

WI'AM- Palestinian Conflict Resolution Center
Annual Report
2009

Reconciliation should be accompanied by justice, otherwise it will not last. While we all hope for peace it shouldn't be peace at any cost but peace based on principle, on justice.
[Corazon Aquino](#)



INTRODUCTION

Another year has passed since Wi'am first opened its doors to the Palestinian public in 1995.

A chapter has just closed and another will begin. Despite the transition, Wi'am has not lost sight of its main goals, among which are to spread peace and justice in the region and give the Palestinian community a ray of hope for the future. Undoubtedly, a better tomorrow will emerge. Through its unique entertaining and educational programs, Wi'am has succeeded in reaching out to different groups within society. All departments in Wi'am continue to work endlessly to deliver assistance, education, and hope to different sectors within society. The women's department continues taking steady steps towards equality and independence.

The children's department strives to build a peaceful environment where children can play and learn as any other children in the world can. The hope is that the children will be able to overlook the obstacles placed by the occupation and set their sight on a peaceful future. The Diplomacy Citizen department has witnessed a noticeable increase in international visitors. Visitors are given a unique insight into the complex historical, cultural, social, political and religious aspects of the Holy Land. The youth department continues to create a generation of conscious citizens. Also worthy of mention is the Christmas play that is held annually.

Last but not least, we would like to extend our sincere gratitude to all of our volunteers and partners who have helped us in getting a step closer to our aims. Without your positive thoughts, warm prayers, and generous financial support, our vast accomplishments would not have been possible. Our appreciation is extended to the continuous generous support by our partners: The United Methodist Church, Mennonite Central Committee, Diakonia, Sweden Oxfam, England, Amos Trust, Presbyterian Church, The Marianist fathers, Fellowship of Reconciliation, Highland Park Methodist Church and many individual contributions.



New Building

Thanks to the generosity of the *Sansur family* and the *Center for Cultural Heritage Preservation Wi'am* has a new location and building. Expressions of appreciation also go to World Vision for their generous donation toward equipment of some of the Children's Playground. In addition ARD (American Rural Development) has been supplying and furnishing our new premises with the necessary equipment, such as office equipment, computers and electrical devices, as well as furniture. Wi'am has been granted the use of this building for a period of ten years as an acknowledgement of its outreach work and service to the community, not forgetting its tireless commitment to justice, peace and reconciliation. The well has been renovated by the Resource Center of Non Violence and {please Check It is written on the well}The new building, positioned beside the Apartheid Wall, is a symbol of defiance to the injustice of occupation, checkpoints, land confiscation and the Wall, to name a few. Wi'am will stand as an expression of steadfastness and non-violent resistance to the Israeli occupation and apartheid division of the country. The Palestinian people have and will continue to find Wi'am a symbol of hope, a sign that reconciliation and unity is possible.



Citizen Diplomacy

The Citizens Diplomacy Program is designed to encourage cultural tourism in Palestine through home-stays, hospitality, and guided tours. *Wi'am* is experienced in organizing programs that give groups and individuals a unique insight into the complex historical, cultural, social, economic, political and religious aspects of the Holy Land. Visitors return home with an educated insight through first-hand experience with natives of the land, and the political situation in Palestine Israel. Groups that visit for ten days, one day or for an orientation visit different cultural, religious, and historic places: different villages and/or cities in Palestine Israel; refugee camps; families affected by the wall: observe presentations concerning facts about the wall; experience traditional Palestinian meals; stay overnight with host families; attend cultural shows; and meet with local political and religious leaders, youth, children, and women. An increase in international visitors has been witnessed by *Wi'am* staff. In 2009 the visitors included 47 groups, with a total of 783 persons, coming from Turkey, U.S., U.K., Scotland, France, Netherlands, Slovakia, Canada, Sweden, Germany, Norway, South Korea, Belgium, and many other countries. The visitors included doctors, students, interfaith groups, clergy, professors, etc. Their interest gives the Palestinians hope that the dissemination of the reality of the situation will increase and eventually change will take place. "I have never believed that I will be having such a transformational journey ever" Mary Kate noted.



Women

Women are not only victims in Conflict, but agents for positive change.

Wi'am's Women Program supports the increase of women's participation as decision makers and leaders. Wi'am's women empowerment program reaches approximately 320 women in the West Bank including cities, villages and refugee camps. The empowerment program seeks to help the village women realize their potential, open up new job opportunities, modify their role within the family and reformulate the individual's perspective of self. We believe that investing in women fundamentally strengthens family and society. Our women empowerment program focuses on Education (Health Education, Family, Children, Environmental Wellness, Personal Development, Agriculture and Organic Farming, Women's Nutrition Feminism & Equal Rights, Violence, Arts & Creativity.



Civil Education and Training



Palestinian society is considered a patriarchal society, particularly in the villages where traditional values are maintained and women have little influence outside of the home. Therefore, the women's department is continually working with women in different areas of the West Bank with a focus on underprivileged locations (refugee camps and rural areas) and women's groups. The program involves conducting training and education on different civic education topics such as human rights, democracy, conflict transformation, communication skills, women's rights, domestic violence, gender equality, conflict transformation, family therapy and political awareness on the local and international level. Skills learned at the center can be applied at home, enabling the women to solve domestic conflicts. As a result there is a reduction of internal conflicts and women's roles in society are transformed from a passive to active role. Awareness of human rights issues and gender equality is of vital importance in altering the mentality of the deeply rooted male dominated society and restoring respect and unity in homes.



Vocational Education and Training

The Occupation puts great pressures on Palestinian society, creating a lack of jobs, restriction of movement, and victimization, which all add to the tensions both at home and in the wider community. Often small problems may be exasperated. By teaching women and encouraging economic empowerment through development of micro-economies, women are able to produce an income. This income allows women to contribute to the cost of family life and helps them gain the satisfaction of self-sufficiency, as well as relieving pressure on the males in a household and generating economic development and job creation. Women are trained in skills such as mosaic glass crafts, bead-work, embroidery, ceramics, pastry-making, olive soap making, flower-arranging and pickling processes. Apart from providing a source of income, these classes offer women an opportunity to try new things, to talk together and it acts as a therapeutic, creative outlet for pent up frustrations.

Wi'am offers training courses, workshops and programs in the WB these included:

- "A Field Study from Palestine: Capacity Assessment of Women from five villages (Nahlien, Baltier, Husan, Al-Walajeh, and Jab'a) in the Western Area of Bethlehem.
- In celebration of Women's Day, March 8th, 2009, Wi'am, in partnership with thirteen women's organizations, organized a conference in Bethlehem. The program included female speakers from the legislative

council, women's rights activists, and lay women sharing traditional Palestinian dance, food and cultural activities.

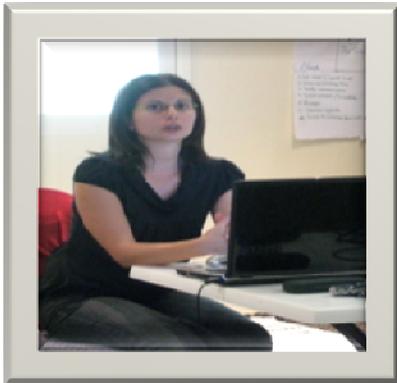
Women's Club Weekly Meetings

Due to the fact a number of other NGOs take an interest in women's needs, Wi'am is careful to avoid duplication.

Approximately Fifty women participate regularly in weekly meetings held every Thursday. Women have an opportunity to participate in a variety of activities, some of which are simply for entertainment and others for educational purposes. At the center, the women can find a safe and fun environment where they can learn new skills and enjoy group activities. It is important not only for Wi'am to provide opportunities for growth and learning of new skills, but a place where women can gather for fun, socialization and sharing. Examples of past activities include a workshop on healthcare, discussing diabetes and arthritis, a lecture on human rights and democracy, and English language lessons. Other opportunities for this club include excursions to other women's organizations and regions in the West Bank.



Women's Conferences outside Palestine :As a reference group with Norwegian Church Aid, Wi'am worked on a program to implement UN resolution 1325. This project represents the first of two phases of a regional program for strengthening civil society in its efforts to engage in and implement the UNSC resolution 1325 on women, peace and security in the Middle East. *The UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (2000)* calls for women's equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security. The resolution also requests all parties to armed conflict respect in full, international law applicable to the rights and protection of civilians, especially women and girls. And that the parties to armed conflicts shall put into place special measures for protecting women and girls from gender based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, and all other forms of violence they may be subject to in armed conflicts.



October 26-30, 2009 **Wi'am women coordinator Lucy Talgieh** was able to organize a conference in Cyprus in cooperation with Operation 1325 on the UN Resolution 1325, regarding women's security. This conference was a huge success and focused the dissemination of the resolution.

Through the invitation of the Ecumenical Women's Initiative, Wiam participated in a regional conference in Croatia, for the purpose of working with regional mission partners to build competence for increased women's participation and visibility in building trust, confidence and reconciliation in multi-ethnic/multi-religious societies in the region. The Conference provided challenging and creative space in which to share positive influences shaping their work; key challenges for women peacemakers within patriarchal religious communities; priorities and solutions brought by women into peace processes; local and national perceptions and relevance of cross border cooperation; forum to exchange expertise and ideas of future joint actions. The goal is to encourage regional networking as a tool to enable cross border communication and cooperation between women in the region working toward sustainable peace.

Additionally, the Women's Department has organized a wide variety of events including;

- A round table discussion on gender relations during political conflicts and in aftermath;
- Discussions on how to utilize UN resolution 1325 to the women's benefit;
- Discussions on international law as a tool for seeking women's rights;



- Discussions on the challenges, obstacles and alternatives for Israeli and Palestinian women's joint peace activities;
- Workshop on the comparison between the Irish and the Palestinian conflict;
- Workshop on combating violence against women in Palestine.



Non-Violent Training

One hundred participants from a variety of backgrounds and ages, coming from villages, cities, and refugee camps have participated in non-violent training. The training assists individuals in learning to identify different models of conflict, types of violence, motives for the use of violence, the effects and dynamics of violence, and the roles of shame and guilt. Participants explored methods of maintaining non-violent behavior even when verbally or physically attacked. The training included various ways of listening, the difference of listening and hearing, and how to use effective communication skills in conflict situations. Finally, participants identified steps and tools for action planning, and prepared a conflict resolution activity

in which the media, leaders and decision makers of the community were invited to observe. The aim of this program was to equip young people with the skills needed to resolve disputes in a non-violent manner in their isolated communities in a political sense, as well as in their daily life.

A Training Manual for Non-Violent efforts has been compiled from resources and local case files. This Training Manual is a wealth of information and guidance for those interested in what Non Violence looks like on a practical, everyday level. This manual includes simulations, information, and case studies that will serve to further educate the community.



Richard and Barbra Dash visit Wi'am Center.

Wi'am center was pleased to welcome Richard and Barbra Dash, who we consider to be influential people in the world of peace building. They both have eighteen years of work experience in conflict resolution in the Middle East. They have great ability creating practical and effective tools for teaching conflict resolution and counseling.

They have both dedicated their lives to making a peaceful future by treating traumatized children and adults. They visited the center and presented a work shop to the people of Bethlehem. Through participation in the workshop, attendees learned:

- Conflict resolution skills and the ability to reduce arising tension at home and in the work place.
- How to openly communicate with others.
- How to become a more cooperative and supportive individual.

The needed language skills to be able to communicate with others effectively and accurately.

Non Violent Action

Wi'am continues to generate advocacy opportunities through demonstrations and public meetings in the community. As we call for resolution of the internal disputes in Palestine, we encourage the community to focus efforts on the source of so many struggles – the Occupation. Wi'am staff engages communities and participate in non violent actions such as the Wall Campaign, protests against oppressions felt from the Occupation and protests against injustice



Youth

The youth are one of *Wi'am's* greatest priorities. It is critical that the youth receive training skills so they will have the necessary skills to train their peers in methods of conflict resolution and mediation. Through educating the young people in matters concerning democracy and human rights, they will become the hope for change in the politics of the country. In 2009, as in previous years, the youth were given the opportunity to participate in a variety of workshops, training sessions and intercultural exchanges. The work with youth headed by Usama Rock has continued in activities with the Euro-Med cross-cultural exchange programs, an initiative to enable young people to encounter and learn from their counterparts from different countries. Such interaction is a vital means of overcoming the distortions, fear and mistrust that can be easily created through misperceptions of the 'other'. Through these personable exchanges youth meet and build relationships that connect them to others at a grassroots level, influencing future relations between nations.



Conferences

*“I believe that to meet the challenges of our times, human beings will have to develop a greater sense of universal responsibility. Each of us must learn to work not just for oneself, one's own family or nation, but for the benefit of all humankind. Universal responsibility is the key to human survival. It is the best foundation for world peace.” **Dalai Lama***



The conference “Young Leaders and President Obama’s Speech: Does it Bring Hope?” held in Bethlehem 8-10/2009 gave young people in the Palestinian community an opportunity to engage in critical analysis of President Obama’s Speech in Cairo. The speech herald a new trend in the relations between the Arab world and America. The analysis of the speech focused on its content, as well as tackling the inherent themes and ideas that set new guidelines in the United States policy toward the Middle East and the prospects of the peace process and cooperation in the region. The conference used an interactive approach that engaged the young people in free/critical thinking about a wide spectrum of issues in the speech relevant to their life and their community. Participants were able to touch on different topics such as the new trend in Pres. Obama’s speech; the US policy in the Middle East with a focus on Palestine; Democracy; US contribution to the peace process; violence; the future of US-

Palestinian. The conference opened with a speech from Wi`am director, *Mr. Zoughbi Zoughbi*, who emphasizes the positive aspects of Obama's speech and the need to put words into action. The fact that it included new discourse in US foreign policy towards the Middle East is an encouraging sign. He also expressed Wi`am commitment to support youth leadership in the West Bank and opening new perspectives for their critical thinking and community engagement.

Presentations and speakers included:

- An open dialogue via video conference with a White House director of Response Policy.
- A public meeting between the participants and the Consul General, Mr. Daniel Rubenstein on topics such as the peace process, two-state solution, the Palestinian -Israeli conflict, the Palestinian State and the role of young people in shoring up democracy.
- Presentations from local specialists in international relations and policy from Beir Ziet/Bethlehem Universities. The presentations touched on issues related to US Foreign Policy in the Middle East, and understanding the process of Foreign Policy and decision-making process in America, as well as the relationship of the Palestinian Authority and Israel detailing the nature of these relations (political, strategic and, educational).



The young people realized the richness of its topics and the density of the speech as a new trend in the US foreign policy in the Middle East. They were enthusiastic about the presence of representatives from the American Consulate, the Cultural Department and the White House Director of Response Policy.

The dynamic participation of the young people in the discussions and the fact that they were given a safe space to ask questions to US officials and local professors was a great value to the conference. This involvement in the conference empowers the democratic participation of young people in community issues and international affairs. In their evaluation, the majority of participants requested follow-up training, a conference, a seminar, intercultural exchange, or a conference that can shed more light on the topics discussed in the conference such as the economic crisis and its impact on foreign policy and international relation. Wiam staff and the director expressed their deepest gratitude to the American Consulate represented by the Consul General in Jerusalem, Mr. Daniel Rubenstein, Cynthia Harvey, Susan Namari and other colleagues for making the conference a success and for their support to educational events that foster closer relations with the U.S.



Wiam Center also held a three_ day conference entitled, "Where is the Palestinian Society Heading?" in the Golden Park resort in Biet Sahour. This conference was sponsored by the Diakonia organization, with the participants being youth from all over the West Bank, with their own unique political and social points of view. The main aim of this conference was to encourage dialogue between the Palestinian people and give

sound to the voice of youth that usually go unheard. The conference was opened by the Governor of Bethlehem, Abed Al-Fatah AlHamayel, who thanked Wi'am Center for their steadfast contributions towards the Palestinian society, and the critical role the youth of Palestine can play in the future of Palestine. After his speech he responded to questions. *Zoughbi Zoughbi* the director of Wiam Center addressed the importance of dialogue between all the Palestinian people, and called for reconciliation between the different political parties along with civil peace. Assuring that it is the only way the Palestinians will ever be able to reach their goal which is independence and freedom. Lucy Talgieh the coordinator of the women's department at the Center introduced the goals for Wi'am, events held and the message Wi'am is striving to convey to the Palestinian society.

In addition, numerous papers were presented by key speakers who have influential roles in the Palestinian society:

- "The Palestinian Liberation Organization Being the Sole Representative of the Palestinian People, Where is this heading?" Presented by: Mr Samer Salameh, director of "Johod" Organization which specializes in development.
- "The Role That Visual Media Plays in Promoting the Culture of Civil Peace and Preventing Violent Acts from Accruing, " Presented by: Dr Saed Ayad, head of the Palestinian Radio and television office-Bethlehem, vice associate of the Palestinian Journalism Association.
- "Overcoming Violence and Protecting Civil Peace...The Social and Political Problems in the Palestinian Society." Presented by, Mr Zoughbi Zoughbi director of The Wi'am Center.
- "International Agreements and the Reality of the Palestinian Politics". Presented by Dr. Jonney Asey, lecturer at Bir Zeit University specialized in international law
- "The International Changes and Their Effect on The Palestinian Society". Presented by, Hassan Abed-Rabo, Hassan Abed-Aljowad, and Suleiman Abu Gosh.
- "The Legitimacy of the Palestinian Liberation Organization". Presented by Dr. Fayez al Saka, member of the Palestinian legislation council.

After the Presentation of each of these papers, group discussions took place and the floor was open to all those who wished to participate by expressing their opinion concerning the matter or asking a



question

The last day of the conference the participants evaluated the conference and gave the following recommendations:

- Civil peace and dialogue between all Palestinian political parties is a must in order for the Palestinians to reach their goal of independence and freedom, resulting to violence should not even be an option. They called for an increase in the role youth play in the Palestinian society and requested that there be a constant dialogue between the youth and the officials in order to serve the peoples interests.
- Sincere gratitude was expressed toward the Diakonia organization for sponsoring such an event and for caring about the youth of Palestine.

The participants were given a tour around Bethlehem city, visiting the Nativity Church, Old City of Bethlehem, Suleiman Pools and the conference palace. The project created an atmosphere of inter-cultural dialogue and understanding between diverse cultures, that help people to understand each other and respect personal choices, and at the same time, fighting prejudices and encouraging non-violence trends in different areas and on between youth groups



Wi'am organized a Euro-Med youth conference " **Learning to Live Together: Fostering dialogue among Cultures**" in Bethlehem in January 2009 with youth from several European countries such as (Portugal, Turkey, France and Italy



We have summarized the feedback as follows:

- Informative: we have been testing our hypnotizes and learned a lot about other cultures
- The beneficiaries learned about ways and tools to deal with prejudice, stereotypes and conflicts
- They appreciate the interactive learning process in which every participant had the chance to express his or her views freely, highlighted her or his cultural values, traditions, and in the process learned about other cultures and traditions present in the group.
- The historical, religious, and cultural visit left its marks on the international group. For, now they have direct contact with the local people, religions, traditions, music, food and customs.
- They appreciated the innovative and state of the art training skills of Wi'am staff, in the way they took the beneficiaries attitude and cultural values into consideration, and where very supportive of any ideas whatever minute.
- The team managed to create an active group atmosphere in which the diversity of the group was harnessed towards a harmonious group that

respect each other not only at the personal level but also at cultural and intellectual level.

Regular Meetings

Wi'am regularly offers evenings for the young people to come together and examine social problems and ways of countering them. The youth often view films, or listen to speakers, which are then followed by a discussion, or workshop.



Art for Intercultural Dialogue

September 2009 in partnership with the People in Peril Association, *Wi'am* launched a six month project, Art for Intercultural Dialogue. The aim of the project was to increase mutual understanding and respect between Slovak and Palestinian youth. The key element of the project is to organize an intercultural exchange visit between Palestinian and Slovak young people, during which the young people become familiar with the social and cultural environment of both cultures, participate in cultural events, participate in informal discussions and public debates, as well as experience family life in a different culture.

November 14-21, 2009 Palestinian youth led by Imad Nassar, *Wiam's* project coordinator visited the city of Bansks' Bystrica, Slovakia, participating in the Festival Art Therapy: Protected Territory organized by Theatre from Passage. The focus of this festival was on political and social situations in different countries where the inhabitants suffer or suffered a certain kind of political, war or civil threat. The program included film presentations, performances, video art works, discussions, workshops. Artists from Kosovo, Serbia, Georgia, Israel, Palestine and the USA attended.

Palestinian youth participated in a Puppet Theatre workshop at the Theatre at the Cross-road. The workshop introduced different types of puppets with a demonstration of their social use as a way to send messages and depict human characters. The youth also received a debriefing about the history of the puppets, the difference between the past and present puppets, and their

use in different contexts and settings. The interactive workshop touched on issues such as gender stereotypes, gender roles, and institutional violence against women, gender sensitivity, gender equality and gender bias, in the context of social pressure such as that placed on girls to be so thin that it leads to health risks such as bulimia. The workshop performances raised the issues of cultural stereotypes and ways of combating them. At the end of the theatre performances the youth discussed cultural values, real life stories and experiences from the perspective of Western and Middle Eastern cultures.



Children

Knowing that our children are full of curiosity, energy, and passion to learn and that their lives are full of uncertainty and insecurity, Wi'am provides a welcoming, safe haven for children to learn and express themselves. Wi'am offers a variety of children's programs including weekly educational and recreational activities, environmental awareness programs, and summer camp for three months, excursions and field trips, and many more. Through these programs under the supervision of saliba Badour. Children are given the opportunity to sing, dance, and learn an assortment of new skills such as: arts, crafts, drama and English, which are all taught by experienced teachers. Through these cultural activities, the hope is that the children will develop their individual and communal identities and be encouraged to try new things and discover new abilities. Youth also learn leadership and team building skills, as they share their gifts. One example would be the young adult Wi'amer(multipliers) who taught the children to perform the art of Dabkeh (traditional Palestinian folk dance).



Wi'am Palestinian Dance troupe was founded in 2009. Wi'am troupe has always looked to express the spirit of Palestinian heritage and culture through a mixture of folkloric and contemporary dance.

The children have learned new songs, played new instruments through choir and guitar lessons, learned new languages such as English, German and Spanish, as well as drama, art, and games. The Youth learn of their culture through song, dance, and the playing of instruments in an environment where children experience restrictions on travel within their own country, it can be a challenge to experience one's land. Thus, it is important to provide field trips to Ramallah and Jericho, as well as the culture of large cities in Palestine. These activities allow the children an outlet where they can ventilate their frustrations. In some cases children who have experienced trauma have been identified and as a consequence have been provided with social workers and skills for coping with conflict in a non-violent way. Approximately 60 children participate in the weekly activities, with a total of 300 children participating in the five field trips held, 300 children participated in summer camp and 1,100 children in the Christmas Smiles.



Children's Summer Camp



Each summer our children gather at Wi'am and other places for three months of games, education, creative projects and fun. The children experience many diverse activities such as glass painting, drawing, glass-shaping, jar labeling, pottery, photography, painting, art, English, spanish, Dabkeh, yoga, educational field trips, and much more. The children were taken on day trips to visit fun parks in Ramallah and Jenin and on cultural trips to Jericho, Artas Village and the Cremisan Monastery. Through these excursions they were afforded the chance to learn about the geography of these locations and extract historical and archaeological information about Palestine. The two important educational aspects of the camp were to develop environmental awareness and teach peer mediation in conflict resolution. Environmental awareness included education on recycling, pollution, and compost. Mediation training encourages children to apply basic problem solving methods to mediate between peers in order to resolve conflicts by peaceful means.



The Summer Camp culminates each year with an End of Camp Celebration, in which the artwork, photography and pottery created by the children is displayed. Drama, Dabkeh and musical pieces are performed for parents, family and friends. This year approximately 300 children ages six to sixteen attended Summer Camp held June until August.

Speaking tours/ training/ PSA

Every year members of staff and local volunteers of *Wi'am* have the opportunity to travel abroad for training and conferences. *Zoughbi Zoughbi*, Executive Director of *Wi'am* Center attended the Fourth Global Summit for the establishment of Ministries/Department of Peace in Costa Rica, the International Fellowship of Reconciliation, where he serves on the steering committee, Conflict Resolution Association Meeting, and the *PEACE WITH THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH*. Usama Nicola, Usama Rock, Imad and Lucy have been invited to speak throughout the world in such as Slovakia, Lebanon, Poland, Jordan, Italy and several states in the United States. Within the US, staff members have been hosted by the Presbyterian

Church, Mennonite Native American Ministries, and others. Staff members have also been hired to conduct training by organizations such as World Vision, Pax Christi, Association of Rural Development, and Bethlehem University to name a few. Such trainings focus on capacity building, conflict transformation, international human rights, human security, democracy and other related topics.

This year Usama Nicola Zoughbi, Citizens Diplomacy Project coordinator, and two local volunteers, with our partners from the Denmark Palestine Network attended the Danish Youth Dialogue Seminar 11th-14th of October 2009, entitled, "Copenhagen Dialogue Seminar 2009: On the Track of Dialogue", held in Denmark. The aim for this seminar was to motivate member organizations to improve dialogue partnerships between Danish and Middle East youth. The method used involved "Dialogue in Theory and Dialogue in Practice" and the case study "Dialogue between Partners". Through this seminar Wi'am staff had the opportunity to share theoretical and practical insight into dialogue, and dialogue theories, as well as share personal experience. It was noted that we may see different political realities, social and cultural challenges, yet we can exchange opinions and learn from each other across borders.

April 24th-26th Usama attended "The Olive Tree Initiative Conference at the University of California, Irvine by invitation and the auspices of the Chancellor. Usama presentation assisted participants in understanding the situation in Palestine Israel. Participants included the Chancellor, students and faculty from Berkeley, UCLA, UC, and community members from Christian, Muslim, and Jewish faiths.

The objective of Wi'am is to help Palestinian people resolve their problems peacefully. With the language of dialogue, reason will be dominated in resolving our differences." *Zoughbi Zoughbi* With this as our objective non-violence is emphasized in our direct work with children, youth and women, but also through Advocacy, Awareness, Spirituality and Education. Through our consistent work with conflict resolution, the Sulha process, in which we

lead and participate in the community, is one of the most pure forms of non-violence. By 'embracing the arms of dialogue instead of dialogue of arms,' our case mediators daily and assertively show the strength of non-violence in resolving potentially violent conflict. This year our case mediators under the supervision of Adnan Thalgieh have mediated 165 major cases which included: 32 car accidents, 16 conflicts over land, 20 conflicts between neighbors, 7 conflict over theft, 30 cases of domestic conflict within the family, 26 cases related to youth, 23 cases related to debts, 9 employee/employer conflicts and 2 domestic violence cases.

Publications

During 2009Wi'am has managed to publish two book on Bethlehem (Culture & heritage) written by Nasri Hazboun and George Samour. Bethlehem as you know is one of the most historically significant towns in Palestine. It is known as the birthplace of Jesus.

Job Creation Program

Wi'am Center has started a project aiming to create job opportunities for unemployed workers. We have employed more than 13 workers in King Husain hospital and Bethlehem Mental Hospital. The workers have been able to accomplish tasks such as, fully set up the kidney ward consisting of six rooms, clean up and plough an eighty dunum piece of land, build a garage for ambulances, fix and paints the walls of the hospital, as well as many other tasks. So far this project has received positive responses from numerous institutions requesting more workers and more workers have applied to join us. Furthermore, since the summer vacation is on the verge of starting we are expecting an increase in the number of workers seeking job opportunities, as many university students will enroll in the program in order to support themselves financially.





Christmas Smiles Program

Each year in the Wi'am office, we look forward to the celebration of Christmas. During this time of year we feel the hope, joy, love and peace of Christmas time. We recognize however the great stress of life in Palestine: parents are often left in a difficult position when they are unable to provide their children with basic life requirements. Many are unable to provide their children with a Christmas present that might restore a stolen smile. To be a child in the land of the Bible is quite challenging. Naturally, the Christmas season is the ideal time to identify with children and help them feel secure and wanted.

Through our annual Christmas Smile Program, the Wi'am Center offers various opportunities to bring smiles to the children and community in Bethlehem. With clown shows, music, arts, crafts and food, the children are given some exciting activities, along with Christmas joy. They then spread that joy by reaching out to the elderly in the community, through visits with them in their homes. Christmas was born in Bethlehem and we pray that smiles will be born again throughout our community during this special season each year.

Current Funding Needs

Many have been wondering what the needs are for Wi'am at the present time. Although our programs are often in need of funding. This support enhances our programs, our projects, and our office. With the support of these needs, Wi'am can provide not only better services, but also expand services for the community of Bethlehem and the surrounding area

Some of these needs include:

- Social worker
- Plastic tables and chairs for the outdoors activities
- Fund for the women club activities
- Employee for Peace & Environmental project
- Counseling unit
- Educational material
- Building a hall
- Playground equipment
- Donate to Our Library

Wi'am has a small English-language library that we would like to add to for reference and research. We are always interested in getting additions to our shelves about Nonviolence, Peace, Justice, Reconciliation, Democracy Dialogue, Human Rights, Palestine, the Arab world, Israeli policies and more.

Word of Appreciation

We would like to say thank-you to all of you who have supported us through prayers, words of encouragement, solidarity, friendly thoughts, and financial donations. Without your support we would not be able to provide these services for the people. It is because of you that the above programs have been able to succeed and exceed in many expectations. Although we cannot fully articulate our appreciation, we thank-you for your ongoing support.