

Wi'am, Palestinian Conflict & Transformation Center

Annual Report 2014



"I believe in reconciliation based on transformation. The enemy is a friend in waiting. I want him to learn from his mistakes in this way I am transforming him. Like the Chilean poet Pablo Neruda wrote "let us forgive with generosity those who cannot love us"

- Zoughbi Zoughbi

A Word from the Director:

“To be hopeful in bad times is not just foolishly romantic. It is based on the fact that human history is a history not only of cruelty, but also of compassion, sacrifice, courage, kindness. What we choose to emphasize in this complex history will determine our lives.”

*I cannot agree less with **Howard Zinn**. This is Wi'am's vision and mission. Hope for us is part of nonviolent means which keeps our sanity. Hope enhances our steadfastness. Hope enriches our lives and fosters our less travelled walk towards justice and peace. Therefore our interdisciplinary work is incarnated and contextualized by hope. Hope has empowered us in our work in the community whether through the work with children, youth, women and men. Therefore, we touch upon compassion and kindness despite of the terrible, bleak, miserable and challenging times through our myriad activities. We cannot do the work of Wi'am unless we are equipped with courage and sacrifice through endless and tireless hope. Indeed, our staff is working on Kairos time and not Chrono's time since we are from the people, to the people and work for the people. We are one of those who would like to arm our people from toe to head with hope. We wish hope to be an infectious disease to affect all people without discrimination since we believe hope is a cure to all maladies.*

Maya Angelou said, "Be present in all things and thankful for all things." Yes, this is the life and strategy of Wi'am, The Palestinian Conflict Resolution/Transformation Center. We are active in the civil society attending and giving lectures; we are either trainees or trainers in interdisciplinary workshops at home or abroad; we are joining or initiating nonviolent vigils or demonstrations; we are either contributors of articles or /and editors of manuals and literature for training or/and oral history books or other kind of booklets.

Our involvement and presence in the community is like salt in our society enough to give a good taste. We try to be the yeast of transformation locally, regionally and globally. We try to be the light through our faith in humanity despite all inhumanity.

We are thankful for all of our partners who are with us by supporting us in different ways unconditionally, by empowering our walk and talk tirelessly, by uplifting us spiritually and by injecting us with hope relentlessly. To all of you our agape, thanks and gratitude respectfully.

Zoughbi Zoughbi

Founder and Director of Wi'am

Overview:

Wi'am Center was founded in 1994, to advance peace and justice at the national, regional and international levels. As a non-governmental organization, the Center has helped to improve life for people in different areas of the West Bank by resolving conflicts; advancing democracy; promoting women rights; engaging in non-violent activities; organizing advocacy campaigns, conferences and organizing training workshops for youth, women and students in areas of civic education and conflict resolution. Throughout 2014, Wi'am continued its outreach work. The primary beneficiaries of Wi'am's work are vulnerable children, youth, women and families.

We focus on the following major objectives:

- 1. Building the confidence of local people and individuals to address issues of conflict, human rights, peace, and justice at all levels.*
- 2. Providing space and opportunity for networks with other civic organizations to advance human rights and women's rights.*
- 3. Transforming, Mitigating conflicts and limiting violence.*
- 4. Facilitating coordinated action against mounting school violence and larger violence in the community at large.*
- 5. Advocating women's rights and raising their awareness on different issues related to their life.*
- 6. Providing children with a safe-space to express their feelings; be creative in their life and more able to resolve peer- conflicts.*
- 7. Producing and disseminating literature on Non Violence, Conflict Transformation, Gender Issues, and Restorative Justice and other topics..*
- 8. Working and training youth in interdisciplinary topics*
- 9. Speaking Engagements and Advocacy*

To meet these objectives, Wi'am works in different areas of the West Bank, across communities, focusing on the following activities:

The director has been invited to different conferences and frequent speaking engagements, lectures, conferences, and workshops on Peace and Justice, and other related issues around the globe... Some of these occasions are:

Nov. 7th and 8th, 2014 Madison, Wisconsin: Key note speaker on Madison Sabeel Conference: "Situation on the Ground in Palestine and Israel". I have also Run two workshops On "Nonviolence and Restorative Justice"

August 7-8, 2014 Ginghamburg, Ohio Keynote Speaker at Methodist and Palestinian Christian leaders Conference for "Walking with. Palestinian Christians...for holy justice and Peace", Co-sponsored by the United Methodist Ministries and Ginghamburg Church, USA

*July 2014 Konstanz: Germany, Switzerland Marcelle as a volunteer at wi'am which is a member of IFOR was Invited to speak on a panel **on Nonviolence and Peace Making with Nobel Peace prize winners** The Engaged Buddhist of Sulak Sivaraksa and Northern Ireland Mairead Maguire at the International Fellowship for Reconciliation 100 years celebration Konstanz, Germany*

Zoughbi lead different workshops in the IFOR Celebration on Nonviolence, Restorative Justice and Reconciliation and on the political situation in Occupied Palestine.

*The staff have been present and attended tens of workshops nationally and internationally: for example: Lucy as staff also was invited to attend a conference on **"Challenging Extremism and Militarism: Women Standing up for Rights, Peace and Plurality"** ICAN's 3rd Annual MENA/Asia Women's Rights, Peace and Security Forum The gathering held in **Şile, Turkey 7-12, 2014***

Lucy also participated in a regional meeting organized by Operation 1325 with other women from Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Palestine, Sweden, Syria, Turkey, and Yemen.

Sulha (Ministry of Reconciliation):

The Ministry of Reconciliation and mediation services have continued in the past several months under increased need. In the past year, Wi'am's mediators have dealt with a total of 400 cases, 80% of which have been solved and finished. Examples of these cases include inter-youth and familial conflicts, car accidents, domestic violence, school violence and land disputes. The increased need for the practice of Sulha during this time demonstrates the vitality of the ministry. By transforming conflicts in a non-violent, transformative manner, Sulha contributes to an overall movement of non-violence in Palestine and at the same time sends a message that reason and dialogue can yield results. It offers the people involved in the conflict a non-violent way to solve and transform the issue while generally encouraging non-violence in our society.

Sulha Case:

Hanan, a widow with 4 children, lost her husband as a result of a sudden road accident. After this incident, the family of her husband family was treating her and her children normally with no problems. As the days passed, there was a need to split the inheritance of the husband among the family. The husband's family however objected to the idea of giving the woman her share of her husband's inheritance. This action created a great rift in the family with constant quarrels between the wife and the husband's. This drove the wife and her children to leave the house and settle with her family.

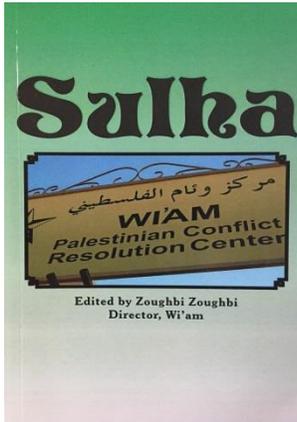


The intransigence of the husband's family exposed the wife and her family to a great stress with no horizon or glimmer of hope that this issue will be resolved soon. Following the advice of a friend who received the services of Wi'am mediator's, the wife sought the help of the mediators in which they intervened and get her lawful inheritance rights. First of all, the mediators were prudent enough to listen to the two parties separately to dig deep to the roots of the problem. After unilateral and arduous sessions with the families of both sides, the mediators managed to convince the family of the husband to embrace the wife and the children as it is not part of our religion to deprive women of their rights. This was followed by a face to face encounter between the wife and the other family which resulted in admittance that the wife should get her inheritance rights. After this reconciliation, the wife and her children moved to her father-in-law's house with her rights guaranteed.

Just as conflict is part of our daily life, mediation is practiced every day to reach a settlement to the problems. It is a way of reaching decisions in a cooperative, non-hierarchical way, allowing a clear and open communication processes to take place. The way in which people resolve their conflicts has an impact on how societies and institutions are run, as well as their ability to resolve conflicts and reach peace with and within other communities.

The following chart explains the diversity of problems that Wi'am has been able to tackle in 2014

<i>Type of cases</i>	<i>Number of cases Mediated</i>
<i>Land Dispute</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>Debt</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Car Accidents</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Brawl</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>Theft</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Attempted Murder</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Financial Dispute</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Neighbors disputes</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Domestic violence and violence against women</i>	<i>43</i>
<i>Rental problems</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Children's Problems</i>	<i>36</i>
<i>Work Accidents</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Fraud</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Unpaid School Tuition and In-Fighting</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Work Compensation</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Work Problems</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Loans</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>Landlord vs. Tenants</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Employee Employer</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>350 Cases</i>



Publishing a Research Book on Sulha Mediation:

*In cooperation with and the support of Berghof Centre in Germany, Wi'am published a Research Study book: "**Sulha-Community-Based Mediation- in Palestine and its Impact on Peace-building**"*

Throughout history, every culture and tradition has developed methods of conflict transformation and mediation techniques. It is only recently that conflict resolution has become a discipline unto itself. Wi'am recognizes the importance of the traditional methods of conflict resolution and as such provides a synergic approach to resolution, combining both traditional Arab forms of resolution called Sulha, and modern techniques of conflict resolution. Zoughbi as an editor and writer highlighted the methods of Sulha that existed as a form of mediation before the pre-Islamic period. This method has lasted the test of time and has been central to all Abrahamic religions. Sulha is characteristic to the Arab desert culture and provides mediation for an entire community. In Palestine family and community is very important and so when a conflict arises it is not just between two people but rather entire families, therefore methods of resolution need to be able to work for a conflict where different parties are involved in the conflict. The research focuses on ways in which civil society can contribute to conflict resolution and reconciliation and the potential added values that Sulha can contribute in peace building efforts at the micro social and macro political levels.

The research highlighted the role played by civic actors in building peaceful societies, contributing to reconciliation initiatives, promoting democratic transformation, and peace-building. The research hypothesis states that through the application, adaptation, and expansion of the methodology of Sulha, we can effectively use it beyond the local level in the management and transformation of larger conflicts. As background, the Sulha process is examined in terms of modifications that would be necessary to adapt the process in order to create a new tool, labeled "Reconciliatory Sulha", for managing and resolving conflicts that can add to different schools of thought on alternative dispute resolution methods.

The Sulha book informs and offer insights about how Sulha can be applied in managing and transforming social, political, and interpersonal conflicts with a focus on identifying root causes and factors that fuel socio-political conflicts. The research sheds in-depth light on the process of Sulha and its application to conflict transformation, negotiation, restorative justice, and mediation with ample case studies.

Through the research, we've found that the cross-cultural significance of Sulha makes it an acceptable and a familiar peace-building tool that can contribute to structural changes in the community, in terms of social relationships between individuals but also norms of behavior and de-escalation of violence. The research found out that Peace-building and mediation connotes a more generic, longer term approach designed to mediate mistrust and mend damages that cycles of violence had unleashed. Thus, the goal of Sulha is not only breaking patterns that have impeded successful reconciliation, but also setting up opportunities for more sustained dialogue.

The women's meetings helped bring women from different backgrounds together in order to discuss socio-political and spiritual issues. Our women's group participated actively in advocacy campaigns that promote women rights and joined non-violent vigils and activism protesting the Wall and other human rights abuses of the Occupation. For instance, in July, Wi'am staff and the women's group participated in a silent demonstration in Manger Square protesting the human rights violations and atrocities in Gaza. The demonstration was an outcry to the outside world to intervene to protect innocent citizens and children from being killed.

On May, 21st. 2014, Wi'am Centre in cooperation with the Ministry of Women's Affairs, the network of developmental institutions in Bethlehem Governorate, Tawasul Center, the NGO Forum for combating violence against women organized a protest in Ramallah opposite to the Council of Ministries. The participants raised banners and slogans demanding the endorsement of a Palestinian Penal Code that can constitute deterrence against the killing of women in the name "honor".

The participants raised banners calling for the Prime Minister and the Palestinian Government to pass a law to protect women from murder, especially with the increase in homicides against women in Palestinian society, which is worrying many of the relevant parties and the authorities that deal with women's issues. This comes a day after the issuance of the Palestinian Authority President, Mahmoud Abbas, an edict amending the Penal Code, which includes the abolition of mitigating circumstances for perpetrators in cases of abuse against women motivated on the pretense of the so-called "honor killings".



Women Club Weekly Meetings:



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

The women of Wi'am have also enjoyed trips together around the West Bank. They visited historic places in the Bethlehem area where they were introduced to the history of the land and the political background of areas visited. In the Cremisan Valley they learned about the disruptions that the Apartheid Barrier will cause to the local population, the environment and Cremisan Monastery. Participants also visited Solomon's Pools and the village of Artas, discovering more fully along the way the impact of the settlements.

The women also visited Jericho, stopping at Biblical sites. Located near the Jordan River, Jericho is a very ancient city whose oldest ruins date to 8000 years before Christ. The participants visited the place in the Gospel where the Lord Jesus healed Bartimaeus, the blind man, and Zacchaeus, injured in the soul by his sins (Luke 18-19). The few sycamore trees still left in the modern city of Jericho remind us that Zacchaeus climbed up into the branches of a sycamore to see Jesus.

The participants then visited Hisham Palace (Khirbat al-Majfar in Arabic). The Palace dates from the times of the Omayyad. It was built by the Caliph Hisham Ibn-Abd El-Malik in 724 and continued until 743. The group learned about the history of the Palace, including its ornate bath complex, agricultural landscape and amazing mosaics. However, only four years after its completion, it was destroyed by a severe earthquake. The tour was an enlightening experience to the history of Christianity and the significance of churches in the area.

The Women's group also participated in a workshop on the status of Senior Citizen's in partnership with UNRWA. The workshop stressed the need to learn listening skills and encouraged women to make every effort to learn sound judgment. The workshop stressed the need to have inter-generational respect that can help reduce violence in the family and engage youth and children in constructive dialogue. The participants in the meetings stressed the need to engage women in things they are capable of doing, making them feel respected and that their contribution is valued by their grandchildren and the community in general. Respecting seniors should be taught from childhood.





The participants agreed that it is their obligation to find time to engage all the family in internal dialogue and agree that there is a need to visit senior citizen's home and spend time with them. Showing respect to the aged in our daily lives will make our life more satisfactory.

At the end of the workshop, the participants watched a short film about Senior Citizens in their area. The film was followed by an open discussion about the status of Senior citizens in the local context and the intergenerational relationship between the young and the older generation. They all agree that neither civic organization nor the local communities are doing enough to accommodate senior citizens in a safe and caring place. They reaffirmed the need to strengthen the bond between the generations through more meetings and awareness-raising at the level of the family, school and the civic society.

Women's Retreat:

With the participation of 50 women from different churches from Bethlehem District, Wi'am center organized a retreat at the Melkite Church. The Greek parish priest, Fr. Issa Thalgieh and Fr. Jacob Abu Sa'ada preached on the meaning of the advent and its theological meaning in our life. The participants discussed the meaning of Christmas and the message of Christ for Peace & Justice in the World.

Young Women's Project:

Wi'am has embarked on a new project in partnership with Unstoppable, a young women's Christian movement in Pennsylvania, USA and led in part by Grace Killian, a United Methodist Global Mission Fellow placed at Wi'am. The Just Sharing Fellowship is a narrative based sharing project that seeks to empower young women's voices and stories, connecting young women across cultural boundaries and dispelling harmful stereotypes. The Nigerian author, Chimamanda Adichie has said, "'Stories matter. Many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign, but stories can also be used to empower and to humanize. Stories can break the dignity of a people, but stories can also repair that broken dignity.'" This sentiment can be described as a catalyst for the mission of this project.

Two circles of young women, in Bethlehem and in Pennsylvania, meet separately and regularly to discuss the power of stories and compassionate listening. Each individual will also produce two blog posts featuring a life experience to be shared on a blog developed by the participants. Furthermore, each participant is also paired with one or two participants from the other circle of young women so that they may develop a relationship across the distance.



The participants in Bethlehem have met several times, discussing the importance of storytelling and listening as well as how to create an engaging story. Partners are developing relationship

through the internet, enjoying the opportunity to learn about life in either Palestine or the USA. The blog featuring the stories of the individuals is now available online. You can find their stories along with more information about the project at:

www.officialjustsharing.wordpress.com

Gender Activities:

Wiam continue its training on Gender issues intergenerational from kids, to youth up to elderly throughout all of our programs. We work on mainstreaming Gender and Gender Justice. Many of the cases that we tackle are affecting the women mainly . Fifty percent or more of our conflict transformation cases dealing with women's injustices. It is not limited to mediation but also a lot of personal counseling, accompaniment and raising awareness to challenge the domestic violence, Patriarchal mentality. Thus we raise the awareness of our community regarding these issues in more practical ways than through theoretical workshops.

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Non-Violent Activities:

Wi'am has been at the front line emphasizing the popular struggle through practical participation of Non Violence. The site of Wi'am in the shadow of the Separation Wall is a witness to the nonviolent steadfastness and resistance that Wi'am is practicing, and a constant incentive for us to serve the entire community. Our staff, volunteers and affiliates call or join other nonviolent demonstrations, protests, vigils and marches in different areas: Cremisan-Beit Jala, Nabi Salih, Al Ma'sara, Bethlehem, Hebron areas, Jericho and other places.



We have lots of training workshops for all generation on issues of Non Violence, Popular Struggle, Civil Disobedience and Restorative Justice. Tens of Seminars in different places were convened discussing such issues. We have also guest speakers who give talks and run workshops under the theme "lessons Learned" from South Africa, Latin America, Northern Island, The Balkans and the Civil Rights Movement.

We build too many walls and not enough bridges."

~ Isaac Newton (1642-1727)

Advocacy week for prisoners:

On Saturday 20th of September 2014, Wi'am Center in cooperation with the National Coalition of Christian Institutions in Palestine organized an Ecumenical Advocacy week for the Palestinian Prisoners in Israeli Jails under the motto "Let my people Go". The event which was held at Wi'am premises is part of the international week for peace in Palestine organized by The World Council of Churches in cooperation with Churches in Jerusalem. The event was attended by local communities, representatives of Church Related Organization church leaders, women groups, media representatives and young people from different areas. The meeting started with a talk from the director of Wi'am center, Zoughbi Zoughbi welcoming the attendees and detailing the plight of the prisoners in Israeli jails and the different types of persecution that they encounter. After that Bishop Munib Yonan, Bishop Attalah Hana, Bishop William Al Shomali, Sheik Maher Asaf, gave spiritual dimension of the prisoners issue, linking their situation with the lack of justice in the judicial system and the occupation. Then, Mr Risq Salah, a representative of prisoners, and mother Khaled Al Halabi, gave a general overview of the miserable life that the prisoners are facing in which they send a plight to the international community and Human Rights organization to intervene urgently.

The Minister of Prisoners' Affairs, Issa Karaqi' and Mustafa Al Barquoti, from Al Mubadarah talked about the situation of the prisoners giving examples of prisoners who lost their life due to lack of medical care inside the Israeli prison. They called for more solidarity with the prisoners issue and Justice to their cause.

At the end of the meeting the head of churches signed a petition calling for justice to the prisoner's issue.

Advocacy for E1 Area:

On Wednesday, October 15, Wi'am Centre, in cooperation with the Foreign Ministry, organized a workshop on the Israeli plans to annex the E1 area. This event was attended by more than a hundred persons representing Bethlehem Governorate, AIDA, OCHA, World Council of Churches, The Mufti, Christian and Moslem religious communities, different local and international NGOs, local councils and committees, and other civic society organizations.

The meetings opened with a welcome by Wiam's Executive Director, Zoughbi Zoughbi, who talked extensively about the Israeli policy and plan in transferring Bedouins from forty-six communities and resettling them in three concentrated localities namely:

Al Jabal, New'ima, and Fasayil. He added that land confiscation is still going on throughout the West Bank, including the confiscation of the five thousand dunums in the Bethlehem Area. Zoughbi added that this policy will put an end to the Two State Solution and will assassinate any remnants of the Peace Process.

The Governorate spokesperson, Mahmoud Zawahra, debriefed the participants on the reality of land confiscation and its impact on the ordinary Palestinians as well as on the role that the governorate in exposing unlawful acts of land confiscation. Nafez Rifa'i from the Foreign Ministry spoke about the negative impact of the displacements policy on the populations, population growth and Arab expansion in Jerusalem. He also indicated that the Israeli plans aim to separate the South of the West Bank and force Palestinians to use less developed roads for their travel. After that, Isra Al Muthafer from OCHA gave a presentation about the issue of E1 and the fact that the Israeli plan is to connect the area in question to Ma'leh Adumim settlement and annex it to Jerusalem. She detailed the Israeli plans to evacuate the Palestinian population living in the area and put them in an enclave.

At the end of the meeting, the participants discussed options for an action plan and thus gave the following recommendations:

- *The Foreign Ministry will prioritize advocacy campaigns against the unjust Israeli policies of transfer, land confiscation, annexation and the continuous Settlement building.*
- *Organizing a media/ advocacy campaign involving key actors and all Concerned and involved parties*
- *The civil society organizations together with other human rights organizations should coordinate plans to protest the E1 and other confiscation of land in cooperation with international bodies and human rights organizations.*



We should complete the following tasks:

- *Empower the non-violent and popular resistance among the grassroots*
- *Boycott Israeli products and enhancing the BDS movement.*
- *Develop and support the affected communities living in the confiscated areas to help them settle in their land and resist evacuation.*
- *d. Reclaim the land in the affected areas to help farmers*

A group of representatives from Wi'am also joined an educational, political tour of the E1 with the Palestinian Liberation Organization, the Jerusalem Legal Aid and Human Rights Center.

The group composed of Bedouin leaders, representatives from the Palestinian Authority and Jericho Governorate, were able to hear the struggles of the Bedouin community as they face relocation. The visit was an eye-opener and highly educational for all. The participants in the tour, had also the privilege of hearing from the late Minister Ziad Abu Ein, who was just

Recently killed on December 10th, 2014, during an Israeli military, violent suppression of non-violent protest.



Children's Summer Camp:

Wi'am held a summer camp throughout the months of school vacation. The summer camp offered children joy and a chance to play in the midst of the stress of the ongoing occupation. The children came to the Wi'am courtyard and playground leaning crafts, drama, games, and cultural activities. They learned new songs and folk dance and created sketches to perform. One such sketches, was a role-play on the humiliating experience that people endure while passing the checkpoint. Such activities allow them to process the world around them while still having fun.



For one craft, the children made prayer flags and banners. Everyone gathered around a large sheet, and held it at arms height, while balls covered in paint were thrown on. The kids struggled to keep the balls from falling off, and in the process made a beautiful banner. Later, 'We shall overcome' was painted on the banner in both Arabic and English. While the banner was being finished, campers began painting smaller pieces of cloth. After painting, children wrote prayers onto their flags, or had staff members transcribe their message.

The prayer flags were put on display at Wi'am, and the banner was hung up facing the street.

The unrest near the Wi'am office in the past several months posed a challenge to the summer camp. At times, the camp only operated a few days a week for the sake of safety. This setback, however, did not stop the campers from enjoying their time at Wi'am. We at Wi'am believe that the summer Camp was all the more important during these times of tension and uncertainty. It is important to continue to live our lives, especially offering children an opportunity for fun and giving them a sense of normalcy. We greatly value the laughter, smiles, and color they brought to our office.



Trainings and Workshops:

Wi'am delivered a three-day training for 200 students (grade 8) from 8 schools in Bethlehem and Ramallah in cooperation with the "Environmental Education Center" on issue of children rights. The participating schools included the Future school, Ramallah; Chile, Beit Jala; Roman Catholic, Beit Sahour; Lutheran School, Beit Sahour; Talita Kumi, Beit Jala; Dar il-Kalima, Bethlehem; Aida School for girls, Aida Refugee Camp.

The first stage of the training focused on "Children Rights". The event was attended by 150 students (grade Eight) from 8 schools, Ramallah and Bethlehem. Wi'am trainers represented by Imad Nassar, Lucy Talgieh, Saliba Baddor, divided the training into two stages. During the first stage, the students

watched divers' video clips that focus on children rights and the infringement of these rights at the social and political level. After watching these clips the trainers opened the stage for general discussion in which the students interacted positively asking a number of questions and inquiring about ways of attaining these rights with the help of Human Rights Organizations and their local government.

The second stage of the training focused on practical side in which the trainers used role plays, case studies, and power point to help the students learn more deeply about their rights and pin point what social and political rights they are deprived from.

The training helped the students to write a letter that will be directed to Human Rights Org, the Government, and Civil Society Org on their aspirations to attain their rights and see progress in implementing Human Rights Agreements in their country.

The training highlighted children's rights through using audio-visual films. The films illustrated children's rights described in the global rights treaty, such as "protection from neglect," "protection from torture," "protection from illegal arrest by occupation," "protection from forced labor", etc. The films are an excellent tool for informing children about their rights and society about its obligations.

The films were followed by a general discussion in which students discussed the infringement to their rights that they face at the social and political levels. The students interacted positively asking a number of questions and inquiring about ways of attaining these rights.

Wi'am also organized a second training phase that focused on peer-mediation, and conflict resolution. The training was attended by 3 schools: Talita Kumi, Aida Refugee Camp School, Lutheran School of Beit Sahour. Saliba and Wael led the young participants in discussions and role plays of peer mediation and conflict transformation.

A thirds stage of the training hosted Grade 8 participants from three schools in Bethlehem area: Chile and Talitha Kumi schools in Beit Jala and Roman Catholic School in Beit Sahour. The training focused on communication skills and cognitive games that empower student's critical thinking and improve their communicative response. The major theme of the training was active listening. The participants summarize what each has said to ensure accurate comprehension; encouraging cooperation and acceptance between students and of each other's differences; and creative problem-solving, which takes into account each disputant's position and their approach in resolving peer conflicts. Energizing games encouraged students to use their cognitive skills in a positive manner. Role play and video clips were used as a pedagogical method to portray various real life scenarios and to give a rational

response to them. The video clips centered around the value of dialogue, responsible leadership, cooperation, initiatives, non-violent approach to conflicts, respecting differences, and codes of conduct in situations of conflict. Through role-playing, students learned how to deal with peer conflicts, negotiating their way out of problems, and working with others reaching win-win solutions.



The case studies that Wi'am circulates in these trainings are real life problems that we managed to resolve in schools and the community. It provided students with knowledge on ways of resolving conflict in non-violent manner. The case studies also help students learn negotiation skills as a strategy in conflict and real life scenarios. Students were able to learn communication skills, non-verbal (body language, personal space) and para-verbal (how we say what we say).

Such training programs have two primary goals: first, stimulating cognitive learning, critical thinking and cooperation skills Second, developing integrative peer mediation and conflict resolving skills. The Training methods included interactive learning, small group work, role-playing, watching video clips that had an inherent message followed by discussions, case studies, peer-mediation activities, games. The training helped the students gain basic skills in peer-mediation and communication skills.

Peer Mediation:

Wi'am staff organizes Open Day training on Friday, 24th of Oct., 2014, in Peer-mediation, communication and conflict Resolution

Target population: Students, from three schools in Bethlehem area: Chile and Talita Kumi schools in Beit Jala and Roum Catholic School in Beit Sahour.

The training involved a cadre of trained Wi'am staff and peer mediators.

The open-Day training program had two primary components: Energizers that stimulate cognitive learning/critical thinking and cooperative skills between students. While, the other component focused on integrative peer-mediation and conflict resolution skills with the aim of helping students find mutually satisfying solution to problems they encounter in their schools and the larger community. The Training methods included cooperative learning, working in small groups, case studies, role-playing in peer-mediation, cognitive games and group discussions. The training focused on teaching students the nature of conflict, peer-mediation skills, communication skills, and how to engage in integrative negotiations.

The major themes of the training are active listening, where participants summarize what each has said to ensure accurate comprehension; encouraging cooperation/acceptance between students and of each other's differences and creative problem-solving. The energizer's games helped students to use their cognitive skills in a positive manner. While, role playing was used as a pedagogical method to portray various real-life scenarios and help students give a rational response to them. The video clips used embeds a real-life message that Wi'am staff conveyed to the students, it centers around the value of dialogue, sound leadership, cooperation, taking initiatives, non-violent approach to conflicts, helping others in need, voluntary work, respecting differences and positive behavior. The training also emphasized learning from experience, with Wi'am staff serving as facilitators and coaches. Through role-playing, students learn how to deal with peer conflicts, negotiating their way out of problems, dealing with anger, and working with others reaching win-win solutions.

Weekly Children's Ministries:

Children come on Fridays for a time of crafts, games, and free play on the playground. It is always a joy to see the children in the courtyard, bringing fresh life to the area. We have different workshops during the year on Trauma Coping. We don't have trauma healing since we haven't the Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. It is an ongoing trauma. Wiam has always provide a safe haven to ventilate, to air out frustration and express their anxiety. We do that through Story Telling, Art Therapy, Playing, Cooking, Drama Theater and joining trips. Group work on therapy is also rewarding.

Youth Activities:

Since Wi'am's inception, the youth program has been very essential in Wi'am. Our youth have meetings frequently to discuss different interdisciplinary topics. We have training for trainers in Conflict Transformation, Non Violence, Leaderships Skills, Gender Issues and Justice. All of this training has equipped the young people with different skills and knowledge which help them to be transformed as well as to mitigate violence and be active agents for change. Some of them have been helping and volunteering at Wi'am in Mediation and different activities of the center.

One of the highlights of the youth program is the intercultural exchange program in which Wi'am host youth from the four corners of the world as well Wi'am has sent delegations and individuals to make the counterpart.

Dialogue of culture helps to diffuse stereotypes and prejudices and overgeneralization. Wi'am works for a culture of acceptance and understanding. Youth will be enhancing their demeanors, personalities, critical thinking and confidence.

Let me mention some of these exchanges: Washington Forest Ridge School, Bluffton University, Belmont University, Hamline University, Covenant Presbyterian-Charlotte in NC, Canadian Mennonite Students, Swedish groups ...etc.

Voluntary Work at the Latin Scouts Headquarters in Bethlehem:



On 15th - 16th of September, Wi'am's young people, , volunteered at the Terra Scanta Scouts building, performing needed maintenance and repairs. The day started with cleaning the premises from the inside and then cleaning windows and doors from old painting, dirt and posters. After that, they painted the doors and windows again with fresh paint. Later, the volunteers decorated the windows and doors with folkloric figures such as Palestinian women, the Palestinian folk dresses, and a drawing of the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem.

Wi'am, Palestinian Conflict Transformation/Resolution Centre hosted a student delegation from An-Najah University, Dar-Al-Kalima and Al-quds Open University in Bethlehem. The event was coordinated by Mr. Tareq Al-Hardan. The delegation was welcomed by Wi'am Director, Mr. Zoughbi Zoughbi, and Wi'am Staff.

At the beginning of the activity, Mr. Zoughbi Zoughbi, the director of Wi'am, welcomed the students, orienting them about Wi'am outreach work and its role in promoting the civil society and building a culture of acceptance of others as they are. Zoughbi talked about the values of pluralism within the framework of diversity in unity, and not unity of resemblance in which he says yes to differences but not disputes.



At the end of the visit, the students accompanied by Wi'am staff planted trees in the garden of the center, which has increased its beauty. All the students agree that planting trees is national duty and a non-violent challenge to the concept of the Apartheid Wall and settlement expansion. They recalled the Minister Ziad Abu Ein, who sacrificed his life for the sake of defending the land.

Youth Empowerment:

Over the past several months, Wi'am has also been working on a project to empower young Christians and develop young leadership within the Church. We have worked with 45 young people from the Bethlehem area, offering workshops on leadership, conflict transformation, and communication skills as well as Bible studies and field visits to strengthen spiritual identity.



In the leadership workshop, participants worked to define leadership and how it is used to motivate people. They discussed theories of leadership as well as the different types of leaders: autocratic, democratic, liberal and free leadership. The workshop on conflict transformation introduced practical tools in conflict analysis and transformation, approaching conflict

From the perspective of a peace builder. The training session addressed the definition of conflict, the root causes and conditions of conflicts, cultural approaches to conflict resolution and communications skills. Participants worked in small groups on case studies to analyze hypothetical conflicts, to map out the key issues and stakeholders, and then present their Findings and analyses to the large group. In the workshop on communication skills, participants worked on improving their non-violent communication skills orally, visually, and physically. The exercises and discussions also sought to cultivate empathy among participants and clarify how best to demonstrate it.

Another key element of this project was to fortify the Christian identity of the young participants. To this end, the young adults took part in Bible studies and a workshop on Christian identity. Through these activities, participants studied the biblical and historic idea of the “Church” and how best to engage in this community. Such study and discussions helped young people who are searching for answers, trying to find any place that will give them a sense of value. They discussed that the Church should be teaching young people who they are in Christ so that they can experience faith transformation while instilling a sense of belonging in a tangible community. Therefore, in order to further cultivate this sense of belonging, Wi’am offered a field visit to Nablus to the participants. Together, they visited ruins of the Byzantine Church in Sebastia, Jacob’s Well, and the Samaritan community who continue to live on the top of Mount Jerzim, their holy mountain. Such an experience was very moving and spiritually fulfilling.



Yes For Volunteerism:

Part of Wi'am's effort to enhance the spirit of volunteerism in the community, Wi'am Implemented a year project on volunteerism. The main objective of the project is to enhance the spirit of volunteerism in the community; helping young people become more convinced about the value of volunteerism; encourage civic society organization to integrate volunteers in their civic work and helping young people take a role in advocating for youth volunteerism in civil society organization



The project main focus areas were in Hebron and Bethlehem Districts targeting unemployed university graduates. After careful selection of the beneficiaries based on their needs, gender balance, field of study, the needs of the hosting organizations, we trained them in areas of social initiatives, data collection, communications skills and public speaking. Later on, we managed to find voluntary placements for 20 volunteers in 10 civic society organizations in Bethlehem and Hebron areas. The placements helped volunteers gain on-the-job skills, and other related life skills that benefited volunteers finding permanent jobs in civic society organizations. At the same time, as part of the volunteer's effort to advocate volunteerism in the community, they delivered 3 social initiatives in the field of health and environment. They also delivered 10 awareness-raising sessions in schools; they used the media to advocate volunteerism in the community other encourage other youth and community members to embrace volunteerism as a way of life.

In total the project helped young people embrace voluntary work as a way of life and we contributed towards increasing their opportunities to find work and at the same time enabling young people themselves to advocate volunteerism as a community asset.

In total the project paved the way for 6 young people (5 females/one male from Hebron areas and Bethlehem) to find permanent jobs in civic society organizations. Their existing knowledge and skills helped them integrate fully in the services and work of the organizations and be a vibrant asset in the organization. In addition, as a result of the project, many civic society organizations opened their doors wide to hosting volunteers in their premises. This action is helping many young graduates gain essential on-the job and life skills necessary that are a pre-requisite for searching and finding jobs in the future.

Success Stories and Photos



Samah Hasaneh, like many young Palestinians, found jobs to be scarce upon graduation from university. Samah grew up just outside of Bethlehem, attending Bethlehem Governmental High School. Upon graduating, she went on to study Information and Communication Technologies at Open University, Bethlehem.

Despite her academic successes, however, jobs were scarce and she remained unemployed for 4 years after the completion of her studies. Supporting herself became increasingly difficult and Sameh grew despondent, saying “After so many years, I began to lose hope.”

Eventually, Samah secured a job with a local environmental protection NGO, the Palestinian Wildlife Society. As has been the case for many other young Palestinian university graduates, Samah gained employment in work that benefits the entire community through Wi’am “Yes for Volunteerism” program, supported by Catholic Relief Services and USAID. Her specific skills were matched with an NGO in need of a qualified candidate, which brought her on as a volunteer. Samah exemplifies Wi’am’s goal of utilizing the high number of jobless, yet skilled, graduates in a manner that improves the lives of all those in Bethlehem.

The transition was difficult at first for Samah, as it often is for many who have been unemployed for several years. Through the close support of both Wi’am and the Palestinian Wildlife Society staff,

Samah rapidly adjusted and began to excel. “I knew that I had been given an opportunity to rise in the organization. I was determined to succeed,” she later said of her early experiences. Her ICT skills and high degree of professionalism allowed her to take on increasingly larger responsibilities within the organization. She moved from handling basic administrative work to managing outreach programs to helping oversee projects at the national level. She was afforded the opportunity to represent the Palestinian Wildlife Organization at numerous conferences and seminars in Palestine and Jordan. She rose steadily in the organization, happy to be doing the work that she had been trained for.

Rana’s fortune has taken a U-turn when she heard about the “Yes for Volunteerism” project run by Wi’am center, with the support and guidance of CRS and USAID. She was quick to enroll in the project. The project team matched her with a local NGO working in youth empowerment in Bethlehem (AEI). Wi’am contributed towards integrating Rana in the work of AEI, in which she was utilizing her skills and knowledge in the daily work of the organizations and its diverse outreach activities.



At the very beginning of her voluntary work, Rana was encountering difficulties in accommodating herself with the work pressure and the routine of work. As a result of ongoing support from Wi’am team and the cooperation of AEI administration, Rana was adjusting to the tasks given to her in which she showed commitment to implement any task given to her. She found that her skills had given her the chance to excel in different coordination and reporting

tasks. By working closely with other staff, Rana started to make significant contributions to the daily work of the organization, its development and its effectiveness. She was able to open a channel of communication with other fellow youth and managed to engage them in activities of the organization. Rana felt that her volunteerism was “a significant contribution to youth development and a chance to apply her education on real-life issues”. It was soon clear that Rana was a vibrant volunteer capable of doing different task at AEI.

Through her work with AIE, Another partner organization Qader, offered Rana a part-time coordination position in a project that they implement with student with special needs. She welcomes the offer and felt relieved that her dreams for finding a job are taking shape. Describing her jubilation, Rana said;” I’m so happy, my joy is indescribable because the project opened a great opportunity for me to contribute my experience for serving the community”. Rana’s success typifies the diligent effort of an unemployed university graduate to overcome her problems with the contribution of civic society

organizations to offer unemployed students a volunteer opportunity to serve the community and at the same time the possibility of finding a permanent career.

Project Management & ME Training: Staff Capacity Building:

Part of wi'am's capacity development for the staff, in cooperation with CRS and support of "USAID" The staff are taking part in a 8 comprehensive days of training on project Management and M&E. The first day of the training focused on cycle of the project and ways of developing ideas about a project. The training centered on identifying a project idea, writing a concept idea and conducting needs assessment related to the project. The training was culminated with presenting different forms related to result chains from different backgrounds (DAC, EU, USAID, GTZ).



The training also focused on clarifying terms related to the project results (input, activities, outputs, outcome and impact) with examples related to Wi'am activities. Then the participants selected a project that is related to their work and the strategy of the organization and started stakeholder's analysis, and then they applied the problem tree on the problem at hand. The participants changed the problem tree into an objective tree. After that, the staff learned different criteria to select strategies of work.

International Volunteers:

Our efforts through the years and over every summer would not have been possible without the generous help of local and international volunteers. The effort of the volunteers has been very rewarding during the summer camp and other activities. We were happy to welcome 3 students from Goshen College, Indiana, USA namely Sam, Kiernan and Jessica and one volunteer from the Church of Sweden to Bethlehem this summer, Erica. We are blessed by the volunteer Grace Killian from the Methodist Church who are amazing, vivacious and justice oriented who helps in training, educating, guiding, editing and writing. We highly appreciate their hard work and dedication.

We were also blessed by a good number of local volunteers who helped in the Summer Camp and in the Sulha ministry of reconciliation.



If you are interested in volunteering at Wi'am, please email us at hope@alastah.org so that we may discuss this possibility.

Citizen's Diplomacy: (Ethical Tourism)

The Citizen's Diplomacy project is our contribution to tell the world about the plight of Palestinians, the current geo-political situation and orient visitors about our outreach programs that respond to the needs of the local population. The project provides our visitors with an idea about the deep-rooted Palestinian culture, our exquisite cuisine. The sharing of meals with the visiting group is one aspect of building a solid bond and reciprocity with the center and the larger community.

During the past year, Wi'am hosted around 50 groups with a total of ~1033 individuals as part of the Citizen Diplomacy and Advocacy Project. During these encounters, the Participants learned about the work of the center in terms of youth and women empowerment and our work in terms of advocacy, mediation, non-violence, human rights. The visitors get debriefing about the larger political context

and facts on the ground. The project helped visitors explore the Palestinian narrative which they witness during their travel and bring it back to their home communities.



We have hosted guests from across Britain, Sweden, the United States, Canada, Latin America, Brazil, France, The Netherlands, Switzerland, Ireland, Scotland, Denmark, Sweden, Germany, Spain, Belgium, South Africa. The visitors are composed of partner organizations, high school students, university students, political and religious leaders, teachers, business people, interfaith members and lay people. We also provided the groups with home stays, tours to historical places and areas affected by the Wall. The groups dine with Palestinians enjoying exquisite traditional food for lunches and dinners as part of the job creation project. In addition, people have also enjoyed their home-stays with local people, visiting a refugee camps and participating in non-violent action with Palestinians as a joint human effort to protest injustices.

Prayers:

Wi'am continues to hold monthly prayer services, on the second Wednesday of every month. Wi'am staff, internationals and locals gather together in the Wi'am courtyard and lift up prayers for peace and justice. Our prayers of word and song are strengthened by the prayerful act of gathering in faith in the shadow of injustice. We hope that the prayers offer encouragement and hope to those present as we work towards a just peace.



In addition to the monthly prayers, each week during the Season of Advent, Wi'am offered prayers and candle lighting at the Wi'am office. We followed the lectionary from each Sunday of Advent and reflect on the messages of hope, peace, love, and joy of Advent. It is one way we are seeking to prepare our hearts, mind, and world for the coming of Christ at Christmas.

Social Cases: *There is no gospel but the social gospel, as John Wesley said, the founder of the Methodist Movement. Indeed there is no spirituality if not social Spirituality. That's the bases for our work in the community where we serve the people at large and the individuals in particular without any limits and without any conditions. There are tens of cases where we helped to assist people financially, network and cooperate with other organizations in dealing with health cases; we aim to provide social and psychological assistance, to alleviate poverty and thus help in the steadfastness of families.*

Christmas Event :

Wi'am organized a Christmas party for around 100 women along with their families at the Melkite Church in Bethlehem. The celebration started with a blessing from Fr. Jacoub Abu-Sa'da, The Melkite Parish Priest and Rev. Kristen Brown from the United Methodist Church and Fr. Issa Thaljeh, The Greek Orthodox Parish Priest who talked about the meanings of Christmas and the importance of Family as the pillars of Christianity. After that, Wi'am director, Zoughbi Zoughbi, talked about the significance and meanings of Christmas in our life and the importance of the family as bedrock for rearing the new generation. He also reaffirms the vision of Wi'am as a community center that plays a pivotal role for women, men and children alike. Zoughbi reiterates the Christmas values of solidarity, steadfastness, agape and diversity in unity and not unity of Symmetry. During the celebration Wi'am women's choir sang hymns on Christmas along with Byzantine Melodies. This was followed by a violin tune on Christmas and a song delivered by little girls leading the community to pray the Lord's Prayer in Aramaic language.



At the end of the celebration, Wi'am staff represented by Saliba Badour, Usama N., Adnan Thaljeh, Lucy Thaljeh, Wael Zineh, Imad Nassar, Areej Najjar and director, Zoughbi, volunteers and our intern Grace Killian, jointly thanked the families for their presence and for being part of Wi'am family,

wishing them a blessed Christmas and a happy New Year. Then, the participants enjoyed the hospitality and each got a Christmas present as a token of fellowship and appreciation



Wi'am director, Zoughbi Zoughbi and the staff, participated in the House of Hope's Christmas Celebration. George Thalgieh presented and played Christmas carols on the Qanoun (Traditional Musical instrument). At the end of the event, Wi'am also presented humble gifts to the children.



We give thanks for all that God has done for us and through us as well as for the support of friends around the world. Let us all pray together that the world will know more peace and justice in 2015.