



Canadian International
Development Organization

CIDO Newsletter, August 2026

Welcome to CIDO's periodic newsletter! We are aiming to provide you with informative, compelling updates about CIDO's work, and we welcome your suggestions.

Summary

CIDO Updates: Mariam Joy Project - focus on student mentors, Mohammad and Khadejeh

Donor Spotlight: Dr. Feridun Hamdullahpur

Your Next Steps: CIDO Donation Link; CIDO Social Media Links

CIDO Updates

Mariam Joy Project

In this edition, we are excited to share with you feedback from student mentors supported by CIDO's partner, Mariam Foundation's flagship project: "Mariam Joy". In our [March](#) and [June](#) newsletters, we highlighted feedback from Palestinian families whose children with cancer were provided daily companionship and emotional support throughout their treatment journeys.

Mohammad and Khadejeh - two of the many university students trained by Mariam Foundation last academic year - share their insights and learning below, as they stay by the children's side, offering them care, warmth, and emotional stability during long and difficult hospital stays.



"My journey as a companion in the Mariam Joy Program through the Mariam Foundation, serving our children at the An-Najah National University Hospital, has never been just about the hours spent in hospital hallways. It has been a complete redefinition of my understanding of strength and humanity. I started this journey with the intent to give, only to find myself a student of young heroes who face the toughest challenges with smiles that put mountains to shame.

The true impact of companionship goes far beyond logistical support; it lies in that profound bond that prompts a child to message me before I even arrive: 'Mohammed, are you coming today? We are waiting for you.' It's in that moment when a little one searches for me the second they arrive for medical check-ups, seeking a friend to share their fear and transform it into courage. This trust is not just a responsibility; it is a badge of honour I wear with pride.

I have learned that a gentle touch, a conversation, or a simple game can serve as a 'warrior's rest' for a mother exhausted by anxiety, and a motivation for a child to regain their appetite for life and medicine. While we do not change the harsh reality of illness, we build

from it a bridge of hope and laughter. My pride is beyond words—to be part of this impact, and to have my name associated with moments of joy stolen from the heart of pain, destined to remain etched in my memory and theirs forever.” - Mohammad, “Mariam Joy” Student Mentor



“Since joining the companionship program at Mariam Joy, I have discovered a new meaning of “giving” every single day. I came thinking I had something to offer these children — I quickly realized they were the ones giving me far more.

I remember a young boy, newly diagnosed with cancer, who entered the hospital rejecting everything and everyone around him. Pain, fear, and shock were speaking for him. When I walked into his room, I brought nothing but time, a toy, and a smile. We sat, we played, and slowly the anger faded — replaced by a quiet calm and a small, stolen smile. That moment made me realize: what we do is not entertainment. It is healing of a different kind.

For a child, a hospital is a place of needles, fear, and pain. Our mission is to show him there is another side — that someone comes not with a syringe or medicine, but with a game, a laugh, and a small breath of joy. We try to create moments he loves, beautiful memories he will carry long after he leaves.

This work eases not only the children, but their mothers too. While we played with the kids, the mothers would step outside to breathe and rest from the weight of exhaustion. When they returned, I could see a lightness in their faces — and that alone made everything worthwhile.

I grew to deeply love these children, their families, and the indescribable bond we built together. If a week passed without seeing them, I felt a real emptiness in my days.



Mariam Joy did not simply give me a volunteering opportunity — it gave me a school of life, and a family I never knew I needed.” - Khadejeh, “Mariam Joy” Student Mentor

CIDO is honoured to stand alongside Mariam Foundation and support projects like "Mariam Joy". To learn more, visit our [Gaza Urgent Appeal page](#).

Donor Spotlight



We wish to highlight Dr. Feridun Hamdullahpur, a significant donor to CIDO in fiscal year 2024-2025. His generous contribution has been put to work supporting children with cancer through the Mariam Foundation.

“Helping anyone in need is human. Helping children with cancer, however, holds a special place in my heart and my wife Cathy’s. Our sorrow lessens knowing that we were able to ease their suffering a bit and that they received good treatment and care, thanks to CIDO and the Mariam Foundation’s pioneering leadership, even under challenging conditions.”

Your Next Steps

At this time of conflict, displacement and great need in the world, please consider contributing through CIDO to Mariam Foundation's efforts in supporting some of the world's most vulnerable children, who are fighting cancer in Palestine. Your donation would make a huge difference in the life and wellbeing of a child and the overall family. [Donate Now.](#)

We also strongly encourage you to stay connected and follow our work online as we expand our online presence. By following CIDO's social media profiles and engaging with our content, you help increase awareness of our humanitarian mission to support Palestinian families and children in need.

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Parting Words

“...[J]ust as it has always been possible to look away, it is always possible to stop looking away.”

Omar El Akkad