



Schools for Palestine

Mobile schools as an emergency response

Architecture Competition

organized by



ARCHSTORMING



WALLAH
WE CAN



Organizer

Archstorming

Archstorming is an international platform that aims to improve the well-being of people in need through innovative and sustainable architecture. Our mission is to **create positive change through architecture** and foster a new generation of socially conscious architects.

Our humanitarian architecture competitions showcase **real projects that address critical issues** such as disaster relief, poverty, conflicts and diseases, while serving

the fundamental needs of shelter, warmth, access to clean water, education, and community building.

Sustainability is the core of our competitions, both in terms of design and construction, challenging our participants to find innovative construction methods, use locally sourced materials, and adopt collaborative easy-to-build techniques, among others, that can be understood and applied by local communities.



introduction

The ongoing conflict in the West Bank has led to widespread and continuous hardships for the Palestinian people. This conflict has severely impacted daily life, restricting movement, limiting access to resources, and creating barriers to economic development for civilians in Palestine. One of the most pressing consequences of this long conflict is **the intentional and organized demolition of buildings and structures, including schools**, which significantly disrupts the education and morale of children.

Given the intensification of destruction and the increasingly urgent needs of the population in the last few months, we have recognized the urgent necessity to organize this international architecture competition which aims to address this challenge by developing innovative designs for mobile and flexible schools in the West Bank. **The competition will focus on creating modular and versatile schools that can be easily relocated and reassembled**, ensuring that

education continues even in the face of demolition threats.

By inviting participants from around the world, we aim to gather diverse ideas and perspectives to find the best architectural solutions while raising awareness about the challenges in Palestine. By participating, you support architectural innovation, humanitarian causes, and education, standing in solidarity with the people of Palestine. **Your registration will also support Wallah We Can** in achieving their goals, particularly in **building the winning project**, which we hope will be the first of many mobile schools in Palestine and other countries with similar conflicts.

This competition encourages everyone to participate and spread the word. Join us in making a difference.

▼ Kids playing at Makthar boarding middle school by Wallah We Can



The NGO



Wallah We Can

Wallah We Can is a Tunisian NGO that has dedicated over 12 years to enhancing children's educational conditions through sustainable community-driven projects. Now, it wants to expand its impact by organizing this architecture competition aimed at designing mobile schools to support the education of Palestinian children.

Wallah We Can, a Tunisian NGO, has been advocating for children's right to dignified educational conditions across Tunisia for over 12 years. Through the implementation of various social, education, infrastructure, and economic projects, Wallah We Can has significantly impacted local communities by engaging local capacities and solidifying community bonds.

One of its flagship initiatives, the "Green School" Project, was successfully implemented in Makthar, Tunisia. This project transformed a primary school into an economically self-sustaining enterprise, a model set to be replicated in over 570 other schools nationwide. Another notable project, the "Kid'chen

Farm" enhances community engagement by providing agricultural jobs to students' relatives, with all farming income directed towards rehabilitating nearby schools, paying school debts, and improving education in the region. Additionally, Wallah We Can's "Ecolibree" project is fighting for menstrual justice by normalizing discussions about menstruation and ensuring access to reusable sanitary protection for those experiencing menstrual insecurity.

These initiatives reflect Wallah We Can's commitment to creating sustainable, community-driven solutions that uphold and advance children's right to education and overall well-being.

▼ Israeli military entering the region of Masafer Yatta (Photo via ActiveStills)



why Palestine?

Standing as a pivotal focus for Wallah We Can's vision of creating a world marked by equity and justice, Palestine, a nation grappling with profound and persistent challenges, where amidst these trials, **the preservation of education must remain paramount.**

Given the urgent need to protect children's right to education amid ongoing challenges, including the frequent demolition of schools due to the ongoing conflict and war. Leveraging Wallah We Can's commitment in Tunisia, they are advocating to introduce three distinct approaches to ensure dignified education for Palestinian children.

Through this competition, we aim to develop one of these approaches: **the introduction of mobile schools as an emergency educational response in the West Bank.** This initiative stands as one of the diverse solutions that hopefully can guarantee uninterrupted learning and fosters empowerment within local communities, strengthening the resilience of Palestinian children and families facing adversity.

the challenge

This international architecture competition aims to address the urgent need for **emergency responsive and resilient architectural solutions in the face of the ongoing challenges in Palestine.**

Due to Israel's continuous demolition of built-in schools in the region, **we seek innovative designs for mobile schools constructed from lightweight materials.** These schools can be easily relocated in case of demolition threats, ensuring uninterrupted education for Palestinian children.

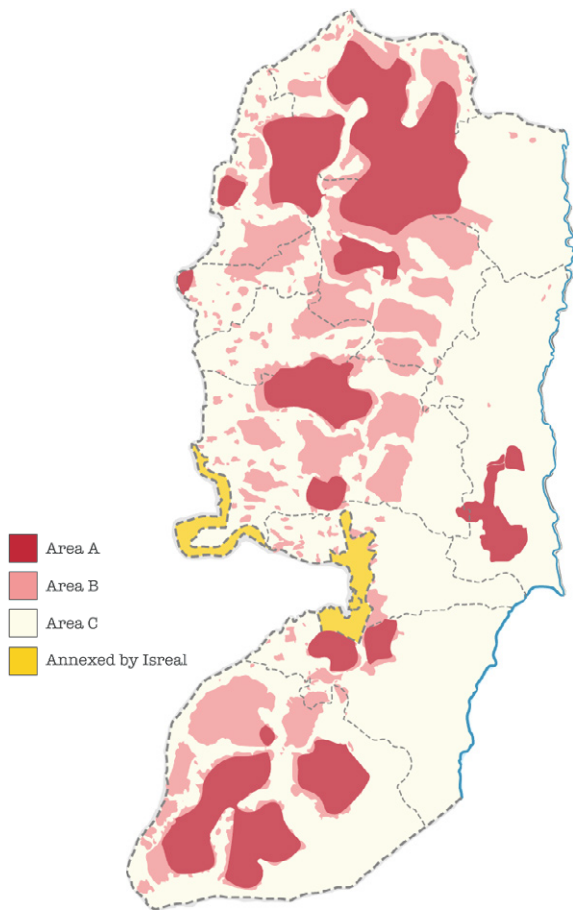
Mobile schools offer **flexibility and resilience**, allowing for rapid deployment in various locations as needed. They can be **reassembled quickly**, minimizing disruption to the educational process. Moreover, these schools provide a **sense of stability and normalcy for children in conflict zones**, which is crucial for their psychological well-being and continued academic development.

We invite **architects, designers, students, and visionaries from around the world** to contribute their expertise and creativity to develop **practical, sustainable, and mobile educational structures that can adapt to the dynamic and challenging environment of the West Bank.**

While this solution is intended for immediate implementation in the West Bank, we should always keep in mind its **potential as a global solution for conflict zones** facing similar challenges. This approach can be replicated wherever there is a need, offering a scalable and adaptable solution to ensure continuous education in the face of adversity.

▼ Palestine kids have no other option but to attend open-air schools





Since 1967, the West Bank has been **under military occupation** and today it is home to 3 million Palestinians along with over 700,000 illegal Israeli settlers. In the early 1990s, the West Bank was divided into three areas (A, B and C) by *The Oslo Accords*- an agreement signed between the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) and the Israeli government.

Area A, which comprises 18% of the West Bank, was given to the newly established Palestinian Authority (PA) which would be responsible for both civil and internal security matters. In **Area B**, the PA was given civil control and shared security responsibilities with the Israeli military. **Area C**, over 60% of the West Bank, was left under Israeli control. This division was intended as an interim arrangement to pave the way for eventual Palestinian self-governance and statehood.

However, over thirty years on from the Oslo Accords, **the West Bank remains divided and under Israeli de facto occupation**. Moreover, Israeli settlements have expanded and **Palestinian communities have continuously been forcibly displaced from the villages in the West Bank**.



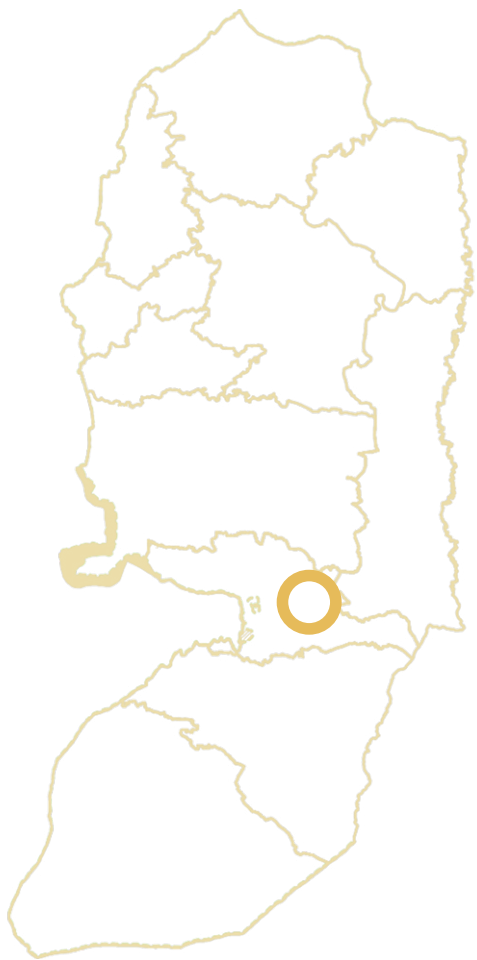
the West Bank: context

the demolitions

One of the most unjust consequences of the ongoing conflict in the West Bank is the **demolition of buildings and structures**, regardless of their use, and **even entire villages**, determined by the Israeli authorities citing security and military necessity. **Schools are not exempt** from these demolition orders, negatively impacting the education and morale of children in the West Bank. It is precisely the issue of school demolitions that has mobilized us to create this competition, focused on promoting education for those who lack access.



As an example of the ongoing school demolitions in the West Bank, a **short documentary by Palestinian journalist Manar Altell** exposes the challenging reality faced by the community in Masafer Yatta, West Bank. [Click to watch.](#)



project location: Khan al Ahmar

The **village of Khan Al Ahmar**, situated in **Area C** of the West Bank, **exemplifies the resilience of many Palestinian communities under Israeli occupation**. The village lacks basic services such as electricity, water, and education, while Israeli settlements in Area C not only have access to these services but also exploit local natural resources.

Since 2009, when Israeli authorities issued demolition orders for all structures in Khan Al Ahmar, the village has faced continuous threats of expulsion. The community, represented by legal advocates and supported by international NGOs, **has managed to postpone or freeze these demolition orders**. Despite these efforts, many individual structures have been destroyed by frequent Israeli military incursions.

The strategic location of Khan Al Ahmar along the E1 corridor, which divides the West Bank into northern and southern sections, is of significant interest to Israeli authorities. Control over this corridor disrupts the geographic contiguity of the West Bank, further entrenching Israeli control over the land and its Palestinian residents.

Plot Coordinates:
31.811618, 35.337793
[Click to open Google Maps](#)



the plot

The plot is located in the village of **Khan al Ahmar**, home to the Palestinian Bedouin Jahalin tribe, who originally hail from the Naqab Desert. This tribe was expelled by the Israeli army from their ancestral lands in the 1950s. They settled on a plot of land not far from Jerusalem, nestled above the ancient city of Jericho - just 225 meters in elevation. The village consists of various structures including a **clinic, mosque, a school, and residential houses**. The

people of Khan al Ahmar **recycle any material into residential material**, with the most common materials used in their houses being **corrugated panels, wood (generally pallets), fabric, tanks, and wheels**.

The plot of land is located on a slope in the western part of the village. **It is 34 meters in width and 55 meters in length**. To the south of the plot, there is a valley; to the east are the village structures; and to

the north is a dirt access road to the highway and other villages. The village's electricity is sourced from **solar panels**, which provide a few hours of electricity every day. There is no main water supply; villagers instead must buy tanks of water.

The vegetation in this area is consistent with the desert environment. There are few trees and only **small shrubs** covering the rocky terrain.

the competition

program:

The program of the mobile school will be similar to that of a regular school. The building should be versatile, offering a wide range of spaces. The goal of this competition is to create spaces that are flexible and can change their function if necessary. The spaces of the following program must appear in your project but their size can slightly vary according to your design. You can also add extra spaces if you think they will be beneficial to the project.

1. Classrooms: 4 large classrooms that can be divided into two/three if necessary. They should be large enough to fit over 200 students when divided. The rooms will have desks placed either in a circular format or a traditional classroom with the teacher's desk and chalkboard in front with an area that could serve as a small library (bookshelves and an area to check out books).

2. Multipurpose Room: This room will be the heart of the school, serving a dual purpose. It will be a gathering place for the community, bringing students and teachers together for socializing, learning, and activities that promote well-being and community building. Additionally, it will accommodate the organization's activities, such as the distribution of school supplies, team meetings, and routine work.

3. Office: a staff office with desks, computers, printers, and other supplies will allow the school team to best serve the students and successfully carry out all their work. it should accommodate up to six people.

4. Sanitaries: Designed to ensure hygiene and privacy for students and staff. The layout should be carefully planned to accommodate mobility and ease of use, particularly in a context where relocation may be necessary. Sanitaries will include ten separate toilets, with five designated for boys and five for girls. Additionally, there will be handwashing stations placed at the entrance of the toilets. The design should prioritize durable, easy-to-clean materials and incorporate features that enhance mobility.

5. Medical Room: The Medical Room will be a dedicated space for addressing the medical and psychological needs of students and staff. Equipped with basic first aid supplies and facilities, this room will offer immediate care for minor injuries and illnesses. Additionally, it will serve as a confidential area for

providing mental health support, allowing students to receive counseling and support to cope with the stress and trauma associated with living in a conflict zone. This room is crucial for maintaining the overall health and well-being of the school community.

6. Exterior Playground: The exterior playground will provide a vital space for physical activity, allowing children to engage in play and exercise in a safe, open-air environment. Designed with durable, weather-resistant materials, the playground will include basic equipment that encourages movement, coordination, and social interaction. This area will not only support physical health but also offer a sense of joy amidst the challenging circumstances, contributing to the overall well-being and development of the students.

7. Rest Areas: The Rest Areas will provide a quiet and comfortable space for students who need a break from the rigors of the school day or a refuge from the stress of their surroundings. These areas will be furnished with simple, comfortable seating and designed to create a calming atmosphere. They will offer a place for students to relax, reflect, and recuperate, particularly important for those experiencing trauma or fatigue. By offering a designated space for rest, the school supports the mental and emotional well-being of its students, helping them to stay focused and engaged in their learning.



▲ Builders working in Khan al Ahmar

the competition

materials and construction techniques

The design of these mobile and resilient educational structures must prioritize the use of **lightweight, portable, and locally sourced materials**. Participants are encouraged to explore a variety of materials that offer durability and ease of transport.

The construction techniques should emphasize **modularity and ease of assembly**, allowing the structures to be **quickly deployed, disassembled, and relocated as needed**. Utilizing prefabricated components and interlocking systems can significantly speed up the construction process and ensure consistency in quality.

Techniques such as **flat-pack design and rapid assembly systems** can be considered to facilitate efficient transportation and on-site assembly.

Additionally, **adaptable foundation systems** are crucial to accommodate the varying terrains of the West Bank.

Given the high temperatures often experienced in the region, it is essential that these structures are capable of **withstanding extreme heat**. This includes the use of materials with **high thermal resistance** and the integration of **passive cooling strategies**, such as natural ventilation and shading, to maintain a comfortable learning environment for students and teachers.

mobility and modularity

In light of the volatile situation in Palestine, the concepts of **mobility and modularity are critical** for the design of these educational structures. We envision schools that can be swiftly **disassembled, transported, and reassembled with minimal resources and labor**, utilizing lightweight, durable, and locally sourced materials. These mobile schools will incorporate modular designs that facilitate rapid deployment and easy scalability, ensuring uninterrupted education regardless of location changes.

The design should include innovative solutions such as **foldable classrooms and collapsible furniture**, which not only enable **quick relocation** in response to imminent threats but also **maximize the use of limited space**. **Adaptable layouts**

will allow these schools to fit diverse and challenging environments, from urban settings to remote areas.

Beyond immediate emergency response, these schools will be designed with the future in mind. **The structures should have the capability to transition from temporary to permanent solutions as conditions stabilize**. This involves creating a framework that allows for the addition of more durable and long-term components over time, **enabling the schools to become fixed educational centers if the threat of demolition decreases**.

Moreover, the modular nature of the design means that these schools can be **easily expanded or contracted based on the number of students and available resources**. This flexibility ensures that the educational needs of the community can be met regardless of changing circumstances.

By creating versatile and robust educational environments, we aim to provide stability and continuity in education for Palestinian children. These mobile and modular schools will not only address the immediate need for emergency response but also lay the groundwork for a sustainable, long-term educational infrastructure.

encouraging critical design thinking

We invite participants to approach this competition with a spirit of **innovation and critical inquiry** across all facets of their designs. Beyond the outlined briefing, we encourage thoughtful exploration of materials and construction techniques that prioritize sustainability, resilience, and local relevance. Consider how mobility and modularity can be optimized to ensure adaptability in challenging environments. Moreover, challenge conventional norms and expand upon the suggested program by proposing additional spaces or functionalities that you believe are essential for fostering a supportive and inclusive educational environment.

Embrace the opportunity to **push boundaries, rethink possibilities, and contribute** to the advancement of educational infrastructure that not only meets immediate needs but also inspires resilience and community engagement.

We look forward to your visionary solutions and impactful contributions.

the competition

humanitarian response to conflicts

As architects preparing to address a humanitarian challenge through this competition, **understanding the fundamentals of emergency response is crucial**, particularly in regions affected by conflicts. This introduction to International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and emergency response is designed to equip you with foundational knowledge that can help you guide your design process.

What is International Humanitarian Law?

International Humanitarian Law is a set of rules that seek, for humanitarian reasons, to **limit the effects of armed conflict**. It protects persons and facilities that are not taking part in hostilities. Key treaties, including the **Geneva Conventions** and their Additional Protocols, form the core of IHL.

Connection Between IHL and Humanitarian Response:

International Humanitarian Law provides a legal framework that underpins humanitarian response efforts in conflict situations. It establishes the principles and rules that **protect civilians and ensure aid can be delivered safely and effectively**. In practice, IHL guides humanitarian organizations in navigating the complexities of armed conflict, ensuring that assistance reaches those most in need without exacerbating the situation. For architects, this connection means that **designs for emergency shelters, healthcare facilities, and other critical infrastructure must comply with IHL** to avoid becoming targets themselves and to support the protection and dignity of affected populations.

▼ 100 Classrooms for Refugee Children by Emergency Architecture & Human Rights



the competition

humanitarian response to conflicts

Emergency Response in Architectural Context:

Emergency response involves immediate and efficient **action to prevent or mitigate the suffering of people in crises**, especially in the aftermath of natural disasters or conflicts. As architects, understanding the dynamics of emergency response can significantly influence your design choices, specifically in the following ways:

- 1. Rapid Assessment and Response:** Learning how to quickly assess damaged structures and the needs of affected populations can inform the creation of rapid deployment shelters and other emergency structures.
- 2. Sustainable and Resilient Design:** Designs should not only address immediate needs but also consider long-term sustainability and resilience against future disasters.
- 3. Community Involvement:** Engaging the local community in the design and rebuilding process helps ensure that the solutions are culturally appropriate and more sustainable.

Application of IHL in Architecture

As architects working in conflict-affected areas, applying IHL principles means designing structures that:

- 1. Protect Civilians:** Ensure the safety and security of civilians by creating shelters and buildings that offer protection from violence and conflict-related dangers.
- 2. Preserve Human Dignity:** Design spaces that

uphold the dignity of all individuals, including adequate sanitation, privacy, and accessibility for vulnerable populations.

- 3. Minimize Harm:** Use materials and construction techniques that reduce the risk of injury and damage, considering both immediate and long-term impacts on the community.
- 4. Promote Resilience:** Develop adaptable and sustainable structures that can withstand the pressures of conflict and provide continuity of essential services, such as education and healthcare.
- 5. Ensure Accessibility:** Create inclusive designs that are accessible to all, including those with disabilities, ensuring equal access to resources and services.
- 6. Respect Cultural Heritage:** Incorporate local cultural and historical contexts into designs, preserving the identity and heritage of the affected communities.
- 7. Facilitate Humanitarian Aid:** Design infrastructure that supports the effective delivery of humanitarian assistance, including safe access routes and distribution points.

For architecture practitioners, **integrating the principles of IHL and emergency response into your thinking, in the context of this competition, will prepare you to contribute positively in crisis situations.** This knowledge will enable you to design structures that not only meet the immediate needs of a community in distress but also promote long-term recovery and resilience.

For those who want to dig further...

Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols:

- *International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) - The Geneva Conventions* [🔗](#)

Principles of International Humanitarian Law:

- *ICRC - What is International Humanitarian Law?* [🔗](#)

Emergency Response Guidance for Architects:

- *Architects without Borders* [🔗](#): This organization focuses on architectural solutions in disaster relief and recovery. Their projects and guidelines can serve as practical examples.

Technical Standards for Disaster Response:

- *Sphere Project, "Sphere Handbook: Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response, 2011" (2011)* [🔗](#): The Sphere Handbook is a comprehensive guide developed by international humanitarian aid agencies to describe minimum standards for the provision of emergency humanitarian aid.

the competition

awards:

We are offering a total of 10,000€ in cash prizes, distributed as follows:

1st PRIZE

6,000 € + Construction

2nd PRIZE

2,000 €

3rd PRIZE

1,000 €

SPECIAL HONORABLE MENTIONS

2 × 500 €

10 HONORABLE MENTIONS

30 FINALISTS

All winning projects and finalists will be published in various architecture magazines, blogs, social networks, and our website. All participants will receive a digital certificate of participation.



Calendar

Registering will give you access to the competition and webinars to you and your team (from 1 to 4 members). The registration periods, submission deadline and winners announcement are as follows:

Early Bird Registration

August 12th - September 11th

Standard Registration

September 12th - October 9th

Extended Registration

October 10th - November 6th

Final Call Registration

November 7th - December 2nd

Submission deadline

December 2nd

Winners announcement

December 21st

Registration

To register for the competition, visit our official website and complete the registration form. Upon completion of the form, you will be redirected to the payment page where you need to complete the payment to finalize the registration process.

The registration fees are tiered based on the date of registration as follows:

- Early Bird Registration: €70 + VAT
- Standard Registration: €90 + VAT
- Extended Registration: €110 + VAT
- Final Call Registration: €130 + VAT

*VAT charged 21%.

We accept Visa, Mastercard, Discover, and American Express credit or debit cards. Payments can also be made through PayPal. Please note that we will not have access to your credit card details. Once the registration and payment process is completed, no refunds will be issued.

Immediately after registration and payment, you will receive a confirmation email at the email address provided during the payment process. The order number in this email will be your unique registration number. You should include this order number on your board for identification purposes, preferably in the bottom right corner.

FAQs & eligibility

- For common queries, refer to the FAQ section on our website. During the competition, individual responses will be provided to questions sent via email.

- The competition is open to all, including architecture students, professional architects, and individuals from other disciplines such as engineering, philosophy, sociology, photography, etc. All nationalities are welcome, we appreciate as diverse participation as possible.

- Teams can consist of one to four members, all of whom must be at least 18 years old. The registration fee is per team, irrespective of team size.

- If a team or participant wishes to submit more than one proposal, they must register and pay the fee for each submission.

- Jurors, the organization, or anyone directly related to the jury are not allowed to participate in this competition.

Submission

For this competition, participants are required to submit **two digital files: “one A1 Board” and a “Project Description”**. Submissions should be made through the **‘Submit’ section on our website, inside the Participants Area**.

1x A1 Board: Participants are required to present their project on one A1 format board (594×841 mm or 23.4×33.1 inches), which can be either landscape or portrait oriented.

A1 Board Content: The board should contain a variety of visual aids that contribute to a clearer understanding of the project. The **Order Number included in the payment confirmation email** must be clearly visible in the lower right corner of the board.

A1 Board File Details: The board must be delivered in **JPEG or JPG** format with a **maximum size of 10 MB per file**. **The file name must be the Order Number provided in the payment confirmation email (e.g. 1234.jpg)**.

Project Description: A project description, of no more than 400 words, must be submitted along with the A1 Board.

Project Description File Details: The description must be submitted in **PDF format**. **The file name must be the Order Number provided in the payment confirmation email (e.g. 1234.pdf)**.

Language: All texts, both on the A1 Board and in the Description, must be written in **English**.

Anonymity: The materials cannot contain any name or reference to participants or teams. Only the Order Number should be included in the files’ names to ensure anonymity.

Rules & Conditions

Intellectual Property: Participants maintain the rights over the intellectual property of their submissions. However, by participating, they grant our platform a global, free, and non-exclusive license to reproduce, publish, and distribute the project in any format and through any dissemination medium. Our platform will make sure to give proper attribution to the project authors. The authors of the project selected to be constructed will give the NGO Wallah We Can the right to build it and modify it if necessary in order to adapt it to their actual needs.

Use of Copyright-Free Images: Participants are responsible for ensuring that any images or materials used in their submissions are copyright-free. Our platform is not responsible for any copyright infringements made by participants.

Changes to Competition Rules: Our platform reserves the right to change the competition rules at any time, in compliance with current legislation. Any modifications will be published on the website and will be binding for participants.

Right to Cancel the Competition: Our platform reserves the right to cancel the competition due to lack of enrollment or other justified reasons. In such cases, participants will be notified individually and the registration fees will be refunded within 15 days from the notification of the cancellation.

Adherence to Terms and Conditions: Participants are required to adhere to the terms and conditions of the competition as stated on our website. Failure to comply may result in disqualification.

No Responsibility for Third-Party Use: Our platform is not responsible for the use of participants’ submissions by third parties, including content that has been shared by third parties or indexed by search engines.

Please note that these rules are a summary and participants should refer to the full terms and conditions on our website for complete information.



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www.schoolsforpalestine.com

