

SEX EDUCATION IN GAZA

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Empowering young people
under occupation



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This zine is dedicated to everyone in Gaza who is suffering, everyone who has loved ones in the Middle East and is scared for their wellbeing, and everyone everywhere who is doing something to try to stop the violence.

December 28, 2023

Here are some things you can do to help people in Gaza right now:

If you have 1 minute:

- Call your representatives and ask them to call for a ceasefire
- Make a donation to a Gazan relief fund

If you have a couple hours:

- Go to a pro-Palestine protest
- Print zines about Palestinian liberation and put them in little free libraries (free zine PDFs are at pleasurepie.org/printables)

Ongoing:

- Boycott companies that support the Israeli occupation, like McDonalds, Starbucks, Puma, and SodaStream

2023 Update

This conversation is from 2018. Since then, Israel declared war on Hamas. The Israeli military has killed over 20,000 Palestinians in Gaza in less than three months. Many of these were civilians.

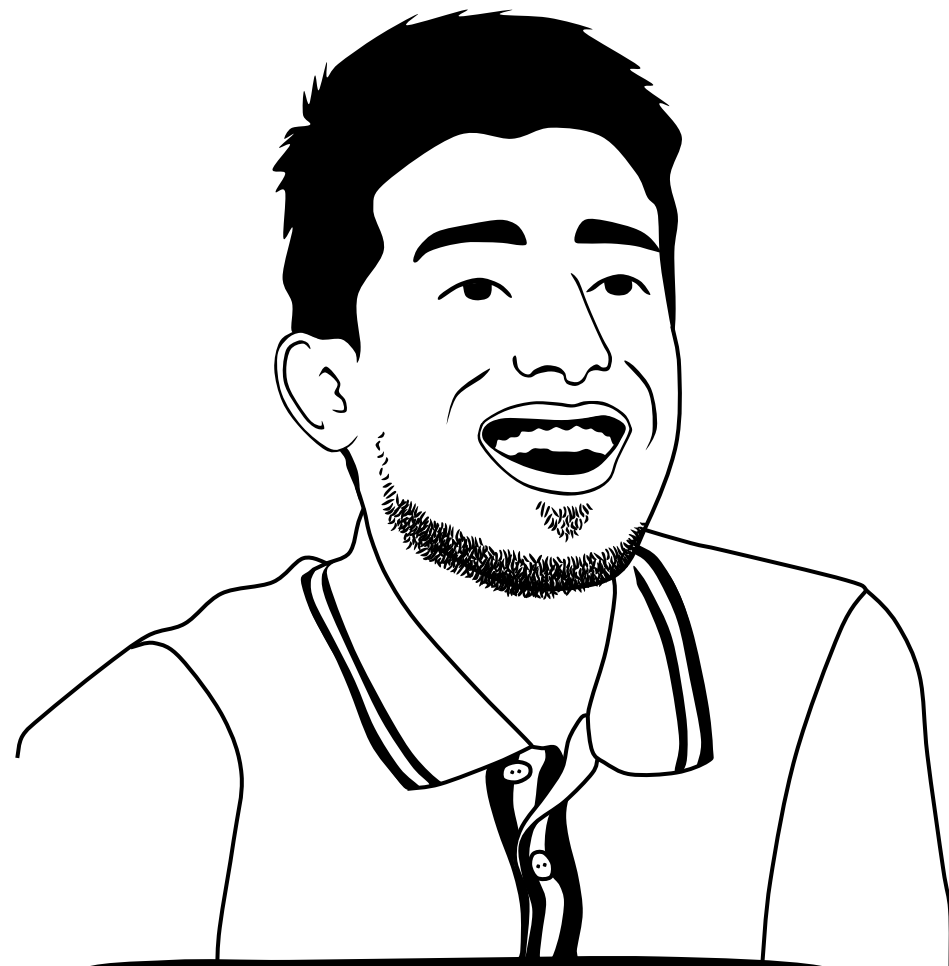
While living in Jerusalem in 2018, I came across the website of an organization called the International Youth Alliance For Family Planning (IYAFFP). They're a youth (ages 15 to 30) run nonprofit that advocates for sex education around the world.

I was intrigued when I saw that they have a coordinator in Gaza. I had never heard of sex education initiatives in Gaza before, and I had no idea what the state of sex education was like there.

I reached out to the IYAFFP country coordinator for Gaza, Mo. Alkrunz, to ask for his insights. Here is our conversation.

Pleasure Pie: Why is sex education important to you?

Mo. Alkrunz: I have a principle in my life that youth must take part in everything surrounding their lives. I believe that creating a new generation of leaders in sexual rights, and creating a generation that can make responsible decisions about their bodies, is the best service we can give to our community.



Mo. Alkrunz is a Palestinian sex educator, nurse, and writer living in Gaza.

PP: On a more personal note, can you describe a typical day in your life?

MA: I wake up at 7:30 AM, drink my usual coffee, and listen to the beautiful sound of Fairouz[◊]. My mother opens my day when she says, “Son, the ultimate responsibility always lies within you, and the opportunities are the ones you create.” I respond by saying, “Now I can open my day and go on in life.”

I am a neonatal nurse so I work in neonatal intensive care unit in hospital in Gaza City. Then I return home at 2:30 PM to devote myself to my other volunteer work, including IYAFP and other networks.

Actually for me, all days in my life are similar — there is no special day, maybe Saturday, Monday, Tuesday, or Friday as well. My favorite day is the day I can do the most work, and the best achievements.

[◊] Fairouz is a popular Arabic singer whose songs are traditionally played to start the day.



CREATING A GENERATION THAT
CAN MAKE RESPONSIBLE DECISIONS
ABOUT THEIR BODIES IS THE BEST
SERVICE WE CAN GIVE TO OUR
COMMUNITY.

P: How is sex education implemented in Gaza? Is it taught in schools?

MA: There is little sexual education in Gazan schools. Where it does exist, it is generally focused on the biological facts of life, rather than the emotional, physical, and psychological impacts, which are of greater importance to young people during this period in their lives.

The Ministry of Education has tried to integrate sexual health in some of its school curricula. However, teachers in schools would not address these issues.

As an alliance and platform for youth around the world, IYAFP is able to promote comprehensive sex education for this group through accurate and well-thought-out information presented in non-traditional and non-systematic ways.



HOW CAN SEX BE TAUGHT IN A WAY THAT IS COMPATIBLE WITH ARAB CULTURE?

PP: What are the biggest challenges to providing sex education in Gaza?

MA: For decades, sexual awareness has represented a red line in many Gazan households and schools, particularly in conservative or religious environments.

What adolescents don't find in a reliable source they will find in a thousand unreliable sources. Youth usually get their information on sex through word-of-mouth, which results in misperceptions.

Prohibiting such discussions is not a valid option. Turning a blind eye to such issues will not make young people quit asking.

Discussions over sex education raise a frequently asked question: how can sex be taught in a way that is compatible with the conservative Arab culture?

Sex education does not necessarily have to contradict Gazan culture — the suitable terminology in such an educational program will not violate public decency.

PP: How does the political conflict affect sex education in Gaza?

MA: The Palestinian healthcare system suffers due to Israeli restrictions on the access to health care, family planning and sexual health tools, through driving up prices, and mobility restrictions.

Furthermore, dependent on the political and economic situation of the city, there is varying access to safe, inexpensive, and protected healthcare in different areas of Gaza strip.



**ISRAEL RESTRICTS
OUR ACCESS TO
SEXUAL HEALTH TOOLS.**



GAZAN YOUTH ARE CONSTANTLY EXPOSED TO TRAUMA DUE TO THE ISRAELI OCCUPATION.

PP: Is trauma a big concern when talking about sexuality in Gaza?

MA: Adolescents and youth are constantly exposed to psychological trauma due to the dual impact of the external Israeli occupation and the internal patriarchal society. There are high rates of anxiety, depression, and PTSD. So these factors are a barrier to accessing sexual education.

Youth suffering from such psychological trauma are unlikely to seek help due to societal stigma including social pressures, family honor, and gender norms.

There is also a distinct lack of youth-friendly health services that integrate sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and psychosocial support. Psycho-education must be increased in order to reduce concerns of stigma, which can lead to preventable deaths.