

Wi'am annual Report 2010



As 2011 begins we wanted to provide you with an update on the many activities that Wi'am Palestinian conflict Resolution center and our program participants were busy at work on throughout 2010.

Introduction

The past year was very eventful one. 2010 had its share of violent conflicts, stalling “peace process” and political changes, both negative and positive. Sadly, the so- called peace efforts is having a serious setback, local reconciliation efforts between rival political groups is still way and far between, and conflicts around the world are increasing in its intensity and geography.

The vision of Wi'am Centre, however, is to create a vibrant, healthy and democratic society which does not neglect its social responsibility and adopts non-violent approach to resolve conflicts. Thus, Wi'am actively contributes to transforming conflicts and builds a vibrant democratic society that respects gender equality, human rights and work towards enabling children, women and young people to be active agents of community change and transformation. Raising conflict transformation knowledge, skills and practices is a subtle process of our work in the community. We also cover aspects of communal social responsibility and empowerment through Sulha mediation, women programs, children activities, advocacy, non-violent action, youth trainings, youth cultural exchanges, gender trainings, and social inclusion.

Wi'am Receive 2010 World Vision International Peace-building Award

In recognition of Wia'm peaceful work in the community and their strive to build a culture of peace and non-violence, Wi'am centre had received a Peace award from the World Vision International Representative. On September 19th more than two hundred people from all walks of life assembled in the backyard of Wi'am to witness the historical event of giving the harmony flame Award to Wi'am organization. Wi'am has been working hard throughout the years to enrich the meaning of peace-building in the area, taking risks to make a contribution to resolving destructive conflict and bring about long-lasting peace through community mobilization. The director/founder Zoughbi Zoughbi was the one who received the reward on behalf of all the staff.



Community-Based Mediation-Sulha

The current socio-political and economic situation is exacerbating dormant social problems that touch upon every walk of life in Palestine. These problems lead to a social imbalance that reflects itself on the sharp rise of cases of conflicts that need direct intervention to transform it and settle it down.

In that respect, Wi'am mediators continue with their mediation services transforming community conflicts and promoting civic Peace. Conflicts that they deal with include cases of domestic violence, marriage problems, youth issues, gender discrimination, family disputes, school violence, neighborhoods feuds, etc. Through the year, we have mediated around 300 cases of conflict transforming and settling a total of 85% of these cases, while other cases are pending further work.

Our work in mediation not only focuses on transformation, but we also take it a step further by providing counseling services to cases of conflict and victims. With this way we help the people to overcome their ordeal and their psychological wounds. In that context, we have a referral of 45 cases to counselors who manage to help these cases regain normality to their life and overcome their psychological scars.

It is worth noting that we tend to use real-life cases of conflicts (after suppressing identities) in our training-for-trainers to young people as a way to maximize the benefits and expose the trainees to efficient conflict management, transformation and mediation techniques.

The impact of Sulha is clearly visible in the positive feedback we get from the wider community and the beneficiaries. Through our follow-up meetings with people, they stress the fact that Sulha has transformed their lives in a way that help them restore friendly relationships with their neighbors, reconcile their differences, enhance the culture of dialogue in the community in a way that boosts civic peace.

Non-Violence: Action/Trainings

The non-violent action program seeks to amplify the voices of local people from all ages and genders. The program is divided into two intertwined tracks:

Trainings in non-violent action

This year we have trained around 120 young activists (18-25 years old)/women groups (18-40 years old) from different parts of the WB in nonviolent strategies and techniques. The training enhances their capacities, and creates a database of resource people. Participants came away with a better understanding of Active Nonviolence and its practical application in peace-building. They are, also, better placed to identify appropriate Nonviolence strategies and initiatives corresponding to issues that require Nonviolence strategies, and strategize on actions to be carried out in different areas of the WB protesting injustices (the Wall campaign). There was learning from experiences in successes and challenges of past Non-violent actions that we participate in different areas.

The training includes the following topics:

- Non-Violence Strategies & Discipline Challenges in the Palestinian context
- Techniques and tool on non violence Case studies
- Conflict Transformation and Reconciliation
- Devising Campaign Strategy
- Strategy planning and Design of Peace building Engagement

Training in “diversity in unity and culture of acceptance”, “Dealing with fear’, non-violent communication, leadership, Human rights, strategies of non-violence, “The 4 Ps: Participation, prevention, promotion and prosecution”, ‘Mobilization of resources”, and “Visioning tomorrow – in Active Nonviolence action”.

Besides the trainings, Wi’am has been active in mobilizing community members and youth groups in which they actively participate in different nonviolent demonstrations around the WB. The activities centre on protesting against injustices in different areas of the WB, such as the Wall Campaign or gender inequality issues (domestic violence, elections, inheritance, early marriage, discrimination against girls).

The trainings help build the capacities of young people to be active agents of social and political change in their communities and to be advocates of justice and non-violent culture.

Non-Violence Activities

Wi’am volunteers and youth groups participate actively in non-violent demonstrations against the Wall and the illegal expropriation of Palestinian land in different areas of the WB (Biet Jala, Bil’in,

Ni'lin, Walaja and Ma'sarah, Ush Ghruab in Biet Sahour). This helps young people apply their theoretical learning on the ground and expose them to the realities of the situation on the ground

By the same token, a group of young people from different areas of the WB paid a solidarity visit to a village near Bethlehem, Nahalin, in solidarity with the owners whose land is under constant threat of illegal settlements. Young people had also a debriefing form Wi'am staff about the issue of settlements and land in which they get to discuss these issues and ask questions related to the issues at hand



Presentations on non-violence Experience in South African and its Relevance to Palestine

Joan, a visiting professor from South African, with experience in non-violence action and the South African experience in that field, shared with young people in different parts of Palestine lessons about non-violence in SA during apartheid period with examples and facts. He also made a comparison between the South African experience and that in Palestine.

The meetings were under the title: ***“from Apartheid to the checkpoint”*** in which the speaker focuses on three intertwined aspects: firstly, he presented a depictive description of life under Apartheid in SA in which he described the interaction of white and black communities, giving examples about detention without trials, cheap labour, education, curfew on the black majority, health and other aspects life in the period. Second, he talked about his experience as a child living under the apartheid regime and his involvement as peace activist. At the end, he talks about the transitional period from apartheid to the current South Africa with examples and a parallel comparison between the two periods. Finally, he gives a comparison between the experience in South African and the experience of non-violence in Palestine drawing some conclusions but stressing the uniqueness of each experience.

During his numerous presentations, young people have the chance to ask different questions, expressing their opinion freely about the benefits of non-violence in Palestine, drawing parallel lessons from SA to our experience and debating ways of empowering non-violent strategies among young people against the injustices of the occupation. Joan has been invited to give talks in many youth centres and universities

World Week for Peace in Palestine

Saturday, May 29, 2010, the opening day of the 'World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel', included prayers and a program of advocacy in Bethlehem as part of a joint action for a just peace convened by the World Council of Churches.



In the morning, Wi'am welcomed two groups of interfaith peace builders. Wi'am and other civic society groups debriefed the group about the disastrous consequences of Wall and settlement building in the larger Bethlehem area. A tour of the area further explored the difficulties and challenges facing the Palestinian people. About 130 Palestinians, largely women brought together by the Church-Related Organizations, attended the program.

At 6:00 p.m. a crowd gathered in the courtyard of Wiam in front of the Wall around Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem. Zoughbi Zoughbi, director of Wiam, in his word of welcome expressed thanks to the WCC and the countries participating in activities for a just peace in Palestine-Israel this week. The prayer service was meaningful and challenging. Among the prayers was a reading that spoke about the "dark prison of occupation," "the greed of land confiscation," and the "inhumanity of demolished houses," with the audience responding "Who will break down walls and remove obstacles?" At the end of the ceremony, Wiam organized a tree planting ceremony in a joint initiative with Pax Christi Germany. Then black and white balloons filled the sky, symbolizing the suffering and oppression of the people of Palestine as well as their persistent hope for freedom, justice and peace.

Civic Education Training: Training-for-Trainers

Wi'am continues training young people from different backgrounds and areas in the West Bank in areas of conflict transformation, mediation, communications skills, leadership, advocacy, human rights, gender mainstreaming, UNR1325 and non-violence.



During the year 2010, Wi'am had accomplished multiplication training for more than 120 young people, from different areas of the WB and from different universities such as Bethlehem Un./Al-Quds Un., and wide range of schools and community centers. The trainees gained knowledge and skills in conflict transformation, mediation and gender empowerment that they can utilize in peer trainings in different colleges, schools and community centers. The training also focuses on building youth spirit for voluntary work and enhances the act of community work as a basic aspect of community building.

The multiplication trainings also focus on building young people's skills and practical knowledge in areas of non-violent action as a way to attain rights and durable justice in non-violent way. Young people are not only learning non-violent skills and strategies, but they are also applying these skills in their daily life and nonviolent actions in the field (i.e. the Wall Campaign, women issues, etc.). Young people and multipliers continue their participation in mediation efforts for the sake of mitigation of community based conflicts. This helps deepen their positive participation in the society and develop their knowledge and skills in the field of mediation and conflict management. In the process young folks form both gender discover his/her positive role in developing the local community.

Wi'am has also accomplished an exchange project "***Art as Intercultural Dialogue***" with PIPA (People in Peril Association). The program involved intertwined exchange visits between Palestinian youth and Slovak Youth. The first stage accomplished on Nov. 2009 with four young Palestinian visiting Slovakia and learning aspects of theatre performance; while the second stage accomplished in the year 2010 with two young Slovak girls visited Palestine. Through their visit, they engage in

Art Therapy training for Wi'am staff/for 80 children age (7-15 years old) from different areas of the WB. They learn about 7 different aspects of Wi'am outreach work and experience in the field of conflict transformation, mediation, theatre, gender empowerment, Palestinian culture, meeting youth and women groups, visiting historical places, learning about local politics and civic society work. They learn about theatre in Palestine and Wi'am experience in community empowerment through drama and theatre.

Peer-Mediation and Problem-Solving for Pupils and Teachers

Wi'am embarked on a long-term training in peer mediation in 10 schools for children and teachers alike. The activities include learning skills in peer-mediation, communication, non-violence and problem-solving skills. The objective of the project is to build the capacities of school children and teachers in peer mediation and help establish peer-mediation desks at different schools run by pupils/teachers. By this we involve pupils and teachers in the effort to reduce school violence, enhancement of school environment and the creation of a healthy atmosphere that advocates non-violence culture.

The training helps children learn skills in problem-solving and peer-mediation that they can use in their own schools and life to resolve peer conflicts. Children are using their skills in peer mediation at the school levels and at home to resolve problems and reduce conflicts that arise around them. The training equips children with intercultural tools/dialogue skills that can help them understand the other and embrace a culture of acceptance and openness in their life and daily encounters.

Through role plays, simulations, small-group activities, pupils and teachers suggest local solutions to the problems at hand and encourage their critical thinking. Through the trainings, we have asked the students to apply a specific case study in groups and then share it in the larger groups to maximize the benefit. The group grasped the concepts very successfully, and coherently applied it to the case, and then they perform it in a role play.



Youth Exchanges/intercultural Dialogue: national, regional and international Levels

Wi'am has been participating in several youth exchanges around the world and the regional levels.



The Danish Youth Council of Denmark invited two young to participate in a seminar on “**sustainable partnerships for the future**” in Egypt.

The seminar is for youth actively involved in partnerships and projects funded by the Danish Youth Councils two international programs.

Planting Peace 2010

Wi'am youth coordinator, Usama R., was invited by Mennonite Central Committee Alberta (MCCA). He took part in Peace 2010 program that hosted different nationalities around the world. Our role was to talk and share stories from our life and work. We had the opportunities to share our experiences in two occasions: first, it was during our week together at Camp Valaqua (Aug. 22-27) with a group of teenagers (14-17 years old); the second occasion was the FCJ Centre in Calgary (Aug. 29- Sept. 2), with a group of young adults (aged 16-30) from Alberta and Saskatchewan. During the encounter, young people discussed topics related to their own context, youth problems, and world issues such as globalization. The participants learned about each other's culture, socio-political situation in Palestinian, particularly, the Separation Wall, Settlements, Al-Nakba, refugees" and non-violent resistance.

Round-table discussion on the Current Political Affairs and the Peace Process

The informal meeting that took place on Friday, 30 of July, 2010, is run by **FRANK J. Finver Consul for Press and Cultural Affairs/Public Affairs Officer U.S. Consulate General, Jerusalem**, hosted 15 members of the civic society, youth activists, students, journalists, and political groups. The participants get to listen to the speaker's analysis of the current situation and the peace efforts in the regions. This was followed by a general discussion and questions that range from the proximity talks, peace efforts, USA brokered interventions and the local sentiment about the peace process in general. The discussion was frank and open in which the participant's called for the US brokered mediation to take the aspirations of the Palestinians in reaching a viable/independent state into consideration



Wi'am

is also engaged in ongoing joint cooperation with Pax Christi training 25 young people from different areas of the WB age (18-25) in different aspects of Geneva convention, International Humanitarian Law and its relation with religion, Conflict resolution and prevention, Human rights, Goldstone -UN'S report on Gaza and its implication on Palestine, citizenship, and advocacy.

Training workshop: "Healing yourself and your Community".

On Friday 19th of November, 2010. Wi'am in cooperation with **CAPACITAR** Organization organized a training workshop on "Healing Yourself and your Community". The *objective* of the meeting was to empower young people living in a situation of stress and conflict to heal themselves and their communities. CAPICITAR is committed to communities affected by violence, poverty and trauma, uniting people across borders in solidarity, understanding and reconciliation.

During the workshop, the co-trainers, Path and George, presented different exercises/techniques that involved body and hand movements. The exercises involved an interactive learning that engaged the participants and helped them teach different movements that help in healing different aspects of body stress. The participants appreciated the workshop; it helped them learn skills to cope with stress and ways of healing themselves, their families and communities, and empowered them so that they can work effectively for peace and healing in the midst of the violence. The training also helped the participants learn skills that they can apply in their work and the context they live under whether at school, with family and at college.

The participants asked the trainers to do a follow-up training-for-trainees next year so that they can learn more in depth knowledge on healing stress and trauma. In that field allow me to quote one of the participants: *"The training has given me skills I can use with youngsters and children to improve learning and to deal with the stress of their lives."* (Noura, 20 years old student from a village near Bethlehem)

Seminar on International Human Rights:

Wi'am center in cooperation with Pax Chrisiti

August 5-8/8, 2010, Beit Jala

The participants get to learn about origins of the "International Human Rights" and Human rights in general. The discussion moved to the definition and of the IHR throughout history and its relevance in religious books in Christianity and Islam. The participants learn about IHR during war times and its different applications. They get also to learn about the rights of civilians and the military during war and the protection of civilians during war. In that respect the participants got into discussion on the application of IHR in the Palestinian case which; they come to a conclusion that Israel is not applying these agreements on the ground. They narrate case of violations to IHR and Palestinian's human rights by the occupation in relation to prisoners, free access and movements, using Palestinians as human shields, child detention and other relevant examples. They also discussed the situation of the basic law as it is on the rank of the constitutions that still none exists in Palestine yet.

The participants discuss a broad definition on the IHR as a set of principles/rules that regulate the use of violence during armed conflicts: the rule of "proportionate" response; preserving the dignity of human beings when doing any action including military one; the principles that combatants must abide to protect civilians.

The participants move to discuss the rights that individuals have during armed conflicts and different aspects of using unjustified violence against civilians with cases of human rights violations in the Palestinian context and around the world. At the end, they learn about what individuals are entitled to do in armed conflicts.

The participants get to learn about the seven principles of the IHR with a case study on The Hague ruling against the Separation Wall in Palestine. They discuss different aspects of not applying the ruling on the ground and the lack of respect to international law by the Israeli government. Afterwards, the participants get to learn about the nature of individuals that are protected by the IHR such as: patients, civilians, unarmed soldiers, soldiers who lay their arms, etc.

Later on the participants discuss the principles of the IHR focusing on prisoner's rights and treatment, coming from either military or civilian backgrounds. The participants learn about ways of using the IHR and HR laws to serve the Palestinian aspirations and cause and defending human rights. They get to understand the importance and the need to document human rights violations and report it to UN agencies and UN's Rappateaur in the Palestinian land.

The participants learn about ways of responding with IHR violations. The participants give examples of such violations with the Israeli military doing military exercises among civilian homes. The participants that self-defense is a legitimate way of dealing with aggression when the borders of the country are attacked.

A question arises: when we should implement the IHR? The participants agree that it should be implemented during war time and that it should be applied to Palestine at daily basis. The participants discuss whether the IHR is applied to their own context and whether the occupation is abiding to the human rights and IHR laws? They get to learn that Gaza and WB are occupied regions, there is no control by the Palestinian authority on its land, borders, resources, exists, water. They agree that IHR should be applied to our case in Palestine and that the occupation is responsible

for the well being of these regions in terms of health, labor, etc.). They agree that the occupation is not heeding to these obligations at all.

The participants also discuss the basic laws in the Palestinian context and its respect to the human rights in Palestine. They get to learn that the basic regulations present in the in IHR related to individuals rights and freedoms against government's violations are present in the Palestinian basic laws. They learn that in cases of emergencies where all freedoms are suspended. Afterwards, the participants in small groups differentiate between IHR and HR laws in terms of: origins, on whom it is applied, when it is applied, mechanism of applications, context. A group presentation followed in which each group present their findings and a general discussion followed. They discuss the difference between civilian and combatant; the persons who are included in the protection mechanisms of the IHR; what a fair trial is? The participants' stress the need to protect people's rights ad not to arrest people outside the jurisdiction of the authority.

Yearly Summer Camp:

The summer camp is a mix of recreational and amusement activities that engaged around 90 children in a safe environment, help them ventilate their suppressed feelings, air out their stress, build their demeanor, enhance their social responsibilities and most importantly help them learn life skills and build their motor.

Children get to learn skills and tools in peer mediation and problem-solving, environmental awareness (recycling, refuse, compost, bird's migration). The learning process in the summer camps include drama workshops, drawing, art skills, art/music therapy, stress release though sport, constructive games and playing.

Children also participated in weekly recreational activities that involve art therapy, drama, theatre, sport, environmental awareness, voluntary work, and drawing. Through different activities and trainings, children learn different skills in problem solving, non-violence, conflict resolution and voluntary work.

Children have the chance to raise their awareness on environmental issues though planting trees at Wi'am garden, learning skills on recycling home garbage and turning compost into fertilizers, reduce pollution, and try to create hygiene, nutritional and healthy environment. We have also conducted different trainings in the West Bank, in cooperation with PACES (Palestinian Association for Children Encouragement of sport"), targeting 100 children from all over Palestine, on issues related to positive behavior, problem-solving, art-therapy, identity, Problem-solving, Conflict resolution, gender, respect of the "other".



Children Activities: Summer Camp for Children

During the year 2010 around 200 children from different areas of the WB have the chance to learn different life skills and interact with their peers in a very safe environment. Through different extra-curricular activities, workshops children have the chance to learn basic skills in resolving problems they face learn new experiences about the environment and positive behavior, enable them to ventilate their feeling of stress.

Through the year, children participate in diverse activities that range from art therapy workshop, environmental awareness, learning skills to resolve conflicts they fact at school or with their peer. They also have the chance to develop their life skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, voluntary work, listening, stress management, environmental awareness and decision-making.

Activities for Children:

- Educational learning workshops on problem-solving, peer-mediation, positive behavior, voluntary work, children's rights, team-building,
- Sports activities (sports contests, traditional games, swimming, hiking trips)
- Community activities (voluntary works, trips, visits, etc.)
- Environmental/green activities (making Palestine green, Recycling/pollution knowledge, composting, appreciation of nature protection, biodiversity, home fertilizers extracted from home garbage).
- Cultural and artistic activities (stories, theatre, songs, films, cultural contests, creative writing, music, drama, folkloric Dabka, basic photography)
- Role-Playing on issues related to school problems, violence at schools, voluntary work, positive behavior, peer cooperation
- Recreational activities: trips, swimming, sports and excursions to different archeological and historical sites in the WB



Women Program:

Woman must not accept; she must challenge. She must not be awed by that which has been built up around her; she must reverence that woman in her which struggles for expression. (Margaret Sanger)

Weekly Women's Club: Empowerment and Civic Education

The Wi'am Women's Club has been very active with a variety of different activities on weekly basis. In addition to the computer course that was offered in June, the women have participated in training on gender mainstreaming, media, advocacy, health issues, human rights and International human rights. Women actively participated in non-violence action against the Wall.



Fifty five women enjoyed a day trip on May 1st to Nablus as part of the educational empowerment and networking in the community in which they visited the city of Nablus and met women organizations in the area.

The women groups have been attending a 15 hours training workshop on non-violence and ways of dealing with domestic violence. The training help women learn skills in dealing with cases of violence and ways of managing, resolving conflicts in a constructive manners. The non-violence skills help women to engage more actively in non-violent action around the country and raising their voice against social ills and political injustices of the occupation.

Women also learn about different aspects of their legal and individual rights; gaining skills and practices that can empower their participation in public and political life as initiators and not as passive agents.

In addition to the trainings in non-violence, women actively participate in solidarity visits to areas affected by unjust measures and land confiscation for the Wall. The visits help women learn about fact on the ground and it is a chance to show their solidarity with other women living in areas affected by the Wall.

Field visit to the Village of Budrus:

On November 27, 2010, 53 women from Wi'am Center coming from different areas visited the village of Budrus. A Palestinian village located in the far west of Ramallah and Al Bireh, surrounded by the apartheid Wall and the villages of Ni'lin, Qibya. It has a population of nearly 1500 people. For many of these women, if not all, this was the first time for them to see this small, yet inspiring village.

The struggle of this village has been captured in the *Just Vision Film*, entitled *Budrus*. On November 4th, the center hosted the representative of the *Just Vision Organization*, Ms. Rola Salameh who is also the director of the film. Budrus was screened for free at the Centre for a group of 35 women.

This movie tells the story of a nonviolent Palestinian activist, Ayed, who tried repeatedly to unite the Palestinian political factions and pro-Palestinian Israelis to stand together to save the village from the Israeli control over Palestinian territories. The film also shows the role that women played in the struggle, in particular Ayed's daughter who helped in the formation of the women's groups that took to the front lines in the face of the Israeli army. Eventually the people of the village were able to prevail against the Israeli army and they succeeded in pushing back the route of the wall by 95%.

After watching the movie, women are encouraged to visit this steadfast village. All the way to Budrus the women sang, and get a debriefing about the area and the impact of the Wall on different villages.

While in Budrus the women met with the organizer of the popular resistance, Ayed, and with the women of Budrus who had also taken part in the demonstrations. Ayed gave a debriefing about the Wall in Budrus and how the popular movement and non-violent action manage to change the course of the Wall to their advantage. Together the women of Budrus and the women of Wi'am sang and clapped their hands to Palestinian National songs. The women, from Bethlehem and Budrus, sang under one unified Palestinian voice, demanding their freedom.

The occupation has tried hard to 'divide and conquer' and to create separations between Palestinian communities. Yet on this day in Budrus, we learnt that nonviolent resistance is not only when we protest against the wall, but also when we outreach a hand of friendship and support those the occupier are trying to separate.



Computer/English language Training for Women/Young people:

Wi'am Center recently offered computer lessons to Women Groups. 60 women took part in classes, which consisted of 25 hours of instruction. The women began with various levels of proficiency, and the goal of the course was to increase the skills of each woman. The training help the participants learn basic computer skills that can help them have better communication, reaching out to different media, surface the web site, create solidarity groups, better networking strategies, and learn basic power point skills, image downloading and media basics. The training was followed by a graduation ceremony held in the garden at Wi'am. The participants, their families, and honored guests from the community gathered to acknowledge their completion of the course. Wi'am looks forward to continuing to offer opportunities to its Women's Group to increase their knowledge and skills in technology.

In addition to the computer learning, women and around 20 young people have been learning English language/communication skills to help them advocate their message and be active players in their community and family.



Young Women Training for Peace

Approximately twenty young women activists from different areas of the West Bank/Sweden, ages 18-23, recently accomplished a training on UNR 1325. The training provide women activists with tools to increase their participation in public and political life and at the same time work for peace, justice, and democracy. The long term goal of the training was to enhance young women's engagement in resolving/prevention of conflicts, creating a stable community. The training took place consecutively in Palestine and Sweden.



The three steps of the training included a basic knowledge on UN SCR 1325 and conflict management, which was conducted in each country in the autumn of 2009. This was followed by a ten-day joint training in February 2010, in which the Swedish group of young women came and met with their counterparts in Palestine. For the final step of the training, which took place in June 2010, the Palestinian group spent two weeks in Jonkoping, Sweden meeting with the Swedish group for further training sessions. Meetings with youth groups in the region (schools, university, religious centers, etc.) were included in the training.



The participants learned about ways and tools to deal with prejudice, stereotypes, conflict transformation, and gender mainstreaming. Every participant had the chance to express her views freely, highlighting their cultural values and traditions, and in the process, the young women learned about other cultures and traditions present in the group. They managed to create an active group atmosphere in which the diversity of the group was harnessed, resulting in a harmonious group that respected each other not only at the personal level but also at cultural and intellectual level.

UNR 1325: *Action for Change in Palestine by Wi'am Center*

The UN Security Council adopted resolution No1325 at its 4212 meeting held on 31st October 2000. Which constitutes eighteen articles, call upon UN member State to enable women, whether living in armed conflict zone or living in free countries, to participate in the prevention of international armed conflicts, and to play a superior role in the prevention of local armed conflicts. The resolution calls for women participation in decision –making, levels and urges member States to incorporate a gender perspective in the mechanisms for the prevention, management and resolution of conflict¹.

Since its adoption, in October 2000 several important steps have been taken to implement UNSC 1325 around the world and in Palestine. In that respect, Wi'am is a pioneer in taken numerous initiatives to implement the resolution:

- Meeting with different local actors, women organizations and stakeholders to adopt the resolution
- Toward the implementation Resolution, Wi'am Center has been working with diverse women groups to promote women's leadership, peace, justice, and respect for human rights. Over a period of five years, we have been working with over 500 women
- Organizing training programs in different parts of West Bank about the UNR1325 and CEDAW. The training workshops focus on building the capacities of the grassroots actors and enhancing their representation in community life and representation in political decision-making
- Several gender case studies were developed to serve as lessons learned as a monitoring tool for resolution 1325
- Wi'am participated in many international and regional workshops that highlight and promote the implementation of this resolution.
- Progress has been achieved, more awareness **created** on the relevance of SCRS 1325, more coordination established between governmental institutions and NGOs.
- In 2010 Wi'am in cooperation of Bilda a Swedish organization young women training for peace organized training in UN Security Council Resolution 1325, conflict management and nonviolence for young women, in Sweden, Palestine and Israel. The training is for young women age 18 – 23 who are interested in conflict management and nonviolence, back home and internationally. The project uses UN SC Resolution 1325 focused on increasing the participation for women in the work for peace, justice and democracy.
- Wi'am took part in an international conference “10 years with 1325 – What now? Organized by Operation 1325” on the 21-22 October 2010. The conference gathers 150 participants representing civil society organizations, governmental officials, policymakers, researchers and journalists from 20 countries around the globe. The aim of the conference was to gather key challenges and essential solutions– good and bad practices - for all participants to bring with them as tools for ground level implementation, policy shaping and advocacy work. A special focus of the conference is “Stories from the Ground” – the

experiences of local stake holders, often women, who stand as winners or losers as they see how resolution 1325 succeeds or fails in being implemented.

- Creating a space for women to engage in public life, for example, meeting with members of the legislative council

Open Discussion on Tolerance

Each year, on the 16th of November, we celebrate the day of Tolerance announced by the general assembly of the member states in 1996. Wi'am had observed this occasion through a public Forum that hosted 50 women from different age groups coming from diverse areas around Bethlehem. The participants engage in an open discussion about the meaning of Tolerance and their own perspective about the essence of forgiveness with examples from real life. They agree that human beings had to respect differences. In small groups, women get to discuss issues related to how much we can go to tolerate others; why tolerance; how people look at forgiveness in their own life and the context in Palestine

During this workshop they underlined the fact that tolerance means respect and acceptance and appreciation of the rich diversity of cultures. They agree that tolerance is enhanced by knowledge and openness, communication and freedom of thought, conscience and belief. They also noted that Tolerance is above all something positive in which it recognizes the right of others to the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms universally recognized. That means accepting the fact that human beings, naturally diverse in their appearance, situation, language, behavior and values, have a right to live in peace.

At the end, they stressed that we must work together to address violence against human beings; stand together to address violence against children; stand together to empower our children and provide them with an environment that enhances tolerance, nonviolent behavior and spread the pure love within them.





Gender equality and women empowerment is one of the objectives of Wiam Conflict Resolution Center in Bethlehem. Conscious of the underpinning role Palestinian women can play in development and in the establishment of a contemporary society based on gender equity and knowledge; Wiam Center has organized, in cooperation with Al-Quds University Community Service Center in East Jerusalem, a series of workshops on women empowerment issues. The workshops took place at the Community Service Center every Saturday for six weeks from the beginning of November till mid December 2011, and were facilitated by Mr. Sammy Kirreh. The workshops aimed to set strategies for improving women status, functioning their capacities and promoting their participation in institutions and decision making.

Twelve housewives and working women aged 25-40 participated in the workshops. Topics for discussion included violence against women; women and identity; human rights of young women and girls; role of women in resolving conflict; women and leadership; the right of women to education and labor. Additionally, the workshops incorporated practical recreational and educational activities with the aim of consolidating essential concepts in the minds of participants. One participant pointed out, "The workshops were a very good initiative that aim to empower women assert them in a patriarchal society. The trainer introduced to us novel and inspiring ideas that will assist us in our work and in dealing with our families and society."

Citizen Diplomacy: Making visible the Palestinian voice for justice, introducing tradition, culture and Palestinian history

Wi'am continues its advocacy and citizen's diplomacy work highlighting the socio-political and cultural life of the Palestinians. During the year 2010 we have the honor to welcome 38 international delegations coming from all over the globe with a total number of around 800 visitors. These groups get to learn about the Palestinian culture, meet with the locals, and get introduced to the current social, economic and political situation on the ground. The delegations had the chance to see facts on the ground, visiting areas around the Wall, historical sites, and areas affected by settlements, meetings the people from both sides of the divide, enjoy cultural nights, have home-stays and traditional Palestinian food.

The feedback we get from the visiting groups is that the tours are an eye-opener that advocates the just cause of Palestinians. It helps them learn more about the history of the conflict, give first-hand knowledge from both sides, learn about the general political situation and injustice on the ground. Most of all, visiting groups enjoy the warmth Palestinian hospitality and the traditional Palestinian foods that help people feel at home.

Wi'am staff, director and the larger community would like to express their gratitude to all the interns who shared their knowledge, time, smiles with Wi'am staff and helped us in different activities and programs. To all these we say big THANKS.

- *Annette Brounbjerg Bennedsgaard (mother vicar at the Lutheran Church) and Lars (father is a teacher) with there 3 daughters at the age of 15, 13 and 9 years.from Arhus Denmark July 2010*
- *Janice Friesen from Texas USA 27-6 – 14-7-2010– she work as Technology Instructional Partner at an Elementary School*
- *Franciscan sister Susanna Fieglmueller from Vienna Oct. 24th until Nov. 4th*
- *Khari LaMarca Ph.D. Candidate Department of Anthropology Adjunct Faculty Departments of Anthropology & Sociology, American University Washington, D.C. University Representative—MyNetResearch.com from 23-12-2009 for six Months*
- *Simona Seliškar from Slovenia*
- *Hope & Ryan Hamilton Schumacher- in July, Alabama USA*
- *Heléne Hedberg from Stockholm, Sweden*
- *Laura Graham South Carolina USA*
- *Mariam Tadros from UK originally from Egypt*
- *Caitie Tobin and Annie Santa Maria from Sydney Australia*


