

“Wi’am” The Palestinian Conflict Transformation /Resolution Center 2013 Yearly Report

*Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.
1 Timothy 4:15-16*





Yearly Report: 2013

We extend our appreciation and thanks to all of our partners and donors in Europe and North America who have supported us whether through financial means, training, supervision, spirituality, sending volunteers and mutual visits.

Without your partnership, our hope would wither. Your involvement with us has given us more meaning, more depth and much more hope. Regardless to the amount of the donation, we appreciate your empowerment, solidarity, agape and sincerity. As Mother Theresa says, "It is not how much love we give but how much love we put into giving."

We know how much love you have towards us by sharing not only your possession but yourself. Khalil Jibran says, "You give but little when you give of your possessions. It is when you give of yourself that you truly give."

Introduction:

For Wi'am community development and peacebuilding is neither just an endless dynamic process nor a fixed end-state, it is both. Being involved in the day-to-day work of Wi'am is like being in a beehive: busy, exciting, challenging and frequently taking us in directions we did not expect.

Wi'am continues working in the community at different levels to enhance community development and respond to people's needs through enhancing civic peace, gender equality, peaceful resolution of conflicts, and empowering a generation of active young people, women and children who are at the core of social change and transformation. All of these activities have been conducted through seminars, workshops, exchange visits, networking and training.

In looking back over the year, we find that our interdisciplinary work is intrinsic to the vision and mission of Wi'am, and this focus has helped us define our niche in the community.

We can summarize our activities in the past year as follow:

Wiam's Exchange Programs and Speaking Engagement:

Wiam director and staff have been in different workshops and conferences regionally and internationally.

Zoughbi has been in Lebanon for a conference with the World Council of Churches on the Middle Eastern Christian. Wiam also attended workshops on shared priorities for peacebuilding in the Arab region and possibilities to create Arab Mediation Forum that convened in Lebanon.

Zoughbi has been in South Korea with "The World Council Of Churches 10th General Assembly, God Of life: Lead us to Justice and Peace" Zoughbi has been in Vienna at the **KAICIID Global Forum: Interreligious and Intercultural Education on the Image of the Other.**

Zoughbi has been at the International Committee of the International Fellowship Reconciliation meeting that took place in Congo-Brazzaville .

Imad and Wael and other youth participated in many exchanges in Europe including two programs in Budapest about Environmental Issues that Impact your World.

Wiam attended a EuroMed Seminar **"Amber 4 colours! By „DIAGONAL Hungary"**.

Lucy attended the first regional meeting within Regional Initiative: Resolution 1325 in MENA, Alexandria. Lucy also attended **ICAN's 2nd Annual MENA/Asia Regional Women's Rights, Peace and Security Forum Building Movements, Promoting Plurality** Istanbul, Turkey.



Volunteerism

Since Wi'am's inception, all activities have been carried out by volunteers and some staff. We now have at least ten interns every year, from abroad as well as locally. We have at least thirty volunteers from different professional backgrounds who help us carry out several projects in various fields. The staff of Wiam volunteer in different areas whether training, counselling, lecturing, resolving conflicts, assisting needed families and doing voluntary work on the public sphere alone and with other organizations.

We would like to send bouquets of flowers to the volunteers who were with us including John Daniel Gore from the USA Methodist Church, Adena Joy Duvachelle from USA, Nicky Davis from England and others. Please do find and see attached Nicky Davies, report for being a volunteer with us. We highly appreciate the presence of Grace Killian who has been with us since September and will remain with us for almost two years as a Global Mission Fellow through United Methodist Global Ministries. The volunteers come for varying lengths of time: some for weeks, some for months, or years. Therefore, we have been avant-garde in the issue of volunteerism for the last two decades and as a result of that spirit we have the following project:

“Yes for Volunteerism”,

The main goal of the project is enhancing the spirit of volunteerism among young people and building the capacities of unemployed Palestinian graduates from the Hebron and Bethlehem areas in the field of volunteerism and community initiatives. Young volunteers are empowered in areas of volunteerism, public speaking, building initiatives, need assessment, presentation skills, reporting and planning. This initial capacity development stage is complemented with matching volunteers to organizations in which they will intern in order to develop on-the-job experience, skills and empower their spirit of volunteerism.

Volunteers will work towards raising the awareness of the community on the importance of voluntary work/highlighting the value of volunteerism to the wider community and CSO's through delivering social initiatives, engaging radio talks and raising the awareness of students and the general public on the value of Volunteerism.



Community-Based Mediation-Sulha:

Wi'am continues to offer an effective conflict transformation services for the community. The current socio-political and economic situation is exacerbating intra-community conflicts that create unstable situation among community members. In response to this situation, we are working on the ground to transform community conflicts and create rapport among community members.

Wi'am team of mediators is continuing their unabated mediation with the objective of restoring normal relationship between individuals and families, and, at the same time enhances civic peace. During the year, Wi'am intervened in around 420 cases of conflict (major and minor) reconciling 80% of the cases, while the 20% are pending further work.

The feedback we got from the community, we sense an appreciation to the work of Sulha with more people approaching us to intervene in their conflicts. Mediation in total contributed towards diffusing community conflicts, decreasing communal tension, enhancing a culture of dialogue and non-violence. Here we appreciate the work of volunteers besides my colleagues who are working on kairos time and not chronos time to respond to the needs of the local community.



Literature

Part of Wi'am's effort to disseminate its best practice and experience in areas of conflict transformation and Mediation so others can use them for information as well as for training. We have produced the following books and booklets in Arabic which are available at Wiam and SULHA is in English (Both the hardcopy and Kindle versions are now live on Amazon)

1-Conflict Resolution and Non violence

2-Peer Mediation

3- Women and Inheritance

4- Reducing Violence at School

5-SULHA, Research Study on Community-Based Mediation in Palestine and Its Impact on Peacebuilding

Last but not least...We have finished compiling a book on Sulha that has been published in English entitled. We also hope to publish an Arabic book using critical thinking and evaluation of the use of Sulha. The book constitutes a practical and theoretical reference that will provide researchers, peace activists, students, academics, non-native speakers of Arabic with knowledge and practices on Sulha. The Arabic book will entail practical case-studies that depict the work of Wi'am mediators that were invested in resolving communal conflicts.

Non Violent Activities:

Wi'am has many activities and trainings for youth and others in Non Violence...

The activities:

1-Wi'am trained youth from the West Bank Area about What Nonviolence means? What methods of Nonviolence the Palestinians use? Why do we need Nonviolence in our societies?

2-Wi'am trained 500 youth in Techniques and skills of Nonviolence.

3-Wiam youth participated in the context of nonviolent actions, such as ongoing demonstrations and vigils at Cremisan, Al-Walajieh al Massara, Nabi Saleh, Billin, Nillin...and The Apartheid Wall.

4- Wi'am youth took part in the demonstration and vigils regarding gender justice and resisting other violent actions in the Society

5-Wi'am held conferences, workshops, lectures, drama activities and ice-breakers about family domestic violence and reconciliation, using Biblical stories about Joseph, Cain and Able, the sons of Noah and also case studies from modern days.

6-Wi'am trained the youth in Nonviolence and Social Activism through real case studies.



Peer Mediation

The Peer mediation program trained around 300 students in mediation techniques in about ten area schools. They learned basic skills in peer mediation, active listening, problem solving, communication skills, and presenting possible solutions. The trainees showed a significant increase in their use of integrative negotiation behavior in which they use these skills at school and home to resolve conflicts with their peers and friends. The conflicts that lend themselves to peer-mediation include interpersonal disputes, verbal harassment, spreading rumors, physical aggression or bullying behaviors.

This component is complemented by training teachers and parents in various schools in the West Bank in peer mediation. These activities are culminated with the production and dissemination of a training manual on peer-Mediation and other interrelated fields (focusing on Case Studies and experiential learning). In the final analysis, the activities contributed towards reducing school violence, enhancing pupil's achievements and creating a better school environment.



Human Rights Training:

The human right training was attended by twenty-five students from different universities. The students learned about human rights and international humanitarian law. They acquired skills in writing complaints, monitoring human rights violations and documentation mechanisms. The training also focused on the identifications of efforts regarding human rights violations in which they learned about ways to determine what rights have been violated. The participants engaged in naming what rights they feel have been violated and what rights they should target when preparing advocacy strategy in cooperation with civil groups (i.e. women rights, children rights).

The participants got into discussion about basic human rights such as freedom of expression, movement, belief, education, justice, gender equality, children rights, and participation in public and political life. The participants are more convinced that civil, cultural, political and social rights impose obligations on governments to honor these rights. They also focused on the violations of Palestinians rights by occupation.



“Activating Social Intervention against Mounting School Violence”

Through this project we managed to work with four schools in Bethlehem area targeting four groups of teachers, students, parents and social workers. Through separate meetings with each focus group in the four schools, we reached a Recommendation Letter (RL) that summarizes the causes of violence in the four schools and other schools in general. This RL was submitted to the Ministry of Education (MOE) and other schools in the area during a town hall meeting that hosted diverse stakeholders. They discussed RL and put forth their own ideas for reducing school violence.

As a follow up to the RL, Wi'am organized regular meetings with the MOE in which teachers, parents and Wi'am staff met with members of the MOE discussing the progress in implementing the RL nationally.

Media campaigns such as radio talks, posters, t-shirts and the dissemination of literature were used to raise the public's awareness about the negative impact of school violence on students and the

community in general. The Radio Talk hosted diverse actors (educators, social worker, students, parents and teachers) from the four schools. The media visibility gave teachers, parents and students a platform to voice their opinion freely and discuss different ways of dealing with school violence. “End the Silence, Stop the Violence” was one motto of the campaign.

We managed to document the learning experiences of the beneficiaries (students, teachers, parents, social workers) in a “School Journal”. This magazine integrated the learning experiences of the students, the perspectives of teachers, and students on ways of reducing school violence and their vision for a better school. The magazine also included success stories, articles written by students on non-violence, teacher’s opinion on school violence, parent’s ideas, social workers opinion, case studies, art work, best practices, learning experiences, and personal experiences in resolving cases of peer-conflicts in their schools.

Building a Social Media Infrastructure for Wi’am

We have worked on implementing our outreach and advocacy campaigns through social media tools. The project focused on the development of Wi’am’s infrastructure and tutoring its team on best practices and utilization of social media channels and content management to increase Wi’am visibility on all levels, promoting our programs and mustering support.

Wi’am's online presence has been greatly developed. We surpassed 6,000 members so far. Our skills in content management have greatly developed and now we are conforming to our content management plan in our postings. Moreover we can now analyze our web analytics and understand what's happening, such as Google analytics and Facebook insights.

Women empowerment Activities:

Wi'am continues with its vibrant ongoing programs for women. Wi'am has enhanced its weekly meetings of the women's group with diverse activities ranging from educational activities, workshops, advocacy campaigns, round-table discussions, seminars and training to voluntary work in the community. Wi'am is working under difficult conditions to empower women and built their capacity at different levels so that they meet the challenges and contribute to the development of the community. The objectives of such activities are to build public and political awareness on Gender issues and willingness to address human rights violations and discrimination against women



Inheritance Denied for Women:

This project is considered to be a pioneer in exposing social norms that deprive women of their inheritance rights in the Palestinian society. Wi'am accomplished a year-long project that targeted roughly ninety women from areas of Hebron, Nablus, Bethlehem and Jordan Valley (i.e. Zbeidat village).

The project aims to empower marginalized women to attain their inheritance rights though different activities. After the selection of the target group from four marginalized geographical areas, we compiled a base-line study to pin point areas of intervention and the

different needs of the target population. We managed to raise the awareness of women and the larger community on the issue via two Radio talk hosting key women activists. The media component dealt with problems facing women in attaining their legal inheritance rights and ways of overcoming this problem. Wi'am also provided legal aid and counseling to women to help them claim their personal legal rights. A training manual was also produced in order to aid women in this essential field.

Other activities tackled the issues of women's place in society. Wi'am held monthly meetings with eighteen women and development organizations in order to discuss different topics in attempts to influence the decision making mechanisms of the Palestinian Authority. For one example, they have marked March 8th, 2014, as a day where different representatives and stakeholders are called to change laws and policies regarding women's inheritance rights. Second, we have launched an advocacy campaign on women's social and legal rights in cooperation with women's coalitions from different areas. The motto for the campaign has been, "Stop the so-called 'honor killing'." Third, through trainings, we have tried to increase the capacity for leadership and human rights among and young adults focusing on UNSCR 1325, gender mainstreaming, gender justice and the CEDAW Convention. Finally, Wi'am offered conflict transformation and counseling for women and children who were the victims of domestic violence and harassment.



Summer Camp:

Wi'am recreational summer CAMP had hosted around 80-100 children in a healthy, safe and secure environment to help them make the best of their summer vacation and advise them on ways to use their time wisely. The Camp is 8-week long summer program comprised of three sessions per day for kids aged 7-15 in Bethlehem area. The camp cultivated hands-on skills while exploring innovative thinking, design and the creative process. Our workshops aimed exclusively towards a holistic development of children.

The kids transform ideas into artifacts and personal achievement into community success. They participated in unique, in-depth, hands-on explorations in the arts, drama and cultural fields. We made art more accessible to kids through in-depth workshop that engage them in artistic creative work in painting, drawing, creating figures from cartons, environmental awareness, composting, drama, voluntary work, peer-mediation. The activities include exposure to a variety of art forms including folk art, planting their very own vegetable garden, do composting, do their own theatre play, and engage in actual peer-mediation.

The Summer Camp encouraged Children to think on their own wisely, be creative, make friends, and apply their learning into social initiatives such as volunteer to clean their schools yard and Wi'am garden.



Citizen Diplomacy: Introducing Cultural and Political Facets of Palestine

Wi'am Continues to welcome hundreds of visitors from international groups. We have hosted/welcomed more than 100 groups from all over the world who come to visit our Centre. They learn about the socio-political situation in Palestine; meeting local families; enjoy home-stays with an authentic taste of traditional food, music, and culture. They learn first-hand knowledge about the impact of the occupation on the life of the Palestinians and get acquainted with Wi'am experience in the field of peace-building, reconciliation, civic education, non-violent action, women empowerment, children activities, outreach work, advocacy, and justice issues.



Sharing the Bread: A Journey of Faith in the Holy Land

Wi'am tries to enhance understanding and dialogue between Congregations and churches in the Holy Land. The target group was sixty women from different congregations in Bethlehem area. The project contributed towards establishing a dynamic cooperation between different congregations in Bethlehem area and helped in



raising the awareness of the participants on different issues relevant to their daily life and intergenerational relationships.

We had various training workshops and conferences for youth women and men **on Kairos, Ecumenism, family problems, Christian values, liberation Theology, interfaith dialogue, intergenerational understanding**

Workshops on Kairos:

The participants had enhanced knowledge on Kairos document, a new genre of theological declarations that shares a common concern for justice from a Christian perspective. It calls Christians worldwide to reexamine their faith in light of oppression, manifestations of violence, and situations of deep social inequalities. They discussed the theology of the Land and the need to be ingrained in this troubled area. They also discussed aspects of the

oppression that they face and ways of coping with its repercussions on their families.

The participants were introduced to the notion of “liberation theology”, one of the common elements of the document, that is, to reinterpret biblical texts and Christian beliefs in light of the reality of social oppression, and to reaffirm the prophetic role of the Churches in the Holy Land. They also reached a conclusion that the theology behind the Kairos document is that the Gospel is never a dead document, but always addresses the here and now and ultimately calls for justice in each present situation

Workshops on Interfaith Dialogue:

Wiam always promote peaceful and humane culture by understanding the nature of dialogue and creating space for genuine dialogue amongst people from diverse backgrounds and with different worldviews, beliefs, and assumptions.

The workshops strongly encouraged that the jargon of aggression and hatred be rephrased with peace, mutual respect. The participants agree that mutual respect and understanding should prevail over scepticism and hatred. The participants reached an agreement that individual might disagree and their perceptions may differ, but the important thing is to respect each other's opinion and resort to dialogue and avoid prejudice.

The workshop enabled participants to challenge stereotypes, while fully respecting particular faith identity. The overall question explored: What can we, as people of faith, do to respond to the pressing challenges of our time as violence and conflict are on the rise?

Conferences and Workshops on Family Problems/Intergenerational Relations:

In the workshops, the participants openly discussed current family problems such as intergenerational gap, domestic violence, husband-wife problems, and problems related to the economic situation. The participants agree that their children need careful attention and language that can create rapport in the family and between different families in general. They come to a conclusion that Social Media is creating uphill challenges to families and put much strain in raising children and causing family problems. They agree that to overcome social problems we need an open channel of communication between family members based on mutual respect.

Workshops on Ecumenism and social problems:

The workshop focused on highlighting theological issues of concern that touch upon our daily life. The discussion centered on aspects of marriage and the breakdown of marriages in some communities. They also discussed ways of good example of sound relationship.

Field Visit to Nablus, Borqin, Sebastia, Battir and other places:

The visits to Borqin, Sebastia and Nablus areas helped the participants learn more about their historical and religious roots in the Holy Land as an empowerment element in their faith. The visit opened their eyes about the religious and historical significance of these places. They gained a unique spiritual uplifting in which they experienced the sites from a religious perspective. The participants considered the visit as rich spiritual experience that deepened their spiritual roots to the place.



Example of Visits to Mother Nature:

Wiam tries to raise awareness about environmental issues and encouraging our people to take care of Mother Nature to live in ecological balanced environment despite of all the problems.

On November 6, a group of around 60 youth from the Bethlehem and Hebron areas visited the village of Battir together... Battir is a village west of Bethlehem that is the site of historic train station, dating back to the Ottoman times. The group visited the eco museum of Battir and hiked in the village, learning about the ancient irrigation system and the history of the village. It was a wonderful time to explore nature and build relationships for those involved

Christmas Gifts

Wi'am had a different approach in celebrating Christmas this year. We have been able to provide a large number of elderly people and children with gifts that were distributed individually through the out-reach program. The Grinch was not able to steal Christmas, even from the children of the West Bank and Gaza.

Advocacy programs:

Wi'am, with the participation of civic networks, engaged in an advocacy campaign advocating women's legal and Human Rights. The theme of the advocacy Campaign was directed against unjust laws and practices that discriminate against women (i.e. honor killing). Different groups, key actors, women activists, lay people and academics participated in the campaigns. We also organized many meetings to raise their awareness on their rights and legal frameworks applied in the society, exposing discriminatory acts against them. We managed also to monitor legal cases and incidence of domestic violence through our mediation work and personal encounters.

We also participated in a TV debate that hosted different stakeholders, Human Rights activist tackling problems facing women, in specific the so called "honor killing".



Activities:

- Launching an advocacy campaign on women's legal and human rights
- Raising awareness on existing laws and human rights frameworks applied for Palestinian women
- Monitor legal cases and incidences of gender based violence
- Engage with media, and key stakeholders to create an environment of accountability for perpetrators

WHAT IS NEXT:

"Go forth and transform

Your personal relationships,

Your community, your world.

We are all agents of transfiguration."

-- Desmond Tutu

Next year will be 2014... We are approaching the 20th celebration of Wi'am,

Would you be so kind as to send or write to us with any creative suggestions and brilliant ideas...

