

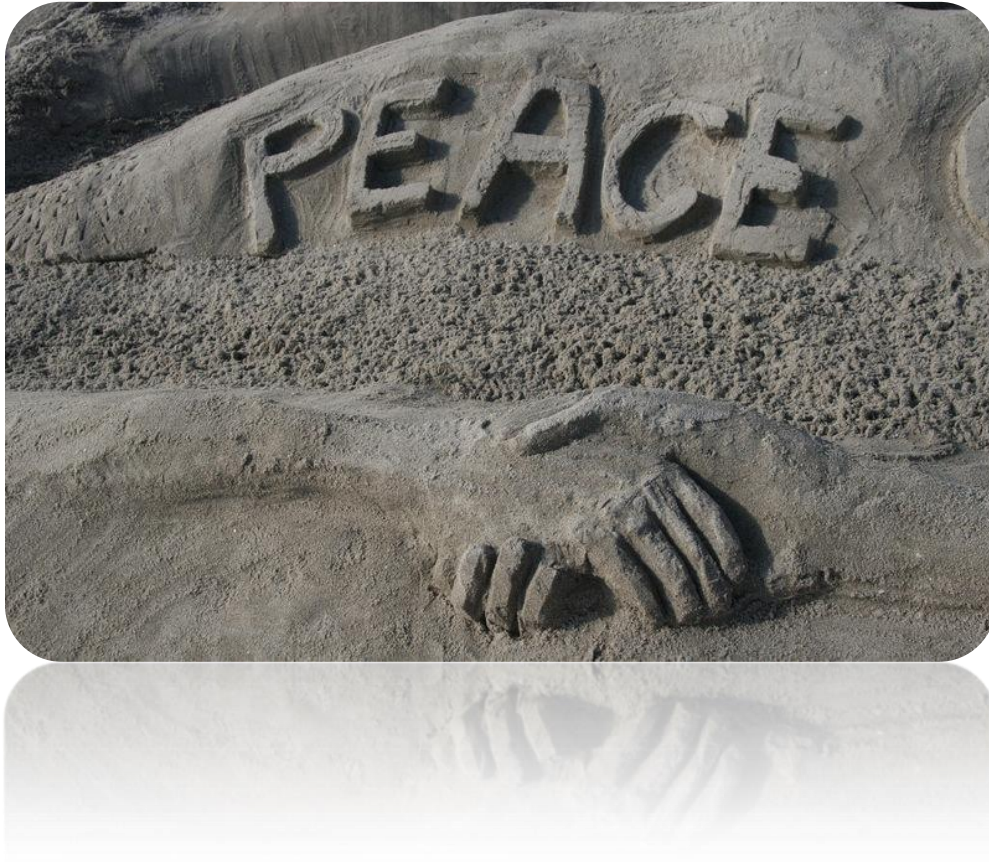
YEARLY REPORT, 2018

Table of Contents:

- Background
- Community Based Field Mediation (Sulha)
- Youth Programs
- Women's Programs
- Summer Camp
- Community- Based Tourism
- Christmas Celebration
- International Conferences

Background:

Everyone must be committed in the matter of peace, to do everything that they can Peace is the language we must speak.” — Pope Francis



We believe that community development and societal change can only be achieved in the context of a peaceful environment, active citizens, and friendly relationships that pave the way for personal initiatives and change.

Wi'am remains as committed as ever to addressing the questions that persist in the community. How can we address the frustration and aspirations of youth, women and children in order to create a better future for the future generations? What can we do so that community groups feel less isolated and less alone? How can we connect children and teens so that they are open, interested, and engaged with those that are different from them?

We strive to create “Safe Spaces” for local youth, women and children to meet, interact, learn and discuss their concerns openly. Recognizing that women and children are most vulnerable to the systematic consequence of the conflict, Wi'am has designed programs to meet their most urgent needs. Wi'am offers a women's empowerment program that helps them realize their full potential. They are empowered to be agents of positive change and transformation within their families and

communities. Women are given access to civic and vocational training as well as counseling, which enables them to effectively cope with their hardships at the familial level.

Palestinian children, on the other hand, are exposed to many challenges which impede their development and creativity. As a center, we are aware of the importance of childhood development to cognitive, social and emotional growth. Children are vulnerable to different forms of injustices which cause trauma and crisis in their lives. Therefore, we take a holistic approach to childhood development by providing children with the tools for critical thinking, tolerance and understanding, as well as nurturing respect for our differences and the basic rights of others. Our program incorporates creative elements, such as art, drama and play to encourage children to release tensions and emotions provoked by the conflict surrounding them. They are empowered and educated with tools and skills that enable them to effectively cope with the problems they face

Another vulnerable population in the West Bank are the youth who are suffering from the consequences of unemployment, lack of access to resources, isolation, and the repercussions of the general political situation. In response, we have created “Safe Spaces” for youth to discuss their concerns openly and are acting as a reference point to help youth address the challenges they face on daily basis. We also strive to develop the youth’s capacity to transform conflicts in their communities. Young people are encouraged to lead community dialogues and peace building activities, to engage in mediation, and to provide mentoring/advice to their peers when they encounter any problems.

Our Goal: To improve inter-communal relationships through promoting peaceful means of reconciliation, while simultaneously empowering women, youth and children to be transformational forces of change and action in their families and communities.

We are happy to share our activities and outreach during 2018 and the outcomes of our work in community development and social transformation.

Community-Based Field Mediation-SULHA

The Conflict Mediation project seeks to decrease local level conflicts that stem from a lack of resources, unemployment and the negative consequences of the current socio-economic and political situation. Through our work, we have learned that conflicts in Palestinian society typically arise from social fragmentation, feelings of hopelessness and desperation which pervade Palestinian communities. This insecurity and lack of hope has led to an alarming increase in cases of disputes. A clear advantage of mediation is the ability to quickly access a process that may produce a satisfactory outcome for the parties in a short period depending on each case. Any delays in reaching reconciliation between conflicting parties are a barrier to justice: justice delayed is, indeed, justice denied.



In that respect, we are faced with two urgent demands in the Palestinian society that we are focusing upon when dealing with community conflicts:

1. The need to resolve conflicts peacefully, effectively and sustainably such that they do not produce a more complicated 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 gender bias, inter-generational gaps, hopelessness, unemployment, domestic violence, inequality, and injustices that violate individual human rights.

Objectives of the (SULHA):

- Decrease the level of tension in the community through restoring broken relationships and swaying disputants from taking revenge so that problems escalate beyond control
- Engage key mediators and the elderly in the peaceful transformation of conflicts thereby reducing its implications on the community
- Contribute to the peaceful dialogue and restoration of civic peace
- Promote mutual understanding and assist the parties to search for solutions generated by the parties themselves in order to reach a mutually satisfactory agreement

Results of Sulha:

During the year of 2018 our mediators were quick to respond to 420 cases of conflicts in the community. Most of the cases revolve around youth problems, inter-generational conflicts, domestic violence, cyber or Facebook abuse, school violence, family feuds, inheritance issues and conflict over resources. In our transformative mediation, mediators focus on empowering disputants to resolve their conflict, find common ground using principles of collaboration and mutual-gains, and encourage them to recognize each other's needs and interests.

Through mediation, mediators successfully managed to transform 80% of the cases reaching a total reconciliation, while the rest of the cases are pending further work.

Case Study:

Case Study I: Abuse of Social Media

As increasing numbers of adolescent girls interact via the social media outlets. They search for ways to break down their isolation and get access to the outside world. But what are the dangers of exploitation that girls can face via cyberspace?

One of these girls who came from a conservative family called the office asking for the help of our mediators. She was very shaky with a hushed voice. Responding quickly, the senior mediator was dispatched to the field and listened to the girl's story. She told him that she was the victim of a cyber-abuse in which a guy was stalking her and threatening to publicize private photos from her lost mobile unless she paid him money.

After mapping the problem, the mediator led a well-planned intervention based on three interconnected tracks. First, the mediator worked with the girl's parents to make them understand that their daughter is a mere victim of embezzlement. This helped in cooling the situation and deterred the family from taking any negative action against their daughter. Second, the mediator worked with the abuser to make him and his family aware of the grave mistake that their son had made. The mediator forced the perpetrator to return any material or photos that he had to the mediator. Third, the mediator worked with the police to make sure that the law was respected. After a lot of meetings with different stakeholders, the perpetrator and his family reached a compromise that preserved the dignity of the girl and kept the matter away from public gossip. The girl's family agreed to accept the apology of the young abuser and not to proceed with legal measures. In the process, the young man gave the mediator all the photos and the material he had of the girl and her friends. This compromise helped save the face of the boy as he was showing remorse and avoided any social scandal that might badly dishonor the girl and make her life intolerable.

It is worth noting that dealing with the abuser was very difficult as he completely denied the charge at first. However, once the mediator confronted him with real evidence and the pressure of jail, he finally admitted his guilt.

Case Study II: Husband-wife Conflict

Woman (X) lives in a small conservative village in the West Bank. She is married to a high-ranking person in the local council, and they have two little kids. Slowly their relationship became increasingly strained as the husband became increasingly jealous, used vulgar language, and beat his wife. This situation drove the woman to seek the help of Wi'am mediator's so that she could cope with the domestic violence and save her marriage and children from an unknown future.

Our first move in response to this case of domestic violence was to conduct a meeting between the staff, social worker, and the mediator to put a joint plan of action into place.

The second stage focused on meeting the husband separately to listen to his argument and talk about the issue. The meeting was very bumpy with the husband denying all the accusations of physical and psychological misconduct. Instead, he accused the wife of humiliating him and shunning him. However, the mediator was prudent enough to remind the husband of the bruises he caused to his

wife and the traumatic repercussions. After a long process of shuttle meetings and many discussions, the husband realized his grave mistake and claimed that it was pressure from work which had led to his situation. He then was quick to apologize to his wife and agreed that he would never commit such shameful acts of violence against her in the future. They agreed that the matter should not reach their extended families so that it would not become magnified and more complex.

This conflict ended with the husband apologizing fully to his wife and showing immense remorse for his actions. It is worth mentioning that in this case as in other cases, the mediation work was complemented with counseling sessions by a specialist to help the wife cope with her traumatic ordeal and to help the family return to normality once again.

II. Youth Program: Empowering Youth as agents of social transformation and peacebuilders



Wi'am has been working hard to support youth participation and involvement in a positive way by offering them a renewed sense of civic purpose, enhanced civic participation, disincentives for violent activity, and building their capacities as peacebuilders in order to have an impact on their own societies and work for community change.

Wi'am sees youth as important agents of social change in which they lead and actively participate in the peaceful transformation of conflicts and works towards cultivating a culture of peace. Young people need to be supported in developing conflict transformation skills and in advocating for peace locally as well as globally. More than any other age group, young people on average have limited practical experiences and life skills. It is all the more important that they have opportunities to learn,

interact, share their experiences and learn from each other on a peer-to-peer level. These opportunities create a social ripple effect and inspire leadership in other youth.

Objectives of the youth program:

1. Build-the Capacities (knowledge, skills and attitudes) of 90 young people from West Bank areas to transform conflicts with facilitation and training skills and to support their peers in engaging with complex issues through non-formal educational methods
2. Enable young people to have the capacity to participate and lead conflict transformation processes and advocate for non-violence and a culture of peace
3. Support youth members in implementing youth-led social initiatives in the field of conflict transformation and transforming narratives.

Activities Implemented during the year with Results:

Activity I: Establishing informal Youth Friendly Spaces (YFS) at Wi'am:

Wi'am offered Youth Friendly Spaces (YFS) for youth coming from different areas/communities to interact/ gather in a safe environment and acquire skills. YFS provided youth with a place for learning, training, peer-to-peer counseling, and encouraging youth-related and youth-led initiatives within the communities they belong to. The meeting space provided youth with guidance, mentoring, advice, mediation and psychosocial support to give opportunities to distressed young women and men to openly express their feelings and experiences, thereby helping them to cope with stress, find solutions to their conflicts, and return to normalcy.

Achievements:

- Youth conducted mediation work with a total of 80 youth-related cases mediated and reconciled during the year with the aid and supervision of senior mediators.
- 150 youth visited the YFS seeking basic guidance, advice, support giving distressed young women the space to express their feelings, experiences, thereby helping them to cope with problems and stress they face and return to normalcy

Mechanism of work:

As conflicts arise between community members, families or young people, people seek the help of the Youth Friendly Spaces and Wi'am's Reconciliation Desk to intervene and reconcile their conflict. Before engaging in real mediation, the mediation team, young mediators and Wi'am staff carefully classify the problem at hand, taking into consideration its severity, geographical area and its type. This classification helps us to decide which cases can be referred to the youth mediators and which ones are referred to the senior mediators. Some very severe mediations require well-versed, senior mediators, e.g., child abuse, women's honor issues, group hostilities, attempted murder, accidents, and more.

When a case reaches the youth mediators, they immediately implement the SULHA norms. First, they call for an extended three-day truce when needed and then embarking on shuttle diplomacy to separately listen to the parties involved. Then, they engage in mapping the conflict. This involves making the distinction between the conflict relationship among the parties, the scope and character of

the context or setting within which the conflict takes place. They explore the issues involved in the conflict, which of these issues can be considered a real “cause” of the conflict, and which of them are conflict behaviors. Further, they explore the disparities in perception, values, interests, and positions motivating each party in the conflict. As the mediation process proceeds, young mediators help the conflicting parties devise solutions which work for everyone, working towards a win-win situation. Finally, they call for a face-to-face-meeting between the conflicting parties that cement the agreement and complete the reconciliation with a hand shake, coffee, or symbolic meal.

Case Study:

Sherien, a 19-year-old college student from Hebron, is in her second year of studies in social science in Bethlehem. Shireen has been seeking the help of our trained mediators via her best colleague Mu’tasim. This situation has left her in a devastated psychological condition, constantly afraid, and distracted from her studies. Mu’tasim and a group of youth mediators, two male and two females, agreed to meet her at the university campus and later on at the YFS at Wi’am. She told them that she was being stalked every two days by a group of three students from her university whenever she left the campus. However, she was afraid that if her conservative family heard about this, they would prevent her from attending university and continuing her studies.

To respond to the situation, the youth mediators first watched the girl as she was leaving campus in order to identify the stalkers. While they were observing the situation, they saw three young men chasing and harassing the girl. The youth mediators quickly reported the incident to the Student Union at their college and received permission to work on resolving the situation. In resolving this conflict, they hoped to both preserve the face of the girl, as well as prevent disciplinary action against the three boys, such as dismissal from the university.

They summoned the three young men to a private meeting at the YFS at Wi’am center with the supervision of a youth council member and a senior mediator. In the closed meeting, they told the boys that they saw them chasing the girl and harassing her in the street. They warned them that they will be subjected to severe disciplinary punishment and community backlash if they did not cooperate. They told the boys that the girl is psychologically hurt, and she can face a family punishment if her parents knew about this incident. They also summoned the parents of the three boys, taking their pledge that their sons will never stalk the girl or even talk to her. The boys and their parents pleaded guilty and asked the youth mediators to not make the case public so that the boys would not be suspended from their studies.

The youth mediators insured the girl’s parents were not informed about the incident, and the boys admitted their guilty freely and openly. After a frank apology to the girl the case was resolved. The mediation process was complemented by providing counseling service by the “Youth Friendly Spaces” members, in order to help her cope psychologically and return to a normal life.

Activity 2: STRENGTHENING YOUTH PEACEBUILDING: Training-for-Trainers program for 90 young Cadres in Conflict Transformation during the year



Wi'am worked to increase the capacity of young peacebuilders to have an impact on their own societies and work for peace. Our main activity strengthened youth peacebuilders. It consisted of skills-based training that included practical, theoretical and creative methods based on case studies, role-playing, dialogue and hands-on practice. We emphasized training young people in "multiplier" positions who can disseminate the training outcomes to a wider audience.

The Training-for-Trainers program on transforming conflicts enabled 90 young activists to improve their facilitation and training skills, focusing on peace building, conflict transformation, Sulha (mediation), and the creation of peaceful narratives through non-formal educational activities.



In addition, young multipliers had the chance to train around 300 students and young people from the Hebron/Bethlehem areas seeking to empower them to take action in the field of conflict transformation and transforming narrative.

Achievements:

- The 90 participants developed competency in analyzing and transforming conflicts, planning, designing, and delivering training sessions.
- 40 participants planned and carried out 15 small-scale training sessions on conflict transformation reaching 300 students in schools and summer camps in the Bethlehem, Dora, and Hebron areas.
- 90 potential trainers improved their facilitation and training skills-focusing on peacebuilding, conflict transformation and the creation of peaceful narratives through educational activities.
- Participants got hands-on experience in developing and implementing their own non-formal educational activities.
- Young people are better able to realize their potential to handle complex issues that other youth are facing with knowledge and skills to cope with personal, social, and educational challenges that they or other youth are facing, and how to maintain positive and healthy behaviors
- Young people effectively manage the challenges they face in their daily lives with improved confidence, assertiveness and decision-making, developing the necessary skills to communicate effectively, utilize non-verbal assertiveness skills and critical thinking.

Activity 3: Local-Level Trainings: Youth Deliver Multiplication Trainings for school children and Scouts

We are constantly seeking methods to best enable participants to use and spread their learning experiences from training courses in their own working environments or communities. Using knowledge or skills gained during a training event in the home context is a great chance to transfer that knowledge.



Youth multipliers had the chance to convey their learning to 300 students and scouts members from Dora, Hebron, Bani Na'em, Biet Awa, Yatta and Bethlehem areas. The aged of the target group, 9-18 years old, from schools of Dalal Mughrabi Basic school, Dar al-Salam school in Dora, Dora school for girls, Hebron Governmental School, al-Razi school, Yatta al-Najah School, Bani Nae'm mixed school, Terra Scanta in Bethlehem, and the Hope school in Biet Jala. The target groups included different ages and gender mixture, 60% female and 40% male.

An open space was offered to the participants to discuss topics, share experiences and develop learning skills. The youth multiplication training focused on imparting target groups with knowledge and skills in areas of peer-mediation and situation assessment,

Many of the trained students are now directly engaged in peer-mediation work in their schools, i.e., Shepherd school, Dora school, and Terra Santa, and actively worked to reduce the level of violence in their schools. They are part of an established peer-mediation desk that responds to conflicts actively when they arise in their classroom or school.

Mu'tasim, one of the multipliers from Dora, shared, "The multiplication training positively impacted my personality and gave me the incentive to engage in peace building activities that can help students solve their own conflict without solely depending on the teachers to do so."

Activity 4: “Youth Training on UN 1325”

The overall objective of the training is to raise the awareness of 40 young participants on issues of women, security, peace, advocacy and lobbying.



Workshop Summary:

The training workshops opened with a discussion on the different roles of women in the society: the political, productive, and reproductive roles. The participants agreed that these roles are changing and discussed how young people can influence these roles and engage in societal change.



In the second session, the participants discussed Resolution 1325 and how it has circulated in the community. They learned about the main facets of the resolution, its mechanisms of protection and accountability. The Resolution refers to the Fourth Geneva Convention, international humanitarian law, The Rome Agreement, and The Hague Convention.

The participants were divided into three groups to discuss case studies and their relevance to Resolution 1325. They considered what violations have been inflicted on women and what

mechanisms of protection and accountability are available to address these violations at the national, regional and international levels.



The participants were exposed to three cases of violations: the first was a case of rape of women in Yazidi, Iraq, the second case was the Abu Ghraib prison, and the third case was about Syrian women.

This was followed by a discussion of violations and international accountability mechanisms. After discussing the three cases, each group presented the violations they spotted in these cases, the mechanisms of international accountability, and the way of responding to these violations. The large group discussion created an exchange of views, and deepened dialogue among the group. The participants discussed the situation of Palestinian women and the ways in which Resolution 1325 can aid in their quest for justice and greater participation in community.



Results and outputs of training:

- The group is passionate about workshops, learning and gaining knowledge, committed to the time of the workshop, discussion and group work.
- The participants are more familiar with Resolution 1325, and how the resolution is circulated in Palestine.
- Participants are more familiar with the mechanisms of integrating women into decision-making processes related to the prevention, management and settlement of disputes
- Participants are more familiar with the international protection mechanisms associated with Resolution 1325
- Participants designed three campaigns – one on early marriage, and two campaigns on cybercrime
- Participants stimulated their ability to analyze social issues: such as early marriage, marriage of relatives, and polygamy.
- Empowering women with group work skills, presentation, and time management.



III. Women's Program:

The diverse roles of women as community leaders, peacebuilders and activists can no longer be denied in Palestine. Wi'am recognizes the urgent need to engage women in community issues and empower their leadership roles at both the domestic and societal levels. Our Women's Group works for gender equality and the abolition of all forms of oppression through empowering and mobilizing women to participate in social, cultural, and political spheres. As they identify and embrace their own strengths, women also strengthen their families and their communities. "Women are not only victims in conflict, but agents for positive change." – Asha Hagi Elmi Amin, UN Security Council 2009, Resolution 1889.

General objective:

To strengthen the capacities of women, advance for their rights, increase their voices and participate in the decision-making process of the public/political life

Specific Objectives:

- Combatting gender-based violence within the homes through awareness raising-sessions, advocacy campaigns, mediation, and counseling
- Increase the engagement and women participation in decision-making process and socio-political life

Activity I: PROMOTING WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION IN Politics, Elections AND Public Life



Wi'am has been able to engage the female-council members in five West Bank constituencies. Wi'am worked with approximately 20 elected council members and five unsuccessful council member candidates. These women were able to participate in our orientation workshop in which expectations were discussed as well as a detailed overview of the project, vision, and mission were shared. The same group of women underwent extensive training in media skills and communication efficiency, in which they were taught how to best effectively share, spread, and promote a message, idea, or campaign. During the same period, a joint advocacy council network was created, made from local council members and activists of the West Bank. This group met to discuss the role of women in the local council, the relationship with their male counterparts, and the challenges that they face when it comes to discussion making, meetings, and decision-making mechanisms.

We help women develop skills to be informed voters, active members of political parties, and successful candidates. Our programs encourage women to engage in political processes and to contribute to more government transparency and accountability.

Project Objective(s)

Increase the role of newly-elected women council members in decision-making processes in their respective councils, and decrease marginalization by building their leadership capacities and facilitating a democratic process in which male members in the council accept them as key players in decision making and consultations.



Activity 1: Enhancing the active participation of elected-female council members in Local Council's affairs

Outputs/results of the Activity:

The 25 training hours are a comprehensive training event which gathered 20 women (selected from different areas of the West Bank (Bethlehem areas, Ramallah, Hebron, etc.), and trained 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 conflict resolution. It also helped in reinforcing the women's leadership skills and confidence to engage in public speaking events and advocacy campaigns, and reach out to their audience during public speeches and social interaction.



One woman said after the training: “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”

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

Wi'am organized three dialogue sessions that hosted around 60 people in total, comprised of male and female elected council members and civic members, including civic activists, women leaders, advocates, social workers, and counselors. Also attending were those belonging to the larger community, such as lay people, members of local councils, local council candidates, members of youth groups, and student union representatives.



During the three meetings, the elected female members engaged in a frank and open discussions with the audience in which they focused on their experience before, during, and after the election. They reiterated the fact that going through the election process from nomination, to candidacy, to election campaign to ultimate success has been fraught with many challenges. One of the major obstacles that they faced is the patriarchal mentality, which disadvantages women and the to give women a marginal role and to dominate their dynamic role as agents of change and community transformation.



In their argument, the women candidates and other women activist focused on highlighting the social and political hurdles that impede women from actively engaging/participating in community and political life. They called for an end to obsolete social practices and patriarchal mentalities that consider women as inept or incompetent for political life. They asked further legislation and other mechanisms to combat discrimination against women's 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 in order to provide a more realistic and balanced portrayal of women.



Many speakers focused on how education can be a powerful vehicle for empowerment, not just for the individual but the whole community. Emphasis was also placed on the need to find positive entry points to overcome cultural barriers. If gender discrimination is to be effectively addressed, we must work with boys and men, as fathers and brothers are often the decision makers in families, resulting in better decisions for a girl's education and participation in public life. 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 female representation at higher levels of public administration in Palestine is to institute quotas. However, some argued that by introducing quotas we are not actually improving women's status. Most agreed that quotas were a good first step, and one of the only means to overcome the constraints of the patriarchal mentality and its grip on women's freedom of choice and rights. Women's inclusion, as argued by many in the meeting, is not only about guaranteeing women's representation, but rather, it is also about recognizing the unique leadership women offer and training them to participate effectively in governance at all levels.

The meetings helped in improving the understanding of male council members on women's concerns and needs in the council. By exposing male members to women issues, especially issues related to gender discrimination, we created a better understanding of the need to engage women more actively in decision making and also taking their opinion seriously during local council meetings.

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

The study tour aimed at creating opportunities for women to defend women's rights and promote their social and political participation in Palestine. The field visits paved the way for a stronger networking and exchange of best practices between council members from different areas which helped build stronger collaboration between different councils. The visits also helped in attracting more male members to join the network.

As part of a program arranged by Wi'am, 40 women, including 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. 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 council members to learn about the challenges/experiences of other city council members, men and women alike, in other cities and exchanging views on ways of facing challenges in their daily work in the community at large.

The participants in the study tour agreed that for women to reach their full potential, they must be given 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 enhanced the networking, learning, and experience of changing dynamics, especially through meeting with influential women, women activists and leading civil society organizations. An elected candidate said that "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."

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

Activity IV: Organize a Radio Talk and Public TV debate around the experience/role of elected female council members and the challenges they face in their council and the community.

Wi'am organized a Radio Talk that hosted 3 elected council members from Bethlehem City Council. The participants in the meeting talked about wide range of issues that focused on women's presence in public life, quotas, women's 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 have applied the principle of a 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 it doesn't tackle the hegemony of the male over 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 discouragement 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 on how they defied the social norms and nominated themselves. One council member 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 as a potential candidate for the council elections bore fruits in her winning the election as a member to the city council. In that context, the candidates talked about the community misconceptions they face as a council member and how some community members mistakenly think that women act as puppets who are inferior to men.

The Radio Talk was an opportunity for female members of the city council in Bethlehem to be a role model for others and talk frankly about their experiences before and after the elections. 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.

Wi'am organized and actively participated in a Public TV debate which focused on the experiences of local councilwomen within their local council a year after taking office. This debate was televised and aired on one of Palestine's most prominent news networks.

1. Outputs

	<u>Planned</u>	<u>Implemented activities</u>
<u>Creating of core group</u>	Establish a core group of 20-25 women, both elected council members and those who were candidates. Explain project and outline vision and goals.	Established a group of 20 women, 15 elected, and explained visions and goals, as well as had general conversations about expectations and managing those expectations.
<u>Establish a lively joint male and female council</u>	Establish a 20-30 person joint council network from council members, and local activists. Explain goals and vision.	Established a group of 45 members, 15 of which are elected council members and 30 of which are local activists. Discussed goals and vision as well as the importance of this project.
<u>Joint council field visits</u>	Have council network visit local NGOs and make field visits to beneficiaries and other organizations.	Visited three local councils to foster better relations between council members and to exchange best practices.
<u>Media training</u>	Offer a two-day training on how to best utilize social media and training on public speaking, media efficiency, and conflict management.	Organized a two day training on social media efficiency and effectiveness for 28 local council members and activities.
<u>TV Debate</u>	Broadcast a TV debate on the experience of elected female council members.	Broadcasted a TV debate that hosted three main speakers, two female and one male speaker, "Mayor or Ebediaha" and two elected female council members. Palestine's most prominent news station and

<p><u>Joint Council monthly meetings</u></p>	<p>Have four monthly joint meetings with the council with an attendance of 20-30 members to expose men to women's issues and deepen their understandings.</p>	<p>enhanced awareness and discussed the hardships and barriers to women participating in the political decision-making process in Palestine.</p> <p>Had four meetings of the joint council. The meetings helped improve the understanding of male council members on women's concerns and needs in the council. By exposing male members to women's issues, especially issues related to gender discrimination, we created a better understanding of the need to engage women more actively in decision making and to take their opinions more seriously during meetings in the local council</p>
---	---	---

2. Outcomes

Evaluation of how the activities have produced the outcomes and impacts as outlined in the M&E plan in Annex I (Proposal). Please note if you were unable to achieve the outcomes and impact as outlined in the M&E plan, and provide an explanation why.

Outcome 1: Enhanced understanding of the program by the selected beneficiaries, the staff and their role, expectations during the implementation phases

<u>Outcome Indicator</u>	<u>Baseline</u>	<u>Target</u>	<u>Details of achievements</u> <u>(evidence and data of achievements)</u>
<u>Creation of beneficiary core group</u>		20-25 members	Created a core group of 20 elected members and 8 unsuccessful candidates and gave clear expectations and explanations for the program

Outcome 2: Male council members are more gender sensitive to women's rights and needs in the council and outside

<u>Outcome Indicator</u>	<u>Baseline</u>	<u>Target</u>	<u>Details of achievements</u>
<u>Creation of active joint council</u>		20-30 members	Had 30 council members from multiple councils as well as 9 different activists. Met with each other and had a debriefing on the different struggles of the communities and councils and were given clear explanations of the vision and purpose of the program

<u>Outcome 3: Improve relationships and exchange of best practices between local council members from different area</u>			
<u>Outcome Indicator</u>	<u>Baseline</u>	<u>Target</u>	<u>Details of achievements</u>
<u>Had 3 different field visits for joint council</u>		30-40 participants	<p>38 people participated and paved the way for stronger networking and exchange of best practices between council members from different areas. This helped to build a stronger collaboration between different councils. The visits also helped in attracting more male members to join the network.</p> <p>Additionally, the visits were an opportunity for women to engage in frank discussion with other members on social and local council issues which eventually have impacted joint decisions in the local council.</p>

Outcome 4: Improve women's capacity to elevate women's voices through media training.

<u>Outcome Indicator</u>	<u>Baseline</u>	<u>Target</u>	<u>Details of achievements</u>
<u>Media Training</u>		20 participants	<p>Had 28 council members and 5 candidates join in a two-day training about media efficiency and effectiveness. Enhanced women council members' abilities to highlight their situation and activism via media outlet.</p> <p>The trainees gained theoretical and practical information on ways of dealing with the media, formulating media messages, news reports and press coverage, and became better equipped with skills in public speaking.</p> <p>A member of al-Khader Council, Wafaa Hamad, expressed her gratitude for this initiative which gave women the opportunity to express themselves freely, discover their abilities and enhance their activism.</p>

Outcome 5: Enhanced understanding in the community of the role of women in local councils and develop support to women participation decision-making process

<u>Outcome</u>	<u>Baseline</u>	<u>Target</u>	<u>Details of achievements</u>
-----------------------	------------------------	----------------------	---------------------------------------

<u>Indicator</u>			
<u>TV debate</u>		Larger public	<p>Broadcasted a live TV debate on one of Palestine's most prominent news networks about the challenges and realities that the women are dealing with inside the local council.</p> <p>Enhanced and increased awareness surrounding the struggles to vote, be elected, and participate in the decision-making process as a woman in Palestine.</p> <p>TV Link</p> <p>http://www.bethlehem-nvmc.com/.../video-episo.../218-episode-90-</p> <p>Production:</p> <p>TV episode on UN 1325</p> <p>http://www.bethlehem-nvmc.com/.../video-episo.../218-episode-90-</p>

Outcome 6: Improved understanding of women issues through the exposure of men and other council members to women's issues, especially as it relates to lax penal codes which enable gender-based discrimination, and better understanding the reasons behind women's political behavior

<u>Outcome Indicator</u>	<u>Baseline</u>	<u>Target</u>	<u>Details of achievements</u>
<u>Monthly Joint-council network meeting</u>		40-45 attendees	<p>Had four meetings with 30 people in attendance from the local councils, local activists and local NGOs.</p> <p>Ms. Amal Kreish shared her experience in political participation and the challenges she</p>

			<p>faced as well as some lessons learned.</p> <p>Enhanced understanding of the barriers to improved participation of women in the political sphere and the difficulties of being a woman in a decision-making position of influence.</p>
--	--	--	--

Activity 3: Organizing Wi'am's Weekly Women's Club Meetings:

Our weekly club is a pioneering idea through which the organization provides physical space for 60 women from diverse geographical areas and backgrounds to meet, interact and learn in a safe environment. It responds to the immediate needs of women to addressing the vulnerability and dissatisfaction of women, and prepares the foundation to address long-term needs. The women's club provides women with all the necessary facilities to enhance their development and improve their quality of life.

Educational activities take the form of workshops and discussion- The program conducts training courses to develop women's knowledge, to change the gender stereotypes, and to build women's leadership capacities. We also organize workshops to highlight issues related to women's rights participation in decision- making processes and gender equality within the various aspects of the society.

The following activities were implemented:

- Provided psychosocial support to give opportunities to distressed women and girls to openly express their feelings and experiences, thereby helping them to cope with their stress and return to normalcy
- Provided life skills training and safe practices, including human rights training, health information, advocacy, problem-solving, leadership, and information related to issues around conflict resolution and general risk reduction
- Mobilized women and girls to engage in advocacy campaigns and participate fully in social and public life
- Raised awareness on issues related to elections, CEDAW, UNR 1325, and social initiatives

Activity 4: Advocacy/Networking in Civil Society:

Wi'am continues networking within a web of 15 women's organizations in the Bethlehem governorate that advocate for gender rights and women's issues. This wider women's network meets to plan activities, advocacy campaigns, and solidarity activities in different areas of the West Bank to

advocate for social change for women rights. We also coordinate with the Women's Ministry and Youth High Council to participate in strategic planning for empowering women, youth, and children. We also invite key actors to debate policies and strategies within the greater community, thus increasing women's rights and security.



Wi'am continued advocating for women rights by helping to plan and implement a Yearly Advocacy Campaign with other women networks and civic organizations to mark "Women International Day" on the 8th of March. The theme of the campaign this year called for more women's rights and the elimination of all forms of violence against women.

Activity 5: Combatting Gender-Based Violence: "Together Against Domestic Violence against Women"

The aim is tackling domestic violence and reduce the high rates of abuse in the homes of Palestinians by addressing issues of prevention and protection. The project's activities are implemented mainly in marginalized areas.

Beneficiaries:

We targeted 40 women and girls (age 18-50) in our mediation intervention to counter domestic violence and reached 80 women throughout the year. The discussion groups invilved 60 men and 110 women and girls from diverse backgrounds and areas. We also engaged 10 social workers who work with different civic organizations dealing with women's rights. The counseling services reached 40 women and girls (40 cases) during the whole year.

1. Activity 1:

i) Mediation/counseling services for cases of domestic violence among women and girls (80 cases per year)

Shuttle mediation is provided by a mediator who is trained in domestic violence in a manner that protects the safety of the victim and any household member. The procedures of mediation make sure that it protects the victim from harm, harassment, or intimidation. The mediation starts with pre-mediation screening to determine the severity of the case, the parties involved, and whether the case is urgent or not.

We provided mediation and counseling services to 80 cases of domestic violence and other related cases of abuse against women and girls. The mediation services were a means of providing support

for victims and their families. Domestic violence and abuse can be grouped into three general categories: physical abuse, sexual abuse and psychological abuse.

Results:

- 80 women/girls and their families have received mediation and counseling after instances of domestic violence: 15 harassment cases intervened 25 cases of cyber bullying/Facebook abuse intervened/40 cases general problems related to husband-wife, couples, and abusive relationships;

Outcomes:

- There has been a significant improvement of the psychological well-being of the women we intervened in their case.
- The intervention helped in regaining and putting in order the broken relationships/injustices/abuse between women and other parties involved.
- Victims of domestic violence improved their self-esteem, lessening their sense of anxiety, fear and stress.

Case Study I: Husband-wife Conflict

Woman (X) lives in a small conservative village near the West Bank city of Hebron. She is married with two kids. As time went by, the relationship between her and her husband who occupies a high-ranking position in the local Authority became strained. The situation became worse and worse, with the husband acting increasingly jealous, using nasty words, vulgar expressions, and beating her. This situation drove the woman to seek the help of Wi'am mediators in order to cope with the domestic violence that she is experiencing.

Our first activity was to conduct a meeting between the staff, social worker, and the mediator to develop a joint plan of action responding to this case of domestic violence.

The second stage of our mediation work focused on meeting the husband separately to discuss the issue. The meeting was very difficult with the husband denying all the accusations of physical and psychological misconduct. He continually accused his wife of humiliating him and not caring for him. However, the mediator was prudent enough to remind the husband of the bruises he caused his wife and the traumatic repercussions. The husband soon realized the immense pressure put on him by this evidence. He did not want the matter to reach the extended families as the issue would become magnified and very complicated. After many shuttle meetings with the husband he admitted his guilt, claiming pressure from work caused these irrational actions. He was quick to apologize to his wife and agreed to never repeat such shameful acts of violence against her in the future.

After that, the mediator summoned the husband and his wife to issue an apology, showing her immense remorse.

The final stage of the mediation focused on providing the woman with counseling and psychotherapeutic services to help her cope with the traumatic ordeal.

ii) Three-day educational workshops for 10 social workers: introduction to issues relating to domestic violence from a social service perspective covering basic concepts and assistance for victims, raising their awareness on domestic violence, social aspects, referrals, legal aspects, psychological aspects, initial responses, listening skills.

The three workshops running for 6 hours each were dedicated to discussing skills covering basic concepts and assistance for victims, psychological aspects of cases of DV, what to do when a woman comes asking for supportive resources for Domestic Violence (initial responses/ listening skills):

- Enquire sensitively and provide a safe and empathetic first response. Listen without judgment
- Don't try to "fix it"
- Keep in mind that:
 - The victim is not responsible
 - It takes time to talk about these issues
 - The healing process is different for each person

The workshops identified ways in which those who work with victims/survivors of Domestic Violence (DV) can be aware of how victims are emotionally and psychologically impacted by their work, and how to provide healthy ways to manage their own feelings about DV. The social workers learned how to reflect on their own opinions and feelings regarding Domestic Violence and how to 'ask the question' sensitively and safely. This activity invited participants to reflect and discuss the ways their own opinions and feelings with DV may impact the effectiveness of interventions made while making referrals for survivors of DV.

The workshops informed the social workers on the social intricacies of DV, including how to deal sensitively with traditions, social conduct, patriarchal mentality, and conservative mentalities. They also learned how to respond in cases of immediate and significant risk (i.e. where it may not be safe to go home) and mechanisms of referrals and contacting the available safe shelter home in their areas.

The participants are more aware of:

- The practice for responding to disclosure, and know what to do when there is immediate risk of harm to victims of DV and their children
- Documenting domestic abuse within certain records safely and keeping records as evidence
- Sensitivity regarding sharing information appropriately. Information will be shared only with the consent of the patient, subject to practice policy on child protection and adult safeguarding. In exceptional circumstances information may be shared without the patient's consent (grave cases)
- The protocols of contacting the police, legal and social aspects of DV.

One of the female participants reflected that it was "excellent training, lots of information for me to reflect on and build into my practice".

iii) Training (45 hours) for 40 women and girls (age 18-50 years old) on women rights, domestic violence, reporting mechanisms of cases of abuse, and initial responses.

The training was conducted for 20 women and girls from Bethlehem and Hebron areas, increasing the participants' knowledge about DV. Participants discussed questions such as: Who is the victim? Who is the perpetrator? What to do when witnessing a DV case? How do you report the case and to who? The training helped participants gather information about DV, reporting mechanisms, conflict transformation, conflict analysis/mapping, and conflict resolution. The training imparted women with knowledge about documenting cases of DV and other related gender rights abuses. This aimed to give women the chance to act as preventive and monitoring resources that can record these violations, decide what/when to document, and follow-up the documentation in cases of legal action. The participants are better able to fight back when it comes to gender stereotypes.

The training gave participants the opportunity to develop an essential knowledge about women human rights issues and its connectedness with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). It is described as the International Bill of Rights of Women as it establishes that women have civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, which are to be enjoyed by women on an equal basis with men regardless of marital status. They learned that CEDAW:

- Considers discrimination against women as a human rights violation.
- Sets standards on women's human rights.
- Obligates States to protect, promote and fulfill women's human rights.

Immediate Outcomes:

-Increased knowledge and skills on CEDAW and women Human rights

-Increased awareness among women on domestic violence, reporting and documenting these cases

Activity 2:

Every three months we held a discussion group with men developing work strategies (reaching 60 people in total).

The four informal discussion sessions hosted around 60 individuals in total during the year hosting key stakeholders (men, security officers, lawyers, social workers, activists). The participants discussed many issues related to gender violence in the community; the role of mediators and police to curb this trend of violence; ways of protecting the victims of violence; and ways of providing shelter and support to victims and their families. They also discussed how to overcome shortcomings and build off successes relating to cases of gender discrimination and domestic violence.

The participants agreed to establish an informal contract and working mechanism of responding to cases of DV in which mediators will be the focal point of intervention to help victims. This working mechanism is a network that can be a future model for coordinating the efforts of the local police, mediators, social workers, lawyers, human rights advocates, women activists, and civic organizations.

The participants discussed issues of masculinity, culture, and power abuse. This is a space where men can speak separately from the women about domestic violence and their role in creating a culture that does and/or does not support DV. The facilitators in the discussion proposed the following questions:

- What roles do men play that foster or support DV?
- What are some cultural expectations of masculinity that contribute to a culture of DV?
- What is the distinction between emotional and psychological abuse?
- What does it look like when a child is a victim of DV?

The facilitator invited the group to brainstorm different strategies for how the participants can be supportive of domestic violence victims in their communities.

Some examples of ways to be supportive to victims of DV in their community include:

- Being a constant supporter who never blames the victim
- Finding resources in the area that can be shared
- Getting to know the victim and being non-judgmental in the process
- Being open to discussing and becoming more knowledgeable about DV
- Connecting the victim to support groups/shelters/mediators and with other victims of DV so that they can hear about the experiences of others

Activity 3:

Every three months we have a discussion group in Bethlehem and Hebron areas for women, girls, and their families (reaching more than 110 people in total).

The four discussion sessions provided around 110 participants, particularly women, with a space that challenges their isolation and brings them in contact with individuals who listen to their concerns. With knowledge, understanding, and support, women gain a stronger awareness of their self-worth and are better positioned to prevent violence (particularly violence that was once considered normal and not abusive, such as verbal abuse). They have acquired skills to identify and solve problems.

Outcomes:

- Combated women's isolation and encouraged women to express themselves.
- Provided individual counseling for 40 cases of domestic violence during the year
- Alleviated the distress that often accompanies victimization (e.g., depression, anxiety, posttraumatic stress symptoms, guilt, shame) and to increase survivors' sense of self and well-being.

Case Study: X, 19 years old married girl

Only in the last year did I begin to think my life is just a mirage. I thought that a family could be a good place to be :a home, a shelter. I'm the eldest, and I took a lot of my husband's fury. I know that marriage against my will always be a curse, not a blessing. In fact, I sometimes get terrified that I will react like him. He beat me on daily basis and threaten to divorce me if I tell my family of my ordeal.

Sometimes we would just argue and shout, but then I would see what he could do when he loses it. I had to go to the hospital once and it was just horrible. I could not bear it. I wanted to kill him. I reached a stage where I could not bear the psychological and the psychical pain anymore”.

One day I spoke to someone on a helpline who referred me to the Wi'am Center. Then we had a counselor who talked to me, my child, and my husband. My husband had been approached by the mediator who managed to work with him.

After many counseling sessions, my psychological pain has eased dramatically and I am relieved from stress and depression. The mediation contributed towards convincing my husband to relinquish his violent behavior and think of his family in a more passionate manner.

Activity 6) Organizing an advocacy campaign on the 8th of March promoting women rights and gender equality

In close cooperation with our women's networks, we organized a march commemorating International Women's Day on the 8th of March, calling for an end to domestic violence and gender discrimination. The march took place in Bethlehem and was attended by 250 individuals from different areas in the West Bank with the participation of women activists, peace advocates, academics, mediators, men of religion, lawyers, lay people, university students, and members of the police and authorities.

Outcomes:

- Greater recognition and understanding of the negative effects of domestic violence on women rights amongst the larger community which affect both women and men.
- Stronger awareness among women and girls of their self-worth which better positions them to prevent violence.
- Heightened community awareness, recognition, of women legal and human rights.

Recommendations:

- Engage women and youth (both males and females) in Capacity Enhancement to raise awareness about domestic violence and ways of responding to this evil
- Engage in partnership with other organizations, universities, and schools to disseminate UN resolution and conventions (UNR1325, CEDAW) and to promote gender equality as a way of life
- Expand the advocacy campaign to reach more areas, civic organizations, male communities, and larger communities
- Support for victims' access to justice
- Training for police officers, medical authorities, judges, prosecutors, and lawyers
- Assistance for women's resource centers that provide legal and psychosocial support to victims, and sharing of experience through roundtable meetings and study tours

- Treating women as active members of society; the whole community should overlook certain traditions and attitudes that encourage and provoke the conflict between the two genders in the Palestinian society

- Improving the image of women in the media and school books

- Adjusting the inherited norms and Patriarchal tradition and mentalities to accommodate women in community change by highlighting the positive and suppressing the negative ones

- Raising women's awareness and developing females' 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

ICAN 7th Annual Women, Peace and Security Forum

Lucy Talgieh participated in the ICAN 7th Annual Women, Peace and Security Forum

Locally Rooted, Globally Connected". Harnessing the Collective Power of Women's Leadership in Preventing Violent Extremism and Promoting Sustainable Peace, November 2018 – Colombo, Sri Lanka.



Under the overarching theme of “Harnessing the Collective Power of Women’s Leadership” ICAN’s 2018 Forum was dedicated to sharing experiences, tactics, lessons, and prospective ideas for deepening these strategic alliances

ICAN’s 7th annual Women, Peace and Security Forum brought together more than 80 women from over 35 countries actively involved in countering violence and extremism by promoting peace, resilience, equality, and pluralism (PREP). Many are among the founding members of the Women’s Alliance for Security Leadership (WASL) that ICAN spearheads.

Title of Workshop

CEDAW as an advocacy tool for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and other WPS Resolutions



Amman

5-8 March 2018

Activity Report

I. General Information

Workshop Location: Landmark Hotel

Participants Designation/Organizations:

Workshop Materials:

Organizers: GNWP with Cooperation Wi'am, Palestinian Conflict Transformation Center

**Facilitators: Mavic Cabrera-Balleza
Shanthi Dairiam
Agnieszka Fal-Dutra Santos
Amal Kreishe
Lucy Talgieh**

Documenter: Rasha Moneer, Tarek Zoughbi, Kelly Yzique

Project Assistants: Lucy Talgieh

II. Project activities and achievements

1. Activities

Opening Remarks:

The workshop opened with opening remarks from Mavic Cabrera-Balleza (GNWP), Abeer Abd El-Haq (MoFA), and from Lucy Talgieh (Wi'am Center). The participants then introduced themselves and spoke on the meaning of peace, led by Agnieszka Fal-Dutra Santos

Abeer shared the following insights in her welcoming:

- Focal point for WPS and CEDAW
- Palestine acceded to CEDAW and has been working to implement them Expert Committee for the implementation of CEDAW
- National Committee to Harmonize Domestic Laws with the international treaties has led to work on the legal framework on DV/VAW etc.
- Initial/preliminary report submitted on 8 March 2017; shadow report also submitted and Recommendations were received and are being answered.
- National Efforts on WPS :
 - High Level National Committee for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325, headed by the Ministry of Women's Affairs;
 - 2016 – NAP developed and adopted; M&E guidelines developed recently

Workshop Objectives and Expectations:

The participants presented some of their expectations from this workshop and meeting, which were:

- To collectively examine the synergies between CEDAW and WPS in Palestine and discuss how such synergies apply to the Palestinian context
- To enhance the capacities of Palestinian women activists and government officials to effectively use CEDAW as an advocacy tool to support implementation of WPS and vice versa
- To identify current gaps in the implementation of CEDAW and WPS in Palestine and make concrete recommendations and commitments to address them

Negative and harmful gender stereotypes and expectations:

Shanthi presented about the Liberian “Bush Wives”. Then the groups shared some of the negative and harmful stereotypes and expectations which were predominant in society, including the following:

- Women: providing care to the children; men – supporting the family financially
- Women peaceful/merciful; Men are violent
- Men as “protectors” of women → women not capable to make decisions/lead/be independent
- “Double burden” on women → even if they work, they are still expected to be the primary providers care inside the house (CEDAW: obligation for equal sharing of house duties)
- Women as consumers and men as producers
- Women are restricted with what they can do – they are not full citizens
- Women are viewed as “property” of men – they are always “linked” to a man: “who is your father”; “who is your husband”; “who is your son” → they are not recognized as separate individuals

- If a woman is divorced or widowed, she is unable to exist on her own – she has to return to her parents, or remarry

Shanthi concluded with the following words: “To change these stereotypes, we have to challenge cultural norms, including the harmful interpretations of tradition, religion etc”.

Impact of Conflict on Women in the Palestinian Territories:

The participants discussed the negative role of occupation, especially on women in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and made the following conclusions:

- Decreased mobility – restricting girls’ access to school; increase in child marriage
- Impact on families and communities (severing of family and community ties, separation of families)
- Women bear the double burden
- Sexual violence; human trafficking;
- Increase of domestic violence leads to violence
- Limited job opportunities increased poverty rates
- Unhealthy situation for widows
- Access to justice different based on legal systems in Gaza and West Bank

Women’s role and participation in Peacebuilding and peace processes:

The Participants were divided into 5 main groups and were tasked in providing answers to some discussion questions. The questions and answers are as following:

Group 1: How are women included in peacebuilding and peace processes? How do gender stereotypes affect their participation?

- There are Two peace processes: the negotiations with the Israelis; the process between Hamas and Fattah
- Women’s participation limited in the negotiations with the Israelis, and nonexistent within the national negotiations.
- “Tribal culture” – men are the primary responsible
- Women as caretakers → Conflict prevention initiatives
- Women created committees to provide protection to the civilian population; but not involved in official/formal processes

Group 2: Is their participation a “ticking of the box” exercise or is it meaningful?

- Women have been present in political and social decision-making since 1970s
- After the forming of the Palestinian Authority, women have been included in that
- Women still burdened by the patriarchal system, which may render their participation meaningless

Group 3: What are the challenges to women’s participation

- Women’s participation in politics/decision-making is very limited (only 3 women ministers)
- Political divisions within Palestine → focus on conflicts, not on gender-sensitivity/inclusion

Group 4: Women’s Movement efforts

- Working towards political participation → fighting for meaningful quota in municipal elections;
- Increasing women’s participation in the labour market

Group 5: Positive impacts of women's participation

- Women bring in the “collective perspective”, the common good, rather than individual power struggle
- Challenging gender stereotypes
- Re emphasis of the importance of women's role as caretakers

CEDAW:

Shanthi's presentation. CEDAW is a living instrument. It is not just the law itself; its content, shape, and implementation are shaped by the Member States' interpretation. That's why the submissions are key to understanding it.

Normative standard for the CEDAW: the principle of equality

- Equality is about creating the conditions where women can be treated as equals and participate meaningfully
- Equity is not the same as equality. Equity is an essential part of equality, but you cannot talk only about equity; it is a component.

Scope of application of CEDAW

- E.g. – application to migrants/asylum seekers
- Progressive implementation – implementation happens in stages, because it is impossible to change; but the implementation has to happen without delay – if there are discriminatory laws or policies, they have to be changed at once.
- Article 16 – equality in marriage; objected to by some states as contrary to their tradition and, for example, Sharia law
- Applicability to Palestinians living in countries who are not a State Party to the Convention – e.g. the U.S.; what matters is the country, not the nationality of the individual

Challenges

- Social norms/gender stereotypes e.g. the guardianship of the women by the men etc.
- Using religion/tradition as an excuse not to implement
- Addressing symptoms not the root causes

WPS:

Mavic presented the following information in regards to WPS via Skype. Women's participation enhances poverty recovery and solidifies and strengthens peace agreements, therefore enhancing and sustaining prevention and security efforts.

Some of the challenges and steps taken in WPS' progression were shared, including expiring NAPs - with more than 20 out of 74 having expired - and funding difficulties - with only 16 NAPs having allocated budgets, the establishment of the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund, the launch of 63 National Focal Points Network on WPS, and the adoption of CEDAW from over 30 countries and their usage of Universal Periodic Review to monitor implementation and report on it.

Mavic then discussed the new YPS initiatives, the 16th sustainable development goal towards building an inclusive sustainable society with justice for all, and developing effective, accountable,

sustainable, and inclusive institutions at all levels. Some of the challenges include sexual violence, lack of funding, and violent extremism. These challenges have been responded to by the Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative, SRSG to get time commitments from member states, the establishment of the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund, the Gender Peace Initiative, and the integration of PVE in NAPs.

The recommendations were as following:

- MS and UN to support and utilize locally driven solutions and increase funding and collaboration with civil society
- Set conflict prevention as a global agenda
- Provide protection for activists, peacebuilders, and victims
- enhance peace agreement implementation
- Increase funding and funding longevity

Q&A – the topics/questions discussed included

- NAP funding and the budget of the Palestinian NAP
- NAP reporting – the indicators from UNSCR 1889; Palestine has incorporated them into their NAP and is planning to report on them
- The possibility to use the global networks on WPS → including the WPS Focal Points network led by UN Women; and GNWP, as an avenue to raise awareness about the plight of the Palestinian women

Synergies between WPS and CEDAW:

Shanthi discussed CEDAW as a feminist initiative; moving from gender-blind to gender-sensitive, from “discrimination based on sex” to “discrimination against women”, and elevating non-discrimination to the status of the law → legally binding contractual obligation to the States

- **Normative standards** of equality and non-discrimination → equality is not 50-50/identical treatment; you have to **redistribute rights** and make up for past injustices
To achieve this, CEDAW allows for **temporary special measures** to counteract it (affirmative action) – but it has to be temporary, otherwise it can turn into protectionism, based on and reinforcing the stereotypes (e.g. that women are weak)
- Introducing an **obligation to transform power relations** → women's right to lead
- CEDAW and other international instruments
 - They are **complementary – can be used together**
- General Recommendation 30 recognizes and highlights that Geneva Conventions are not gender-sensitive and therefore need to be complemented
- CEDAW and UNSCR 1325 – CEDAW provides the context and starting point for UNSCR → the implementation based on the **principle that women are equal citizens**
- During conflict, women's economic and social rights tend to be forgotten, as the focus is on humanitarian response and conflict resolution; this is harmful and CEDAW helps avoid it and ensures that after the end of the conflict women can effectively participate in the nation-building

CEDAW and UNSCR 1325

The groups presented and discussed both the priorities and challenges of CEDAW and UNSCR 1325.

UNSCR 1325 – priorities

1. Protecting women from negative impacts of occupation (including conflict-related sexual violence)
2. Documenting and challenging Israeli occupation
3. Increasing women's participation in decision-making on peace and security issues

UNSCR 1325 – challenges

1. Different/inconsistent laws in the country – due to occupation and internal divisions
2. Lack of documentation of the violations
3. Weak monitoring and evaluation
4. Culture of discrimination
5. Lack of political will (from both Israel and Palestine)

CEDAW – priorities

1. Challenging Israeli occupation – a pre-requisite for Palestine to be able to protect its own women and ensure non-discrimination
2. Working to ensure equality and protect women within their families
3. Working to challenge the culture of discrimination

CEDAW – challenges

1. Israeli occupation – unable to implement the laws in parts that are under CEDAW control
2. Internal divisions and inconsistent legal systems
3. Culture of discrimination/lack of awareness among the people
4. Lack of political will

CEDAW as an advocacy tool for the implementation of UNSCR 1325

The groups were divided across 5 tables and were tasked with discussing how CEDAW can be effectively and efficiently used for the implementation of UNSCR 1325. The groups discussed how CEDAW and UNSCR 1325 compliment and aid each other, both enhancing women's role and rights, regardless of environmental circumstance. The groups came up with the following commitments, within each of their subdivided region and sector.

Commitments for Action

Group 1 East Jerusalem

1. Make statements on the accountability for the violations under Israeli occupation to the CEDAW committee, using a common, internationally used language, and disseminate them internationally to academics, international stakeholders etc.
2. Unify the language used when talking about CEDAW and UNSCR 1325 in internal and external communication

3. Document the invisible violations of the women's rights through meeting with Palestinian women, and make statement/report highlighting the invisible impacts of the occupation

Group 2 – Hebron and Bethlehem

1. Prepare a report on the militarization of civilian spaces in Palestine under the Israeli Occupation (e.g. military checkpoints, numbering of citizens, aggression on the street between Hebron and Bethlehem)
2. Conduct education and awareness-raising sessions for the grassroots organizations and CBOs as well as marginalized people living in Area C on the subject of Israeli occupation and the violations under the Israeli Occupation, using media as an awareness raising tool
3. Document the violations of women and girls' rights, including sexual violence and other types of violations, under the Israeli Occupation

Group 3 - Ramallah

1. Disseminate and raise awareness on women's rights and international instruments that guarantee them, especially CEDAW and its GR 30 and UNSCR 1325, as well as the links and synergies between them;
2. Prepare statements, speeches and academic articles commenting on/discussing the concluding remarks of the CEDAW Committee to Israel, to ensure accountability and recognition of it;
3. Strengthen networking and collaboration among women's organizations to work on UNSCR 1325 and to document the violations of human rights under the occupation and use them to advocate against the Israeli occupation on international fora
4. Coordinate with the MOFA and Ministry of Women's Affairs to push for the Exceptional Report to the CEDAW Committee on the violations against Palestinian women in Israel

Group 4 - Gaza

1. Raise awareness on the synergies and parallels between CEDAW and UNSCR 1325 among the Coalitions working on 1325 and women's issues (e.g. Coalition on VAW)
2. Request the government to prepare an Exceptional Report on the situation of Palestinian women under the occupation, especially with regards to the impact of restricted mobility and freedom of movement
3. Document the violations of women's rights under the occupation, using the international legal frameworks, including GR 30, and use them for international advocacy, including the advocacy for international investigation teams/committees to come to Gaza to witness and document the violations themselves

Group 5 The North

1. Raise awareness on the synergies between UNSCR 1325 and CEDAW among women's organizations through workshops
2. Organize a meeting for all National Coalitions working on 1325 and CEDAW to develop practical tools to implement CEDAW and UNSCR 1325

3. Review the existing plans on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and CEDAW to ensure their synergy and implementation

Group 6 – government

1. Work in partnership with civil society; refuse to be separated from the civil society organizations
2. Review the Palestinian legal system, especially Article no. 10 in the Palestinian Basic Law, to ensure its alignment with CEDAW, and disseminate the Convention in the Gazette
3. Ensure the synergy between the governmental work on CEDAW and UNSCR 1325 and harmonious implementation
4. Develop gender-responsive budgets and allocate sufficient and adequate funding for the implementation of CEDAW and UNSCR 1325
5. Establish a national monitoring body to document the violations of women's rights, guaranteed within CEDAW and GR 30, under the occupation
6. Organize a national consultation and dialogue on what should be taken into account when reporting on CEDAW, and to develop a 2nd generation NAP on 1325

2. Achievements

III. Concrete Actions agreed upon during the Workshop (Comprehensive details of Local Action Plans, Media Strategy, and any other plans agreed upon by group during various exercises)

Please see section V. for the list of commitments made by participants.

IV. Participants Feedback

Based on the evaluation form that the participants filled it:

- The training met their expectations and they understood the synergy between 1325 and CEDAW
- The content of the workshops was relevant to their work and they familiarized themselves with the CEDAW and WPS action plan in a better way.
- The most interesting workshop was the Synergy between CEDAW and 1325 because it was related to their work
- 19 out of 20 mentioned that all the entire session was important for them and related to their work.
- 18 out of 20 said they now have better understanding of the synergy between CEDAW and UN 1325, because the obligations under both of them must be fulfilled together.
- Benefit from the reporting mechanism of CEDAW to strengthen the implementation of 1325

- Five out of twenty recommended that we should conduct future workshops and invite CEDAW committee members to train us on how to defend the Palestinian report before the committee (mock session)

Quotation by the participants:
 Abeer said: “Through this training course we understood better the synergies and direct connections between CEDAW and UNSCR 1325 and how to use CEDAW as an advocacy tool to implement UNSCR 1325, in addition to the importance of the reporting mechanism of CEDAW and how can we use it to strengthen the implementation of the UNSCR 1325. In other words, providing the rights ensured by CEDAW to all women is essential to help them to become better leaders and to participate in the decision-making and peacebuilding processes which are the main issues of the UNSCR 1325”.

Victoria: “The workshop was very well organized, positive environment, all participants feel comfortable, all have the chance to talk about their experiences, for me it was over my expectation. The speakers mainly Shanty was excellent, the materials distributed very useful the workshop outcome with the commitments need follow up. Hope to meet you in another similar workshops to work on the commitments and exploring the CEDAW Gr30 and 1325 synergies in details”.

Amal: “The conference’s topic is not an easy one, and yet, with the careful organization, management, and cooperation between Wi’am Center, and the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders, this group of Palestinian pioneers and activists for women’s rights and gender justice, were able to beat the odds and meet in Jordan in this very well-organized workshop. The topics and times discussed were enough to allow all participants the time to engage and create the framework upon which we can all further continue our work, with revitalization, new knowledge, connections, and more holistic vision. I hope that we will be given the opportunity to further this much needed discussion and focus in greater extent on the implementation of the mechanism and synergies between CEDAW, UNSCR 1325, and the WPS resolutions”.

V. Conclusions and Recommendations

Commitments for Action

The following commitments were made by the different groups who were subdivided by region and/or sector.

Group 1

4. Make statements on the accountability for the violations under Israeli occupation to the CEDAW committee, using a common, internationally used language, and disseminate them internationally to academics, international stakeholders etc.
5. Unify the language used when talking about CEDAW and UNSCR 1325 in internal and external communication
6. Document the invisible violations of the women’s rights through meeting with Palestinian women, and make statement/report highlighting the invisible impacts of the occupation

Group 2 – Hebron and Bethlehem

4. Prepare a report on the militarization of civilian spaces in Palestine under the Israeli Occupation (e.g. military checkpoints, numbering of citizens, aggression on the street between Hebron and Bethlehem)
5. Conduct education and awareness-raising sessions for the grassroots organizations and CBOs as well as marginalized people living in Area C on the subject of Israeli occupation and the violations under the Israeli Occupation, using media as an awareness raising tool
6. Document the violations of woman's' and girl's rights, including sexual violence and other violations, under the Israeli Occupation

Group 3 - Ramallah

5. Disseminate and raise awareness on women's rights and international instruments that guarantee them, especially CEDAW and its GR 30 and UNSCR 1325 and the links and synergies between them;
6. Prepare statements, speeches, and academic articles commenting on and discussing the concluding remarks of the CEDAW Committee to Israel to ensure accountability and recognition
7. Strengthen networking and collaboration among women's organizations to work on UNSCR 1325 and to document the violations of human rights under the occupation and use them to advocate against the Israeli occupation on international
8. Coordinate with the MOFA and Ministry of Women's Affairs to push for the Exceptional Report to the CEDAW Committee on the violations against Palestinian women in Israel

Group 4 - Gaza

4. Raise awareness on the synergies and parallels between CEDAW and UNSCR 1325 among the Coalitions working on 1325 and women's issues (e.g. Coalition on VAW)
5. Request the government prepare an Exceptional Report on the situation of Palestinian women under the occupation, especially with regards to the impact of restricted mobility and freedom of movement
6. Document the violations of women's rights under the occupation, using the international legal frameworks, including GR 30, and use them for international advocacy, including the advocacy for international investigation teams/committees to come to Gaza to witness and document the violations themselves

Group 5

4. Raise awareness on the synergies between UNSCR 1325 and CEDAW among women's organizations through workshops
5. Organize a meeting for all National Coalitions working on 1325 and CEDAW to develop practical tools to implement CEDAW and UNSCR 1325

6. Review the existing plans on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and CEDAW to ensure their synergy and implementation

Group 6 – government

7. Work in partnership with civil society; refuse to be separated from the civil society organizations
8. Review the Palestinian legal system, especially Article no. 10 in the Palestinian Basic Law, to ensure its alignment with CEDAW, and disseminate the Convention in the Gazette
9. Ensure the synergy between the governmental work on CEDAW and UNSCR 1325 and harmonious implementation
10. Develop gender-responsive budgets and allocate sufficient and adequate funding for the implementation of CEDAW and UNSCR 1325
11. Establish a national monitoring body to document the violations of women's rights, guaranteed within CEDAW and GR 30, under the occupation
12. Organize a national consultation and dialogue on what should be taken into account when reporting on CEDAW, and to develop a 2nd generation NAP on 1325

VI. Annexes

- a. **Final Module Matrix**
- b. **List of participants and resource persons – names, organizations/media institution and contact information (if they are willing to share). (Note: Please state how many female and male participants.)**
- c. **Findings of the Knowledge, Attitudes and Perception Survey**

Please refer to section IV.

- d. **Findings of the Evaluation Survey**

Please refer to section IV.

- e. **Slides for each presentation used during the Workshop**
- f. **Documents produced – e.g. participants' statement; media and communication strategy/plan; Draft Local Action Plans**
- g. **Networking and information sharing mechanism – e.g mailing lists or Facebook Groups or WhatsApp group created**

- h. **Photo and video documentation**
- i. **Social media outreach – e.g. how many FB posts – how many shares, likes, followers; how many tweets- which hashtags, how many likes, retweets, followers; how many blog posts, recipients, shares (Note: Provide at least five sample tweets , five sample FB posts, five instagram posts.)**

No Twitter page was created, as Twitter is not a large social media outlet in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. However, a Facebook page with the following URL was created:

<https://www.facebook.com/CEDAW-and-UNSCR-1325-in-Palestine-932306616946446/>

This page has 155 likes and 156 followers and had 15 published posts which reached 10,396 people and engaged 4,989 of them.

- j. Mainstream/traditional media coverage – articles in newspapers and magazines – which newspaper/magazine; how big is the newspaper circulation/readership; TV and radio interviews – which TV or radio program, how many viewers, listeners**

Various interviews were conducted on different radio shows and platforms, including the Bethlehem Radio which has 30,000 listeners, and Mawwal Radio which has approximately 25,000 listeners.

Newspaper articles were written in regards to the workshop. Here are the links:

- 1. <http://pnn.ps/news/311799>**

- 2. <http://blog.amin.org/najeebfarraj/2018/03/19/%D9%85%D8%A4%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%B1-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%B9%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%86-%D9%8A%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%82%D8%B4-%D8%A7%D9%88%D8%B6%D8%A7%D8%B9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%84%D8%B3/>**

- 3. <http://www.alquds.com/pdf/1521621740829169000/1521623619000/>**

- k. Any other relevant documents produced during the Workshop**

IV) Children's Program: PEER-Mediation in schools/Summer Camps,

- **Peer-Mediation in Schools:**

The core aim of the peer-mediation program is to empower students as 'ambassadors of social justice'. The program trains students in the mediation processes and develops leadership skills needed to assist peers in resolving personal conflicts in a peaceful manner. In this context, students who are trained in the appropriate skills offer support to their peers, helping students to find peaceful ways to resolve their playground and classroom conflicts.

**Beneficiaries:**

The target group is students from grade (10-12) from four schools in the Bethlehem areas - namely Terra Santa school, Shepherd School, Lutheran School, and Hope School in Beit Sahour. A total of 290 students, both male and female, were reached.

The program aimed to:

- Help students become leaders in their school community, promote fairness and respect for all students, watch out for harassment and bullying, and help students get any support they may need. This includes providing a safe, confidential peer mediation service
- Develop empathy so that individuals listen to each other with understanding
- Teach lifelong conflict management skills
- Empower individuals in making positive choices to build successful relationships
- Provide children with a safe space to learn, interact, and build life and mental skills necessary to discover their potential, be creative, and think in proactive ways

Activities:

Activity I: Conduct 10 training workshops in each school for grade (10-12) in areas of peer-mediation/non-violence, negotiation, problem-solving, and communication skills during the year

Activity II: Organize 4 informal meetings in the target schools on the stages of development and ways of encouraging positive behaviors among children (reaching 80 people in total - parents, social workers, teachers)

Outcomes:

- Increased use of peaceful conflict resolution skills among students
- Increased confidence and ability to manage conflict constructively
- Greater awareness of the students psychological and physical needs on behalf of the parents

Case Study:

During the past years, Wi'am has been working diligently in implementing effective measures to proactively educate students about the harmful effects of school violence, bullying, and other negative behaviors. The comprehensive training in peer-mediation and conflict resolution aimed at creating a safe and respectful learning environment for all students has always been a high priority of Wi'am's work in schools that are inflicted with high rate of peer violence and bullying.



One of the cases of success was Ameer, a 15 years old boy from one of the schools that were targeted in Bethlehem area. Ammer's personality was described as violent, careless, and a constant bully who gave his classmates and even his family a hard time. His school achievement was sliding sharply, and 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 considered 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, managing to convince him to join the training and that his demeanor will be improved after the training. In the process, Ameer was given a leadership 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, the 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 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. His work with the children and the care he gave to them demonstrated the great shift in his behavior and conduct.

By the same token, his parents indicated they witness the great positive shift in his behavior and praise 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 and school.

To quote the parents of Ameer: "My son underwent a lot of changes that made him more responsible person, caring, and more focused on helping others rather than condescending over them. His marks at school saying it all..."

Summer Camp 2018



Philosophy:

The goal of the Summer Camp is to engage children in quality programming that provides opportunities for growth, education, enrichment, fun, and positive relationships with peers and adult role models. We seek to foster a healthy self-image for each child in a caring and supportive atmosphere.

Program:

The Summer Camp offers a variety of activities that foster a child's mental and physical growth, supporting academic learning and engaging children in a constructive and creative activities.

Beneficiaries:

We targeted 120 marginalized children age (6-15 years old) from different areas in Bethlehem governorate including refugee camps around the Wall to take part in the 3-week annual summer camp held on Wi'am premises.

Activities:

1. Outings: Trips to Fun Parks

Kids go on a weekly outing to Amusement parks in the Jericho and Ramalah areas. These trips contributed greatly to children's self-esteem and giving them a sense of happiness and joy.



2. First Aid Training conducted by the Red Crescent-Life Saving Skills

Investing in first aid training for the children at the camp not only gives the children vital skills but also encourages a sense of community responsibility, communication, and leadership abilities.



The Basic first aid training covers a range of essential skills. This includes how to get ahold of emergency services, what to ask for, and how to describe someone's condition. All of this can be the difference between life and death. Running first aid training for the children in the camp involves making sure they have a thorough understanding of how different emergency services work and what

to do in different kinds of accidents and emergencies. First Aid training, not only gives children invaluable life skills, but it helps to build confidence, communication skills, and the ability to work well in a team.

3. Environmental Awareness:

The environmental activities included visiting the Palestine Museum of Natural History (PMNH). During the visit, children learned about the fauna and flora of the land and ways of preserving their. The children had the chance to see the botanical garden and the birds, wild plants, and animals threatened with extinction that live there.



The environmental awareness component included picking-up trash and composting different items and trash that they collect at the end of each camp day.

4. Art Work, Painting and Drawing:

Arts and crafts give children participating in the camp a great way to express themselves creatively, as children tend to be very visual about the things that happen around them and in their heads. Art activities included drawing, clay work, making prints, pottery, coloring, marble shaping, basic puppet-making, and clay-shaping. Children decorated the playground with balloons, beautiful paper birds, and doves of peace. They also worked to prepared cakes and snacks for the camp. These art activities promote creativity, imagination, and self-expression. With the guidance of the camp facilitators, our children make connections to real life experiences and use their imagination through the arts. One of the portraits drawn by a refugee child represents an old woman looking at the separation 'Wall' with sadness on her face. This painting expresses the hijacked freedom and coercion that most people face, particularly, children living under the shadow of the Wall.



Art activities enable children to see things through a lens that is uniquely theirs. By examining and making a variety of artwork, including abstract art, children learn that people are individuals with unique expressions of ideas and emotions. Art work in the camp proves 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 helps 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.

5. Swimming

Swimming proved to be one of the outdoor activities that the children enjoyed the most. Each week, children enjoyed a swimming day at the Golden Park pools. 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. The days were perfect for fun at the pool, surrounded by laughter and great splashes of excitement.



6. Traditional Palestinian Dance-DABKA:

During the summer camp, Wi'am embarked on training a group of children on the traditional dance: Dabka. Through this, we contribute towards connecting children to their tradition and cultural heritage. At the closing ceremony of the summer camp, the Dabka group performed an impressive performance that drew the appreciation of the audience present.





Please allow me to share some comments from some of the participants in the camp:

“The camp has been a safe haven for me. I met new friends; I played with them, enjoyed the camp activities which broadened my horizon with new skills, experiences and it has bolstered my personality; it also gave me a chance to use my critical thinking, problem solving skills to deal with problems when school resumes” (Leila, 14 years old girls from a refugee camp)

“I learned a lot. I gained new life skills. I have the chance to be part of the Dabka group and happy to perform in the final ceremony... something which made my friends and family very proud of me” (Mais, 15-year-old girl)

“The camp gave me the chance to fill my time with something constructive and beneficial; I have been part of the mediation group which was entrusted alongside other kids with the task of mediating peer-conflict that arise in the camp; we did a perfect job reconciling differences. Thanks to the Wi'am team.” (Hani, 15 years old)

V) Citizen's Diplomacy: Community Based Tourism in Palestine

Wi'am has a long tradition of welcoming international groups and visitors who come to learn about our outreach work, visit historical and religious sites and get a first-hand knowledge about the current socio-political and economic situation in the Holy Land.



During the year, we have welcomed around 1500 individuals from different parts of the World-Europe, USA and Canada. The Citizen's diplomacy program is more than just a mere encounter with international groups, it is a means of orienting groups about our civic work, our work in reconciliation and community development, meeting locals, learning about our socio-political and economic context, making connections with Palestinians and finally tasting our exquisite cuisine with local dishes that are incarnate with a long history of cooking and the aroma of natural spices. People who visit us feel the warmth and hospitality of the Palestinian people, who share with them their dreams and aspirations.



On the other hand, Journey through Palestine offers visitors an encounter with myriad religious, historical, natural, and archaeological sites. The uniquely varied landscape is perfect for walks and hikes through the extensive valleys and desert hills, and picturesque villages with their biodiversity and breathtaking landscapes. You can explore different locations and experience hospitality which is a fundamental Palestinian tradition.

So, the program does not only invite groups to experience our civic work on the ground, but also to have a better understand of the situation at different levels.

Quotation by Mark Michaelis

“An amazing place trying to help Palestinians during the occupation. As a grassroots organization established in Bethlehem in 1994, Wi’am aims to improve the quality of relationships and to promote peace, justice, a culture of acceptance, and reconciliation in the community. Wi’am strives alongside other forces in the community to build a society based on active participation, citizenship, democratic norms and values, and separation of the four powers (executive, legislative, judicial, and media).”

Nancy Pitrowiski

“Short visit there in June 2018. Very impressive work to bring people with different narratives together and amazing programs for kids.”

VI) “Christmas Festival: little signs of a great hope”



Preparation:

∴ In the run up to the Christmas party, Wi'am team was active in doing the preparations. First, we have a consensus to have the event in the middle of the town at the town at the Rum-Catholic Church to make it easy for all the people to access the place.



We also made a great effort in selecting the best gifts for the children and the elderly. We have been careful to select educational gifts for the children and warm winter Blankets for the elderly to help keep warm during the cold winter. Of course, the Santa's chocolate was present at the party for all the ages.

Beneficiaries:

We carefully selected the most impoverished and deprived of the youth and elderly. We have invited 120 children (6-14 years old) and 50 elderly coming from marginalized community groups, scouts, and impoverished families in the Bethlehem Governorate.

The Day of the Christmas Party:

The Christmas celebration instills joy in all of those who participate. About 120 children with their parents and 60 elderly gathered on the 21st. of December at the Rum- Catholic Church.

After a welcoming note from Wi'am Director and staff that focused on welcoming the audience and wishing them a Blessed Christmas, we started the event with a reading from the Holy Bible done By Far. Jacob, the Parish Priest, and Fr. Ray. The speakers read the story of the Birth of Christ from the Bible, taking some time explaining the story of the birth of Jesus so that the children will have a clear understanding of the meaning of Christmas. They also shared with the children the special visitors' gifts to the baby Jesus after his birth and the giving of the gifts. When children see the correlation between the birth of Christ and the giving of gifts to Him and the giving of gifts at Christmas, they will understand the true meaning of Christmas and the message behind what occurred over two

thousand years ago. It's the perfect example of a "true gift." By this, we encourage children to "out give" each other by coming up with more ways of giving to others-how giving a gift can also come as serving others. We took advantage of the fact that Christmas really brings peace in our hearts and peace to the whole world at this time when we really need it



The event continued with the singing of a number of hymns and Christmas carols (Jingle Bells, here Comes Santa Claus, Silent Night and Away in a Manger), in which everyone joined the singing which made the participants feel the spirit of Christmas and encouraged them to participate actively.

The children and elderly enjoyed listening to George Th., a blind Scout boy, playing the Middle Eastern stringed Musical Instrument, Qanun, which evokes ancient Middle Eastern culture and tradition passed down through the centuries. His musical playing echoed traditional music and tunes that touched the audience present in the Hall and give a feeling of awe and serenity to the event.



The party also included a spectacular clown show offering non-stop fun and entertainment. The clown show added a special flavor to the event by engaging children in the activities and having fun in the process.

The event was crowned by carol singing by the seniors who sang Christmas songs in both Arabic and English. The caroling made the senior feel ~~that~~ they are not forgotten and that their favor and sacrifices are cherished by all generations.



Gifts are a major attraction of Christmas

Nobody wants a sad child. Once your child is happy, he or she will be able to do well in every aspect of life, live healthily and generally be the kind of child you have always wished for.



Children bursting with energy welcome a Santa figure, lending that excitement to the atmosphere. Each child/senior citizen was presented with a gift from Father Christmas. For children, we provided them with an educational gift (toys) and we presented the seniors with a warm winter blanket that can surely keep them warm during the long cold winter. Before leaving the premises, the guests were invited to have some Christmas treat: light food, Christmas cookies, pastries, cake and beverages.

Conclusion

This year we have chosen the theme of “community first”. A motto that enlightened our work and made us more dedicated to influence societal change and social transformation at the grassroots level. Sustainability is the core of our work. It is always a joy to see lives transformed as people are able to move forward to a better level, and engage in simple initiatives with much progress being made as women were trained in gender rights, advocacy human rights; youth are more active in peace-building and social initiatives; children’s personality are more empowered to be creative; families are more coherent when they have their conflict reconciled and their differences settled peacefully.

We can catch a nice quotation that I can recall: “Wi’am is a hub of humanity that touches our soul, a well of knowledge, learning, education holistic approach that builds our personality and show us the light at the end of the tunnel”.

International Conferences:

Kairos Canada global partners meeting

Global partners from Wi’am Palestinian Conflict Transformation Center – Palestine/ Democratic Republic of the Congo Colombia, South Sudan Council of Churches National Women’s Programme – South Sudan, and National Council of Churches – the Philippines, recently concluded the inaugural Women of Courage: Women, Peace and Security global partners gathering in Toronto and Ottawa. The gathering highlighted the critical role that women’s grassroots organizations play in international peace building. In a series of meetings and public events, Wi’am representative spoke about their work with grassroots women, building peace and addressing gender-based violence in some of the longest and most egregious contexts of militarized conflict in the world. The gathering coincided with the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence which begins on November 25, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women#Kairos Canada.



CAN’s Pilot Seminar on Gendered Mediation

ICAN's Pilot Seminar on Gendered Mediation Lucy Talgieh, has represented Wi'am center on July, 16 at ICAN's Better Peace pilot executive seminar on gendered and inclusive mediation, co-hosted by the world class Human Rights Research and Education Center at the University of Ottawa. She was one of Twenty-five experienced women in peace making and mediation gathered to exchange ideas and strategies, and to hone their knowledge and skills, in preparation for their relentless journey for peace at home. These women activists had faced the rogue's gallery of militias, liberation guerillas, states and extremist ideologues, from the Taliban in Afghanistan, the LTTE in Sri Lanka and the FARC in Colombia to Boko Haram in Nigeria and the governments of Syria, Pakistan, Yemen, Palestine and beyond.



Wi'am center, represented by Imad Nassar, participated in the International Day of Peace Program at the "Diocese of Lund" during World week of Peace in the Holy Land, 16-23 of Sept., 2018. It is difficult to imagine a day in Palestine when the news is not full of injustice and conflict. Can we envision a day when peace and goodwill would be recognized around the world and justice prevail in our troubled land? In September 21, International Day of Peace, is a celebration of that vision that we all yearn for.



Wi'am have the honor to meet the invitation of the Diocese of Lund and join them in commemorating International Day of Peace and be part of Diocese week of peace in the Holy Land. The world Week of Peace emphasize not only every person's "Right to Peace", but also our role as individuals in making that vision a reality.

The program of week of Peace in the Diocese focused on giving Wi'am the chance to present the current socio-political and economic situation in Palestine and its impact on the prospects of peace in our land, and our vision for an end of occupation with its unjust measure if we want a just peace to prevail in our land. I have also talked about the diverse programs of Wi'am and our experiences in promoting justice, reconciliation in our communities, and, our civic work to promote a more active youth, children and women role in influencing social/political change. The program included numerous encounters with different congregations, churches, organizations, meeting "Women Talk about Faith" group), meeting with the women organization in the Church of Sweden, speaking in parishes in Malmo, Helsingborg (Fosie, Norra Nöbbelov Parishes), visiting Open Skane organization, speaking about human rights issues and peace building to 37 students in the Samhallsprogram, meeting responsible persons in the area who are working against violence in their areas. I have also the honor of meeting with Bishop Johan and the International Board of the Diocese in which we have an open discussion about our work in the community and ways of enhancing cooperation with the Church in areas of community change and reconciliation. The visit

was also a chance to be part of an Ecumenical prayer in the church of Fosie, Church of Arlov, all Saints church in Lund dedicated for Peace and Justice in the troubled areas.

At the end, we warmly salute all the Staff in the Diocese of Lund, and particularly, the peace-loving woman, Marie Korner, for her/their dedication to promote peace, common humanity and justice worldwide. Our common values are embracing peace and focusing on shared humanity. The Day of Peace is a stark reminder of us that we need to foster a peaceful environment and act on behalf of peace and reconciliation in our communities. The smallest gesture of kindness, a rejection of violence or stereotypes, or speaking out for those different than ourselves can plant meaningful seeds for a future, more peaceful world.