. Through these activities, participants are given a channel to express their fears and hopes while exploring themes relevant to their community.

The organisation also trains adults in acting and drama teaching. Last year, it reached 80,496 children through plays, performances and drama workshops.

TDP is working to shape the view that performing arts are not only a tool for self-expression and healing, but also a vital agent for transformation in Palestinian society.

Muna Wehbe, CEO of Stars Foundation – “Once again this year's Impact Award winners have demonstrated exceptional work in responding to the needs of children, and in the strength of their institutional and management practices.

Flexible funding allows these well-managed locally-led organisations to determine where their award funding can be best spent in order to bolster the important work that they do. We are delighted to be awarding in such a broad range of countries this year, with awardees drawn from as many as 12 countries.”

As part of the prize package, TDP will receive US\$50,000 of flexible funding and capacity building support.

This year, Stars is awarding 24 organisations from countries ranging from Colombia to Iraq for their work with disadvantaged children.

Representatives from each local charity will take the stage at the Philanthropreneurship Forum, entitled “The New Frontiers of Philanthropy” which will be held at the Palais des Congrès de Versailles, Paris, on 12 December. **ENDS**