



Headlines and heartstrings

Over the past few weeks headlines in the UK have been dominated by the scandal surrounding MPs' expenses. The investigation, carried out by the Daily Telegraph, has brought to light the nature of the claims made, which range from moat cleaning to tins of dog food – and everything in between! Not a single day has gone by, without yet another MP's name and claim being revealed.

When asked for their opinion, most people speak of the breakdown of trust that has taken place, and of the lack of transparency surrounding the actions taken by MPs. It brings into sharp focus a society that is at odds with itself.

There is a lot to be learnt from the example of our partners working in the Middle East, as they seek to serve those in their community whilst thinking very little of their own needs. One such example is Rawdat El Zuhur in Jerusalem.

Elizabeth Nasir, a Christian social worker and daughter of a Palestinian clergyman, opened her home to 25 destitute girls after being shocked to see so many homeless and unwanted girls wandering the streets of Jerusalem. The school of Rawdat El Zuhur, meaning 'garden of flowers' was founded in response to an urgent need for Palestinian education, for both under-privileged boys and girls.

Many of the children come from low income families so the fees they pay only cover a quarter of the actual cost of running the school. Rawdat El Zuhur relies heavily on donations to keep its doors open.

Teachers are keen to make learning as enjoyable as possible and extra-curricular activities are also encouraged in order to develop students' skills and talents even further. The school follows the government curriculum, and languages include not only Arabic, but also English and French.

The school seeks to remain open through all circumstances but did have to close recently due to politically related matters. In order to deal with this closure, an extra week will be added onto the end of the summer term, as the teachers do not want to let their pupils' education suffer unnecessarily.

In spite of the pain and devastation in the Middle East, the school continues to make every effort to rekindle the hope for justice and peace in the hearts of young children and their families.