



WI'AM- Palestinian Conflict Resolution Center

***Newsletter - First Quarter of 2010
(January-March):***

MESSAGE FROM Wi'am Director/staff

Hope is our catalyst to continue with our life working for a better future, cleaning the mess with our hands, empowering our people and baptizing Our words by actions. Hope is a form of non violent struggle that will never cease until freedom, justice, and transformation is incarnated.

The year 2010 is a leap year for us in which we move to our newly renovated Premises near the Apartheid Wall. The premise is a 10 year rent free by local benefactor renovated by the Heritage center for Cultural Preservation in Bethlehem in recognition of our work and service in the community.

Since the beginning of the year we have been proceeding with our outreach activities empowering women, young people and children to bring change to their life and their communities and building their skills/capacities in civic education, conflict transformation and gender equality trainings.

Consult YouTube for visual images:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z5g4h0xZ_4Y

2. Sulha: Community-Based Mediation

Wi'am staff continue with their mediation services transforming community conflicts and promoting civic Peace through dialogue groups and community meetings. Since the beginning of the year we have witnessed an upsurge of conflicts that is exacerbated by the current socio-political and economic situation. Conflict ranges from domestic violence, marriage problems, youth issues, gender discrimination, family disputes, school violence, to neighborhoods feuds, etc. During the first quarter of the year, we have mediated around 100 cases of conflicts with 86% success. However, we follow up with pending cases so that we can reach a solution.

Through our Ministry of Reconciliation, we strive to bring justice to community conflicts, empowering the weak and saving face of the parties involved in the conflict. We work hard to transform community conflicts and re-establish friendly relationships that are sustainable based on equal footing.

Our work in mediation not only focuses on transformation, but we also take it a step further in providing complementary counseling sessions for families/children victims of violence, so that they can overcome their psychological wounds and ordeals. In that context we provided 30 counseling sessions which impact their psychological life and help them regain confidence and tranquility.

It is worth noting that through our mediation in the field, we manage to compile real-life case studies of conflicts that we utilize in our trainings and simulations to young people and children.

Women Program:

Our women groups continue their weekly meetings with activities that range from gender equality trainings, commemoration of Women's International Day, activities in health issues, attending awareness session on "Palestinian Women and Security" prepared by Geneva Centre, Educational trips, organizing seminar of local culture and Palestine identity focusing on the significance/meanings of cultural artifacts, training in gender mainstreaming for 50 women and girls.

Wi'am in cooperation with Bilda (Swedish organization) completed the second phase of their Project "Young women and Peacebuilding. The first phase started with trainings in women legal/human rights and UN's Resolution 1325; while the second phase involved a training for 17 girls from Sweden and Palestine on "women Peacebuilding", "Non-violence", "Gender issues", "Conflict Transformation", and didactic "case Studies. The third phase is forthcoming in Sweden in June, 2010.



Wi'am has also conducted information session about Kairos document hosting 50 women and girls. The discussion focuses on the main themes of the document (occupation, non-violence, messages of advocacy, love and resistance, hope, a word of faith, messages to the outside world and its impact on the local Palestinian context.



Children Program:



Wi'am continues its weekly program targeting 300-400 children (6-16 years old) with trauma coping activities that involve individual counseling and psychological care/therapy (40 children). 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 through 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”.



Youth Program: Civic Education/Conflict Transformation Trainings:

Wi'am continues its multiplication trainings and capacity building in civic education for young people targeting 80 young people from mixed gender. The training-for-trainers include case studies on conflict transformation, mediation skills, peer-mediation, conflict transformation, leadership skills, human rights, democratic principles, gender mainstreaming, advocacy, non-violent action and media literacy.



Later on, young trainees engage in peer mediation work and civic education training in different areas of the WB targeting youth groups, schools and community centers.

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 with two young Slovak girls visited Palestine.

Through their visit, they engage in Art Therapy training for Wi'am staff and training for 80 children from different areas of the WB. They learn about

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.

Wi'am is also engaged in ongoing joint cooperation with Pax Christi training 25 young people from mixed gender 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. The training hosted different young people from different areas of the WB.



Internship:

Wi'am is proud of being a place of educational learning for interns from local Universities and international young folks. Currently, we have two interns from Bethlehem University doing community service; while we have an intern from USA- Amira LaMarca -who is helping with different programs, trainings and office work. Amira currently teaches basic and intermediary English language to 20-30 young people from different areas.



Citizen Diplomacy (CD):

Wi'am continues to welcome different international visitors/groups. In the first quarter, we have hosted/welcomed more than 300 visitors from all over the world who come to visit our centre. They enjoy meeting local families; enjoy home-stays with an authentic taste of traditional food, music, and culture. They learn first -hand knowledge about the socio-political and economic situation, peace process, fact on the ground, the impact of the occupation on the life of the Palestinians, get acquainted with Wi'am experience in the field of peace-building, reconciliation, civic education, non-violent action, gender equality, women empowerment, children counseling, outreach work, advocacy, peace-building and justice issues.



The feedback we get from the people who participate in CD program, is that they pass through an eye-opener experience. They are proud of their objective experience/learning of facts that help them see the entire picture by themselves.

Non-violent Action:

As part of the community NGOS, Wiam continues to take part or initiate or coordinate with others in different pockets of Non violence/

Wiam also continues training trainers in different aspects of non-violent actions, communication skills and advocacy. The program helps prepare young people for non-violent action and disseminate a culture of non-violence in the community. Young people have the chance to exercise their learning skills in different non-violent actions all over the WB joining and actively participating in weekly events against the Wall.

In the first quarter of the year, we've trained 30 young people in active non-violence and peaceful action which helps them be active agents in different non-violent demonstrations against the Wall, social injustices and confiscation of land.

Announcement:

We would like to draw your attention that we have moved to new premises near the Separation Wall. Our new address is:

Palestinian Conflict Resolution Center

"WI'AM"

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P.S. Please look at our Web Page to find about our activities in the last years and mainly the Final Report of 2009: <http://alastah.org/annual-reports/annualreport2009.pdf>