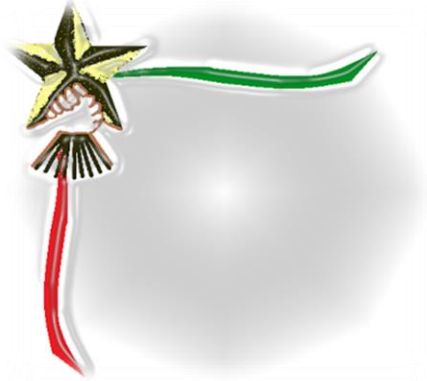


Wi'am Yearly Report, 2017



Background:

During 2017, we saw our work ploughing ahead, with new challenges, achievements, experience and acquaintances. Each year, we are looking forward to an exciting and demanding project work, as well as deep-reaching internal reflection and organizational improvement that bring with it considerable growth.

Our work during the year has been focusing on transforming community conflicts reaching a more harmonious community relationships that turns enmity into cooperation. We have been engaging youth in social initiatives that create change on the ground and help in transforming community conflicts. We also focused on enabling children to be a creative force in their schools, training in peer-mediation and using theatre as a way to highlight problems at their schools and eventually deal with it. At the level of gender rights, we have been training women and give them the chance to advocate for a recognition of their rights and their participation in public and political life, calling for their protection and the respect of their rights. Our staff capacity has been improved in which they participated in Monitoring and evaluation training for a better delivery of activities, implementation and reporting of projects.

Our activities were made possible through the support and funding made available by kind and honest donors. It is therefore our honor to thank all Wi'am's generous donors, who show great vision and a strong commitment to peace and community development.

We hereby bring to you our yearly glimpse into the universe of themes, projects, we have been implementing during 2017:

I. Community Based Mediation: SULHA

Background of the project:

The turbulent socio-political situation, recurrent tensions, economic upheaval and conflict over resources are some of the complex challenges to local peace. This has had disastrous consequences impact on the life of families, individuals, social cohesion that put a severe toll on progress towards community development and societal change.

Building resilient communities and preventing the outbreaks of conflicts requires our prompt a robust/subtle intervention to prevent and mediate conflicts that arise in different communities. Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, (July 2016)

There are two demanding needs facing Palestinian society which is strategic to focus upon when talking about domestic/community conflicts:

1. The need to resolve conflicts that do arise peacefully, effectively and sustainably such that they do not protrude to a more complicate scenario and cause further problems that we cannot contain or mitigate.
2. The need to intercept/prevent conflicts and avoid situations that cause conflicts, particularly conflicts caused by lack of representation, gender bias, inter-cultural/generational gaps hopelessness, unemployment inequality and injustices that discriminate against human rights.

Overall Objectives

The overall objective of the project is to improve the social cohesion and mending social relationships by reducing the level of conflicts and resolving civil disputes through an effective implementation of mediation practices.

What Mediation entails: Sulha

Mediators at Wi'am, leaves no stone unturned, they work tirelessly during the year to respond to cases of family and communal conflicts, and constructively deal with negative behaviors, improve relationships and reverse the trajectory of the parties in the conflict.

Mediators also act as early warning 'beacons', ensuring that action is taken on an issue(s) before tension escalates into violence. Beyond the traditional role of transforming conflicts, our mediators help initiative and deepen dialogue across the board between different communities and groups, planting ideas and shifting discourses towards a more peaceful community that adopts non-violence and dialogue as a way of life and as a peace-building strategy.

When conflicts erupt between conflicting parties or individuals, mediators listen to each of the conflicting parties separately, in order to hear the perspectives of all

of the parties involved. By allowing each party to express their views and to vent their anger, this stage serves to build-up trust and create an atmosphere of confidence.

After this fact-finding stage, the disputants are subsequently brought together. The discussion is facilitated by the mediator and aims to help disputants to take responsibility for the process and come to an agreement by themselves. Throughout the process, mediators refer to religious texts, narratives, myths and stories to stress the religious relevance of reconciliation and peace. The mediator engages in talks with both parties, sometimes calling for the intervention of an expert in specific matters related to the conflict issue (e.g. a land related conflicts, inheritance), or seeking political, family or religious influence to put pressure on the conflicting parties to peacefully resolve the conflict. By bringing together key figures and key elders, a frame of preventive measures has been taken and by creating a safe space for dialogue, conflicts can be tackled at an early stage.

Mediation, thus, is an interactive process

The interactive nature of mediation permits the possibility of multiple and joint influences on outcomes. For example, in a landlord-tenant mediation, both the landlord and the tenant engage in persuasive attempts to influence the mediator toward their individual positions. At the same time, the mediator is sorting out past and present issues, guiding them toward a resolution. Both disputants and the mediator exchange viewpoints, maneuvering for various positions, and making proposals toward a resolution. Mediators influence disputants by making the disputants focus on present rather than past events or issues, a critical role of a mediator is to persuade disputants to behave in a cooperative rather than a confrontive manner

We helped in disputes involving:

It is worth mentioning that they year 2017 witnessed an increase in the intensity/numbers of conflicts in which family conflicts are the main category that we dealt with. During the year, we managed to transform around 420 cases of conflicts with a total success of %85. Around 20 % of the family-oriented cases received individual counseling that helped the parties involved cope the psychological repercussions of the conflict and lead a normal a life again.

The cases we intervened:

- a) Access to Land and Land Ownership: 3%
- b) Economy/Lack of Livelihood Opportunities: %2
- 3) Domestic violence: Psychological abuse- emotional/verbal abuse %25
- 4) Intergenerational problems: %12

- 5) intra-family conflicts: %13
- 6) Land and tenant problems: %3
- 7) Inheritance issues: %5
- 8) Youth problems: infighting, delinquency, violence: %20
- 9) School Problems: violence in schools, bullying, teacher-student disagreements: %15
- 10) Car accidents: %2

Longer-Term Outcomes – Communication/friendly relationship

The successes of mediation process can be measured both in terms of immediate resolution of the particular dispute(s) and/or in terms of longer term benefits. With Mediation, reported improvements in communication and reduction of conflict were strongly correlated with resolution of the issues in disputes.

In our mediation, it was crucial to gain the support of local religious and community elders since family ties and social control is high. In our communities the local key figures were supportive from the beginning in which our mediators consulted and shared with them the “identification of conflict triggers”.

1. Community-based mediation tips the balance of injustices facing the powerless as a way to create a win-win situation that is conducive to building a social peace and a just society
2. Create inter-generational dialogue that helps the young of the age understand and have dialogue with the young of the heart. Having two-way communication between the older generation and the young generation is the golden password for creating a society based that believes in dialogue, respect and the understanding of the opinion of the other which eventually leads to transformative change not only at the personal level but also at the collective one
3. Creating an open channel of communication with the elderly and key figures that help in stirring change and advancing civic peace and gender rights
4. Creating a space for people to more believe in pluralism, respect of the other and non-violence
5. Creating local networks of mediators and, peace activists, men of religion, academics, specialists, human rights groups who work together to influence change and advocate social needs and raise voices of the younger generations

Real-life Case: The Intractable Mother-in-Law

When a married woman is offended or injured by her mother-in-law and husband, she has the right to return to her father's or other kinsman's house. In our case, R., 35 years old, who works as a teacher in one of the remote schools, lives with her ill-tempered mother-in-law and husband, who constantly scolded her and made unreasonable demands on her. She did not want a divorce but could not bear life with her mother-in-law nor husband. Following custom, she consulted her family who advised her to approach Wi'am Center.

Desperate, R. sought the help of Wi'am mediators. She agreed to come to the office and narrate her story which entails a long and breath-taking description of her ordeal which visibly disclose a history of mixed psychologically and physically abuse that left some visible psychological wounds on her let alone some scars on her body.

The mediators engaged in a shuttle diplomacy mediation between the two conflicting parties, convincing the mother-in-law and the husband to curb their temper and respect the fact that the R.'s dignity should be respected as she is an integral member of the family. After a long process of convincing and negotiation, the mother-in-law and the husband started to back down. They are more confined that Insulting R. is as insulting the whole family.

At the end, the Woman (R.) was happy that the situation of coercion that she was facing has ended and that her mother in law and her husband are cooperative with her and consult with her on the family matters without any condescending or aggressive manner.

Real-life Case Study II:

One of the heart-breaking cases has been referred to us via the hotline. It is the case of Samah, a conservative Beni Na'em village, South of Hebron. Samah, 24 years old, is a member of traditional family that consists of 5 male brothers, younger than her. She has a degree in social work, finished her degree from Hebron University 2 years ago. When she finally found a job in one of the schools in Hebron city, her family vehemently objected her endeavor to join her work in Hebron claiming that she will be mingling with male members and by this she violates that family tradition and what they consider "religion". This stance of her parents came as a shock to her but wasn't strange and a blow to her dreams to apply her knowledge and practice her right to education on equal footing with her male brothers. One of the implications of this ordeal on Samah is that she developed a depressive mood that made her stay at home without leaving it.

One day she collected her courage and called our office in which she received an initial counseling and guidance about the next step. Her call was taken by a

young female to avoid any embarrassment to her and not to expose her to further problems with the social norms that cripple her.

One of the important steps taken by the senior mediator is to involve our young mediators in which they reached an urgent plan of action with practical intervention steps. The consensus was that the senior mediator be accompanied by our two youth female mediators that visited the house of the girl. During the visit, the girls posed as friends of the girl and paved the way for the senior mediator to step in. They eventually met with the father, engaged in a long conversation with the father. They managed to unlock the impasse by appealing to the father's conscience and morality. They told him that religion doesn't object the work of the girl. They also told him about their personal story of studying and working and how their families supported their choices. They also told him that mingling with men is not only in the workplace; when they were at the university they used to study with young boys.

After a long and strenuous conversation, the father reached a breaking point in which he admitted that he objected Samah's joining her work simply because of the tradition that he considered not 'fair' in many cases. So, the girls have the promise the father that he will give the green light for Samah to join her work and be active agent in her community.

What we have learned from these cases:

- Conflicts can be solved with the support of neutral and impartial mediator don't take sides; who immerses his emotion to find a win-win resolution that saves the face of the parties involved in the conflict

- We need to support youth in their endeavor to mediate Inter-generational family-oriented problems as they can exert "moral" pressure on the parents to listen to their sons more attentively and give more freedom to their sons and daughters to choose their path in life

- We need to equip our mediators and young people with culture-sensitive training that can pre-empt any problem and at the same time help unlock traditional and Patriarchal thinking that is based on gender biases

- A shift from reactionary conflict management to a more proactive conflict management and transformation is observed. Mediators exceed the mere mediation norms to a more personal involvement that entails direct support and guidance.

- Mediators are able to reduce the likelihood of conflict, and lower the risk of conflict spreading

II. YOUTH PROGRAM:

The youth program is dedicated to youth-led peace building initiatives, sustainable conflict transformation and youth activism. Supporting a growing youth initiative at the grassroots levels, helped in unleashing the potential of youth as asocial agents of change and as actors who can deliver positive results. Young people are leading changes in attitudes and behavior that address issues of social conflicts in their own communities and engaging actively in social initiatives that create social transformation and pave the way for more robust youth role in community life.

Objectives:

1. To support youth peacebuilding action and initiatives to transform and resolve conflicts and advocate civic peace
2. Build the capacities of 120 young people (mainly Bethlehem/Hebron areas-inter alia villages and refugee camps) during the year with conflict mediation and transformation skills
3. To offer young people the opportunity to express their views on major societal issues and offer them an opportunity to express their opinions on topics concerning them

Beneficiaries:

During the year we were able to target 120 young people in total (18-28 years old) from different geographical, social and economic backgrounds in the West Bank areas. The objective was to offer young people the opportunity to express their views on major societal issues and offer them an opportunity to express their opinions on topics concerning them, that is, giving young people a voice and the opportunity to tell their stories and to become agents of peace and societal change.

Activities:

1.1. Training of Trainers

General objectives:

- Familiarizing participants with the concepts and approaches of nonviolent action, i.e. how to use it best and to adapt it to local conditions and realities in order to promote peace-building:
- Motivating participants to advocate for non-violent actions;
- Building the capacities/competences of the participants (knowledge, skills) to work as multipliers and activists for peace building/conflict mediation using tools learnt

Specifics:

The training workshops, led by skilled trainers, was attended by 120 participants (18-25 years old with 55% female participation) during the year. The beneficiaries represented different geographical areas in the West Bank, particularly, Bethlehem and Hebron with surrounding villages and refugee camps.

The first phase of the training which was conducted in the first half of the year, was devoted to Conflict Analysis, looking at the theories of peacebuilding, conflict transformation and intercultural dialogue and facilitation skills. The participants learned conflict analysis skills and models to analyze the complex situation in their communities and find common understandings of the causes of the conflict across social and political lines. When it comes to skills young people learned how to analyze, develop effective communication skills, mediation and negotiation skills to be able to engage with the conflicts they encounter in a constructive manner. They also learned skills in public communication and advocacy to bring conflict situations they wish to change to the attention of policy makers and the wider youth, the elderly and the adult public. The training was also devoted to peacemaking skills at the personal, group, and national levels. The trainings were very interactive, full of small and large group collaboration and, as such, create space for dialogue.

The second phase of the training which continued until the end of the year, focused on instilling the techniques of Sulha through exposing young trainees to real-life case studies that Wi'am mediators worked on in the past. The use of cases studies via role playing and simulations helped the participants map the problem, understand multiple perspectives, give alternatives available to them (win-win solution) based on the needs and the common interests of the conflicting parties and gain insights about the personal and social consequences of the conflict. These put participants in hypothetical situations and challenge them to deliberate and make decisions in new and different ways. Role-play simulations foster both individual and collective learning that can be transferred to "real world" situations. It is also worth noting that the trainings included guest presentations from the local mediators.

Through case studies, simulations and role playing, young people obtained a clear idea about Sulha (Community-based Mediation), the constituent elements of Sulha, and the cultural facets that come with it. They have also a detailed understating of the way in which Sulha works in real-life through the action of mediators (Islah men).

Discussion Topics Include:

- Distinguishing between various dispute resolution practices and mediation
- Examining the core values of mediation and putting them into practice
- Distinguishing between parties' positions and interests
- Identifying negotiable issues
- Helping parties engage in creative problem solving
- Examining how cultural issues affect conflict
- Assessing balance of power issues between parties
- Drafting a quality mediation agreement

Impact/outcomes:

- Enhanced peace-building knowledge and conflict mediation/transformation skills of the target group
- Creating a resource pool of 120 motivated young multipliers equipped with knowledge and skills to transform and mediate conflicts
- Deepening youth's understanding of key concepts of conflict management and non-violent actions, i.e. how to use it best and to adapt it to local conditions and realities in order to promote peace-building;
- Youth are motivated and willing to participate in mediation efforts in cooperation with the elderly and senior mediators and have already begun meeting to discuss various peace initiatives with the mediators.
- Young people are playing a major role in the solution of existing conflicts and tensions between youth groups and various communities in cooperation with the elderly, and taking a leading role in promoting non-violence, establishing links between conflicting groups

1.2. Establishing a hotline run by young people and Supervised by Wi'am staff

Objectives: Assist 170 cases (directly benefiting 250 individuals) in crisis seeking out our support services/mediation to help them find a way through

Wi'am had allocated a landline and a mobile number for people to call – "just to connect with a friendly voice when they are facing a problem. The hotline is completely confidential and anonymous, making it a safe place to turn for people who are afraid to go someplace else or feel they have no place else—due to social, cultural, economic or other reasons.

Responding to all kinds of Problems;

During 2017, young people aided by Wi'am staff responded to 170 calls benefiting more than 250 people. When people in crisis call us, they reach a caring hotline in which the people in charge, the senior/or young mediators, listen to the case seriously, document it and giving their advice to the caller on the best way to deal with their conflict or problem. After the initial call, the mediators either deal with the problem via the telephone or give the caller an appointment to see the person discretely and deal with the problem in a prompt manner. Sifting through the calls that come to us, we have found that 60% of the calls from women and girls who are victims of domestic violence, harassment and/or abuse; while other cases are related to youth/family problems (delinquency, abuse of social media, domestic violence, harassment, bullying, gender discrimination, divorce, unemployment, university conflicts and Patriarchal traditional thinking that discriminate against girls in terms of marriage, education and inheritance.

Impact: Improved discrete crisis counseling, guidance/directions to in conflict cases with sensible solution's and support service for a wide range of cases of conflicts and domestic violence incidents facing women and girls

Activity I.4.: Establishing a network of 30 community Leaders (mediators) and 40 young mediators from different West Bank areas with a focus on Bethlehem and Hebron areas

Due to the important role local leaders play, namely in dealing with local conflicts and de-escalating violence, the project selected key community leaders (notables, religious figures, clan leaders) from our network of mediators from different areas of the West Bank. This network of community leaders is established for the sole purpose of providing young people with mentoring and guidance when dealing with conflicts. The join work of elders and young people together help youth-to-be-mediators learn practical tips and skill in de-escalating and mediating conflicts, and, at the same time, exposes young people to the cultural facets and intricacies of community mediation (SULHA). The involvement of community elders in peace-building constitutes a major corner stone in the effort to establish a joint working relation and cooperation between the younger generation and the elderly to preempt conflicts. As such, joint work in this project can contribute in the effort to bridge the divide between youths and the elderly.

Activity 1.3: Establishing 2 Informal mediation Desks in Hebron and Bethlehem run solely by young people

Part of the effort to engage young trainees in meaningful mediation efforts, 40 young trainees from Bethlehem and Hebron areas established informal “Mediation Groups” that work in their areas to respond to cases of conflicts that arise among youth groups. This group voluntarily takes on its stride to mediate peer conflicts in their areas in close cooperation/supervision of Wi’am’s mediators.

Young mediators, managed to intervene in 25 conflicts around the year mainly in their universities and youth clubs.

Please allow me to narrate a successful case of mediation at Bethlehem University done by Mirna, one of our active students.

“One day, while I was at my class, the professor asked me to come to his office after the class. When I arrived at his office, he told me that he needs my help. He said that the students told him about my active role in mediating conflicts at the university and the capacities I gained at Wi’am to bridge differences between students. He asked me to meet with one of his female student who is facing a problem with her family. I told him that I will meet the girl privately and talk to her about her ordeal. In the second day, I met her at the cafeteria and told her professor felt that she needs help. She told me that her father is pressuring her hardly to leave the university and marry a man that he chose for her. The girl was in a bad shape with visible state of depression and hopelessness because she doesn’t want to leave the university and doesn’t want to marry at all.

I promised the girl to talk to her father about this issue. However, in order to avoid any embarrassment to the girl and any objection from him of any intervention from a female mediator, I told her to invite me to their home so that I take this opportunity to talk to the father head on. At the week end, I went to the house of the girl as a guest for dinner. After finishing our dinner, I have a golden opportunity to talk to the father alone while the girl and her mother are busy in the kitchen. I started talking about the importance of university life and how it empowers our personality and provide us with the necessary education for our future and the next generation. I also told him how my family is so proud of me and how they encourage me to finish my degree and even continue towards the master degree. Then I delved into the subject directly, I ask him: why you are asking Su’ad to leave the University? She is considering you as her highest example of honesty and support for her. Do you think that she will be happy leaving her study and marrying someone she doesn’t know even? She deserves your kindness and care more than something else, and that depriving her of continuing her study will just make her an ignorant mother in the future who cannot teach her children nor can give them kindness because of the

psychological wound that she might develop. I went saying to him that your daughter is continuing your good message in life. After long debate and ups and downs he told me that the reason he wants her to marry is that he thinks that the man is rich and that he would give her what he called “happiness”. I told him that money doesn’t bring happiness, rather your support to your daughter, Su’ad, is the fountain of happiness.

At the end, the father broke in tear and said to me that I should mend this gap between him and his daughter by allowing her to continue her education and give her the freedom to make her own choices away from his interference or coercion.

Success Story I:

After delivering peer-mediation training in the Terra Santa school in Bethlehem, the social worker approached our young trainees asking them to intervene in resolving a conflict with Ameer (grade 10).

Ameer, 12 years old boy, has developed a violent behavior and an aggressive personality in his school. Ameer is a clever student with good achieving marks; however, the broken marriage in his family has caused him much distress and depression. His school achievement was sliding gradually in which he was on the verge of being expelled from school.

At the very early stages of the peer mediation program, Ameer, was very reluctant to join the training as he was considering it “nonsensical” and a waste of time. Being aware of his psychological backlash, Wi’am trainers and the social worker dealt with his case in a very sensitive manner, they managed to convince him to join the training and that his demeanor will be boosted after taking the training. In the process, Ameer was given a leading role in different activities in the school which reassured him of his importance and his role as active participant.

In order to instill the initial transformation and shift in Ameer’s behavior, Wi’am team in cooperation with the school, entrusted him with a leadership role at Wi’am’s summer camp that hosted around 120 children. Ameer was given a leadership role in the camp in which he was responsible for a group of 10 children: 10-14 years old. He was entrusted with organizing the daily work of the group, intervening positively using his acquired mediation skills in resolving conflicts that arise among the group, leading and supervising the daily work of the group. His work with the children and the care he was given to them were a stark witness of the great shift in his behavior and conduct and that fact that he relegated any obtrusive and bullying behavior that he had.

By the same token, the feedback we got from his parents indicate clearly that they are feeling the great shift in his behavior to the better and praising Wi’am

and the school for the work they have done to make Ameer a more responsible boy who uses his leadership skills at home school positively.

Success Story II:

During the recent council elections- 15 young trainees actively engaged as volunteers in observing the elections as volunteers outside the polling stations in Bethlehem and Hebron areas. As the polling stations opened in that day, tensions started to simmer between members of rival electoral lists. In the middle of the day, two members of rival parties starting a fist fighting that could have developed into an all-out fighting between rival supporters. The presence of one of our trained young mediator (Nicola) helped in managing the situation and containing the tension between the parties involve. He managed to convince the two-people involved in the fighting to go to a side room to resolve their conflict and misunderstanding in a peaceful manner. The young mediator stated started the listening stage to the parties to map the conflict and see how he can unlock the problem to reach a win-win formula. The core of the conflict was about trying to influence the free choice of one of the voters while there should be complete campaigning silence.

Being able to identify the root causes of the conflict, the mediator told the parties that abiding by the regulations is one step of having clean elections. He told the member who violating the code of conduct to admit his guilt, never do it again and also apologize to the other party so that they can put the problem behind their back. At the end, there were an apology and everybody agreed that they should abide by the regulation that is made to keep the Election Day a democratic symbol.

Challenges:

- * The success stories show significant personal development of the target groups. Perhaps most notably, a shift from reactionary conflict management to an understanding of (and in some cases execution of) proactive conflict management initiatives is observed.
- * The Trainings are very helpful in preparing youth to conduct peace building initiatives/engage in real-life mediation.
- * Some case of conflict poses extra challenges to young mediators as it entails sub-problems (i.e. a case of bullying in a school can lead to family problems related to single breakaway parents). In such cases, the senior mediator(s) play a role in the mediation, while young people are only observers.
- * A gap between the thinking of the elderly and young people was observed in the way to handle certain, i.e. youth problems, gender issues. Youth advocate for the supremacy of the judicial law and not the tribal law in some sensitive cases (dealing with battered women) because they think that informal justice

(mediation) will not cover all things related to the problem and bring half justice to the case.

* There were some objections from the larger community against engaging young people in mediating conflicts. However, the presence of senior mediators and community leaders help in dispelling these fears and re-assuring people that the work of youth is supervised and guided carefully. In many intricate/thorny cases, young people's role was that of observers.

*Most of the female callers to the hotline were reluctant to give many details about their identity fearing of their names going public, even they were reluctant to come to the office for follow-up. The fact that we have female mediators for special cases gave assurance to the callers to approach our center for mediation and guidance.

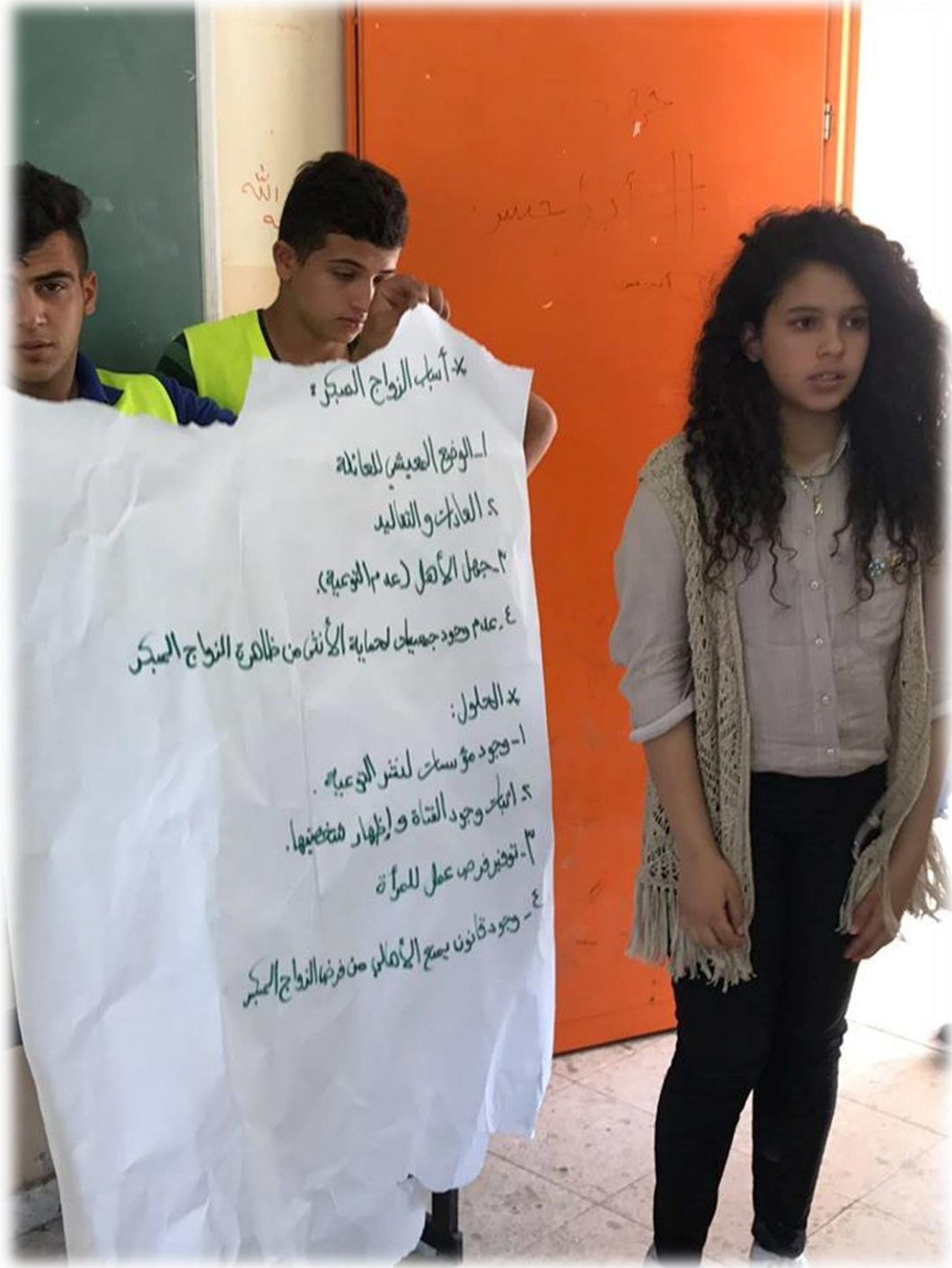
*Senior mediators were keen to allocate low-profile mediation cases for young people.

* Implementation of follow-up activities and mediation in Hebron was difficult for girls as the community is very much conservative. We were keen that we talk to the parents in a round-table discussion session to dispel all fear and get the parent's consent.

* The encounter between community leaders and young mediators uncovers a clash of generations. On the one hand, the elders think that young people have a secondary role, while, 'some' young folks think that they should be in the forefront of any mediation. However, through informal meetings between senior mediators and young people, those who are skeptical of the elderly role in civic peace were more convinced that they cannot do without the senior mediators as they are credible and influential.

Activity 1.4: Youth deliver 7 Multiplication trainings in 4 schools in Peer-mediation and problem-solving during the year.

Objective: 1. Provide young trainees with opportunities to deliver trainings and initiatives in peace education and conflict transformation;



A group of 12 multipliers aided by Wi'am staff (3 trainers in each group), delivered 5 training sessions on peer-mediation and problem-solving in 4 schools reaching 220 students (grade 8-12). The training took place in Bethlehem and Hebron areas (Terra Santa school, Dar Nadwa School, Orthodox School and Dora's main school on the outskirts of Hebron). The training centered on providing students with the right skills/knowledge to engage more actively in solving their own conflicts, and, at the same time, gives young multipliers the chance to pass the learning they got from the project.



Result:

Enhanced confidence of young trainees in delivering peacebuilding initiatives and trainings in conflict resolution

Activity 1.5: Organize Periodic meetings between senior mediators and young trainees on issues of Sulha, peace building and tribal techniques of resolving conflicts

For the purpose of discussing different topics and providing guidance to young people engaging in peace building and mediation, Wi'am organized several meetings each month consecutively, hosting 80 people in total (young people, mediators and community leaders).

Objectives: to give young people and mediators that platform to discuss progress that young people are making in their mediation initiatives, lessons learned from mediation cases, the nature of the cases intervened, other issues related to Sulha, the role of young people/elderly in promoting civic peace and youth needs.

Session I: Youth role in society and Peacebuilding

The participants reflected on elements of peace and mutual understanding from the point of view of socio-politics, history as well as current realities and future

challenge. They also reflected on the challenges that young people face in their community (unemployment, accessibility, and marginalization) and their needs. They talked about diversity and leadership and reached a consensus that each individual has a role in promoting civic peace and non-violence through active engagement in active non-violence and peaceful resolution of conflicts. They also talked about the need to break free from the control of political parties which has a hidden agenda that many times don't give young people a free saying in their life and curtail their social activism. The participants also identified reasons for tension in the community and among young people, suggesting practical solutions on how they could serve as leaders of peace in their own communities, peers and families. In that respect, they suggested that there should be a civic society body that embrace youth activists and give them the space and the umbrella to engage in social initiatives that promote peace building and civic harmony.

Session 2/3: Tips about Sulha: What is the mechanism of Sulha? Is there a relationship between the Sulha and security services?

In the meeting, the participants discussed the social and ethical issues that may arise during the mediation process. These include impartiality, neutrality, saving face and empowering the weak and bringing the powerful to his or her senses. The mediators stressed that young people should have reasonable knowledge about religion, cultural backgrounds, family values, tribal and Patriarchal mentality. It was evident that young people and mediators agree that a successful mediator need to have sufficient socio-cultural knowledge needed to unlock disputes that occur in different communities: the urban and rural communities' way of thinking, behavior, gender issues, as an example.

In addition, the mediators explained more thoroughly about the mechanism of sulha: i.e. Jaha (group of wise men and elders who help in the process of mediation), Truce (hodna-a lull for three days in the hostilities to avoid re-incidentment of passion- it gives space and time for the mediator to map the conflict and shuttle easily between the conflicting parties); Atwa (The offer of 'atwa by the offending family, and its acceptance by the victim's family, is evidence of the Hodna, and also acts as an immediate and tangible expression of remorse on the part of the offender's family).

There was a consensus among the participants (young people, mediators and the elderly) that there is a connection between the security service and Sulha-mediation. They agree that the security services (Police) support the efforts and work of mediators to the extent that they seek the help of mediators when they deal with issues of domestic violence, gender discrimination and child abuse. By the same token, the mediators need the help of police to contain large disputes and facilitating their visits and meetings with the disputing parties in detention centers.

Session(s) : Lessons learned/Challenges from practical cases of conflict that young/senior mediators manage to resolve. (period lessons all over the year)

In this meeting, young people presented cases of mediation that they have mediated in close cooperation and supervision of senior mediators. These cases are low-profile cases (i.e. peer conflicts; simple family disputes; University problems, broken relationships, school problems, student-teacher conflicts). The sessions focused on discussing success stories, cases intervened, what went wrong, how we can improve or building or successes. By the same token, the sessions constitute a planning phase in which the participants discussed the cases that need intervention and how senior mediators and young people can deal with it. So, by mapping thee cases, the mediators (senior and young mediators) can reach a plan-of-action or a road map about the parties involved, the issue at hand, and the way these problems can be approached.



By the end of the day, the senior mediators will do the major mediation work and delegate some responsibilities for young mediators to deal with cases that suits their potential or cases which are not culturally-sensitive or intricate (domestic violence, inheritance issues, brawls, gender abuse, etc.).

We can say that senior mediators give young people guidance and directions about these cases with some tips for improving their way of approaching conflicts to reach better results.

Outcomes:

- Youth are addressing/transforming low-profile cases of conflict at the local level
- Increase in the ability of target youths to address the root causes of conflict with a greater understanding of their roles in community peacebuilding and transformation of conflicts
- Acceptance of the role of youth by adults as community problem-solvers is slowly shifting, as adults are beginning to understand the value of youth in advocating civic peace and their engagement in decision making
- Youth utilize dialogue and discussion to prevent and resolve disputes at family and community levels.
- Adults willingness to engage in dialogues with youth and in mediation efforts shows an increase in the belief that Young people have a role to play in peaceful resolution of conflicts.
- Local youth capacities to mitigate tensions, prevent and transform conflicts are strengthened

Project Activities: “Youth Promote Peace-building and Inter-Faith Dialogue”

Beneficiaries:

The primary Target in the project are 30 young people (18-30 years old) coming from different religious backgrounds around Bethlehem area (refugee camps, villages and surrounding towns). We targeted motivated young people from different and serious interest in relationships based on dialogue.

Objectives:

Objective I. To bring together ethnically and gender mixed groups of 30 young people age (18-25 years old) from different locations in Bethlehem, Hebron areas to develop their skills for intercultural learning, dialogue, peace-building and conflict resolution.

Activity: capacity Building training workshop for young people (30 hours training)

Results: The 30 hours training enabled 30 young people (18-25 years old with 60% females) from different backgrounds to develop intercultural competences that promote inter-faith dialogue, inter-Cultural understanding, diversity, Identity, conflict management skills, and abilities to deal with intercultural differences and prejudices



Objective II: To help 30 young people coming from conflict areas deal with inter-cultural and political conflicts through telling their story as they had experienced it to other young people in the group

Results: young people from different backgrounds are devising joint solutions to local conflicts, sharing their experience, trying to understand different point of views.

Objective III: To increase tolerance and promote inter-cultural dialogue between young people coming from diverse backgrounds through encounters, educational excursions, dialogue sessions, learning, and debates on issues common living and interfaith dialogue in an atmosphere of relative security and mutual respect

Activities:

****Round-table Meetings and Debates (6 meetings/3 debates during the year).**

**** Organize four platforms that hosted respected religious or community figures from Christina and Muslim faiths giving presentation and talking to the young people. Religious figures have the moral influence to lead youth in a peaceful direction promoting moderate narratives and proactive dialogue on controversial issues (i.e. misinterpretation of religious texts or respect of the other).**



4. Organize (4) local educational excursions/study visits to local youth organizations, youth centers, universities and youth Ministry to promote networking and interfaith/intercultural dialogues. Also Visiting Ramlah cultural center; Mahmoud Darwish Museum, Khalil Sakakini cultural center and the Palestinian Museum.

Results: This was an opportunity for the participants to experiment concretely different sub-cultures, youth/community conflicts, exchange of opinions, and together how they can overcome differences, that exists at the intra-/inters communal levels.

-Religious figures have the moral influence to lead youth in a peaceful direction promoting moderate narratives and proactive dialogue on controversial issues (i.e. misinterpretation of religious texts or respect of the other).

-The meetings helped deepen dialogue of common living, friendships/understanding among participants with bridges and contacts in the interfaith/cultural domain built between youth coming from different backgrounds and religions, as well as enhanced awareness of the value of dialogue to reduce stereotypes and consolidate the value of "Common living".

Youth Conference: "Enhancing the Role of Youth in Civil Peace"

Wi'am Centre has organized a two-day Youth conference on 25-26 /1/2017, "Enhancing the role of youth in civil peace", which hosted 60 young men and women from different parts of Palestine at the Grand Park Hotel in Beit Sahour. The conference is a knowledge-sharing conference attended by young people, larger youth communities, activists, mediators and other actors.



During the first day of the conference, a tribal mediator, Gamal al-Der'awi, spoke about the role of the tribal leaders in the Palestinian reconciliation, and the importance of tribal mediation as a way to restore civic peace based on the realization of rights. The participants agree with the spokesperson that Indigenous leaders have a pivotal role to play at the grassroots levels in areas of consolidating peace and engaging young people in active peacebuilding. The advocate, Mary, R., stresses the fact that the tribal reconciliation does not replace existing laws rather it complements them. During the session, young people were able to learn about the best practices of Sulha and discuss lessons learned from different cases of conflicts which Young people were engaging in in cooperation with the mediators. Young people who participated in our conflict transformation activities have the chance to share their experiences in mediation and peacebuilding that they are doing in their communities. The discussions showed the significant increase in the number of engagements by "traditional" mediators to promote civic peace and mitigate social conflicts.



In the second session, Mr. Isaam Aruri, and Dr. Kifah Mansra, spoke about the psychological and social dimension of the cybercrimes and how to help young people transform the danger into a driving force for change, focusing on the risks and benefits of social media and ways of rationalizing their use. During the discussions, the participants pointed out some cases of Facebook abuse that they encountered and asked for guidance from the speakers on ways of responding to it and mitigating its implications through psychological counseling.

On the second day, Ms. Linda Garaisa spoke about the importance of involving women in peace-building and discussed ways of strengthening women's roles in responding and mediating conflicts. In a workshop style that was conducted by Albert Hani and Yusef Hantash, the participants were able to discuss issues related to youths' roles in building civic peace; different aspects of non-violence and most importantly devising and implementing initiatives that promote non-violent approach to conflicts and social issues. The participants also concluded with the importance of the strategic philosophical thinking that young people must have to reach the general goal of building a society based on creative thinking. Finally, participants agreed on the importance of working to create a society based on effective participation in which individual and community rights are respected within a pluralistic framework that responds to the needs of citizens and the values of citizenship.

In the final analysis, Young people were able to share with the audience the best practices and lessons that they learned from their engagement in conflict

resolution work, their interaction with the senior mediators, and lesson they learned from the project activities. Reaching recommendation on best ways of engaging young people as mediators and the mechanism of cooperation and coordination between the elderly and young people. This cooperation is much needed in mediation that responds to cases to cases conflicts in the community, particularly among youth groups.



In the light of the interventions and discussions of participants, the conference concluded the following recommendations: Integrating young people in community mediation in close cooperation with the elderly is important in order to pass along traditional practices to the next generation. Secondly, creating a comprehensive awareness about the dangers of cybercrime in schools and ways to avoid them and providing psychological support is necessary in this modern and technological era as these issues are prevalent in our society. Finally, youth should play a pivotal role in processes that focus on youth and women's issues for the maintaining and strengthening civic peace and peaceful resolution of conflicts.

Results:

- The conference communicates lessons learned in mediation and conflict transformation work done by young activists, mediators
- It gave young people a platform to share their experience as young-mediators, give mediators the chance to evaluate young people's role as

peace builders and eventually reach common recommendations/lessons for more youth involvement in community civic peace and conflict transformation.

- The interactive component of the conference and the working groups managed to discuss topics related to civic peace, women role in peacebuilding, tribal law vs. common law, causes of conflicts, youth needs, girls involvement in peacebuilding, and youth role and challenges they face as mediators,
- Peace activists and human rights advocates gave their evaluation about the way ahead regarding civic peace, youth activism, Sulha as a mean of reconciliation that can stand the challenges of the current socio-political and social turmoil.
- Youth giving their own experience when it comes to peace initiatives, mediation work, training other students and organizing youth meetings
- Sharing with the audience lessons from our work in areas of Sulha
- Reaching recommendation on best ways of engaging young people as mediators and the mechanism of cooperation and coordination between the elderly and young people
- Defining more clearly youth role and responsibilities as agents of change focusing on intergenerational cooperation and dialogue
- The conference was a forum of discussion and networking for young people, peace activists coming from diverse.

III. Women Program

3.1 Combatting Gender-Based Violence: organize a public meeting - "Killings between the Law and the Tribes", on 29/10/2017 at the Peace Center in Bethlehem.

The meeting hosted a tribal preventatives/mediation and women activist.

As part of the 16-day's campaign, Wi'am in cooperation with a Coalition of 13 women organizations in the West Bank areas, organized a public meeting to raise the awareness in the community of such infamous phenomenon,



In the meeting, Jamal Al-Der'awi, A prominent tribal mediator, talked about the role of the tribal elders in dealing with this phenomenon and their effort to put an end to this alarming trend in the community. The recent spate of violence against women demonstrates that there is a need for harsher punishment that can automatically translate into justice for women. The authorities should ensure that police impartially investigate cases of “killing” and violence against women without bowing to political or other pressure from religious and local leaders. The government should also ensure women and girls have access to safe emergency shelter and other services, especially protection, when they report risks from their family.

Luna Erekat, a legal advisor, also talked about the legal aspect of the clans as the basic law strengthened the role of the tribes through articles 99-100. She also

talked about the problem in the tribal system in which there is no unified tribal system.

At the end of the meeting, the audience and the speakers alike called for support of battered women and other vulnerable groups in the Palestinian society which is witnessing growing frequency. They called for a greater role for civil society institutions to move and put pressure on decision-makers to find a suitable solution.

At the end, the participants reached the following recommendations:

- Consolidate the tribal system among all governorates
- Establishment of a code of honor between the clan system
- Calling all governorates to determine who the tribesmen are
- Studying the phenomenon of killing to find out its causes and motives
- Stressing the importance of the coroner report as an evidence
- Discussing the tribal charter of women's institutions
- Conducting a Comparative study between the civil judiciary and the tribal judiciary
- There is a need to represent women in the tribal reconciliation

All these Recommendations will be made to the President and relevant judicial authorities.

Women International Day

Wi'am, in cooperation with other women networks, commemorated women International Day on the 8th March, by holding a conference at the Peace Centre on Electronic-crimes and ways of addressing it. The E-crime is recognized as a virtual crime and an offense committed against individuals or groups motivated by a criminal intent as of a material or moral abuse, whether it comes directly or indirectly, and done by using a modern means of communication such as the Internet. During the conference, the mayor of Bethlehem, Mrs. Vera Baboon and other guest speakers, spoke about the need to combat such crimes, especially, when it is directed against women, and girls in specific. Studies indicated that an increasing percentages of uses of the Internet and computers among members of a community would lead to the emergence of electronic crime. The percentage of Internet usage in Palestine reached nearly one-third of the population (30.4%) in 2011. The percentage of Internet usage reached 30.6% in the West Bank and 30.0% in Gaza Strip in 2011. As well as more than half of young people in Palestine (15-29 years old) use the Internet (55.0%) compared with five percent in 2004. (The Palestinian central Bureau of Statistics 27/02/2013 (PCBS) After that, a film was shown on the E-crimes that depicted a real-life story of a woman who was harassed via the internet. This was followed by a panel discussion which hosted Mrs. Nesrin Rishmawi, the head of the Electronic Crimes Division,

Major Sufian Zahlan, the head of the Family protection unit at the police, and Amal Ju'ba, President of the Women Center for Legal Aid and Counseling in Hebron, who talked about the issue from legal, social and psychological angles. The conference came out with a number of recommendations: - The need to enact a law on electronic crimes because the Palestinian Penal Law doesn't mention anything about this - Engage the community in awareness campaigns about the issue whether in schools, universities and housewives about the risks of abusing the Internet and how to behave in the event that any person, whether male or female, is subject to extortion - Provide protection for women by the police and other relevant institutions for cases that are subjected to blackmail or harassment



3.1.1 Voices of Activists against Domestic violence:

Part of our effort to highlight the voices of activist and civic leaders against domestic violence, we invited a number of women/men to do short clip voicing their concern about the phenomena and highlighting its consequences on the victims. The following took part in the campaign:

1. Nora Karmi- women activist:

“Voicing her views against gender-based violence, promoting gender equality to prevent violence against girls and women.

https://drive.google.com/.../0B_--IOXi68IMd212M1FPNF9YTXM/view

2. Goerge Zidan#Right to Movement#

“Voicing his views against gender-based violence, promoting gender equality to prevent violence against girls and women.

3.2. Public Meetings for mothers: “Empowering parents on the best way for dealing with their children at the school age and detecting their needs”

Objective(S): To raise their awareness of parents on the best method to deal with their children’s problems/respond to their needs (psychological, physical, educational and personal) according to their age group,

Wi’am organized 2 awareness-raising session for 32 female parents at the Shepherd Orthodox school in Beit Sahour. The event was facilitated by Hunaida Musleh, an educational specialist/Psychologist.



In the meeting, parents got to know about the physical, emotional, psychological and educational needs of their children at the pre-school and school age. The meeting gave parents needed information on the best way to deal with their children’s needs and ways of addressing them. Children are very different and have different needs, depending on their relationship with their parents, their maturity level, and their extended family, friends, peers, community, cultural background, and other factors. The tutor provided parents with information on ways dealing with the personal changes, feelings and emotions of their children during school.

Besides, the tutor stressed the fact that when addressing children who have problems at school or did something wrong, we should encourage them to express their feelings and anxiety openly because if we didn’t allow children to express themselves it will lead to psychological/behavioral problems. The tutor encouraged parents to take an interest in their children’s lives beyond the

classroom: taking some time to ask them about their day and whether they have any problem or they have something to share.



The participants stressed the fact that they find listening to their children as the best method to reassure them that they are not alone and that their problems if shared it will be resolved. By using a language that encourage children to do differently, we will encourage them to rectify certain act and deviant behaviors. For instance, if we say, “You have to stay in your room because you acted out in school today,” we’re not addressing the behavior and it will not help the child because we’re not teaching him anything—except we are putting them down. Sometimes parents assume that their kids will figure out things on their own, but if you’re dealing with a chronic issue, you have to face facts: your child has not figured it out by himself and he is not likely to do so. You need to help him. So, talk to the teacher—that’s your best first step. Take it from there. You need a sense of why he’s acting out and what’s happening in order to know how you can help your child change.

Parents are more aware of the following after the sessions:

1. The need to use Compassionate listening with their children and not use abusive language or any physical harm
2. Parents are more aware of the fact that they should not make comparisons between their children and other children as there are individual differences and not putting too much excitations on the child he/or she cannot meet
3. We should draw a line between what is possible and what is not in the world of children

4. Parents are more aware of the conduct and behavior that depicts each age group. Parents are encouraged to Get their children to know about the reality around them and give them information in a very organized and rational manner.

At the end of the meetings, the participants have the chance to put through their problems that they face with their children and exchange views with the speaker on the best methods to respond to it. One of the ladies in the meeting said: “I usually consider the hyper activity of my child as a very negative/abusive behavior, however, after the sessions, I’m sure that I can do more to engage my child in constructive and mental activities that can take ease down his hyper behavior and conduct and focus on helping my child rather than punishing him” .

3.3: “TRANSFORMING WOMEN’S ROLE IN LOCAL COUNCILS”

Project Objective(s)

“To increase the role of newly-elected women council members in decision-making process in their respective councils away from marginalization by building their leadership capacities.”



Activities:

• Training for 20 women (10 elected women and 10 candidate who didn't successes) in areas of leadership, advocacy, conflict management, public speaking and social media

Outputs/results of the Activity:

The 25 hours training is a comprehensive training event that gathered 20 women (10 elected women and 10 candidate who haven't the chance to be elected) selected from different areas of the West Bank (Bethlehem areas, Ramallah, Hebron, etc.), and training them in areas of leadership, advocacy, conflict management, public speaking and social media.

The training has certainly increased the participants' knowledge in areas of conflict transformation, particularly on conflict analysis/mapping and resolution of conflicts. It also helped in reinforcing the women's leadership skills and confidence to engage in public speaking events and advocacy campaigns, and at the same time, reach out to their audience during public speeches and social interaction. "Being a woman and a politician in Palestine is very hard". "Better public speaking skills and awareness of social media outlets are great tools for enhancing confidence and effectiveness when engaging in the political arena" One woman said after the training.

Activity II: Organize three dialogue sessions between elected council members and their male counterpart and other groups to discuss way of empowering women

Wi'am organized three dialogue sessions that hosted around 60 people in total comprising of male and female elected council members and civic members (civic activists, women leaders, advocates, social workers, counselors, etc.) and others belonging to the larger community (lay people, members of local councils, local council candidates, members of youth groups, Student's union representatives).

During the three meetings, the elected female members engaged in a frank and open discussion with the audience in which they focused on their experience before the election, during the election period and after it. They reiterated the fact that going through the election process from nomination, to candidacy, to election campaign to ultimately success has been freight with lots of changes. One of the major obstacles that they faced is the Patriarchal mentality that put hurdles on women running for elections.



They called for an end to obsolete social practices/ Patriarchal mentalities that consider women as inapt and incompetent for political life. They asked for more measures in terms of legislation or any other mechanism, as appropriate, to combat discrimination against women active participation in elections and gender stereotyping in the media. The participants agree that there is a dire need to increase attention to gender equality issues in the community and the media through providing more realistic and balanced portrayal of women, including those in leadership positions, and reduce stereotypical and discriminatory practices against women.

Many speakers focused on finding positive entry points to overcome cultural barriers and engage fathers, brothers, who are often the decision makers in families to make fair decisions regarding girls' education, participation in public life if we want gender discrimination to be effectively addressed. In moving forward, participants defined what needed to be done: they stressed the need to mobilize local communities to promote women rights and to lobby decision-makers to take realistic steps at the levels of legislation, education, laws, elections, economic empowerment to consolidate women rights and make way for more women participation as equal to men.

In the meetings, one of the most effective and widely employed methods for improving women representation at decision-making levels and higher administration is by instituting quotas. But introducing quotas, some argued that

we are not improving women status, but give it something ready. While others argued that quotas are the only means to improve women status and overcome the constraints of the Patriarchal mentality and its grip on women freedom of choice and rights. Women's inclusion as argued by many attendees isn't only about guaranteeing women's representation, rather, it is also about recognizing the unique leadership women offer and training them to participate effectively in governance at all levels.

At the end, the participants called for building strong leadership among women and more networking between women groups. They called for more collaboration among institutions to develop support structures, incentives and accountability for improving the health and well-being of girls and women; identification of mechanisms to foster strong leadership and a coherent agenda for action: this includes addressing gender discrimination, bias and inequality that permeate the organizational structures of governments and civic society organizations; and involvement and full participation of women's organizations, advocates and leaders to bring decision makers to account.

Activity III: Conducting study tours for the elected council members and other activists to other municipalities in different west Bank towns to learn from their experiences and discuss challenges

40 women inter alia 5 elected council members candidates, local council candidates, lay women and other activists participated in three study tours to other municipalities in Bethlehem, Hebron, Beit-Sahour Tul-Karm and Qalqilya as part of a program arranged by Wi'am. The study tour aimed at creating opportunities for women to participate in discussions on defending women's rights and promoting their social and political participation in Palestine.

Through Study Tours, the visiting groups were given the opportunity to engage in dialogue with other elected members, officials and mayors around a range of issues that entail the larger political, economic and social situation that create immense challenges to elected female members. Women are facing similar challenges like other Arab societies in terms of patriarchal domination and the marginalization of women. They also must deal with family and tribe rejection of their political participation, and with high levels of ignorance and illiteracy, especially in villages and countryside. The tours are a great opportunity for female's council members to learn about the challenges/experiences of other city council members (males and females) in other cities and exchanging views on ways of facing challenges that they face in their daily work in the community at large.

Th study tours helped the participants to further network with likeminded women and men as a way to enable women and empower their potential as leaders. The participants in the study tour agree that for women to reach their full potential,

there is a need to give them the space to participate and exercise leadership at all levels of decision making which can only happen if the political system in Palestine becomes more responsive to women's needs and aspirations.

Furthermore, the study fostered networking, learning, and exchanging best practices between women, especially through meeting with influential women, women activists and leading civil society organizations.

One of the participants said: "It was a unique experience for me. As an elected council member who participated in the study tour to different city councils, I've learned more about the experiences of other candidates and other elected members- it was beneficial and exciting". An elected candidate

Another one commented: "For me it was a pioneer initiative, necessary to complement the training workshops and discussion sessions. The visit was helped me in exchanging experiences and networking between the women from different municipalities" one of the participants

Activity IV: organize a radio talk around the role of elected female council members and the challenges they face.

Wi'am organized a Radio Talk that hosted 3 elected council members from Bethlehem City Council (Sherin Mouj and Raidah) and Lucy Thaljieh. The participants in the meeting talked about wide range of issues that focused on women presence in public life, quotas, women participation in the political factions, their experience in the current local council and the problems/challenges they faced as candidates and current council members.

The participants talked about acceptance of the presence of women in public life and creating a social dialogue based on the principle of participation from both sides, which helps in the formation of a community fabric that incorporates women on the basis of their competence and capabilities.

With regard to quota, two council members agree that the PA President and the Palestinian national movement has applied the principle of quota in women's representation for the sake of increasing women's participation in the national action and political struggle. However, one candidate argued that the quota doesn't reflect a gender equality in the community because it curtails women rights and doesn't tackle the hegemony of male on women's participation in public and political life.

The argument also touched upon the participation of women in political parties. They argued that women didn't manage to increase their political impact and remained weak in comparison with men, in addition to their exclusion from the high decision-making positions in those parties. Some of the Palestinian parties overtly adopt an ideology which promotes the integration of women in political and public life, but the gap between theory and practice remains wide. There is

no doubt that the reluctance of Palestinian women from political participation is caused by an atmosphere of political and social frustration, apathy and futility, thereby generating a disbelief for women in influencing or getting involved in policy-making and decision-making processes.

The final section of the debate focused on the personal experiences of the council members and how they defied the social norms and nominated themselves. One council members talked about her experience in defying the consensus of her family to nominate a male candidate for the council elections. She added that her struggle to change this trend and include her in the name as a potential candidate for the council elections bore fruits in her winning the election as member so the city council. In that context, the candidates talked about the hurdles they face as a member of the council with some in the community mistakenly think that they are just a puppet and not an active member on equal footing with men.

We can say that the Radio Talk was an opportunity for female members of the City council in Bethlehem to be a a role model for others, talk frankly about their experiences before and after the elections and that fact that talking to the public is in itself a political statement that women are competent enough to be in the position of decision-makers at different levels.

Recommendations:

- Empowering women participation in public and political life, we need to fight against the existence of laws and legislations that allow discrimination against women.
- There is a need to create a general tendency among decision-makers to adopt policies and programs that would support women in the formal and informal aspects of life.
- Society's perception of women as equal should be consolidated fully
- Reasons related to women themselves: Many women do not realize their ability for political action; they consider it a detracting element which cancels their femininity. This may be due to the way of socialization which supports this view and emphasizes the primary function of a woman as a wife and mother.
- Women lack the interest to develop their political awareness through participating in political matters. They content themselves with practicing a role in the community far from decision-making process
- Women prefer to vote for men, on the premise that they are more appropriate for political action and holding responsibility
- The image of women should be improved in the media and school books
- The inherited norms and Patriarchal tradition and mentalities need to be adjusted to accommodate women in community change by highlighting the positive and suppressing the negative ones

- The civic society organization should raise women's awareness and develop their skills and abilities to increase their participation in public life through providing sufficient training in the fields of politics, economy, human rights, advocacy, leadership, in addition to training programs that enhance their skills

International conference:

Lucy Talgieh the women coordinator at Wiam center has attended the 6th ICAN Annual Women, Peace Security Forum 2017: From extreme Violence to violent Extremism Women's Strategic Engagements to Provide Positive Sustainable solutions ICAN's annual women, peace and Security forum. ICAN's 6th annual forum gathered women peacebuilders and human rights defenders from more than 25 countries to improve social cohesion, promote peace and address violence. The forum focused on how women-led civil society actors establish strategic working relationships with other key sectors at community, national and international levels to enhance their impact and sustain the space for independent civil society



Lucy Thalgieh the women coordinator at Wi'am : The Palestinian Conflict Resolution & Transformation Center participated in The Projection Lab which held at the Swedish Institute Center in Alexandria. The theme of the Projection Lab to increase the active participation and framing of MENA women in the news media, projection of women opinion makers, women leaders, women organizations from MENA and formulate projection strategy for a women network. Women organizations exchanged experiences of current media projections of women in conflict zones and jointly plan revised, equal, democratic media projections The Projection Lab has strengthen women's media actor ship, projecting their independent civil views and increase democracy 5 women CSOs in MENA region supported each other, projecting voices from within conflict areas for increased equal reporting, draft application for joint women media projection, strategies joint communication projection so that 1000 news consumers, policy-makers and civil society in MENA, internationally and Sweden have heard and read



Wi'am Women Club

Wi'am hosts weekly meetings that bring together women of all ages for mutual support, education, recreation, and creative activities. Drawing on the resources of the Center as well as the resources each woman can offer ,we encourage the women to focus on their own innate gifts. Women engage in classes and activities involving drama, computer skills, craft projects, and creative arts, as well as workshops in the fields of

the democratic process, civil society development, reproductive health, gender equality, non-violence, conflict mediation, and domestic violence.



Wi'am's Women's Group has continued to gather once a week, offering the women time to socialize and learn from a variety of speakers and programs. Recently, the women have benefited from a series of programs on health and wellness in partnership with Ministry of Health awareness Program. One session dealt with the risks of high blood pressure and diabetes and the impact of these ailments on the community. Participants were also tested for high blood pressure and diabetes and the group discussed tips for living with such health concerns. This series on health and wellness also included programs on emotional awareness and stress management. Specifically, the women learned of the health benefits of singing together as a way of stress relief. The importance of these meetings was stressed as a way of relieving the stress of daily life.



Capacity Building for the Staff” M & E Training

Wia'm staff have their Capacity Building training on Monitoring and Evaluation funded by the **Church of Sweden**. The capacity Building process is part of Wi'am long-term vision to regularly upgrade the level of staff capacities in areas



of project delivery, monitoring and evaluation among other things.

The Training focused mainly on results Chain which can help us think more analytically about cause and effect. By engaging in a real-life case study, we were able to identify inputs, output, results and impact. We were also able to devise SMART indicators for the inputs, outputs, results and also reach the mile stones relevant to the case study at hand. The case study was a chance for the trainees to point out what we expect? What we like? And what we love? Through the training, the trainees were able to identify the core problems, the direct partners and construct indicators for each of the categories identified.

Through the problem Tree analysis, we used the case study to find solutions to the issues by mapping out the anatomy of cause and effect. The Problem tree analysis is carried out in a small focus group using flip chart paper. The first step was discussing and agreeing the problem or issues that the case study at hand entails. Then the problem or issue is written in the centre of the flip chart and becomes the 'trunk' of the tree. Next, the group identify the causes of the focal problem - these become the roots - and then identify the consequences, which become the branches. These causes and consequences were arranged in a

cause-and-effect logic. The heart of the exercise is the discussion, debate and dialogue that is generated as factors



The staff gained knowledge in Project life cycle and Project Phases. We learned about Project Life Cycle and how it provides a framework for managing any type of projects. The training touches upon the four phases of project life cycle which involve:

Phase 1: The Initiation Phase: What is the problem? During the first of these phases, the initiation phase, the project objective or need is identified; Will the development of a project solve that problem? What are the specific goals of the project?

Phase 2: The Planning Phase: What is the project purpose, vision, or mission? This is also referred to as “scope management.” Are there measurable objectives or success criteria? Do we have a high-level description of the project, requirements and risks?

Phase 3: The Execution Phase: it deals with project implementation and how people are carrying out the tasks, and progress information is being reported through regular team meetings. The training focused also on how progress information is used by project manager to maintain control over the direction of the project by comparing the progress reports with the project plan to measure the performance of the project activities and take corrective action as needed. The Execution Phase typically involves: Strategic planning and Implementation planning.

Phase 4: The Termination Phase: Are the project's completion criteria met? Is there a project closure report in progress?

The training touched upon Project concept and assessment. We talked about different stakeholder's in terms of information and consultation. Stakeholder engagement at the early stages of the project is about gauging potential local support for, or opposition to, different options and alternatives and identifying key issues and concerns that might affect the viability of a project. Engaging stakeholder groups early in relation to these strategic decisions and alternatives can help to avoid project opposition and other reputational risks.

In the training, we touched upon differences between outputs, outcomes, impact and inputs. It has been through a cases study that the trainees differentiated between direct/indirect partners in the project. The case study was an opportunity for the staff to identify the needs of direct partners and other stakeholders and the sphere of influence that the project will introduce to meet their needs.

Devising Wi'am's Child Protection Policy:

Through Wi'am's activities, we are dealing with an increasing number of children, especially during summer camps, peer-mediation trainings, mediation work, and excursions. Some of our programs involve working with children, and many of our children are under 18 years of age. Keeping children safe during the activities is one of our responsibilities. As staff, trainers, mediators and activists who might work and interact with children, we are required to ensure that our policies and practices reflect this responsibility. Therefore, all staff at Wi'am and those we entrust to deal and interact with children, are responsible for the safety and protection of children. This responsibility extends to the exposure and prompt response to any concerns regarding possible sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse or neglect of a child.

Wi'am's Child Protection provides guidelines to create and maintain a safe environment for children. It is a tool that protects both children, and staff by clearly defining what action is required in order to keep children safe. The Policy provides clear ways of identifying concerns and the appropriate procedures should a concern arise (recognizing and responding to abuse). It also includes guidelines for reporting and recording concerns. The Child Protection Policy emphasizes the respect of the rights, and feelings of children with whom we work or interact with while taking all reasonable practicable steps to protect them from physical, sexual and emotional harm.

For more information about the Child Policy, please log into our website:

www.alalsah.org

Schools Peer-mediation Program

Goal of Peer Mediation;

- To build the capacities of 150 students during the year from 5 different school in areas of peer-mediation, theater, problem-solving and communication skills
- To create a cadre of active student peer-mediators able to solve school conflicts without much intervention of teachers.
- To help reduce tension and violence in the target schools by 70% through the year

The peer mediation program offered training to 150 students and 10 teachers coming from 5 schools in Bethlehem areas (Terra Scanta, Hope school, Shepherded School, Dar-al- Kalima Lutheran school). The training focused on imparting students with conflict resolution and peer-mediation skills. The trainees are given opportunity to use these skills to mediate conflict among their peers in the school. At the same time, the teachers helped in facilitating the peer-mediation work of the students and supervise the mediation done in their classes by helping the students to establish peer-mediation groups in each school ready to mediate peer-problems.

During the peer-mediation trainings, we have a drama and theatre component. The use of participatory drama techniques, including carefully structured role-play and forum theatre helped students express their problems via acting scenes and devise possible solutions to these problems. So, Drama provided children with opportunities to create and experiment with life-like models of conflict from real life school situations.

Activities:

Activity I: Conducting 30 hours of trainings for each school (5 schools in total, 7 and 8th grade) over the year reaching about 210 students in areas of peer mediation/non-violence, Negotiation, problem-solving, communication skills

Activity II: Implement 5 training workshops for 15 teachers from the target schools in peer-mediation and conflict Transformation

Activity III: hold 3 meetings (20 people in each meeting) between parents, school administration, social workers, teachers and the general public on ways of improving the school environment and encouraging positive trends among children

Activity V: Train 30 students from two schools in drama and theatre as an expression tool

Results:

- ✓ Building the skills of children in peer-mediation and problem solving using non-violent techniques. Enhanced student's skills in listening, critical, creative thinking, anger control, decision-making, and conflict resolution
- ✓ Student mediators in the 5 schools manage to mediate 48 cases of conflict during the year between students, and they are on-call assisting students when encountering any problem.
- ✓ Schools reported a decrease by 40% of cases of conflict during the second half of the year.
- ✓ Enhanced creative thinking and problem-solving skills that helped students take more responsibilities and make right at the educational and problem levels.
- ✓ In this way, peer mediation not only reduces violence in schools, it relieves teachers of constant disciplinary problems, creating
- ✓ A cadre of student mediators are established in the five schools, participating constructively in mediating conflicts.

Summer Camp for Children



Wi'am organized its 14th summer camp that lasted for four weeks. It hosted 120 children from the age of 6-16 years old, different ages, gender and areas. Children were exposed to new and exciting experiences, fun adventures, educational knowledge and life skills.

The activities entail various extracurricular activities such as drama, art, music, voluntary work, environmental activities, peer-mediation training, hiking, folk dancing, sports, excursions, art projects, interactive story time, and dramatic play.

The main objectives of the summer camp:

- To provide a safe, healthy, and productive environment for 120 children to spend their summer time, especially for those who come from underprivileged communities.
- To allow children to engage in educational and creative activities that gives them the space to adopt positive behaviors to the family and school levels.
- Building a generation that believes that non-violence is a way to resolve peer conflicts and develop a sense of trust, respect, understanding, and empathy towards one another.

BENEFICIARIES:

120 Underprivileged children aged 6-16 years old from different communities and schools.

A. Environmental Awareness Activities:

During the Summer Camp, children were trained in different aspects of recycling, composting, sorting refuse (glass, paper, plastic, organic food), This helped them have environment-friendly attitude and know-how to be green in their life preserving nature and taking care of their environment.

A. Art Work, Painting and Drawing

The campers crafted beautiful paper birds to decorate the Wi'am courtyard and created masks for the end of the camp celebration. The children loved the opportunity to express themselves creatively and make some beautiful pieces.



Children have also created fictional cartoon characters out of cloth and beads that helped open new horizons for their imagination and encouraged team work. Part of the art activities was painting and decorating large swatches of cloth with shapes of flowers, birds and the dove of peace. Children focused on coloring pots that unravel the artistic imagination and self-expression. Many of them spent time on producing colorful frames that they used to insert their own pictures inside.

Art work proved to be therapeutic in which children openly conveyed their feelings and their depiction of the reality that they live under. For many children, drawing and painting helped them get rid of painful emotions and events that are difficult to verbalize. It is an effective means through which children are able to process the complexities of unspoken anxieties, aspirations, experiences, and memories.

Sports: Swimming

Each week, children enjoyed a swimming day. They spent most of the day swimming, diving, and learning new tricks in the water. Some of the campers did not know how to swim, so we held lessons to help them learn.



Traditional Palestinian Dance-DABKA:

During the summer camp, Wi'am embarked on training a group of children on the Traditional Dance, Dabka. By this, we contribute towards connecting children to their tradition and cultural heritage. At the closing ceremony of the summer camp, the Dabka group performed a pleasant performance in a very impressive way that draws the appreciation of the audience present.



Learning about Icons: Visiting the Icon School:

The second week started with a visit to the Bethlehem Icon School-this school is the only school of icons in the entire Middle East. The campers learned about the special process of creating icons. During the visit, children find it illuminating to learn about the significance of Icons and the fact this art is more than just any old image, of course. It's an image with a religious content, meaning and use.



Visit to Bethlehem Museum

Children in the summer visited Bethlehem museum that exhibits features ancient histories: from the Roman, Byzantine eras until the current period. They have a chance to see Byzantine icons that were produced by renowned Palestinian artists. They also saw the Roman Aqueduct that used to supply water to Jerusalem from the Bethlehem Solomon Pools.

Creative Activities: A Competition on "Treasure of Information"

Wi'am in cooperation with the Municipality organized a "Treasure of Information" competition. While walking on Old city, Star Street, children were given instructions to search for scattered pieces of paper that contain Q&E hidden in the corners of the Star Street. After finding the papers, the children were given the chance to answer the questions in these papers. The winning children earned a promotional prize- an annual subscription from the Pontifical Mission Library in Bethlehem as a way to encourage children to read.



Closing Ceremony:

Our final day of Summer Camp concluded with a grand closing ceremony. The ceremony opened with children performing Dabkhe dance.

Children also performed two plays: firstly, they acted a short sketch dealing with bullying, its impact on them and ways of dealing with it. In that sketch, children used the skills they learned in peer-mediation to resolve the conflict efficiently. While the other play was centered about respecting the environment and the fact that we shouldn't throw garbage in the streets while at the same time be responsible citizens who clean their environment.

Children did a wonderful job displaying their work during the camp for their parents and other guests that included different art work, paintings, and portraits, and different pieces of their work with beads and drawings.

Please allow me to share some comments from some of the participants in the camp (translated from Arabic to English):

"I enjoyed the camp, it emboldened my personality; it helped me gain skills to deal with problems and mediate peer-conflicts that I face in my school" (Husam, 14years old boy from Bethlehem area)

"I had the chance to be creative in areas of art and music. Something which builds my demeanor and gives me more confidence in my abilities... I was an

active member of the Dabka group which gave me the chance to perform the final ceremony.” (Miral, 13 years old girl)

“... It has been an interactive event that helped me make new friendships and learn new knowledge, information and games that nourishes my mind.” (Amira, 9 years old)