

LINES4 PALESTINE



Authors

Maria Grazia Imperiale, Giovanna Fassetta, Sahar Alshobaki, Damian Ross, Fatma Abubaker, Islam Abu Madi, Salah Ahmed, Farida Alghoul, Sadia Ali, Haneen Alsammak, Evelyn Arizpe, Runna Badwan, Anna Blackman, Steve Brown, Hanaa Elqattawi, Sana El Sayegh, Michael Fennell, Carol Goodey, Dalia Hassani, Yuhan Huang, Rachel Lyon, Ghada Mahmoud Yonis Radwan, Elizabeth Nelson, Kalina Raeva, Laila Saleh, Rinda Saleh, Michelle Swan, David Watt, Rebecca Wood, Sally Zacharias, Rong Zhang.

Design

Beatrice Catanzaro

Project Team

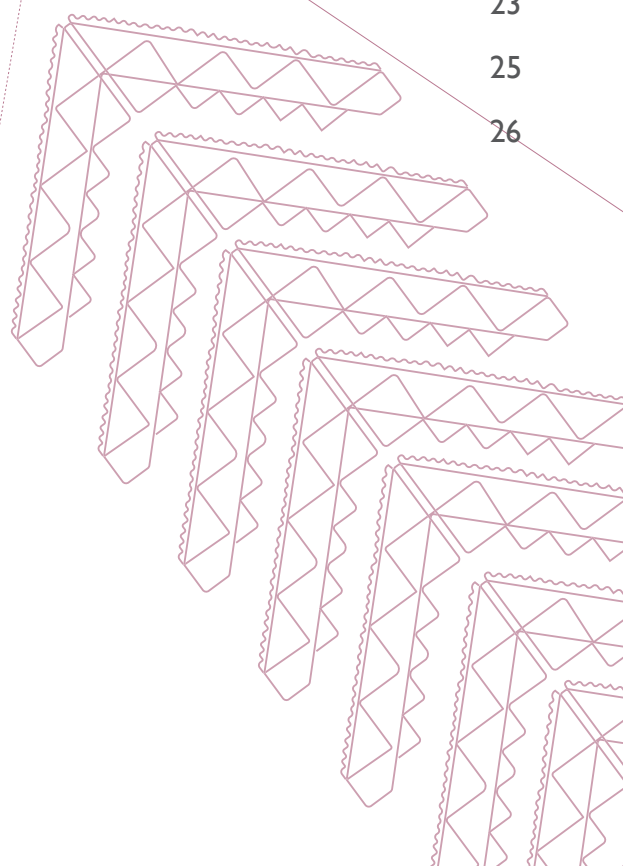
Dr Maria Grazia Imperiale (Project Lead, University of Glasgow), Dr Giovanna Fassetta (Project Co-Lead, University of Glasgow), Dr Sahar Alshobaki (Project Coordinator, University of Glasgow), Damian Ross (University of Porto).

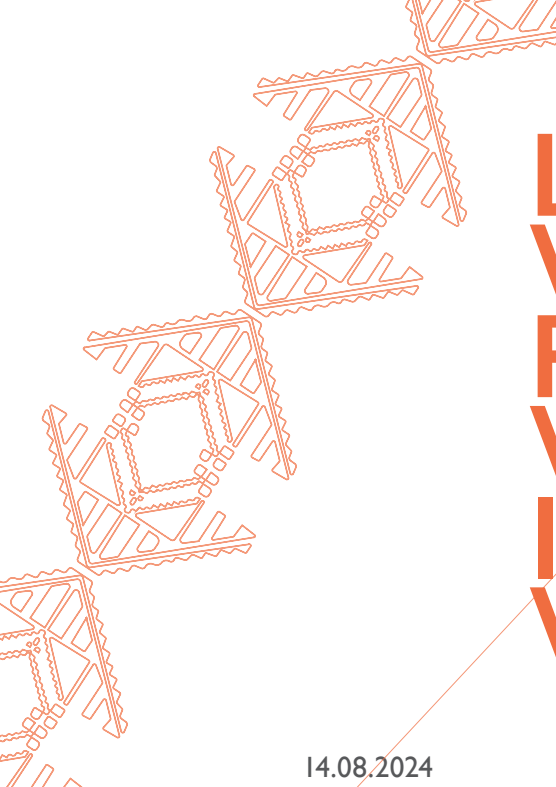
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LINES4PALESTINE WAS A 'SELFISH' PROJECT AND WE DOUBTED IT WOULD WORK

14.08.2024

Maria Grazia Imperiale

The LINEs4Palestine project was a 'selfish' project. We did it (I did it) to make myself feel better in the circumstances. It did, sometimes. I could no longer stand the sense of helplessness (although I still feel helpless..). I had to somehow use what I know – and what I am able to do - to do something. Indeed, it made me feel better. In fact, it kept me sane throughout these last months. Other times, it has just been devastating, heartbreaking, and I've felt so lost for words. Seeing massacres and devastation, praying that our participants in Gaza were safe; praying that someone would show up at HopeHub. Are they alive?

Those days, for some reason, it usually happened that I received a message, usually from someone in Gaza, thanking us for the recordings of a certain workshop that was 'very useful' and 'beneficial.'

Today, it was one of those days. I still have tears.

You thank us??

We thank you. All of you.

The **LINEs for Palestine** project, funded by the British Council, was born in response to the devastation caused by the ongoing genocide in Palestine, especially in the Gaza Strip. The project team had already been collaborating with colleagues in Gaza for the past ten years on various research projects.

When we learned about the British Council's opportunity to fund small projects in Palestine, in January 2024, after long discussions and some hesitation, we contacted our dear colleague in Gaza to ask what, if anything, would be feasible and useful under the circumstances.

The **LINEs4P** project emerged from these discussions, which would not have been possible without our long-standing and trusting relationships. The value of such relationships and their impact on our professional lives are key components of both the rationale for the project and its design.

Our contacts and colleagues advised us to focus on academic support for English language teachers and English and Education graduates who, due to the destruction of all Higher Education infrastructure in Gaza, no longer had access to education or professional development.

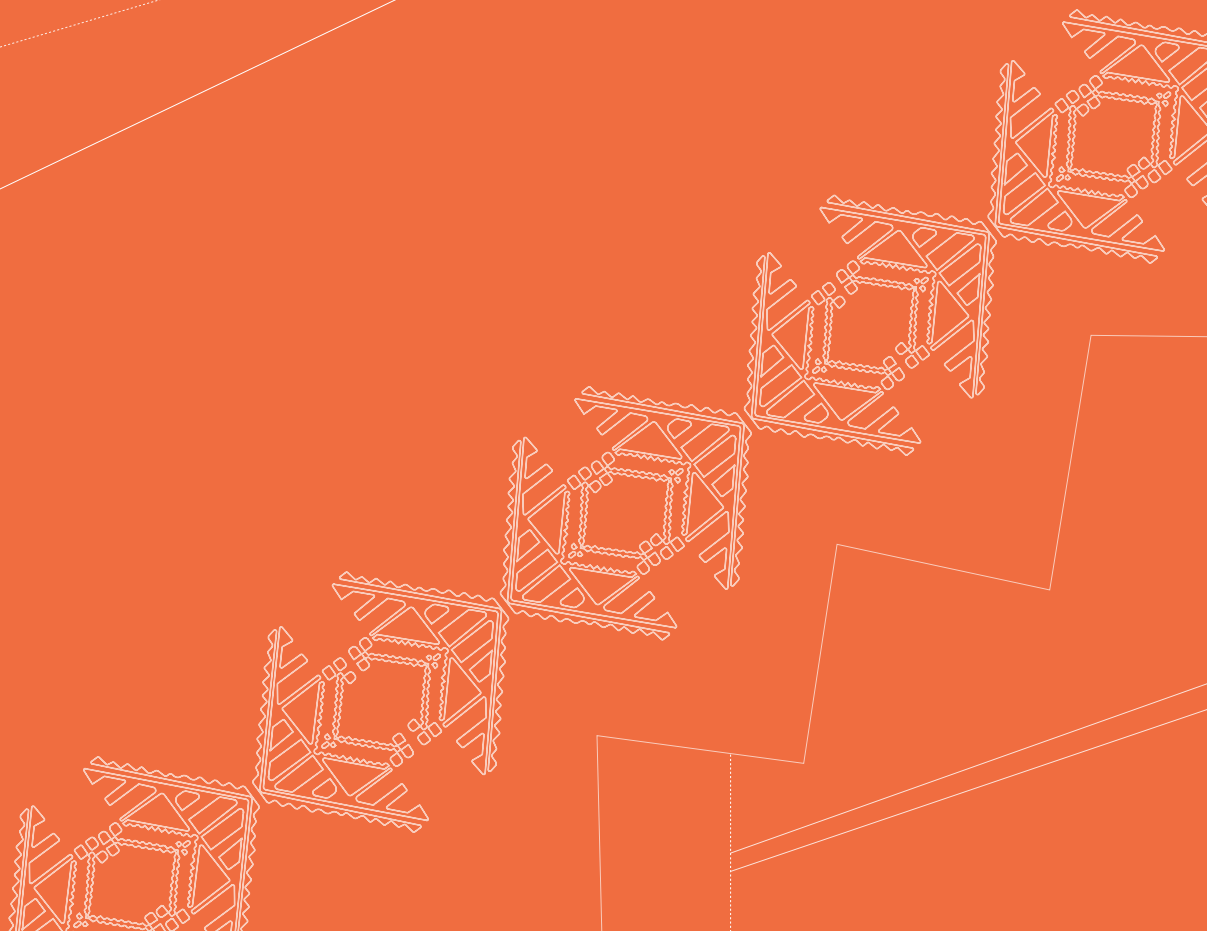
We were successful in securing funding.

Sahar Alshobaki

I felt excited about the possibility of doing something. However, is it possible?! Is there 'still' enough mental and psychological space for such initiatives? Will people 'still' be interested in continuing education when things are falling apart? It felt like starting a journey that looked impossible with everything happening around them.

This **multivocal report** aims to tell the story of our project. The project was made possible thanks to so many people beyond the core project team, and as such it includes the voices of colleagues from the School of Education who contributed by presenting workshops and acting as mentors, colleagues at the British Council who enabled this work, our research office and administration who ensured everything could run smoothly, our partners at HopeHub (a local NGO in Gaza established in January 2024 that runs internet points and learning hubs in the Gaza Strip to support freelancers and students to work and study remotely), some of the Palestinian participants and mentees, and presenters and attendees of our mini-conference.

Our report wants to represent this plurality of voices. It is not homogenous; it embraces different styles, flows, cracks, quotes, and pictures. It is a joint effort, and we hope that readers will sense both individuality and collectivity in its pages.



WE CONNECTED WITH HOPEHUB, RUNNING INTERNET CAFES IN GAZA DESPITE THE GENOCIDE

By Salah Ahmed, Founder of HopeHub

The HopeHub initiative, led by Act for Entrepreneurship and Development (ACT), aims to support displaced Palestinians and Lebanese affected by the recent war in the Middle East, particularly in Gaza and Lebanon, by providing shared workspaces and fostering economic resilience. In response to the devastating impact of war on Gaza's economy, ACT launched HopeHub to create opportunities for freelancers, remote workers, and students through Internet and learning hubs in Gaza, Egypt, and Lebanon. HopeHub's mission is to build sustainable livelihoods for Palestinians affected by war, fostering resilience through education, training, and community-driven solutions. HopeHub also addresses infrastructure challenges, such as limited internet and electricity, through renewable energy solutions and high-speed connectivity. These hubs or temporary workspaces are built using locally sourced materials and solar energy to ensure sustainability. Key hubs have been established across Gaza, including Rafah, Deir al-Balah, and Khan Yunis, as well as a hub in Cairo, Egypt, and Saida, Lebanon.



HopeHub also runs a training program and workshops that focus on equipping youth with technical and freelance skills, increasing their employability and adaptability. HopeHub also emphasizes mental health by incorporating workshops and counselling sessions to sustain emotional well-being. Training courses and workshops, both online and in-person, have reached over 2,000 participants, enhancing their technical skills and preparing them for global job opportunities.

Imagining the unimaginable by Giovanna Fassetta

I doubted the project would reach many people. It was several months into the war and my imagination failed to imagine the unimaginable. Until a day when I was having a coffee with a friend from Gaza and she told me that her husband had set up internet spaces called HopeHub where people could study, work from in Rafah and other locations in Gaza. This was a 'rewiring' moment for my imagination. Life, work, study were still happening, and pockets of normality still found in the total abnormal circumstances of the Gaza Strip.

Through partnerships with several institutions, local and international organisations, international universities, HopeHub provides mentorship, networking, and community support, ensuring that individuals can continue working and pursuing education despite ongoing challenges.

This mission and vision to support students led to a partnership with the LINEs4Palestine project by the University of Glasgow. HopeHub provided crucial support to LINEs4Palestine by offering training facilities, internet access, and logistical support to facilitate their educational initiatives: HopeHub enabled LINEs4Palestine to conduct workshops and training sessions.

HopeHub's efforts have also been recognized internationally, with features in prominent publications such as The Guardian and The Currency magazine, highlighting its impact and the resilience of the Palestinian community.

Setting up the project (contracts, payments etc.) wasn't simple but we did it.

It took many emails, many calls and a lot of patience to set up the project from an administrative perspective.

Sending money to Palestine is not easy these days. Thanks to our colleague in the Research office, Michelle Swan, this was eventually possible.

We also tried to support our partners and the Palestinian participants through eSIMs, which were the best chance to be connected to the world outside the Gaza Strip for those who lived far from the HopeHub centres.

urgent email from a participant



Farida Algoul [redacted]



To: Sahar Y.I. Alshobaki [redacted]

+ 1 other

Wed 07/08/2024 09:04

Dear Project Line Family,

I hope this email finds you well. I wanted to share a delightful experience I had today. I visited the café, and the service was incredibly pleasant. It truly made my day

Thank you for always being so wonderful and supportive. I wish you all a beautiful and fulfilling day ahead

Best regards,

Farida Algoul

EeSIMS? Worth buying? by Kalina Raeva

I've had the pleasure of working with Grazia, Giovanna, and Sahar on other projects connecting our University with educators from or in Gaza. I gladly jumped in when Grazia asked for some help with an admin task on this project – to look into purchasing e-SIM cards for our partners in Gaza, knowing that there isn't any guidance for it, and especially for circumstances like these, the process might not be straightforward. We were trying to work against time, knowing it was crucial to provide a way for our Gaza partners to communicate with us.

Of course, there were multiple limitations on the availability of network and mobile providers in Gaza.

On a call with Grazia and Sahar, Sahar shared a map with all the different providers available in various parts of the area – I could only imagine the effort that this took to produce and the amount of people behind it who had many failed attempts to connect to the world. Despite all the hurdles, people still somehow managed to connect with others and share this valuable and life-saving information!

Our University's Telephony team responded immediately to our inquiry about purchasing eSIMs through them, but they could only advise that the current contract in place with a UK-based company meant very limited coverage beyond the UK's borders with very expensive rates. The eSIMs would also have had to be sent via post which was an impossible task in the current climate.

There are usually quite strict procurement and finance restrictions in place for purchasing goods from providers directly, with no contact in place. We thought that this was going to be another challenge, however, the finance team were very understanding and allowed us some flexibility – we were able to get approval to purchase the eSIMs directly ourselves, which made the process of setting them up and using them way more simplified and straightforward. It was a pleasure working with the team on this, it feels good to have contributed to people in Gaza being able to reach out to us and each other and collaborate on a valuable project like this, even if the contribution itself is very, very small.

WE ASKED PEOPLE IN PALESTINE WHAT THEY NEEDED, AND WE CONTACTED COLLEAGUES

Once contracts and posts were in place, we started contacting people ('recruiting participants'). We circulated a form to gauge interest among some of our contacts in Palestine. Overall, over 200 people from Palestine signed up. What we did not expect was that the majority of them (80%) were in the Gaza Strip.

Sahar Alshobaki

Feeling embarrassed to reach out to people in Gaza at the start, I contacted my colleagues in the West Bank. This changed when I contacted a friend of mine who was in Gaza amidst the current Israeli genocide and explained the project. She affirmed how important it is, especially now, that students are keen to find ways to continue their education or help them develop their skills. At a time when everything stopped, learners in Gaza are looking for any chance/anything that resembles normalcy, my friend mentioned. Then we met with Salah), introducing us to HopeHub. I felt motivated and believed this would work. Seeing that most participants were from Gaza still came as a big surprise.

We also circulated a form among our colleagues in the School of Education, asking for support in either leading workshops or providing mentoring. 27 people signed up within 3 days, and the number kept growing.

Anna Blackman

I was amazed to see this project being advertised. I felt so hopeless about everything I was seeing in the news, and I couldn't believe that such an initiative was taking place; it felt like a wonderful opportunity to be able to just try and do something to make a difference. Admittedly, I probably joined from feelings of sadness and guilt, that my country is perpetuating the situation, that I am implicitly colluding, and that I felt at a loss as to how to challenge this. Although I joined thinking I'd be providing support, sharing my skills, really, I have gained so much.

Steve Brown

From a distance, the nature and scale of the atrocities in Gaza can easily lead one to turn away, rather than confront the horror and the feelings of impotence that accompany this. It's just too much, too awful, too depressing. But when the opportunity to do something specific arose – something that allowed me to use the rather narrow set of skills that I have - the excuse that there was nothing I could do immediately vanished. Suddenly there was something I could do. Offering mentorship to an academic seemed like rather an insignificant gesture in the grand scheme of things, but at least it was something.

In our form to gauge interest from Palestinian participants, we also asked them what kind of academic support would have been most meaningful to them. Most people indicated they were interested in academic skills, such as writing a PhD proposal, developing scholarship applications, writing for publication, creating a strong CV.

154
Responses

Latest Responses

"Pedagogical approaches"

"Academic publishing, how to write a CV, how to write a PhD proposal, peda...

...

36 respondents (23%) answered CV for this question.

Update

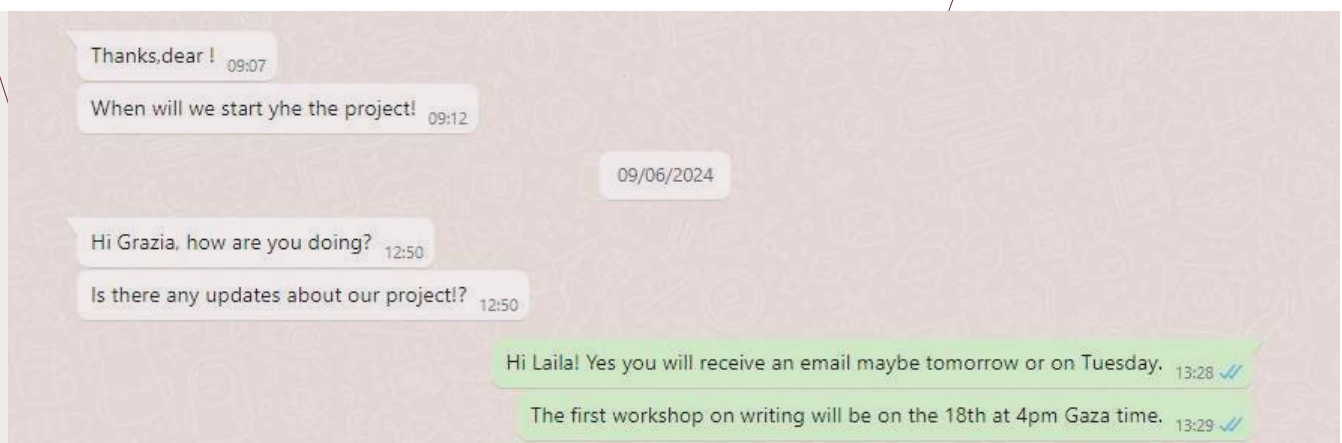
Master's degree
research paper
Master's or PhD
proposalCV
publishing- how to write
writing novels
research perspective
Academic publishing
methods and research
CV/ research methods
theoretical and research
master's proposal
approaches from theoretical master's research
academic research
PhD scholarship
PhD proposal
CV
research methods
pedagogical approaches

ALL WAS READY TO GO, BUT WE HESITATED: WHEN IS IT A GOOD TIME TO START?

By Maria Grazia Imperiale

Even though everything was nearly ready to go, I kept postponing. When shall we start? Can we start? Is it even appropriate to start? We had our partners, HopeHub, ready to go. We collected the needs from our Palestinian participants. We knew what they were interested in. Colleagues were ready to deliver workshops, but I was keeping hesitating. What if anything happens during the workshops? What if...? And...? ...

Until I received a WhatsApp text from Laila, a friend in Gaza: When will we start the project? And a week later, she wrote me again: Hi Grazia, how are you doing? Is there any updates about our project?



Laila Saleh

When we will start the project?

In the midst of homelessness, displacement, and repeated feelings of despair, I received a message from Grazia, and it was only then that I believed there was no room for despair in my life. I must be stronger because it is a matter of to be or not to be.

I had not yet gotten over the trauma of the Israeli soldiers invasion in the Nasser Hospital just two hours after the delivery of my newborn baby. I was exhausted and suffering from severe depression on all fronts, but this project became the solution to overcome all of this. I decided to join and commit as much as possible for several reasons, the most important of which was that I wanted to prove that Laila, who is an example for all Palestinian women, is a strong woman capable of overcoming all the obstacles in her way. She will step into the world with all her strength and will remain proud of her identity and resilience.

So, when will the project start??

Hi Laila! Yes, you will receive an email maybe tomorrow or on Tuesday.

The first workshop on writing a proposal will be on the 18th at 4pm Gaza Time.

... It was time to start.

EVENTUALLY WE DID START. WE RAN 11 ONLINE WORKSHOPS

We ran **11 online workshops** that matched the needs of participants to our colleagues' expertise. Our colleagues led the workshops, which were attended by about 40 people on average. These usually ran smoothly on Zoom, with few interruptions. Participants predominantly used the chat function to ask questions, but on many occasions, we had insightful and active discussions. It was a joy to hear people's voices. Cameras were off, and during the workshops, we only caught a glimpse of people at HopeHub centres once in a while. We later received pictures from our partners at HopeHub; this was incredibly helpful in giving us a sense of what was happening on the other end of the screen.

Our Workshop Series:

- **Writing your research proposal.** By Dr Rachel Lyon (University of Glasgow)
- **Your research proposal: what's next?** By Dr Rachel Lyon (University of Glasgow)
- **Research design and research questions.** By Dr Giovanna Fassetta (University of Glasgow)
- **HESPAL Scholarships.** By Hiba Hammouri (British Council)
- **How to write a strong CV and a cover letter** By Peter McGinty (University of Glasgow)
- **Academic publishing.** By Professor Simon McGrath (University of Glasgow)
- **Writing your research abstract.** By Dr Rachel Lyon (University of Glasgow)
- **Teachers and/as researchers: conducting practitioner research.** By Dr Sahar Alshobaki (University of Glasgow)
- **Exploring materials for teaching in refugee and precarious contexts.** By Dr Maria Grazia Imperiale and Nikos Psochios (University of Glasgow)
- **Artificial intelligence in English language teaching, learning and research** By Dr Adam Edmett, Neenaz Ichaporia (British Council)
- **Podcasting for local and global communication.** By Dr Sadie Ryan (University of Glasgow)

طبعاً يعطيكم العافية، بالنسبة لتجربتي مع منحة المجلس البريطاني للمنح، كانت تجربة قيمة، استفدت منها كثير من خلال المعلومات المفيدة والمعلومات القيمة التي اخدناها من خلال اجتماعات زوم والمحاضرات التي كانت على زوم عن المنح وكيفية التقدم للمنح، انا فعلياً ماخدة منحة من جامعة ايسلندا لكن كمان استفدت من خلال المعلومات التي تقدمت في المنحة وفي البرنامج من تجربتي الشخصية، وايضاً فادتني في ايصال هذه المعلومات المهمة لزملاء آخرين ما زالوا في قيد البحث عن منح وهم زملاء مميزين وعندهم معدلات عالية لكن ما كانوا بيعرفوا كيف يوصلوا للمنح، فوجودي في منحة المجلس البريطاني فادتني في اني افيد زملاء تانيين على التقديم على منح ف بشكر القائمين على هذا المشروع وهذا البرنامج وبتمنى انه يتم تمديد هذا البرنامج او يكون في نسخة اخرى من هذا البرنامج حتى يستطيع معظم الطلاب الفلسطينيين المتميزين الباحثين عن منح دراسية للوصول للمنح الدراسية التي تناسبهم ويعطيكم الف عافية على جهودكم، جهودكم مقدرة وان شاء الله تستمر.

Translation

Thank you for your efforts. Regarding my experience with the British Council scheme (LINEs4Palestine), it was a valuable experience. I benefited greatly from the useful and valuable information we learned through Zoom meetings and lectures about scholarships and how to apply for them. I have already received a scholarship from the University of Iceland, but I still benefited from the information provided in the program personally. It also helped me pass on this important information to other colleagues who are still searching for scholarships. They are outstanding students with high grades, yet they do not know how to get scholarships. Therefore, being part of the British Council program helped me assist my colleagues in applying for scholarships. So, I would like to thank organizers of this project, and I hope that it will be extended or that there will be another version of it so that more outstanding Palestinian students seeking scholarships can find the ones that suit them. A big thank you for your efforts—your work is truly appreciated, and God's willing (hopefully) it lasts.



Rachel Lyon

Participants in the images below are looking at a slide from the 1st workshop of the project which I gave on Research Proposals. What was it like to teach this? This was my first experience of teaching remotely into a conflict zone and it was strange, in a way, it was so new to me that I honestly felt after it ended the same way I felt teaching for the very first time. This project enabled me to really dig into my own teaching practice and access parts of myself I hadn't used before. In order to make sure I could be useful to my colleagues in Gaza, I had to really honestly evaluate my teaching practice, and make sure I was able to prioritise: Finding our shared language across different educational; cultures and life experiences, and sharing contextual hidden curriculum knowledge that would support my new colleagues to succeed in the context I understand and I have experience of.

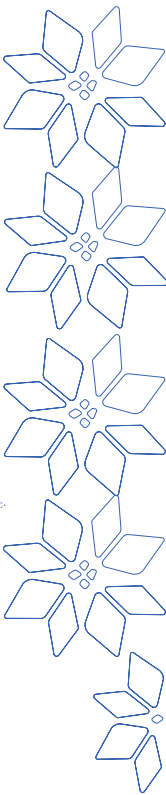
Giovanna Fassetta

The sheer determination of workshop participants who often lost their connection and had to reconnect several times during the workshop.

Based on the workshop series, we developed an Open Access Resources, hosted on EdApp, which includes the recordings of the workshops, and additional activities and readings.



COLLEAGUES VOLUNTEERED TO MENTOR PALESTINIAN GRADUATES AND TEACHERS ONE-ON-ONE



Sahar Alshobaki

This is the closest stage to my heart and where I got more connected with mentees at a more personal level. After pairing mentors with mentees, there were a few times when communication was not the easiest to do. As a team, we thought of creating a WhatsApp group with the mentees as it might be a more convenient way to reach out to them, given the challenges of connecting in the first place. However, the group chat was fading slowly, so I contacted each mentee individually to check on them, see how things were constantly going and if they needed any help with mentoring or if we could do anything else to help them in their learning journeys with us. A sense of personal relationship was established. Though I can never imagine how it feels for them to live in such a human-made apocalypse, perhaps having my family there led to some sort of understanding, sharing some of their worry, stress, disappointment, and hope at the same time. We received 30 requests for mentoring, however, some of them were for fields beyond TESOL, English and Education, so we were not able to accommodate all the requests. We provided mentoring opportunities to 17 students.

Steve Brown

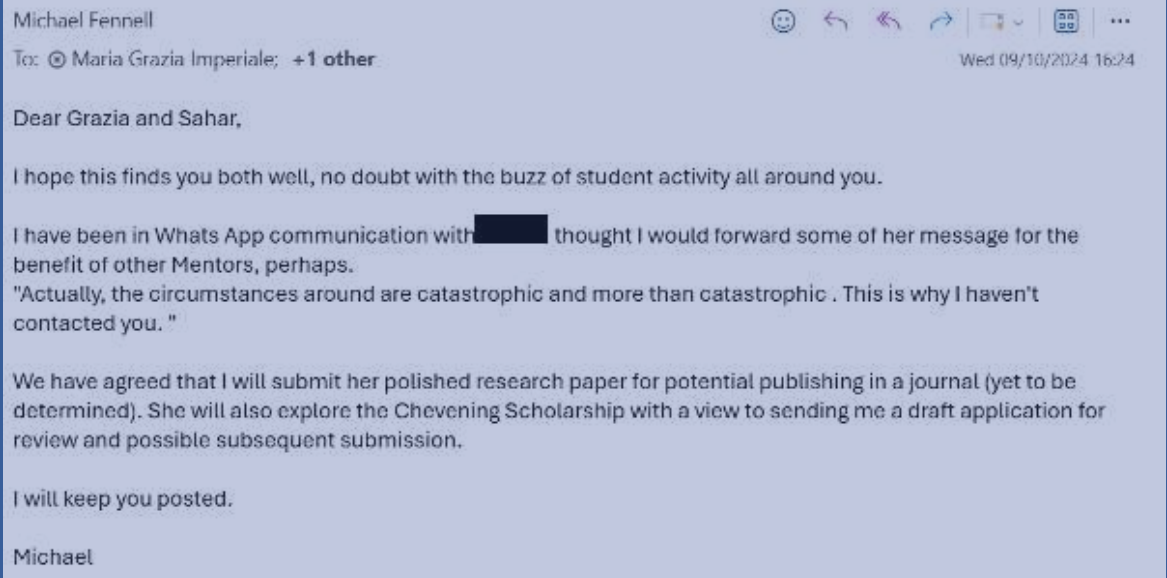
My mentee was keen to develop a research proposal for a PhD application, and of course I was happy to help. To begin with, much of what I seemed to be doing was providing useful reading material and offering occasional input on useful concepts or research approaches; it didn't feel like I was doing much. But Dalia's work kept improving with every email she sent me, so I was able to tell myself that I must be doing something right. Our discussions have led to Dalia producing a research proposal with a critical-emancipatory focus, which is oriented towards developing an English language curriculum that advocates for social justice. Given the iniquity of her research context, how could it be otherwise?

Dalia Alhassani

I was lucky to have this experience as it will open the way for me to continue despite the inhuman situation where my country is under collective genocide. After living in Gaza and witnessing multiple wars, the last war led to my experiencing displacement from my home with my daughters and the loss of all essentials for living that existed in Gaza Strip. However, I survived this war, and came to Egypt, and continued my work but the dream of continuing my studies has risen again and I registered in the Lines 4 Palestine project. I had never expected that I could work with a mentor to support my journey towards PhD studies. I was incredibly lucky to have a mentor, Dr. Steve Brown, who guided me during the past four months to accomplish my proposal, which will allow me to continue my PhD studies. I have learned multiple important research skills from Steve, and he was extremely supportive and was even helping in providing practical help as I was not able to access many resources such as books and other publications. This has helped me to continue and read more and I was able to think about how I can, as an educator, benefit my people and preserve my Palestinian identity. Accordingly, I have developed my proposal thinking about how English language can benefit the Palestinian cause through advocacy and social justice. Thus, I will continue working on this, hopefully to start my studies by September 2025, and I hope peace and justice to be in Gaza and to have an end to this war.

Sahar Alshobaki

The mentees shared their struggle. Emotions evolved. Multiple forced displacements. Losing dear ones. Constant fear. Getting Injured. Losing homes. Losing everything. Another displacement. Starvation. Massacres upon massacres. Living the horrors - and yet another displacement. There seems to be no end to this. Despite all this, they always found their way back to keep going. The project was seen as an escape – a means to give a sense of normalcy – a way to do something to move forward. The communication kept going. The mentoring stayed on track. The flexibility and understanding of the mentors were keystones here. Our conversations always end with hugs and prayers for brighter, peaceful days, the nightmare to end, and for seeing the light amidst the darkness.



Haneen AlSammak (voice note)

طبعا...
سبة لالي كان المشروع كثير مهم وكثير نوعي، بالبداية لما انا حطيت القطاعات اللي انا بهتم فيها يمكن ما كنتش شاء
تمية وجود حدا يتبع معايا ويراجع معي ولكن بأول اجتماع مع المنتور تبعتي، كان الحكي بصفة عامة in general
ر عام لكن في ثاني اجتماع بعد ما حددناه وكان عندي تركيز على انه ايش هي الاحتياجات تبعتي الخاصة ولايش بدي
عمل بالنهاية. صراحة تم تطوير بعض النقاط المهمة، على سبيل المثال اديش بتعكس سيرتي الذاتية واهتماماتي في
مل، وهذا يمكن لأول مرة من اكثر من فوق عشرين سنة انا مش مطورة السيرة الذاتية تبعتي، فنجحت اني اطور
يرة الذاتية تبعتي...

رت نفسي انه انا بصراحة للحظة الاهتمام اللي تم الاهتمام في هو عوضني عن فقدان لي عملي من خلال الحرب
وضني لأنه في ناس بتهم فيا وعوضني انه اشعر انه لسا في امل في انه انا اكمل، في امل انه انا ابحت عن فرص
امل انه انا لسا في عندي قدرات وطاقات ممكن انا اقدمها، في ناس قدرت العمل اللي انا كنت اعمله وبالتالي وجهتني
ريقة افضل. بصراحة التعلم من خلال الممارسة من خلال العمل وانه يكون في شخص هو يعطيك يكون دليلك هادا
ي بينور كثير حاجات بينور كثير أمور، شكرا كثير كثير لالكم على هادا المشروع النوعي والمتميز بصراحة.

Translation

Hello. For me, this project was very important and unique. At the beginning, when I listed the areas I was interested in, I didn't really realize the importance of having someone to follow up and review things with me. In my first meeting with my mentor, the discussion was general. However, in the second meeting, we focused on identifying my specific needs and what I ultimately wanted to achieve. Some important aspects were improved, for example, how well my CV reflects my interests and work experience. This was significant for me because, for more than 20 years, I had not updated my CV. So, I successfully improved my CV...

To be honest, for a moment, I felt that the care and attention I received through this project compensated for the loss of my job due to the war. It reassured me that there are people who care about me and gave me hope that I can continue, that I can search for job opportunities, that I still have skills and capabilities to offer, that there were people who valued the work I had done and guided me in a better direction. Such learning through practice and having someone to mentor and guide you, honestly, illuminates so many things. Thank you so much for this exceptional and distinguished project.

Rebecca Wood

My time being a mentor, and particularly in light of supporting applications for scholarships, has shown that there is a potential conflict between values based on academic excellence, 'achievement' in the conventional sense (e.g. Grade 8 piano; captain of the football team) and other attributes usually considered important for scholarship applications, and candidates who do not have access to these sorts of avenues. For a candidate in a war zone, what sorts of attributes and achievements should be expected? Is not the fact of taking the initiative to apply to university a major indication of qualities in itself? I have had a sense of a disconnect between what the mentee wants to do, and the requirements she is expected to meet, which were not remotely devised for someone in a situation like hers.

Fatma Abubaker

I guess as I think about this, I am reminded of my own experiences during the uprising in Libya. Although the circumstances were vastly different, with distinct root causes of violence, the thoughts and emotions people experience in such situations often intersect. For those witnessing these horrors from afar, the burden is often the contemplation of the unimaginable; that Palestinians are victims of injustice, violence, and genocide. For those directly affected, however, the focus is often on staying strong, maximizing the time they have, and making a great effort to build a future, even if only for a moment, even if that means starting with themselves. In my communication with my mentee, I have tried to maintain this focus. I don't typically ask about the situation on the ground in Gaza. Instead, I ask about her well-being and her family for only a minute, and then we shift the conversation toward her aspirations—what she wants to achieve, how we can work toward those goals, and the options available to her. My mentee is a beautiful young woman, incredibly determined to study or work abroad, and I see my role as helping her chart a clear path to achieving her goals. It was always about what she wants, rather than what she feels.

Carol Goodey and Farida Alghoul

Through working with Farida, I have learned how even small pockets of mutual learning can be moments of resistance and solidarity during genocide and scholasticide. The importance of education in these times has been clear even when the ongoing attacks and killing has made it difficult.

It is not easy to do what I love in this horrific situation (Farida)

Within this horrific situation, what stands out to me are the moments of hope, joy and excitement – glimpses of light where we have just seen darkness – that I have been able to witness through being part of the project. It has been a joy to get to meet and work with Farida, hearing about what she has been doing, her insightful reflections on her experiences of working in education tents, following the destruction of schools, her work with communities and her drive to continue to make a difference.

Throughout our work together, flexibility and being open to change have been essential. Not only to deal with the challenges of poor or no internet connection, Israeli attacks, losing family members and fearing for their safety. Flexibility and openness were also key during our conversations, making space to explore and understand experiences and aspirations and build on these rather than following a set agenda or having to meet pre-set outcomes. This openness to working on what was important to participants has been a valuable element of the project design.

Libby Nelson

The shift from feeling helpless to helpful is so meaningful and then meeting the mentee who has been through so much and is so resourceful and positive is both wonderful and heart-wrenching. I want to do more but also want it to be meaningful and it brings me back to my ontological and epistemological positioning as a researcher where the focus on exploring the minute, individual qualitatively is how I see the world. This experience both confirms and challenges this.

I think I meant that I can't change what is happening in Gaza, but at least I can try to be a positive aspect of someone's experience of the world after/while going through so much.

Anna Blackman

This has been a process of boundless joy, but also deep grief for me. My mentee, Hanaa, has always been so thankful for my assistance, yet I feel sad and frustrated that I cannot do more, and hope she realises how much she has enriched my life. Working with Hanaa has been the most wonderful experience, and I feel absolutely blessed to have been given the chance to get to work with and get to know such an amazing person, seeing her courage, humour, and determination in the face of such unimaginable tragedy. During one meeting, Hanaa surprised me with an artwork she had made for me; I cannot begin to explain how much that touched my heart, to see such kindness, the creation of such beauty in the context of such darkness.

I have learnt so much about what is happening on the ground, that I would not have seen in the news, and she has shared so much about her own culture which has helped me to learn in a way I couldn't just through reading. Working in the area of peace and nonviolence, challenging structures of violence and injustice is already something I am passionate about, but such personal encounter has transformed the ways I think about both my research and how we teach these issues. The importance of accompaniment, as well as the impact of war and conflict on mental health, have really come to the fore.

Sadia Ali

There is a feeling of gratitude amongst both mentees and mentors to be part of L4P. Mentors feel privileged to know and learn about the perspectives of Palestinians. Mentees want us to know that many Palestinians are unable to get the opportunities and help provided by L4P.

David Watt

*Sharing Family Context: Glasgow, Pakistan, Cairo Unstable platforms
Breaking up, buffering... but weekly sessions (almost!)*





WE HOSTED A MINI-CONFERENCE, WITH PRESENTATIONS FROM GAZA AND GLASGOW

Sally Zacharias

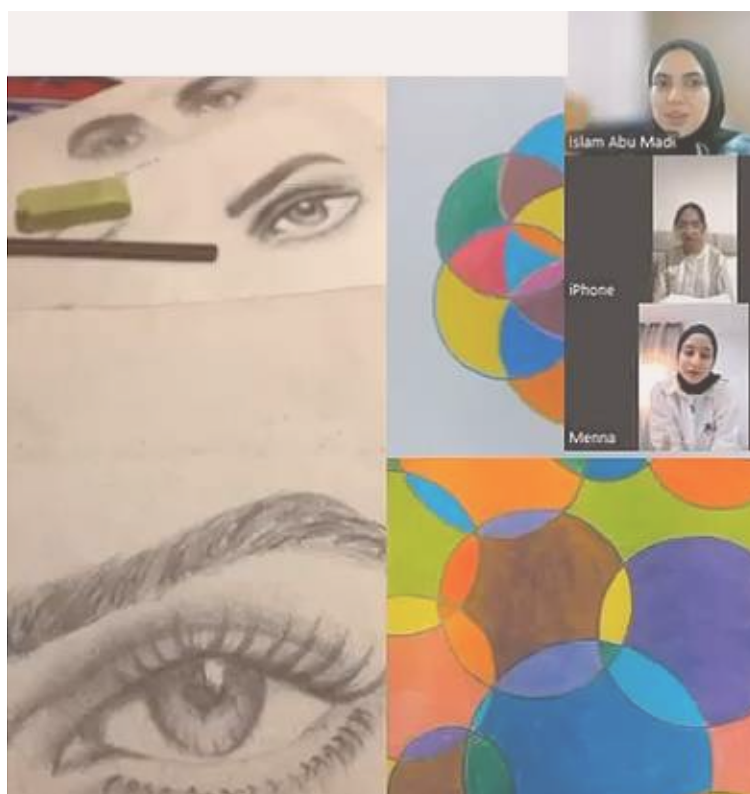
The mini conference was hosted by the Linguistics and Knowledge About Language Special Interest Group (LKALE SIG) of the British Association of Applied Linguistics (BAAL) in partnerships with LINEs4Palestine. As voices of educators and the link between scholarship and pedagogical practice lie at the heart of the SIG's values, the SIG could provide a safe space for the online mini conference held at the end of August. A Call for Papers was sent out and together with 3 presenters from Palestine, we had 3 Postgraduate Researchers and 3 Master's students from the University of Glasgow presenting their work. The mini-conference featured a keynote by Evelyn Arizpe. It was a powerful and joyful event.

Islam Abu Madi

Participated in the mini conference reflecting on my experience in teaching teenagers from Gaza in Egypt. My students were very enthusiastic to record the activities. They prepared really well and they kept asking if I said their names in front of university professors :) Their parents as well were along and supportive of their children getting back to the academic environment after a very long obligatory break.

Sana El Sayegh

Presenting my thesis at the conference was an exciting milestone, as it was my first time sharing my research on the challenges faced by Arabic-speaking refugees in Malta. This topic is deeply personal to me, as I am an Arabic speaker myself and have seen firsthand the barriers refugees encounter when trying to integrate into a new society, from language difficulties to limited access to education, and I wanted to shed light on their assets and strengths instead. One of the most memorable aspects of the conference was a participant in Gaza, who was determined to participate despite being in danger and at war. Her resilience, strength, and determination, even in the face of war, and continuing to push forward was something I kept thinking about. At a time when I have been feeling frustrated and angry about what is going on in the world, Farida highlights the immense power of hope and reaffirms the importance of advocating for the injustice and adversity.



Navigating Education in Gaza: Adapting to Challenges, Bridging Languages, and Proposing Future Research

Farida Alghoul

The English language has been the means through which our voices have reached the world, making the entire globe aware of the catastrophic situation currently unfolding in Gaza. This is why we learn—so that the world can hear us.

AN EXPLORATION OF EDUCATION IN CONFLICT ZONES

FARIDA ADEL ALGHOUL
AUGUST 2024 30

Libby Nelson

It was my first experience connecting with people in Palestine, I know Palestinians and my mentee, but all are abroad. This opened up the space of meaningful exchange of ideas and experiences of education and holding this intentional space and switching around the timetable to accommodate the challenges of connecting was so well managed and meaningfully done. This was an intentional space of coming together and idea exchange. Thank you. Rong, my PhD student, presented for the first time and she so appreciated the warm reception and supportive space. She took it very seriously and it demonstrates knowledge exchange on her CV.

Rong Zhang

Multilingual learners often face significant challenges when engaging with listening and reading, especially in English. During the event, I shared my ideas of how audiobooks can not only enhance vocabulary and fluency but also serve as a tool to foster the emotional and imaginative engagement of multilingual learners.

Yuhan Huang

I stumbled upon information about the Mini Conference and discovered that it was part of the LINEs4Palestine project. The Mini Conference itself was highly academic, covering a wide range of research topics. Listening to the presentations was both enlightening and inspiring, as they not only showcased the project's remarkable outcomes but also provided fresh insights for my own research. What left the deepest impression was LINEs4Palestine's openness to diverse voices and perspectives. The team made a concerted effort to ensure that every voice was heard. I am truly grateful to have been a small part of this project, and I firmly believe that these efforts will have a lasting positive impact.

Evelyn Arizpe


Surprised to be asked to 'deliver' a keynote. Although my work related to 'critical challenging contexts' none of these involved an actual war happening at that moment. Worried about what I could say that would be meaningful or useful in any way. Also how would picturebooks contribute in any way at this point? Spoke to Grazia who was reassuring. Then realised I should put my 'worries' into perspective. PS: Talk happened to be delivered during a congress on children's literature, the International Board on Books for Young People, IBBY (in between sessions in a quiet corner). I met 2 members of IBBY Palestine, who were sharing information about libraries that have been destroyed but also about ongoing projects with children and books. Also, I shared LINEs4P with them.

Children's Literature in Critical Contexts of Precarity & the 'Mediator's Toolkit'

How story and arts-based practices create 'safe spaces' for children and young people

- Egypt and Mexico and surrounding countries (Guatemala, Honduras, Lebanon)
- IBBY (International Board on Books for Children and Young People) National Sections in Egypt, Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Chile and Peru
- www.childslitspaces.com





LINES4PALESTINE LED TO OTHER CONNECTIONS AND PROJECTS

We presented the project at two conferences in December 2024: the University of Glasgow's Reconstructing Gaza event and the Universities of Sanctuary Conference, held at the University of York. After our presentations, many colleagues from different institutions reached out to express their support and inquire about ways they could actively contribute to the project.

Islam Abu Madi

LINES4Palestine made me think of what I can I personally do. I mean, as a teacher, I would assist my students in everything they need. But I started to think of a systematic and more organised way to help younger generations and B.A students. For instance, I haven't got any mentoring or advice during my B.A. I had to find the way myself. But after I started the mentoring sessions, I started to think of what help can I give to other people to save precious time of their lives, to have kind of short cuts in academic life. I really wish you could offer more than 6 hours and that you could reach out to other participants in Gaza as it can be a life-changing chance for them.

LINES4Palestine led the way to the development of two other projects: **Education in Conflict** and **LINES4Palestine2**.

Education in Conflict is a project funded by the Scottish Funding Council via the University of Glasgow. We partnered with Professor Nazmi Almasri, at the Islamic University of Gaza (IUG). The project is ongoing and our activities involve: **dissertation Supervision** of 10 Master's students from IUG. The School of Education (UofG) has allocated workload to a small group of permanent staff members to act as supervisors.

Qualitative Research Methods Training: we delivered online training to 12 Master's students from IUG. Since IUG doesn't currently offer such a course, this training will form the backbone for a new core course. These trained students are now working as peer-researchers on the project.

Research Activities: data collection involves in-depth interviews with IUG Senior Management and staff, focusing on institutional resilience and the educational measures implemented during the genocide. Our peer-researchers are collecting data with undergraduate and postgraduate students on how their learning experience during the genocide. It is important to note Universities in Gaza have resumed their educational activities.

Carol Goodey

It seems that there could be value in making this opportunity available to more people. I feel there may be value, for some aspects, in moving away from a mentor/mentee relationship to one that more accurately reflects the mutual learning and potential collaboration of equals. For example, in line with the acronym of Learning for Informal and Nonformal Educators, might this project be extended so that informal and nonformal educators from other places be included, alongside academics, in connecting with Palestinian educators? There seems to be so much potential for learning for and from action.

The School of Education at the University of Glasgow has also funded an expansion of LINES4Palestine. We are now launching **LINES4Palestine 2**, which extends our work beyond education to provide coordinated academic support across a range of subjects in collaboration with UofG and other institutions. This phase will also pilot a collaborative online co-teaching initiative involving students from the Islamic University of Gaza and the University of Porto, aiming to foster knowledge exchange and co-creation.

WE ALL LEARNED SO MUCH

LINEs4Palestine was a two-way learning opportunity and the project benefitted us all.

Steve Brown

It did not feel like I was helping Dalia. If anything, she was helping me – not just to understand more about the current and potential role of English in the Middle East, but also to understand the importance of continuing with academic study in the face of unspeakable disaster and loss. Injustices must be documented, rights must be fought for, solutions must be found. Educators and academics can play a role in supporting these processes, and this revelation has replaced my feeling of helplessness with one of hope. I am grateful to Dalia for giving me this.

Fatma Abubaker

Media and social media often paint a singular narrative of violence and trauma, which can skew our perception of reality at times. While life in Gaza is undeniably far from normal, the strength and resilience of its people create a sense of grounded reality that is very inspiring.

Interestingly, through my conversations with my mentee and a couple of friends in Gaza, I've realized that it is often we, the outsiders, who struggle the most to comprehend and cope with their reality. They, on the other hand, find ways to adapt and continue with remarkable grace. This reversal of expectations has been one of the most powerful takeaways for me. If we truly want to support Palestinians, we need to shift our perspective. Rather than viewing them as victims, we should see them as heroes.

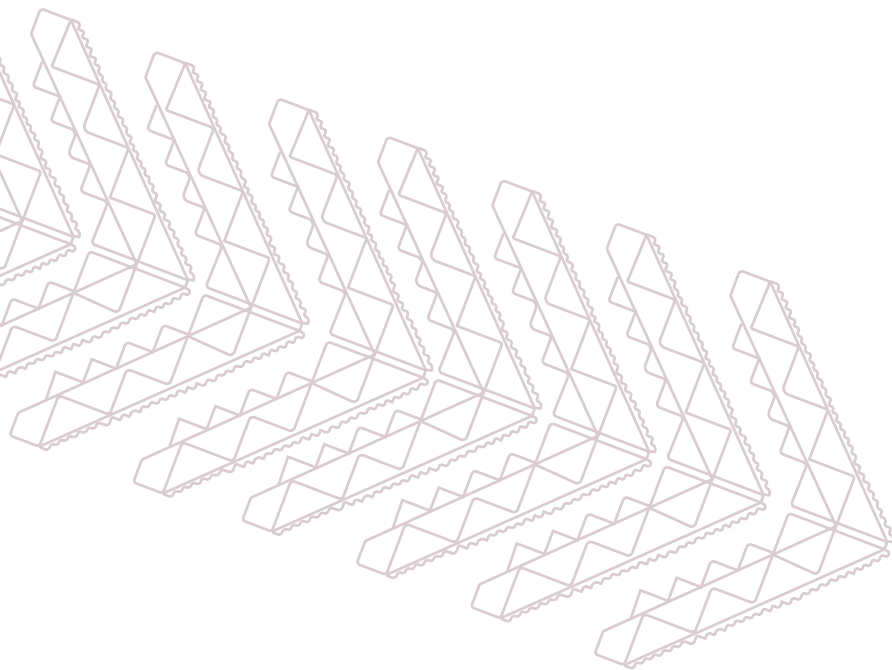
Carol Goodey

It has been a complete privilege to be able to work with Farida as part of this project. I have learned, been inspired and benefited immensely. While the project may at first glance seem like an initiative to 'help' Palestinian educators and students, it helps us all. We all learn. And, indeed, we have much more to learn from our friends from Gaza, than they could ever learn from us.

بالنهاية بقدر أقول LINEs كان بالنسبة لالي هو طوق النجاة والامل ووضعني على انه انا ما زلت لسا موجودة ولسا عندي امل ولسا عندي قدرة على الاستمرار وهذا اللي خلاني ارجع ثاني استمر في اني ارجع اتطوع ثاني ارجع يكون عندي خطة عمل ارجع عندي قدرة على اني اكمل ارجع على اني يكون عندي إمكانية لاني اعطي الاخرين وضمن المسؤولية، شكرا كثير LINEs

Translation

At the end, I can say that LINEs was my lifesaver—it gave me hope and reaffirmed that I still exist, that I still have hope, and that I still have the ability to continue. This has motivated me to start volunteering again, to redevelop a work plan, and to regain my ability to move forward. It gave me the motivation to give back to others while carrying a sense of responsibility. Thank you so much, LINEs!



Rinda Saleh and Runna Badwan

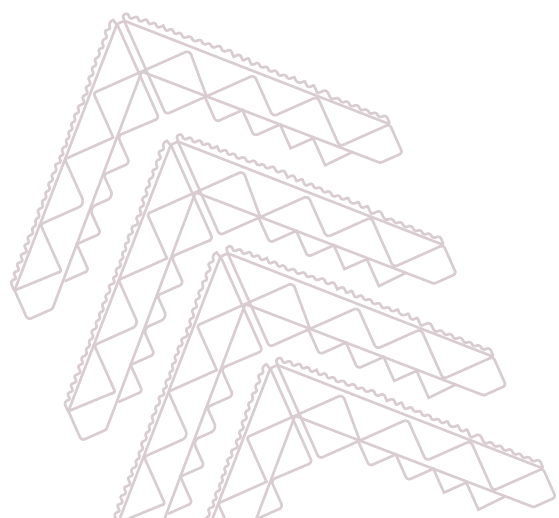
The British Council acknowledges the University of Glasgow's commitment to delivering the LINEs4Palestine project, implemented in partnership with HopeHub in Gaza. This initiative, despite facing immense challenges due to the ongoing crisis, demonstrated remarkable resilience and impact. The project's success, encompassing needs analysis, online academic skills workshops, one-on-one mentoring, highlights the dedication of all involved. The project's ability to adapt and deliver high-quality outputs, including the development of an open access resource, under such difficult circumstances, is particularly commendable. We recognize the University of Glasgow's proactive approach to maintaining communication and providing support to participants. We also appreciate the project's dedication to listening to the Palestinian voices and letting them steer the project to meet their needs. The British Council is pleased to have supported this project, which has not only provided valuable academic support but also fostered vital connections and knowledge exchange during a critical time.

Hanaa Elqattawi (voice note)

Hello everyone. I hope are doing well. My name is Hanaa Elqattawi and I am from Gaza, Palestine. I wanna say a few words about this unique experience that I went through during the war in Gaza. Frist of all, I wanna start with how much proud of myself for being part of Glasgow university workshops and receiving mentorship has been an incredible blessing, the guidance and the encouragement that I have received have transformed the way I present myself and my aspirations. This opportunity has not only improved my academic and professional skills but also renewed my determination to fight for my dreams. I am deeply grateful to my mentor, Dr Anna, and the workshops organisers Dr Grazia and Sahar and everyone involved for giving me this unique chance and life changing support and by the way, I miss everything in your workshops. Looking forward to attending a lot of workshops in future. Truly, truly, I hope one day that my dream will be true and studying in the UK and see every one of you! Sending you all my love. Thank you very much for this unique chance. Bye bye.

Evelyn Arizpe

A small act of resistance and solidarity, heartwarming to witness.



THANKS TO SO MANY WONDERFUL PEOPLE

The LINEs4P would not have happened without the quiet support of people both at UofG and elsewhere. It took some teambuilding, but also finding the people who would work to help us in many academic non-academic ways. The administrators, people in the research office, colleagues at the British Council, etc.

All working together to facilitate the project, as an act of quiet academic activism.

We are very grateful to each and every one who collaborated to make this project possible.

We are thankful to our Senior Management at the University of Glasgow and especially within the School of Education, for their support: this has been very important for all of us. Our thanks to Anton Muscatelli, Rachel Sandison, Kristinn Hermannsson.

Heartfelt thanks to all our colleagues at the University of Glasgow, who were involved in mentoring, workshops delivery, providing advice, or offered to be involved in the project (in addition to the co-authors of this report): Leyla De Amicis, Benjamin Mulvey, Melanie Ramdarshan Bold, Dennis Francis, Simon McGrath, Lavinia Hirsu, Nicki Hedge, Mohammed Mahbulul Kabir, Gaston Bacquet, Ibtihal Ramadan, Sadie Ryan, Catherine Lido, Luke Ray Di Marco Campbell, Angela Curley, Bilal Tayan, Ursula Canton, Margaret Sutherland, Izzeddin Teete, Julie McAdam, Ines Alves, Rawand Elhour, Peter McGinty, Nikos Psochios, Kris Paisley, Michelle Swan.

Thanks to the British Council for funding the project and especially to the British Council Palestine Team for their extensive support throughout these months. Our thanks to Rinda Saleh, Runna Badwan, Haneen Naser, Martin Daltry, Fiona Robertson. Thanks to the other colleagues at the British Council who delivered some of the workshops: Hiba Hammouri, Adam Edmett, Neenaz Ichaporia

All mentors and mentees, in earlier drafts of this report, reciprocally thanked each other, but the team finally decided to edit those out in the interest of length.

We would like to keep what Islam wrote, though, as Sahar deserves a very special mention: I would love to give special thanks to Dr. Sahar Alshobaki. She is just one of a kind.

And we totally agree! Thank you for everything, Sahar.

And finally, thank you to our colleagues and friends in Palestine, who taught us so much. Thank you for trusting us with your time, your hopes, your aspirations, your words, your guidance.

LEARNING WE CAN SHARE WITH OTHER PROJECT TEAMS

Here, we offer a set of questions, reflections, and prompts for consideration. Some of these points are well-established and can be found in existing resources on conducting international research projects ethically and equitably. Others may be more specific to the current context.

Do you trust your team? It is important that you work with people that you trust and share your ethos.

Does anybody in the team speak Arabic?

Does anybody in the team know the context (and do they know it well?)

Build on existing connections and relations.

Paperwork and payments. Universities may struggle to make payments to institutions in Palestine but they may be able to pay individuals (e.g., as external suppliers to provide consultancy). Transparency with your partners is key.

Find your allies within your institution. There are many people willing to help, ask and be persistent. There might be people not willing to help. Pick your battles.

Need analysis: do you know what your partners/project beneficiaries/participants need? Ask them what can be done, do not assume you know.

Is the project feasible? Is it manageable (including for yourselves)?

Do you have someone you can cry and rant with (maybe in your team)? These projects are emotionally demanding.

Take into consideration strengths, not just challenges, for planning your activities. Let your partners lead.

Ways to communicate: (but these are ever changing— what works today might not work tomorrow): what is the preferred method of your partners/participants? What are you feeling comfortable with? If it is Whatsapp, are you comfortable with sharing your number? If not, don't do it.

eSims worked for us, sometimes and in some places and with some phones only, months ago. Now, the work they require to secure them (and find out which one might actually work in a specific place) is not always worth it.

Flexibility always works (do you have a plan B, C, D?)

Do you know how to 'end' a project? We don't, and that's fine with us but it may not work as well for others.

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