



THE DANISH HOUSE IN PALESTINE البيت الدنماركي في فلسطين

2026 - 2030



Art and culture are not passive reflections of reality but acts of resistance, reclaiming narratives and defying erasure. In palestine, where identity and existence are under siege, creativity becomes a weapon of memory, a tool of solidarity, and a force of liberation.

Culture and art reproduce their meanings within the framework of a straightforward liberation project – challenging neoliberal and imperialist dominance, dismantling colonial logics, and reaffirming the indestructible spirit of a people who refuse to be silenced.

Statement By Art And Cultural Activists & Organizations, 2025



Content

Introduction

Context

Mission & Strategic priorities

Outcomes 2026-2030

Values & Guiding Principles

Theory of Change (TOC)

Outcomes & Outputs 2026-2030

Outcome-Focused Adaptive Management

Risk Management, Security and Safety

Introduction

The Danish House in Palestine was founded as an association in 2005 by a group of Danes who wished to strengthen dialogue and deepen understanding between Danish and Palestinian communities. From the beginning, The Danish House has been rooted in people-to-people solidarity, a space where relationships grow through shared stories, cultural exchange, and listening to Palestinian voices. We believe in standing with, not speaking for: learning from Palestinian perspectives, supporting local visions for art and culture, and rejecting top-down approaches. In 2010, we opened our doors in Ramallah's Old City, and this commitment to dignity, mutual learning, and collective action continues to guide our work today.

The Danish House in Palestine is an independent civil society organization – our vision is to create meaningful exchange between Danish and Palestinian cultures, not as donor and recipient, but as equals, rooted in shared humanity, mutual respect, and the belief that art and culture are tools of liberation. We amplify Palestinian voices on their own terms, foster solidarity over charity, and celebrate culture as an act of resistance and resilience.

This document outlines The Danish House in Palestine's strategic direction for 2026–2030. It builds on over a decade of partnerships, programs, and collective learning with Palestinian artists, cultural practitioners, youth, and communities - as well as dialogues with staff, board members, and stakeholders.

A Renewed Commitment to Impact and Sustainability is not just a strategy title but a pledge: to root our work in the lived realities of Palestinians. The artists, youth, and broader civil society we serve navigate relentless oppression, yet their creativity persists as a force of resistance and hope. We recognize that without this truth at the center, our efforts risk irrelevance.

This strategy responds to their voices, not assumptions. It adapts to their challenges, not external agendas. Because solidarity - when done right - demands nothing less.



Context

The Landscape in Which We Operate

1. Cultural Resistance Under Prolonged Occupation

Palestine's cultural sector operates within a unique context where artistic expression is simultaneously vital for identity preservation and systematically suppressed. Under prolonged military occupation, Palestinian culture serves multiple functions: maintaining collective memory, processing collective trauma, asserting national and cultural identity, and connecting fragmented communities across geographic and political divisions.

The occupation's impact on cultural life is structural and multifaceted. Movement restrictions fragment communities, limiting collaboration and reach. Administrative barriers control access to materials, venues, and partnerships. Censorship - both direct and through self-censorship - shapes what can be expressed and where. These constraints are not temporary disruptions but permanent features of the environment in which Palestinian artists and cultural practitioners work.

2. Children and Youth: A Generation Under Siege

Palestinian children and youth (representing over 60% of the population) face unique challenges that profoundly affect their cultural development. Growing up under military occupation means experiencing restricted movement, witnessing violence, and living with constant uncertainty. Traditional educational systems, already under-resourced, struggle to provide spaces for creative expression and critical thinking.

For young Palestinians, culture becomes both refuge and resistance - a means to process trauma while asserting identity. However, access to cultural programming remains limited, particularly in marginalized communities. This generation carries both the trauma of occupation and the potential for cultural renewal, making youth-focused cultural work essential for Palestinian society's future.

3. The Shrinking Space for Civil Society

Palestinian civil society organizations face increasing restrictions on their operations. Bureaucratic obstacles, funding conditions, and security concerns create an environment where cultural organizations must constantly adapt their programming and operations. International NGOs working in Palestine navigate complex regulatory frameworks that can change rapidly, affecting program continuity and long-term planning. Despite these challenges, Palestinian civil society demonstrates remarkable resilience and innovation. Organizations develop alternative funding models, create mobile programming to reach restricted areas, and use digital platforms to maintain connections across geographic barriers. This adaptability is both a strength and a necessity in the current context.

4. Current Moment: A Period of Unprecedented Crisis

The period leading to this strategy (2023-2025) has been marked by particular intensity, fundamentally altering the landscape of Palestine. The escalation of violence has reached levels that constitute genocide in Gaza and severe escalations across the West Bank, creating an environment where cultural survival has become an urgent imperative.

● The Genocide in Gaza:

Since October 2023, Gaza has experienced systematic destruction that extends far beyond military targets to encompass the deliberate targeting of cultural life itself. Over 50,000 Palestinians have been killed (as of June 2025), with more than 20,000 of these being children. The cultural infrastructure has been systematically destroyed: libraries, theaters, schools, and cultural heritage sites have been bombed. This represents not just immediate loss of life but the deliberate erasure of Palestinian cultural memory and the spaces where culture is created, preserved, and transmitted.

● Escalations in the West Bank:

The West Bank has experienced its own escalation of violence, with over 500 Palestinians killed in the first half of 2025 alone - more than 200 of those being children. Israeli occupation forces have employed aerial

strikes and military operations in cities like Jenin, Tulkarm, and Hebron, and entire communities have been forcefully displaced. Settler violence and expanded military checkpoints have intensified the fragmentation of Palestinian communities.

● **Impact on the Palestinian Cultural Sector:**

This crisis has directly affected the cultural sector we serve. Over 200 artists and cultural practitioners have been arrested since 2023, while many others face increased censorship and restricted access to resources. A new 2024 INGO registration law has weaponized bureaucracy to further isolate Palestinians, attaching political conditions to aid and threatening the operations of international partners like ourselves.

● **Implications for Our Work:**

This moment of crisis has clarified that our work is no longer just about cultural development - it is about cultural survival. The communities we serve face immediate threats to their physical existence alongside systematic attempts to erase their cultural identity. Our strategy must therefore respond to both the urgent need for cultural preservation and the long-term work of sustaining Palestinian identity and resistance through art and culture.

Why This Matters for Our Work

This operational context shapes our strategic approach in several ways. The youth, artists, and cultural practitioners we serve are not victims to be pitied but agents of resistance whose creativity defies erasure and oppression. Our programs must:

- Center Palestinians' lived expertise, not external agendas.
- Adapt and respond to repression, ensuring art and education survive as acts of liberation.
- Challenge complicity, whether through silence, conditional funding, or neutral rhetoric.

"Our work is no longer just about culture – it's about cultural survival."

Mission And Strategic Priorities

The Mission

To Empower

young girls and boys,
women and men through artistic and cultural
engagement.



Fostering Resilience

and Raising Hopes
via creative practices that
defend Palestinian identity.



Heal Collective Wounds, Reclaim Narratives, Amplify

Marginalized Voices,
and **Build** Solidarity across borders.



while

Championing Freedom

of thought and expression
as fundamental to cultural
survival.



Strategic Priorities

Priority 1: Defend Freedom of Expression

Goal: Combat shrinking civic space through art and advocacy.



Priority 2: Strengthen Artistic Resilience

Goal: Equip children and youth with art and culture as tools of therapy and empowerment: healing trauma while reclaiming cultural identity.



Priority 3: Danish Solidarity Reimagined

Goal: Transform Danish supporters from passive sympathy to active solidarity for Palestinian children's cultural rights through advocacy, membership and sustained contributions



Outcome 2026 - 2030

Three Outcomes

Palestinian artists, cultural practitioners, and youth use art and culture to uphold freedom of expression and strengthen independent Palestinian cultural life.



Palestinian children, youth and communities strengthen collective resilience through art and culture as means of survival, healing, and creative self-expression.



More Danes actively engage with and sustain Palestinian art and culture as followers, members, and sustained contributors.





Values And Guiding Principles

Responsive Partnership

We work with our Palestinian partners as equals, not beneficiaries. Their understanding of their reality guides our work, not donor agendas or external assumptions. Their priorities shape our programs, their analysis informs our strategy. This responsiveness to children, youth, and the cultural sector we serve is what grounds our work.

Locally Led Development

We recognize that sustainable change is driven by those closest to the challenges. Our approach prioritizes local ownership, ensuring Palestinian partners lead the design, implementation, and evaluation of interventions. This commitment to locally led development challenges traditional power dynamics, centers local dignity and expertise, and builds more effective and lasting impact.

Shift the Power

We actively participate in the global movement to redistribute power and resources within development cooperation. Our work is a conscious effort to challenge the donor-recipient hierarchy, instead fostering a model of mutual solidarity where Palestinian voices, leadership, and agendas are at the forefront.

Decolonization

We are committed to decolonizing our practices by continuously examining and dismantling inherited power structures, biases, and Western-centric approaches in our work. We support Palestinian cultural resistance as a fundamental act of decolonization, asserting the right to self-determination and narrative control.

Freedom of Expression

We uphold art and culture as essential tools for Palestinian voices to flourish uncensored and unafraid. In a land where expression is systematically suppressed and civic space shrinks daily, we defend the fundamental right to creative expression and provide platforms for voices to be heard.

Leave No One Behind

From Area C's bulldozed villages to Gaza's rubble, we prioritize those the occupying power seeks to isolate. Our programs ensure art and culture reach the most marginalized.

Gender Equality

We actively foster spaces where girls and women lead and thrive. While equal participation may not always be within our full control, we commit to ensuring that their involvement is meaningful, empowering, and transformative ... not just measured in numbers, but in influence, voice, and opportunity.

Sustainable Development Goals

We align with SDGs 4, 5, 8, 11, and 16, building sustainable communities, justice and equality.

Community as Stakeholders

Audiences are allies. We mobilize communities at the grassroots level, transforming audiences into active allies. Our approach builds not just awareness but real solidarity, connecting people directly to Palestinian cultural resistance.



Theory of Change (TOC)

The Danish House in Palestine believes that **cultural resistance is survival under occupation**. By providing safe spaces for art as trauma healing, we strengthen collective resilience - enabling Palestinian youth and artists to process oppression while reclaiming identity. When we equip local partners to lead advocacy against censorship, we amplify uncensored voices and challenge systemic erasure. By building unconditional funding pipelines, we ensure programs adapt to repression rather than donor agendas, sustaining cultural life amid crises. Simultaneously, mobilizing Danish allies as active (not passive) solidarity partners instead of passive bystanders shifts narratives beyond charity, fostering transnational accountability.

This creates lasting change: Palestinian children and artists gain tools to heal and share their stories; marginalized communities take back control over their narratives; and Danish supporters become true allies in challenging injustice. The outcome is a stronger cultural movement where art overcomes division, solidarity is built on fairness, and Palestinian culture not only survives but grows - even under occupation.

Ultimate Impact: Palestinian children, youth and artists will reclaim narrative control, resist erasure, and sustain cultural life.

If we...

- Provide safe spaces for art as trauma healing and creative self expression (resilience),
- Equip partners to lead advocacy against censorship (empowerment),
- Build unconditional funding pipelines (sustainability),
- Mobilize Danish allies to amplify Palestinian voices (solidarity),



Then...

We equip Palestinian children, youth and artists with tools to reclaim narrative control, resist erasure, and sustain cultural life.



Outcomes And Outputs 2026 - 2030

Outcome 1

Palestinian artists, cultural practitioners, and youth use art and culture to uphold freedom of expression and strengthen independent Palestinian cultural life.

Palestine's vibrant civil society continues to courageously defend creative expression despite increasing pressures. Artists face systematic targeting - from smear campaigns to outright bans on performances - while cultural organizations operate under constant threat of closure. In this climate of repression, The Danish House commits to strengthening the capacity of Palestinian artists and cultural practitioners to advocate for their fundamental rights while creating platforms that ensure their voices resonate globally. This strengthens Palestinian civil society more broadly, maintaining the cultural infrastructure that connects communities and preserves collective identity across geographic and political divisions. Our work recognizes that artistic expression constitutes both resistance and survival under occupation, where every painting, poem, or performance defies attempts at cultural erasure.

Output 1.1: Young talented Palestinian artists' and cultural practitioners' abilities to advocate for freedom of expression and cultural life are strengthened.

Through comprehensive training programs in creative writing, filmmaking, and performing arts, we will equip emerging talents with the skills to articulate their experiences and defend cultural rights. These capacity-building initiatives will include mentorship opportunities with established artists, workshops on creative activism, and platforms for cross-cultural exchange. Participants will gain both the technical skills and awareness needed to navigate and challenge censorship while amplifying Palestinian narratives.

Indicators:

- Number of capacity building workshops/ sessions conducted annually
- Number of networking activities facilitating artist collaborations

Output 1.2: Production, documentation and promotion of Palestinian artistic works.

We will establish systematic support for the creation and dissemination of Palestinian art through funding for productions, exhibitions, and digital archiving. This includes backing daring theatrical performances that challenge occupation narratives, supporting visual artists in creating works that document Palestinian heritage, and facilitating film productions that bring Palestinian stories to international audiences. Special attention will be given to preserving art forms at risk of disappearance due to the fragmentation of communities and restrictions on cultural transmission.

Indicators:

- Number of art exhibitions hosted and supported
- Number of artistic productions completed and publicly shared
- Audience reach of promoted artworks (physical and digital)

Outcome 2

Palestinian children, youth and communities strengthen collective resilience through art and culture as means of survival, healing, and creative self-expression.

For Palestinian youth growing up under military occupation, artistic expression provides both psychological refuge and a means to process trauma. Our programs recognize that in communities where children routinely witness violence and families live with constant uncertainty, creative activities offer crucial tools for maintaining mental health and community cohesion. The act of creation itself - whether through drama, music, or visual arts - becomes an assertion of humanity and a rejection of dehumanizing conditions.

We are committed to enhancing the resilience of children and youth in challenged communities through community-based programming tailored to their unique needs. Our emphasis on art, culture, and creative engagement serves as a foundation for fostering lasting change. We will implement strategies that not only address immediate challenges but also build capacity for the future.

Output 2.1 Enhanced cultural and creative capabilities for marginalized children and youth.

We will implement trauma-informed arts programs specifically designed for children and youth in Gaza and the occupied West Bank, with a special focus on Area C and other vulnerable communities. These initiatives will combine psychosocial support with skills development in various art forms, creating safe spaces for self-expression while nurturing talents. The programming will be developed in consultation with local mental health professionals and cultural practitioners to ensure cultural relevance and therapeutic effectiveness. Special attention will be given to gender-specific needs and reaching children and youth with disabilities.

Indicators:

- Number of trauma-informed workshops conducted
- Number of children and youth participating in creative programs
- Number of youth-led artistic productions created

Output 2.2: Strengthened capacities of community center workers and facilitators

Recognizing that sustainable impact depends on local leadership, we will invest substantially in training and equipping Palestinian community workers who serve on the frontlines of cultural resilience. This includes comprehensive training programs in creative pedagogy, trauma-informed facilitation, and community organizing. We will also provide material support to enhance physical infrastructure at community centers, ensuring they have the tools and spaces needed to deliver quality programming despite movement restrictions and resource limitations.

Indicators:

- Number of capacity-building workshops for community workers
- Number of community centers receiving support
- Number of physical interventions/infrastructure improvements completed

Outcome 3

More Danes actively engage with and sustain Palestinian art and culture as followers, members, and sustained contributors.

The Danish House serves as a vital bridge between Palestinian artists and Danish audiences, challenging reductionist narratives that dominate mainstream media. Our engagement work transforms passive awareness into active solidarity by creating meaningful opportunities for Danes to connect with Palestinian culture. We recognize that lasting change requires building sustained relationships rather than momentary interest, which is why we focus on deepening engagement through multiple pathways.

Output 3.1: Public engagement through advocacy

We will expand our targeted programming that brings Palestinian voices directly to Danish audiences through multiple channels. This includes organizing educational journeys to Palestine that allow Danes to experience the cultural landscape firsthand, curating exhibitions and performances in Denmark that showcase Palestinian creativity, and facilitating direct dialogues between Palestinian and Danish artists, cultural creators and audiences. Our media work will focus on placing Palestinian cultural perspectives in mainstream Danish outlets, while our digital campaigns will reach new audiences through compelling storytelling.

Indicators:

- Number of volunteers and interns engaged in programs
- Number of Danes participating in educational journeys
- Number of newsletter subscribers and social media followers
- Number of media interviews and publications secured
- Level of participation in advocacy initiatives in Denmark

Output 3.2: Sustainable financial support through membership and donor programs

To ensure the long-term existence of our work, we will implement strong systems for cultivating recurring support from Danish individuals and institutions. This includes developing tiered memberships and recurring donation methods while creating compelling cases for support that highlight the transformative power of cultural solidarity. Special emphasis will be placed on converting one-time donors into sustained supporters through transparent impact reporting.

Indicators:

- Number of monthly contributors secured
- Number of members in the support association
- Total donation amounts received annually
- Retention rates of recurring donors



Outcome-Focused Adaptive Management

Monitoring, Learning, and
Evaluation

Approach and Philosophy

Our approaches are guided by who we are as an organization. We seek solutions that are relative to our capacity and the characteristics of our programs and projects - taking into consideration subject matter, volume, and depth of engagement, as well as the diverse spectrum of art and culture disciplines we work across, each with distinct methods, artistic aims, and expressions.

Our approach promotes accountability, adaptation, and learning at both program and project levels, ensuring clarity on how each actor contributes to broader outcomes.

- At program level, we will review contribution to and achievement of outcomes
- At project level, we monitor and ensure learning in cooperation with partners
- At both levels, we will assess outputs, reach and indicators

Annual Planning and Review Cycle

The strategy is translated into an annual plan with key actions and results. The plan will be informed by the learnings and deliveries of the previous year, dialogue and planning meetings with partners and changes to the context.

We will do an annual program review based on e.g. the project level monitoring, annual reflection workshops with the partners, insights from networking, field trips and desk-studies. The annual program review will include:

- An overview of the delivery of targets, an assessment of the contribution towards indicators at output level and towards the achievement of the outcomes
- Reflections on lessons learned, testing the underlying assumptions etc.
- Outline and analysis of significant changes to our context, which have had or are likely to have implications for program relevance and delivery
- Adjustments to the program (outputs, targets, indicators) and the justification
- Review and update of risk register

The above will be consolidated in our annual report.

Project-Level Implementation and Monitoring

All of the outputs include one or more projects. The objectives of the projects will be aligned to the output indicators. These may be further qualified at the project level together with updated baseline data upon initiation of the projects.

All projects are continuously monitored. Program staff make frequent field visits and are often present during execution of activities.

Methodologies include meetings with participants/partners, questionnaires, interviews and open discussions with audiences.

Partners submit financial reports together with narrative and/or video reports.

Partnership Learning

Our approach to long-term strategic partnerships is relational and builds mutual trust. This is a condition for joint learning. Frequent reflection and learning meetings including annual workshops with the partners will take place.

External Evaluation

Larger projects will be subject to an external final evaluation depending on donor requirements and availability of funding. An external mid-term review and final external evaluation of the strategy will be done.

**Risk Management,
Security And Safety**

The safety, security, and well-being of our staff, partners, and participants are our highest priorities, guiding all strategic and programmatic decisions. Operating within the context of prolonged military occupation and systematic oppression requires a strong, proactive, and principled approach to risk management. We conduct continuous context analysis and risk assessments to ensure we can respond effectively to evolving threats while steadfastly maintaining our commitment to Palestinian communities and our mission.

Key Strategic Risk Areas:

Our strategy is implemented in a high-risk environment. We have identified several interconnected risk domains that threaten our ability to achieve our outcomes:

- **Security context:** Our area of operations is under military occupation by Israel, which can lead to armed clashes, attacks, violent confrontations, and disruption. Movement restrictions may be imposed abruptly through roadblocks and checkpoints. Also, the ongoing genocide in Gaza and intensified military operations and aerial strikes in the West Bank (e.g., Jenin, Tulkarem, Hebron) pose immediate physical threats to life and safety. This includes the direct targeting of cultural infrastructure and personnel, leading to program suspension, trauma, and the destruction of the very cultural life we seek to sustain.

- **Shrinking Civic Space and Censorship:** Palestinian civil society, including cultural organizations, faces increasing restrictions. This includes bureaucratic obstacles like the 2024 INGO registration law, direct censorship of artistic content, and pressure from both Israeli authorities and the Palestinian Authority (PA), which increasingly limits space for critical self-expression and cultural work deemed politically sensitive.

- **Movement and Access Restrictions:** The entrenched system of checkpoints, roadblocks, and the Separation Barrier severely fragments Palestinian communities. These restrictions impede our staff and partners' movement, limit access to marginalized areas (especially Area C), disrupt program continuity, and increase the cost and complexity of implementation.

- **Safeguarding and Protection (PSEA & Child Protection):** In a context of widespread trauma and power imbalances, the risk of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), sexual harassment (SH), and harm to children is significant. We have a fundamental duty to ensure that our programs do not cause harm and are safe spaces for all, especially vulnerable groups like children and women. This includes maintaining strong, confidential complaint mechanisms for staff and beneficiaries, and ensuring our partners uphold the same standards.

- **Reputational Risk:** Our unwavering stance on Palestinian rights may lead to smear campaigns or legal challenges from groups opposing our work, potentially impacting funding and donor relations.

- **Exchange Rate Risk:** Our operations involve financial flows in multiple currencies (Danish Krone - DKK, US Dollars - USD, and Israeli Shekels - NIS). Significant fluctuations between these currencies can adversely affect our purchasing power, erode project budgets, and create uncertainty in long-term financial planning, directly threatening program sustainability and scope.

- **Psychosocial Well-being and Burnout:** Our staff and partners operate under constant stress, exposure to trauma, and the emotional weight of working in a context of profound violence and loss. This poses a significant risk to individual well-being and organizational sustainability if not actively managed.

Our Risk Management Framework:

Our approach is integrated, adaptive, and grounded in our values. Key elements of our framework include:

- **Comprehensive Policies and Training:** We maintain and regularly update internal policies, including:

- **Security Management and Safety Guidelines:** Including protocols for movement, communication, and emergency response.

- **Safeguarding, PSEA, and Child Protection Policy:** Mandatory for all staff and partners. This includes safe recruitment practices, mandatory training, and clear, confidential reporting mechanisms accessible to beneficiaries and staff.

● **Strong Complaint and Response Mechanisms:**

We enforce a clear, confidential procedure for handling complaints. All staff are instructed to send complaints to a secure email. Complaints are managed by the Director or, if involving the Director, the Board, with immediate suspension pending investigation and termination for misconduct. Furthermore, our sub-partner agreements include a clause obligating them to report credible complaints to DHIP, ensuring a consistent safeguarding standard across all our programs

● **Adaptive and Context-Responsive Programming:**

We design programs with flexibility at their core. This includes:

- **Decentralized Implementation:** Empowering local partners and community hubs to lead activities autonomously, reducing dependency on movement between areas.

- **Digital and Mobile Alternatives:** Pre-positioned resources and the capacity to shift to online activities or smaller, localized gatherings when access is blocked or security deteriorates.

- **Continuous Context Monitoring:** Maintaining close coordination with UN clusters, NGO security networks, and local partners for real-time security alerts and risk assessments.

● **Principled Partnership and Solidarity:**

- We embed safeguarding and child protection clauses in all partner agreements.

- We practice «**do no harm**» principles, ensuring our interventions do not inadvertently exacerbate tensions or put partners at greater risk.

- We stand firmly with our partners against censorship and political pressure, using documentation of access denials and violations for advocacy through networks like AIDA and ASU.

● **Financial Integrity and Accountability:**

We enforce strict financial controls, transparent reporting to prevent and detect misconduct.



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