

Young people in Abu Dis

Abu Dis is a small Palestinian town in the suburb of Jerusalem. It has been under occupation by Israel since 1967. Since 2002, it has been cut off from Jerusalem by the Israeli Separation Wall.

Young people grow up with the presence of the Israeli army at checkpoints on the Wall, in military vehicles coming through the town and sometimes arresting or beating young men in the town.

There is a military camp on a hill in the town. All young people in Abu Dis know others who have been arrested and imprisoned by the Israeli army.



The struggle to be young

Living behind the Wall and under Israeli Occupation has a bad effect on both physical and psychological health. Experience of terrible events – shootings, imprisonments, torture, army raids – either directly or to members of their families - have traumatised children and adults. The Wall and the closures are dividing and pressuring families.

The majority of people in Abu Dis are young. They are trying to live a normal life. But there is no cinema, music centre or theatre in Abu Dis (people used to go to Jerusalem). The only sports field is threatened by the Wall. There is not enough youth provision for the number of young people. There is very little chance of outings.

Education at risk

As the rest of the Palestinian economy is at risk, education matters enormously to young Palestinian people. Camden visitors have been impressed by how hard they work. But education at schools in Abu Dis and the Al Quds University there are disrupted by the Occupation – stopped by curfews, divided by the Wall, sometimes invaded by the Israeli army.

University students are often stopped by checkpoints from getting to university – this seems to happen a lot on exam days. Recently, a number of students have been arrested by the Israeli army and told that they can return home as long as they do not go to university, which puts their degrees and their future at risk.

