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USAID Unveils New Library at Dar Al-Kalima University

West Bank – Today, representatives from the U.S. government, Dar Al-Kalima University College of Arts and Culture, Bright Stars of Bethlehem, and the Minister of Education celebrated the opening of a new library and multimedia center in Bethlehem. The solar powered library was constructed through a grant from the USAID Office of American Schools and Hospitals and Bright Stars of Bethlehem and features the latest advancements in technology to support academic research and exchanges. The library, the first of its kind in the region to focus on arts and culture, now has the capacity to house more than 25,000 books and media titles including an extensive collection of English language materials from American authors, artists, and filmmakers.

U.S. Consul General Donald Blome inaugurated the facility, saying, "This library and multimedia resource center will help thousands of Palestinian students strive toward the highest of ideals. And it is our hope that the renovations will help them reach the stars…. We could not be prouder of this investment." The new library operates entirely on solar energy and features the latest advancements in technology to support academic research and exchanges with other universities around the world.

Speaking at the event, Dar Al-Kalima University President Dr. Mitri Raheb stated, "This new library is a game-changer for us. We are now distinctly positioned to be a resource, not only for our university students, but the entire region."

Established in 2006, Dar Al-Kalima University College of Arts and Culture is the first Palestinian academic institutions to focus on performing arts, visual arts, and cultural heritage. The university offers both bachelor's and diploma programs in nine disciplines, emphasizing the important role of the arts to raise cultural and societal awareness for the development, growth, and excellence of Palestinian society.

The U.S. Government, through USAID, is the leading provider of bilateral development assistance to the Palestinians, having provided more than $5.4 billion since 1994 for programs in the areas of democracy and governance; education; health and humanitarian assistance; private sector; and water resources and infrastructure. USAID/ASHA provides assistance to schools, libraries, and medical centers outside the United States. Since 2004, USAID/ASHA has invested more than $56 million in the region to support construction, renovation, and the procurement of scientific, medical, and educational equipment.