

## “This is hope for them”

*Your gifts to the ELCA World Hunger Appeal, through its partner the Lutheran World Federation, help fund this development effort in Palestine. Thank you.*

Randa Hilal Nassar has a lot to be proud of, and a lot to be worried about. Until recently she served as director of the Lutheran World Federation's Vocational Training Center (VTC) in Beit Hanina in the occupied Palestinian Territories. Four years ago Randa helped open the Center's doors to young Palestinian women as well as young men.

Whether male or female, finding a job in Palestine as a plumber, auto mechanic, computer technician, or carpenter is not easy. The poverty rate has tripled to 60 percent since 1999. Almost 2.5 million Palestinians live on less than \$2 per day.

Nor is it easy to keep the Vocational Training Center running. The closures and daily long delays at Israeli checkpoints make it difficult, and sometimes impossible, for many VTC students and their teachers to get to



PALESTINE

and from school. But for many of these young people, LWF's Vocational Training Center “is the only chance they have...this is hope for them,”

Randa says.

Since checkpoints and the Israeli Separation Wall prevent some students and teachers from getting to the Beit Hanina center, the LWF is finding other ways to keep hope alive. Randa is now helping to start up a satellite LWF vocational center

in Ramallah, which will provide 60 to 100 students with “good training that will lead to good employment,” and will contribute to the revival of the Palestinian economy should the fragile peace hold. Randa says, “we need to do this, for they have to have hope.”



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