

# Working with the Rubble: the Enduring Resilience of Palestinian Universities in Gaza

Alison Phipps and Dr Tawona Ganyamatopé Sitholé - UNESCO Chair for Refugee Integration through Education, Languages and Arts at University of Glasgow

On International Education Day 2025 Palestinian students and academics released a film of testimonials of hope documenting their enduring commitment to studying and to providing education.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G5MmIDc1LXE>

The film reflects the experiences of the UNESCO Chair for Refugee Integration through Education, Languages and Arts in working through the scholasticide with students and academic staff, since they resumed teaching in March 2024, despite the worsening conditions of the Israeli occupation and genocidal campaign.

In this seminar Alison will briefly contextualise her present work with Gaza by outlining the work undertaken previously, before focusing on the actions being taken in the present to enable students and academics to resume their studies, to work with the overwhelming scale of loss, destruction and mourning for fellow students and academic teachers, and to enable a fragile, networked infrastructure to form through the work of solidarity with global movements and with international universities.

In particular, she will focus on the work of Amani Al Maqdaha and Sultan Barakat in their vital reports on the needs assessment and leadership requires for rebuilding higher education; on the University of Glasgow Summit and the work of the Royal Society of Edinburgh to document actions universities are taking, can take and where there are critical barriers. She will also refer to two articles she has recently published in Curriculum Perspectives and Language and Intercultural Communication, and to her best selling book of poetry Keep Telling of Gaza, with Khawla Badwan.

She will be accompanied in the seminar by her colleague Dr Tawona Sitholé who has worked as Research Associate and Lecturer in Creative Practice Education and co-editor with Alison and with Dr Hyab Yohannes, of Cultures of Sustainable Peace, an open access book containing several chapters published by colleague in Gaza during the scholasticide. Tawona is a poet and will bring his words to the seminar as counter point.

Alison Phipps is UNESCO Chair for Refugee Integration through Education, Languages and Arts at University of Glasgow and was University of Otago De Carle Fellow 2019-2020. She has worked with Gaza for 15 years.

## Dr Tawona Ganyamatopé Sitholé

I am Lecturer in Creative Practice Education within the UNESCO Chair in Refugee Integration through Education, Languages and the Arts. In research and teaching I am part of CLIP (Culture, Literacies, Inclusion and Pedagogy) Better known as Ganyamatope (my ancestral family name) my heritage inspires me to make connections with other people through creativity, and the natural outlook to learn. Educated by assigned teachers through the schooling system, and by natural teachers through 'pasichigare' (my ancestors lifestyle), I benefit from having more than one way of knowing/learning. As a result, I find myself playing many roles in creativity and education. I am a poet, playwright, storyteller and musician.

I am co-founder of Seeds of Thought, a non-funded arts group. I write, perform, organise events, run workshops amongst other things. We often collaborate with other writers, artists and musicians. Through my creative arts expression and experience, I am now involved in education at all levels, and my creative journey continues.



Thursday 6 March 2021

1-2pm

Staffroom, College of Education, 145 Union Street East

Or join us on Zoom:

Password:

If you have trouble joining on Zoom, please email: [collegefeducation.askotago@otago.ac.nz](mailto:collegefeducation.askotago@otago.ac.nz)