**Dynamic Futures – An innovative model for Leadership Development**

In the Gaza Strip, the population had been affected by repeated wars, through which children and youth had lived during the course of three highly volatile conflicts over the past 10 years.

Youth in Gaza are amongst the most vulnerable segments of the population, in terms of both personal and professional development, with rates of unemployment reaching as high as 58%.

UNDP, through its Dynamic Futures Programme went beyond conventional models of skilling and developed a socially innovative model of learning that provides youth with the skills relevant in today’s job market and will be in demand in the future through the integration of social emotional learning and professional development skills to improve livelihoods.

The activities were built based on a bottom-up approach, voicing youth’s vision and the positive change they want to be engaged in. Dynamic Futures institutionalized an innovative Civic Leadership development programme encompassing three stages: 1) Fundamental Skills and Qualities of Civic Leadership; 2) Advanced: Art of Debate and Dialogue; and 3) Specialized Mentorship Opportunities and Community Specialization. The implementation modality and the design of the programme focused on eliciting students as generators of the sessions, being the core, and the focus. It encouraged students to become self-aware and explore their own strengths and weaknesses.

The programme begins with defining the key characteristics of a good leader, leading to the various types of civic leadership positions and functions. Students were taught a wide range of skills pertinent to a contemporary civic leader in today’s world of globalized and integrated economy.

During the second stage, students are provided with effective skills in the areas of debate, facilitation, storytelling, lobbying, etc. Students learn the art of advanced communication skills in various scenarios: academic, social, emotional, traumatic, and stressful, whilst remaining focused, calm and collective. At the final stage, students undergo competitive trainings. Based on interest and best-fit, students are divided into two tracks; mentorship opportunities and community specialization. Along with these activities, based on skills and talent, students will be selected to join the students’ clubs to crystalize their own skills and talents.

The activities implemented in 2017 went beyond technological and virtual activism into social innovation. Over 600 students implemented 74 community-based initiatives that were totally led by the students themselves. These students became the new role models of civic-leaders that aim at addressing challenges with socially-inclusive solutions and creative ideas.

The Dynamic Futures programme offers educational scholarships to talented, yet marginalized, young Palestinian students and empowers them academically and economically to lead their communities to a more peaceful and cohesive future. It aims to build a cadre of educated and trained leaders who are civic-minded, intellectually able and professionally skilled to become community, business and national leaders of the future. The programme was launched by UNDP in 2009 in partnership with the Islamic Development Bank and Education Above All Foundation. By 2018, around 1000 young people will be given the opportunity to lead and reflect on the vision of building a cadre with human capital investment that can break the cycle of poverty, contribute to state building and make a positive change in the community.