



**Women's Studies Centre**  
**Freedom Dignity Equality**

**Annual Progress Report**  
**January – December 2015**

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## Context

The overall context for women remains similar to the previous year and many women, such as those in Gaza and those who suffered from additional security measures during the Gaza war, are still attempting to recover from the trauma they were exposed to last year. According to OCHA's factsheet, no work on the ground to rebuild any of the destroyed houses in Gaza took place in the first half of 2015 and it is expected that the work will start in the second half of 2015 (OCHA, 7/2015; retrieved on 29/7/2015). During the first 6 months of 2015 and in regards to Jerusalem, there were some challenges due to the status of oEJ which affected mobility and accessibility at times mainly during June-July; the month of Ramadan. Furthermore, the Separation Wall, checkpoints, and harassments by settlers in oEJ represented some of the challenges. That in addition to the fact that the extremist group was further empowered due to the winning of the newly elected right wing government in the elections in 2015. This presented a threat on the Palestinians as the new government approved building a very high number of illegal settlements in oEJ; in the first six months of 2015 alone, the government approved the building of 1500 new illegal settlements in oEJ (Middle East Monitor, 4/5/2015; retrieved on 24/6/2015). This impacted the work of the WSC due to the increase of the number of arrested women, particularly the Murabitat<sup>1</sup>, and the violence of settlers in the old city of Jerusalem and Silwan which was and still is very apparent. Furthermore, the settlers' violent attacks did not only target Jerusalem but also the West Bank. These attacks created a general feeling of insecurity among Palestinians and disrupted the daily lives of people.

The political situation in Palestine escalated in the second half of 2015 particularly when settlers burned the Dawabsheh family's house in Nablus (father, mother, 2 children) which resulted in the death of the entire family except for one child. This tragic attack took place on 31/07/2015. Starting from 15/08/2015 and up till now, the stabbing operations as a form of resistance started taking place in different parts of Palestine with focus on Jerusalem, Hebron and Nablus. During the month of August, the number of martyrs due to these stabbings reached 4 and the number of injured due to political clashes reached 71 among Palestinians as opposed to 12 Israelis. During the month of September the situation escalated and the number of injured along with the number of detainees increased. As a result, 2 Israelis were killed, 2 injured and the number of stabbings in the second half of September reached 13 compared to only 3 in the first half of the month. The clashes and stabbings continued and reached its climax as a result of the repeated violations of Al-Aqsa Mosque and the attacks on Al-murabitat – Palestinian women who are stationed in Al-Aqsa Mosque to defend it from the attacks of the Israeli settlers. The new resistance of Palestinian youth that included stabbings made Palestinians, especially Palestinian children both girls and boys an easy target especially with Israel following the motto "shoot to kill;" Many Palestinians including children were executed and stripped out of their clothes publicly with no respect to their dignity as

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<sup>1</sup> Women who stay in Al-Aqsa Mosque in order to protect it from settlers.

human beings and with no respect to the Palestinian culture; these violations included girls and women. During the month of October the number of martyrs reached 105, including 23 children and 4 women. As for the number of injured, it reached 12201, while the number of detainees reached 2126 out of which 812 are children (Euro-Mediterranean). Based on the latest statistics published on the Euro-Mediterranean website, up till December 2015, the number of Palestinian martyrs reached 150 out of which 27 were children and 7 were women, 15759 injured, 1511 kids were detained and 3401 adults were detained, the number of settlers' attacks on Palestinian civilians and their properties reached 352 attacks, 92 homes were destroyed, and 908 incursions were carried out in different Palestinian villages and cities.

The following are some of the challenges that the Palestinians are facing and the centre is facing as well in light of the escalating political situation:

- The unstable political situation in Palestine and particularly in Jerusalem, Nablus, and Hebron where the program's activities are being implemented affected the sustainability of the activities as it is becoming unsafe for people to leave their homes due to the lack of security and to the continuous harassments by the Israeli settlers. Not to mention the execution policy Israel is inflicting on the Palestinian civilians along with the increased arrests which spreading a sense of insecurity and uncertainty.
- Due to the continuous closures and checkpoints, it became challenging for CBOs and beneficiaries to communicate and working with the targeted group became more complicated.
- The execution policy and the fear of the fact that each person could be targeted because of the spread of settlements and the increase in the number of armed settlers in all areas affected the sense of security among the Palestinian civilians and affected their movement as well including participating in some of the program's activities.
- The sudden closures imposed on some areas along with the military checkpoints prevented some volunteers from implementing some of the workshops and initiatives.
- The continuous incursions of the Palestinian Universities in Tulkarem by the Israeli soldiers caused a state of confusion and fear among students and resulted in early dismissal of classes.
- The violence of occupation and the increased number of Martyrs diminished the importance of addressing some issues such as divorce in the community as the current situation does not allow for addressing social rights when there are violations of various human rights particularly the right to life, security, and safety.

As for the laws in Palestine, they are still not in accordance with CEDAW. Women suffer from discrimination and a low level of protection from the judicial system that holds high discretionary powers over what happens to women in court. National laws need to provide more protection for women and recourse procedures must be improved to ensure these rights are accessible. As a result of this gap, the WSC is currently involved in writing the shadow report.

## Executive Summary

In 2015, the WSC started working on implementing its 6 main programs that were identified as a priority within its strategic Plan 2012-2016. These programs fall under three key intervention areas and include an additional “institutional development” area addressing our role as community experts. The main programs lie under one or more of the following priority areas:

- *Women’s Empowerment*
- *Combating Violence against Women*
- *Promoting a Feminist Discourse*

The WSC’s role is not limited to implementing strategic interventions based on priority areas, but also encompasses being a provider of technical advisory and consultancy services that contribute to the *institutional development*. The WSC provides expert advice and capacity building needed to make large scale institutional changes involving women’s advancement through our landmark tools— endorsed by our institutional partners— including our gender audit, gender mainstreaming and gender impact assessments, and reports and analysis tools.

Within the intervention addressing **Women’s Empowerment**, several areas of progress have been made. The WSC focused on building the capacities of 21 partnering organizations in Nablus, Hebron, Tulkarem, and Jerusalem through capacity building trainings that lasted for 28 days and targeted 57 young men and women activists enabling them to carryout awareness raising campaigns addressing women’s rights issues, specifically divorced women’s rights. Additionally, based on previous phase evaluations, the WSC has continued to work with victims of violence to empower them and enable them to speak about their cause and build support in future advocacy and awareness raising campaigns. Moreover, a documentary film reflecting the experience of 4 divorced women was launched in August 2015. The WSC also worked, in partnership with the British Council, on training its staff members on Action Research Development by developing capacities and skills in research through a program that will support them to produce an action research through the learning process. Moreover, and also in partnership with the British Council, 322 women through the Spring Board project developed their capacities in taking more control over their lives and identifying clear and practical steps to realize it. Around 100 women received training on women’s participation in public life and on advocacy.

In the area of **Combating Violence Against women**, two main programs have been carried out. This is the second year that the WSC implements the Bereaved-to-Bereaved

program in Jerusalem, Hebron and areas C in the West Bank. During the second year of the program, the focus was on individual and group support sessions where 76 support groups were conducted in the three targeted areas benefiting almost 50 bereaved women and 26 bereaved women benefited from the individual support sessions. Furthermore and in order to plan for the implementation of the activities in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year, a 10-day training was conducted in order to provide 21 bereaved women with the skills to become supporters to other bereaved women. 18 women out of the 21 who received the training were selected to become supporters and start working in 2016.

The Centre continued its awareness raising activities in the AMAN program to combat sexual violence and introduced the program to different civil society institutions and implemented it in a number of schools. It is worth noting that despite the fact that this program does not have any specific funding, the WSC continued implementing the activities planned and conducted a number of trainings that took place in the targeted areas and targeted a large number of people in the different areas.

As for the interventions involved in **Promoting a Feminist discourse**, the main focus was on developing a qualitative study that assesses the gender based gaps within child rights and specifically female child rights in Palestine which is still a work in progress. Additionally, and despite the fact that this program does not have any specific funding, the centre managed to conduct a total of 250 awareness raising workshops on gender equality and the dangers of early marriage targeting parents, female students, CBOs, and boys and girls in the community. Moreover, the centre was able to raise an estimate of \$20,000 and 20,000NIS through fundraising events to cover the tuition of 66 needy female students throughout 2015. 6 full scholarships were offered to female students for 4 years and 7 partial scholarships were offered.

Lastly, within the **Institutional Development** of the WSC, the centre has become a respectable reference in conducting gender audits in oPt and the Arab Region. We also became the address in conducting other trainings such as well-being training. This year, the WSC was contracted in May 2015 by ILO to conduct Training of Trainers Capacity Building Workshop for the PGA National Team in Egypt and submitted and discussed 2 gender audit reports; one in Amman with the Institute of Social Security and the other in Birzeit with Birzeit Municipality. The WSC was also contracted by UNWomen to conduct gender audit to the Bank of Palestine and to Birzeit Pharmaceutical Company in Ramallah. The WSC also cares about improving the capacities of its staff and as a result, a number of employees attended trainings in different areas both locally and internationally.

Throughout the reporting period, the centre's work was covered by media through radio and TV interviews with staff, radio coverage of activities, promotional radio spots, newspaper articles, and through electronic media. Moreover, the centre is focusing on social media through the development of the centre's Facebook page and through updating the WSC website.

## **Program Impact**

Through implementing the various programs, WSC contributed to:

- Developing the capacities of relevant institutions to address sexual violence and exploitation issues
- Institutionalizing “protection from sexual exploitation program” within the educational and social organizations.
- Increasing access of underprivileged female university students to higher education
- Diversifying financial resources to reach a larger number of female university students
- Contributing to the promotion of female child rights in the Palestinian society through working on developing resources on that account
- Contributing to developing an alternative discourse that respects human rights and promotes women’s rights
- Strengthening and widening the rights-based skills and knowledge of the network of women and youth organizations
- Institutionalizing a gender sensitive approach to deal with trauma resulted by the Israeli occupation measures.
- Building the capacity of other organizations (governmental and non-governmental organizations) in concerns related to gender.
- Conducting a research on strengthening the rule of law in the oEJ which focuses on women’s access to justice.

These areas in which the WSC has had direct impact respond directly to the mission and goals of the centre.

## **Implemented Programs, Objectives, Results & Challenges**

### **1. Women Empowerment and Development Program:**

*“Sanad” Program – Mobilizing Cadre from the Civil Society in Making Change*

#### **Main Objective:**

To develop community supporters from both genders to promote feminist discourse

#### **Specific Objectives:**

- To develop the capacities of young men and women in equality, and women’s rights as an integral part of human rights
- To raise awareness of woman rights in the different areas with a focus on the most marginalized through a “mobile awareness raising clinic”.
- To change policies and laws oppressing women through organized lobbying and advocacy campaigns.
- To document women rights violations especially the poor and marginalized through conducting research and studies.

**Progress of program:**

The program activities were implemented as planned.

*Please note the following achieved results fall under project funded by Open Society, which focuses on the rights of women in general and divorced women in specific.*

**Achieved results:**

- Networking with 21 CBOs and NGOs in order to collaborate on implementing the project.
- 8 follow up meetings with these partnering organizations in the 4 targeted areas; Nablus, Tulkarem, Hebron, and Jerusalem in order to discuss the project and plan for the following phases of the project.
- Building the capacity of the partnering organizations through capacity building trainings that lasted 28 days in the targeted areas (7 days in each area); Nablus, Hebron, Tulkarem, and Jerusalem. These trainings took place between March and May 2015 and targeted 57 volunteers who are now qualified to work in the field on raising awareness through mobile awareness raising clinics.
- Training of 25 volunteers from Nablus, Hebron, and Tulkarem took place on 12/12/2015 around initiatives. The training prepared for 4 initiatives that are based on divorced women's perspectives on how to lead to change in the way the community perceives their issues.
- Developed a legal manual about the rights of divorced women in the Palestinian personal status law and the Israeli family law considering the fact that Jerusalemite women are subject to both the Israeli and Palestinian laws. This manual also includes a list of all the organizations that offer services to divorced women in Palestine.
- Prepared the initial report about the status of divorced women in the Palestinian society.
- A number of bids to produce a documentary film about divorced women were submitted in January and on January 22, 2015 a short list of candidates (three producers) were interviewed and Mr. Ramzi Maqdisi was chosen to produce the film.
- The filming of the documentary film was completed on May 10<sup>th</sup> 2015. The filming took place in Ramallah, Jerusalem, Haifa, and Bethlehem where the interviewed divorced women live. The producer provided the center with the final copy of the documentary on 20/8/2015.
- 4 workshops were held to show the film and discuss it with a number of CBOs, partnering organizations, and legal and social organizations. These workshops were held on 15/8/2015 in Hebron, 24/8/2015 in Nablus, 17/8/2015 in Jerusalem, and 26/8/2015 in Tulkarem. 300 people from a number of CBOs in Nablus attended the workshops and discussed the film. Also, the film was presented at Al-Ein refugee camp schools on 24/12/2015, at the Women's Center in Askar on 3/12/2015, at the Women's Center in Balatah on 25/11/2015, Salem organization on 25/7/2015, and Women's Affairs Center on 1/12/2015.
- A work plan for conducting awareness raising workshops was completed by the 4 networks. The plan was to conduct 300 workshops, another work plan that specifically targets the marginalized areas was completed and the plan was to

- conduct 100 mobile clinics for awareness raising in Jerusalem, Nablus, Hebron, and Tulkarem. A total of 349 workshops were conducted in all 4 locations and 5191 individuals attended these workshops.
- The centre worked on publishing and disseminating a comprehensive news report about the program in general and the capacity building activities implemented by the centre. Following is the link to this report that was published on 17/9/2015 on Palestine TV and on 11/8/2015 on Nissa FM :  
<http://www.pbc.ps/video.php?id=8572>
  - The following are media coverage links for this program
    - <http://www.alwatanvoice.com/arabic/news/2015/06/01/722767.html>
    - <http://www.najah.edu/ar/print/35010>
    - <https://www.facebook.com/wscpal/posts/884725098264110>
    - <http://zamnpress.com/news/76242>

***Please note that the following achievements were carried out under the program funded by CFD and carried out in Both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip but with emphasis on violence against women:***

- A 5-day training for abused women in Nablus was conducted between 18-22/1/2015 in which 14 abused women participated. The training focused on general safety and well-being, self-assertation in the society and creating mechanisms to reconnect with the society.
- A first draft of a report about women and violence in Gaza was developed.
- A meeting with the coordinator of CFD to discuss the program and the possibility of continuing the funding. So far, no decision have been made in that regard.

**Challenges and /or changes:**

- The lack of commitment of some of the representatives of the partnering organizations which was apparent in the lack of attendance in some of the networking and follow-up meetings.
- Due to the unstable political situation, the partnering organizations along with the universities suggested postponing some of the planned activities as it is not suitable to address the issue of divorced women when the larger society is being continuously attacked and more serious violations are being imposed on the Palestinian society. Not to mention that some of the universities the WSC works with have been subject to continuous attacks.
- A large number of the volunteers are university students and the issue of examinations especially since we are partnering with more than one University created the problem of time coordination between trainees.
- The withdrawal of some of the trainees due to getting employed; however, they were immediately replaced.
- A number of partnering organizations in Jerusalem closed and stopped working in the field.

### ***Spring Board:***

#### **Main objective:**

It aims at empowering women and developing their capacities in a way that enables them to take more control of their lives by identifying the clear, practical and realistic steps that they want to take to improve their lives. This project directly contributes to the objectives of Women Empowerment and Development program, thus included in the program as a component.

#### **Achieved results:**

- 10 training courses of springboard were carried out in Jerusalem, Nablus and Hebron
- 322 women developed their capacities in taking more control of their lives and identifying clear and practical steps to realize it.
- 1 graduation ceremony carried out in Hebron on 7/5/2015 for the second group of graduates which consisted of 95 participants.
- 1 graduation ceremony carried out in Jerusalem at Hind Al-Husseini College on 27/5/2015 for the first group of graduates which consisted of 134 participants.
- 1 graduation ceremony carried out in Nablus on 16/6/2015 for the third group of graduates which consisted of 64 participants.
- A graduation for the 2<sup>nd</sup> group of participants who received the training in Abu Dis on 12/11/2015.
- A graduation for the 3<sup>rd</sup> group of participants who received the training in Qalandia on 12/12/2015.
- A meeting was conducted on 5/11/2015 in Ramallah to discuss the budget of the program and of the trainings and it was agreed to conduct a centralized training in Ramallah.
- Field visits were conducted on 24/10/2015 targeting local councils in order to include them in the program and offer trainings to the council members to empower women through the Spring Board training. Local councils in Al-Ram, Anata, and Bethany were targeted.

### ***Women's Participation in Public life***

#### ***Component 1: Action Research on Women's Participation in Public life***

#### **Main Objective:**

This project aims at building the capacity of women and broad-based support for their active involvement in public life including local and national political processes. It also aims at building the capacity of individuals and organizations participating in the project to design and deliver Action Research themselves.

#### **Achieved results:**

- 5 meetings were conducted with Mr. Sa'ed Al-Halawani, the programs manager at the British Council, to discuss the progress of the project. These meetings took place between January and June of 2015.
- A 2-day workshop was held in Jericho in April 2015 and focused on training the team on how to write the research.
- A meeting was held in Ramallah on 13/5/2015 in order to discuss the duties of each researcher and how to proceed with the action research.
- A 3-day training took place in February 2015 in Amman and focused on how to benefit from the experience of other countries that completed the action research and to become familiar with the challenges they faced and how they addressed those challenges. The training was attended by 3 staff members from the WSC.
- 2 workshops (1 day each) on analyzing data took place in Ramallah and was attended by the research team (10 people).
- Developed a study that was completed in August 2015 but the study required more work in terms of language and analyses and that required contracting with an editor and meeting with him on 14/11/2015 to discuss the study and the expectations of the revision. .

### **Challenges and /or changes:**

There was a difficulty in organizing the meetings with all the team members as some of the partnering organizations did not dedicate time for the project. In regards to the action research, it was a bit complicated to explain to the editor the research and to follow up on some unresolved issues in the research including the analyses of the data; therefore, the research was also revised by another staff member. Also, due to the political situation that escalated in the second half of the year 2015, the planned workshops in Nablus, Hebron and Ramallah to present the main findings of the action research were postponed to January 2016 due to closures and to the inability of the research team and the participants to meet.

### ***Component 2: Active Citizenship and Advocacy:***

#### **Main Objective:**

To build the capacity of women and broad-based support for their active involvement in public life including local and national political processes.

#### **Specific Objective:**

- to produce young community leaders
- to enhance the capacity of national partners to progress women's participation in public life
- to establish regional networks to provide mutual support and learning
- to carry out and publish and action research

#### **Achieved results:**

- A meeting with Mr. Sa'ed Al-Halawani was held on 30/4/2015 to finalize a new contract with the WSC and Ma'an Center that will focus on Women's participation in Public life and the findings of the action research.
- A meeting with Ma'an center, British Council, and WSC took place to work on developing the budget for the project.
- A 4-day training for 5 hours a day on women's participation in public life targeted 20 women and was coordinated with Ma'an center and the local council in Anata. The training involved women who are members in the local councils of Anata, Al-Ram, Abu Dis, and Bethany.
- A 4-day training in Hebron took place between 16/3/2015-19/3/2015 at the WSC office. The first group included 38 women from local councils in Kahel, Durah, Hebron, Halhoul, Ithna, and Yatta. The second group involved 28 women from the youth council in Halhoul and from some of the partnering organizations.
- A 4-day training took place in Nablus. The first group included 24 women from local councils in Beita, Aqrabeh, and Boureen and took place between 2/3/2015-5/3/2015. The second group included 30 women from the local councils in North of Assirah and Al-Qibliyeh, Madama, Tal, Bazaryah, and Sabastya and took place between 8/3/2015 – 11/3/2015.
- 4 meetings were conducting regarding partnering with other organizations to nominate some of their staff to receive training in advocacy and lobbying. A 3-day training workshop took place between 29/7/2015 and 1/8/2015 at Palestine Hotel in Ramallah.
- A meeting was held on 26/7/2015 at Ma'an Center in Ramallah following the 3-day workshop to modify and approve the plan for the Jerusalem area and to suggest names for the advisory committee in Jerusalem. This meeting was followed by another meeting for the Jerusalem team to follow up on the plan. The meeting took place at the WSC office in Jerusalem on 3/10/2015
- On 21/10/2015 a meeting with Mr. Sa'ed Al-Halawani was organized to discuss an alternative plan due to the escalating political situation.
- An emergency meeting was held on 12/12/2015 at Ma'an Center in Ramallah to discuss an emergency plan due to the political unrest in the country that led to difficulties in reaching certain places.
- A meeting with Ma'an was organized to clarify the budget assigned for the trainings.
- A 4-day training targeting University students took place between 28/12/2015 and 31/12/2015 at Al-Al-Najah University in Nablus.

### **Challenges and /or changes:**

The halls where the trainings were held were not suitable for implementing the training particularly the group ones as the participants were uncomfortable. Also, since the training took place in Al-Ram, it was difficult for some participants to get to the training place on time. Furthermore, and due to the political situation, we were forced to conduct the workshops in specific areas due to the difficulty of reaching other areas.

The participation of some of the members from the local councils was not to standard as they were busy fulfilling other obligations not related to the project. Also coordinating

with Universities was very difficult due to the political situations in the areas and to the examination dates.

### ***Women's Political Participation Program:***

#### **Main Objective:**

Promotion of women's political participation as a constitutive part of democracy building in the Arab world

#### **Specific Objectives:**

- Increased presence and influence of women and women's rights in the political sphere in the Arab Region.
- Developing the capacity of the WSC to conduct rights based research and rights based programs
- Strengthening and widening the rights based skills and knowledge of the network of women and youth organizations
- Strengthening the capacities of the members of the network of women and youth organizations in rights based advocacy

#### **Achieved results**

##### **Under Regional Program: "Women's Response to Arab Spring (WRAP)**

- The final conference was held in Lebanon in February of 2015 to finalize the program and following the conference there was an evaluation day where all the partners participated.
- Formation of regional forum, launched in February.
- Follow up with Oxfam Novib to clarify some issues that were presented in the final report and to provide them with materials that were produced during the program period.

#### **Challenges and /or changes:**

- Due to the travel restriction and our inability to provide participants with visas to enter the country, the WSC was unable to host any events or workshops in Palestine. Consequently, all events took place in Egypt and Lebanon.
- For the same reason mentioned above, the external evaluator was unable to enter Palestine to conduct the evaluation and therefore, the WSC was forced to conduct the evaluation independently.
- The steering committee is mainly comprised of individuals belonging to different political parties which distracted them from working on the project as their efforts were directed towards the political events in the country.

## **2. Combating Violence against women :**

## ***AMAN Program - Combating Sexual Violence in the Palestinian Society***

### **Main Objective:**

To reduce sexual violence against women and children within the Palestinian society

### **Specific Objectives:**

- Raise community awareness regarding the prevalence and consequences of sexual violence in the Palestinian society and build local capacity to prevent violence and support the victims.
- To strengthen the ability of female and male children, adolescents and women to protect themselves from sexual violence and enhance their life skills
- To develop the capacities of relevant institutions to address sexual violence and exploitation issues
- To institutionalize “protection from sexual exploitation program” within the educational and social organizations

### **Achieved results:**

- The completion of a comprehensive plan for the year 2015 to develop AMAN program.
- A planning meeting was conducted in January in order to develop a detailed action plan to work with children and parents. This meeting involved 15 counsellors from the Ministry of Social Affairs and from the Palestinian Network for Child Protection who received the trainings in AMAN program in the North and South.
- The counsellors from 15 CBOs belonging to the Palestinian Network for Child Protection and from the office of Social Affairs in Hebron – 6 counselors from Hebron and Bethlehem, 7 from the North, and 2 from Jerusalem -- conducted workshops with 15 groups of children (total of 350 children). Each group received 4-6 workshops which adds up to a total of 76 workshops that covered the topics addressed in AMAN manual. Children received information on sexual education and on how to protect themselves from sexual exploitation. A number of CBOs and schools in the marginalized areas were involved including an orphanage.
- A study day on protecting children from sexual exploitation. The study day took place on 29/4/2015 at the City In hotel.
- Mural work was done in 15 elementary schools in the East, South, and Center including awareness raising drawings and statements to protect oneself from unsafe situations with a focus on children’s rights.
- A march was planned on 13/4/2015 in Bethany under “Tawq AMAN” carrying the slogan “with knowledge, I protect myself from exploitation” which demands children’s rights and their protection from exploitation in general and sexual exploitation in specific, and requesting the implementation of the Palestinian penalty law. Organized by the counseling and special education units in the ministry of education in Jerusalem, this march started in the Bethany girls’ school and ended in Bethany local council. 250 students from East Jerusalem participated in this march and 50 counselors, parents from the parents’ council in schools,

- local councils, the Ministry of Social Affairs, and CBOs that are concerned with child rights issues. This march was in coordination with the police department.
- Communicating with the ministry of social affairs to institutionalize the AMAN program along with the collaboration of counselors in the family and child protection unit particularly after the successful experience the program had last year with the counselors in the Ministry of Education.
  - The program Manager presented a paper on sexual education through a workshop in Jerusalem initiated by AL-Quds University and the program Manager on 1/4/2015. The workshop took place at Yabous and was attended by 100 people.
  - Participated in a total of 14 radio interviews in 2015 around AMAN program and the sexual problems parents face with their kids.
  - The counsellors from 9 CBOs belonging to the Palestinian Network for Child Protection and from the office of Social Affairs in Hebron, Bethlehem, Nablus, Salfeet, Toubas, and Tulkarem Hebron conducted workshops. These workshops targeted mothers (10 groups of mothers with 15-25 in each group with a total of 200 mothers in all groups) and each group received 4 workshops addressing the topics covered in AMAN manual around life skills, sexual education, and the tools to protect from sexual exploitation.
  - Two trainings were conducted in February and March in Hebron and Nablus targeting university students from both Al-Najah University and Hebron University (a total of 40 students from the fields of journalism, law, and education and psychology). The trainings were for 7 days and addressed gender (2days), sexual abuse from a gender perspective (2days), lobbying and advocacy (1day), the laws that address sexual abuse (1day), and using AMAN manual (1day).
  - A workshop was conducted in Ramallah to develop an awareness raising action plan for AMAN program with university students and to graduate 40 students from both university from AMAN program
  - 23 university students from media department received a one-day training (for 7 hours) that took place at Al-Najah University and addressed protection skills and the ability to identify cases of sexual abuse and taking into consideration the circumstances surrounding the case. A focus was on understanding the concept of victim and how to deal with survivors of sexual violence and how to be sensitive to these issues. A number of documentary films that focused on women's and girls' rights were presented at a film festival at Al-Najah University on 16/9/2015 and the WSC provided the university with a \$2000 award to be distributed among the winners.
  - In the North:
    - 18 participants from Al-Quds Open University took part in an awareness raising workshop about protection skills from sexual violence.
    - A workshop in Beta village was conducted in coordination with the school principal. The workshop involved a movie followed by a discussion about sexual abuse and sexual harassments. This workshop included 30 mothers and school children.
    - A workshop was conducted in Yasouf with a group of women addressing the issue of protection

- A workshop on safe environment from attacks was conducted at Al-Quds Open University where 44 students participated in the workshop.
  - 22 awareness raising workshops on protection from sexual harassments and gender based violence were implemented with 13 governmental and non-governmental organizations. 500 people participated in these workshops.
  - 25 training hours on AMAN program were completed at the Women's Studies Centre in Nablus that targeted Al-Quds Open University students, Al-Najah University, and Al-Quds Open University who are completing their field work practicum. A total of 17 participants from the 3 universities benefited from the training and learned skills on how to protect children and teenagers from sexual harassments.
- In the South:
    - 3 meetings were conducted in September to develop a plan for the activities in Hebron along with media and law students. The legal plan was developed by the lawyer, Mr. Mohammad Hamdan, and the media plan by the journalists, Maysoon Qawasmi.
    - The WSC coordinated with the Mental Health Center in Halhool, the Women's Cultural Center in Dura, and Family Development organization to organize 2 meetings for mothers and 2 meetings for children. This was done by the University students who received the AMAN training.
    - 12 meetings with children were implemented in Hebron between September and December. This was done by the university students who received the training in collaboration with experts and specialists at the Mental Health Centre in Halhool (6 meetings) and at the Family Development Organization (6 meetings). These 22 children; both boys and girls, were divided into 2 groups and the meetings focused on providing the children with information on how to protect themselves, gained life skills, and communication skills that would help them protect themselves and prevent themselves from being sexually harassed.
    - 20 meetings with mothers were implemented in Hebron between September and December. These meetings were done by the university students who received the AMAN training with the collaboration of experts and specialists at the Mental Health Centre in Halhool (6 meetings), the Women's Cultural Center (8 meetings), and the Family Development Organization (6 meetings). 33 women participated in these awareness raising workshops and they gained knowledge about sexual harassment, the symptoms and indicators of harassment, who is the abuser and how to identify the abuser, knowledge of the law that deals with cases of sexual abuse.

**Challenges and/ or changes:**

- Due to the heavy workload, the counselors at the office of social affairs faced difficulties in implementing the workshops with the kids and in forming additional groups despite their belief in the importance of the program.

- The difficulty of coordinating between universities to conduct the training for the students. Consequently, the trainings were mainly conducted on Saturdays.
- The WSC faced difficulty during this year in securing funds specifically for this program, but due to its importance and impact, the WSC decided to maintain the program activities and cover them through core funds. However, if provided special funding, the WSC would have been able to expand on the activities of this program increasing the scope of the program and developing further tools and support material and targeting a wider audience to assure larger impact.

### ***Bereaved Women Program:***

#### **Main Objective:**

To improve the psychosocial wellbeing, and empower women victims of Israeli occupation violence

#### **Specific Objectives:**

- Institutionalize a gender sensitive approach to trauma.
- Mainstream and advocate the understanding of the need for a gender sensitive approach to trauma.

#### **Progress of Program:**

Taking into consideration the positive impact of this program in different areas in the previous years, it was decided to expand the work of WSC to include Salfet, Jerusalem and Hebron as there is a great need in these areas and women in particular need a lot of support to help support the entire family.

#### **Achieved Results:**

The activities during the reporting period focused on individual and support group sessions as well as the training of bereaved women to become supporters themselves. Following are the activities implemented in each of the three areas:

In Salfet:

- 17 bereaved women participated in the support group meetings, 9 in the individual support sessions, and 11 CBOs were involved.
- 6 bereaved women were trained to become supporters to other bereaved women. These women received a 10-day training from April till July where they were introduced to skills that would enable them to work with other bereaved women on the three levels; individual, group, and community levels.
- Home visits were conducted and targeted 9 bereaved women from Salfet. These cases were referred to WSC by the Ministry of Detainees to provide these women and their families with support. 27 visits were conducted on an average of 3 visits a month.
- 26 support group meetings were conducted in 2015 that aimed at supporting these bereaved women, providing them with skills to cope with grief, introducing them to ways to deal with their children who were released from detention, discussing the meaning of loss and its impact on the entire family, enabling the women to express their feelings, teaching them to document the violations committed

- against them and against their families, and providing them with the knowledge on different issues such as sexual assaults and some health related issues. These meetings also included a field trip to Jenin. 17 bereaved women participated in the support group meetings which were held twice a month.
- A documentary film (22min) about the program was produced. The documentary aimed at highlighting the achievements of the program, provided statistics, and included a number of interviews.
  - The advisory meeting in Salfet met 4 times during 2015 to discuss the progress of the program.
  - Also, 4 training days were conducted in Antakya Turkey with Syrian bereaved women.

#### In Jerusalem:

- 14 bereaved women participated in the support group meetings, 8 in the individual support sessions, and 10 CBOs were involved.
- 26 support group meetings were held in 2015. The meetings were held twice a month and included 14 bereaved women. The support groups focused on processing grief and documenting the bereaved women's experiences, the suffering of women while visiting their children in prison, how to change negative thoughts and behaviors and how to release and express negative feelings that resulted from loss with focus on strength points of each bereaved woman. Art therapy was used in these meetings. These meetings also included a field trip to Jenin. 4 additional meetings were conducted by a social worker that focused on identifying and expressing emotions and on providing them with communication skills that would strengthen their relationship with their children.
- Home visits were conducted to provide bereaved women with individual support. These visits targeted 8 bereaved women from Jerusalem. 3 visits a month for each case with a total of 24 visits. 5 bereaved women who received individual support will participate in the support group meetings in 2016.
- 8 bereaved women received a 10-day training between April and July to become supporters to other bereaved women on the three levels; individual, group, and community levels.
- The advisory committee in Jerusalem met three times in 2015 to discuss the progress of the program.

#### Hebron:

- 18 bereaved women participated in the support group meetings, 9 bereaved women took part in the individual support sessions, and 12 CBOs were involved.
- 24 support group meetings were held in 2015 and included 18 bereaved women. The meetings were held twice a month. These meetings included participating in a solidarity vigil with the prisoners and patients with disabilities in Israeli prisons. In addition, a number of topics were covered such as well being, how to be decisive and make decisions, introduction to various sexual and psychological disturbances that women go through as a result of loss, celebrating women's day, discussing the effect of loss on family relationships, and understanding the effect

- of administrative detention on detainees and their families. Moreover, these meetings also included a field trip to Jenin.
- Bereaved women in Hebron received a 2-month computer training (during February and March of 2015). This training was a donation from the municipality of Hebron as a gesture to support bereaved women. The women received a certificate at the end of the training.
  - Home visits were conducted to provide individual support to bereaved women. These visits targeted 9 bereaved women from Hebron. 3 visits a month for each case. One case was referred to the Treatment and Rehabilitation Center for Victims of Torture. 4 bereaved women will participate in the support group meetings in 2016.
  - 7 bereaved women received a 10-day training between April and July to become supporters to other bereaved women on the three levels; individual, group, and community levels.
  - The advisory committee in Hebron met twice to discuss the progress of the program.
  - An exploratory report was completed as well as a bulletin about the program.

A total of 21 bereaved women from the three areas received a 10-day training to become supporters to other bereaved women. 6 women were selected from Salfeet, 7 from Hebron, and 8 from Jerusalem. At the end of the training, only 18 women were selected to become supporters to other bereaved women. It is worth noting that this training was supposed to be completed in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2015 but due to the delay in the implementation of the program in 2014 as a result of a delay in the funding, the training was postponed. Also, after consulting with Prof. Hassanein, it was suggested that the bereaved women receive the trainings in 3 phases so as to be able to implement some of the skills gained during the training period. Consequently, 3 days of training took place in April, 3 in May, 2 in June and the last 2 days of training took place in July 2015. This training addressed the issue of loss and support whether individual or group support, support skills, analyzing the support meetings be it individual, group or public, communication skills, the different levels of intervention and follow-up and evaluation. The program is going according to plan with some minor modifications as previously mentioned and is being monitored and evaluated by the program consultant, Prof. Sohail Hassanien. These meetings were in addition to the field visits he conducted to all three program locations to get a better understanding of what happens on ground. Furthermore, the advisory committees are functioning as a backbone for the program in all locations where a total of 9 meetings were carried out in order to fully engage the committee in the program and enable them to follow-up, plan and monitor with the WSC the progress of the program.

The individual and group sessions are fulfilling the program's objectives by empowering women through providing them with the support, skills, and tools to mitigate the effects of trauma, to resume their roles in their families and communities, and to be of support to each other.

### **Challenges and /or changes:**

- The unique status of occupied East Jerusalem with it being constantly targeted by the Israeli occupation makes our work challenging. This is represented in the fear of some bereaved women of getting involved in the program.
- Some social workers conduct the meetings alone without being supported or accompanied which at times complicates the work in the field.
- The unstable political situation in the areas the WSC works in reflects negatively on the women's health but despite the challenges, the bereaved women were committed and attended most of the meetings be it the individual or group meetings.
- Some of the team members have to cross 2 or 3 checkpoints in order to get to the locations where the meetings are being held which sometimes complicates the implementation of the program activities.
- On a social level, particularly in Salfeet, there is a lack of understanding of the bereaved women's needs and a sense of criticism and belittling of the efforts these women are making in order to support each other. However, that is not stopping these women from being involved as long as they are having their husband's and their families' support.
- As previously mentioned, due to the escalating political situation and to the increase in the number of martyrs and detainees, the demand is high and that puts pressure on the WSC staff to meet the need in the community.
- Taking into consideration the closures and continues clashes, it was challenging for the bereaved women to meet and that sometimes led to being late to meetings but despite that, the meetings were conducted. Though there were some delays in the activities, all activities were implemented.
- It is worth noting that some bereaved women feared participating in the activities out of concern for their children and husbands as they didn't want their participation to jeopardize the safety of any of the family members.

### ***Bereaved Women Program in Gaza:***

#### **Main Objective:**

To strengthen bereaved women's capacity to reduce the effects of trauma caused by the Israeli occupation and enable them to become agents of change and supporters to other bereaved women while the situation of bereavement is better understood by the community at large and the rights of bereaved women to reparation is increasingly accounted for.

#### **Specific Objectives:**

1. Bereaved women have increased ability to cope with their loss in a constructive and empowering way.
2. Bereaved women have become empowered supporters to other bereaved women.
3. Bereaved women's self-help groups / networks have been established.
4. Bereaved women are increasingly claiming and accessing their rights at individual and collective level.

5. The general public and relevant stakeholders and duty bearers including international organisations have become more aware of the trauma bereaved women experience as a result of occupation crimes and gender-based violence; their equal right to reparation; and equality under the law including personal status law, and international human rights and humanitarian law.
6. The WSC in coordination with WAC is the leading organisation in applying and disseminating the *bereaved to bereaved rights based approach* in Gaza.

### **Progress of Program:**

Taking into consideration the positive impact of this program in different areas in the previous years, it was decided to expand the work of WSC to include Salfet, Jerusalem and Hebron as there is a great need in these areas and women in particular need a lot of support to help support the entire family.

### **Achieved Results:**

During the second half of 2015 and since this is a new program, the focus was on the preparation phase of the program which included:

- 1) Assigning a program coordinator from WAC.
- 2) Assigning a project manager from WSC.
- 3) Preparation and planning meetings between WSC and WAC
- 4) Identifying members on an advisory committee in Gaza who will serve as part of the referral system network. The committee will consist of representatives from different organisations and institutions who will contribute and strengthen the referral system. Fourteen organisations, professional and/or public institutions were identified to be part of the referral system.
- 5) Recruiting a team of 6 social workers (2 per each group in the targeted area) and 2 consultants – one expert of the bereaved to bereaved approach in the West Bank and another consultant in Gaza.
- 6) Identifying the targeted area
- 7) Developing a scale based pre- & post questionnaires
- 8) Developing a baseline survey. It's still a work in progress.
- 9) Interviewing and identifying 54 bereaved women from the targeted area. These women will participate in support groups. There will be 3 support groups with 18 women in each group
- 10) Developing pre-questionnaire to be used for identifying the 54 bereaved women who will participate in the support group sessions.

Other activities included:

- 1) Providing 3-day training to 8 social workers, the consultant in Gaza and the WAC project coordinator. The training was conducted by the senior consultant and offered training on women's rights framework as well as on the bereaved to bereaved approach. Six social workers out of the eight committed to working on this program.
- 2) Administering pre-questionnaire to the 54 bereaved women selected to participate in the support group sessions.
- 3) Conducting 3 supervision meetings to social workers.

**Challenges and/or changes:**

Since the program is still in its early stages, no challenges were detected so far.

**3. Promoting a Feminist Discourse**

*Female Child Rights Program:*

**Main Objective:**

To strengthen the community awareness and capacity to support and protect the rights of girl children and expand their opportunities to practice their rights

**Specific Objectives:**

- To empower teachers in kindergartens and schools, and community activists who would promote female child rights.
- To develop, produce, and disseminate innovative tools which foster the culture of female child rights
- To develop community discourse which supports female child rights
- To monitor and document female child rights in the Palestinian society
- To develop media programs about gender equality with a focus on female child rights
- To develop partnerships with community based organizations to create social movement which promote female child rights.

**Progress in Program:**

The program was carried out as planned but there is still some delay in publishing the final research.

**Achieved results:**

- A Total of 102 awareness raising workshops on the dangers of early marriage and on developing the concept of self-confidence were conducted in Jerusalem, Nablus and Hebron. The workshops targeted girls and boy between the ages of 15-18 and were carried out in 9 schools and 7 CBOs in Jerusalem, Nablus, and Hebron.
- 108 awareness raising workshops on the importance of gender equality. The workshops targeted boys and girls between the ages of 10-14 and took place in 2 CBO and 8 schools in Nablus and Hebron. These workshops focused on reading stories that the WSC published which focuses on children's rights, using coloring books and story telling. In Jerusalem, there was an agreement with 3 schools to work with grades 3 to 7 throughout the year through the social worker at the school.
- 40 awareness raising workshops on the dangers of early marriage that targeted parents. The work was done through 4 organizations and 10 schools in Nablus, Hebron, and Jerusalem. These workshops targeted 534 individuals.
- A Qualitative Study in Palestine on the extent of discrimination between male and female children (between the ages of 12-18) was developed, this study focuses on

education, health, family relations and recreation, (development of the study included field research and data collection from field such as filling of questionnaires and focus group meetings in three locations of the West Bank, in addition to a literature review and an analysis of the data collected- the study is not finalized as it went through a number of editing attempts due to some weaknesses in the writing and analysis. The study is currently being revised by the director of WSC.

### **Challenges and/or changes:**

Funding was the main obstacle for this program as there is no specific funding for it. As a result, the WSC supported this program from the core funding budget. Consequently, not all the planned activities were implemented and a number of activities were canceled as will be clear in the timeline table.

### ***Component 1: Access of Underprivileged Women to Higher Education***

#### **Main Objectives:**

To empower underprivileged female university students by providing them with financial support and training/ professional experience to enable them to continue with their university education

#### **Specific objectives:**

- Provide underprivileged female university students with financial support to continue their higher education
- Provide underprivileged female university graduates with training and voluntary work experience to develop their skills and to earn some income to cover their university expenses.
- Expand the financial resources of the project to reach a larger number of females

#### **Achieved results:**

- An active and functioning scholarship committee to monitor and work on fundraising for scholarship maintained established, and was able to meet regularly and develop a plan.
- The WSC carried out a number of fundraising initiatives to raise funds for more scholarships as follows:
  1. Fundraised from local and international sources, that included a number of private sector companies, and individuals both Palestinian and foreigners living either in Palestine or abroad.
  2. One musical event was organized in Ramallah and 2 fundraising events (2 austerity lunches) were organized in Nablus where a number of civil society organizations attended.

- As a result of all the fundraising activities that were carried out, the centre was able to raise an estimate of \$20,000 and is expected to pay the tuition of 66 needy female students throughout the year 2015.
- It is worth noting that 3 students who were granted scholarships through the centre graduated in May 2015.
- As part of young women's initiatives in Jerusalem, the centre managed to raise 20,000NIS to support female students.
- One full scholarship for 4 years was secured through Al-Quds Open University who was granted to a Jerusalemite young woman who is also divorced to empower her and to encourage her to become independent.
- A full scholarship was also granted for 4 years to a young female student in Hebron.
- A full scholarship was offered by a Palestinian man living in the U.S to support a female student in Jerusalem. The scholarship is also for 4 years.
- A full scholarship was offered by a volunteer at the WSC also for 4 years and was granted to a female student from Jenin.
- A partial scholarship was offered to a female student through the community development center.
- 2 full scholarships were offered to 2 students; one studying medicing and the other engeneering.
- 6 students in Nablus received partial scholarships from one of the feminist activists.

### **Challenges and/or changes:**

The main challenge that faced the WSC was the inability to meet the need in the community as the number of needy female students is very high and the amount raised is limited since this program is mainly based on fundraising.

### ***Component 2: Resource Centre:***

#### **Main Objectives:**

Promoting gender equality discourse in the Palestinian society in particular and in the Arab region in general

#### **Specific objectives:**

1. To fill the gap of available information on the situation of Palestinian women in Palestine and the Middle East through promoting the website about Palestinian women.
2. To disseminate information and data about Palestinian women so as to enrich the advocacy activities organized by women and human rights organizations and highlight priority issues and needs of Palestinian women in the OPT and in the Diaspora.

3. To expand the use of the WSC library through developing a network with universities, colleges and inter-loaning system to facilitate the access of students to WSC's Library.

#### **Achieved results:**

- A number of international delegations and high-level representatives from foreign ministries or supporting donors had visited the library and listened to discussions on the situation and role of Palestinian women and girls.
- A network of WSC library friends was maintained and expanded.
- All media coverage of the WSC was documented and archived for easy access at the WSC library.
- Regular additions to the library are made, and regular resources, books are purchased, donated and or provided to the resource centre
- 2 poetry Recital Sessions took place on 3/1/2015 and 11/3/2015 and were attended by tens of library members where the topic of the poetry and its social implications were discussed.
- 1 cultural meeting about the impact of social networking on the writers was held.
- 1 cultural meeting was conducted to discuss philosophical topics organized by a number of university students.
- A monthly book club event that aims at encouraging university students to read was established. The events started in June 2015 and continued throughout the second half of the year. Each event hosted 9 to 10 individuals. On 18/4/2015 a one day workshop on public relations and communication took place in order to improve students' communication skills. The workshop was attended by 7 students and was led by Mr. Ahmad Al-Sadah.
- The WSC Participated in the poetry festival organized by Al-Manarah Forum and took place in Sama Nablus on 23/5/2015.
- The WSC attended a cultural meeting organized by Al-Manarah Forum on the availability of Palestinian literature in the school curriculum. The meeting took place on 28/3/2015.

#### **Challenges and /or changes:**

- One of the main challenges is the lack of interest these days in reading. People are preferring to use the internet over reading books which requires a lot of work to encourage people to go back to reading books.
- Due to the heavy workload, the dedicated time to work at the library is not enough.
- There are a lot of books that need to be sorted and added to the system and that requires a lot of time.

#### ***Component 3: Supporting Young Palestinian Women to be Feminist Activists***

The WSC and in Partnership with Kvinna till Kvinna was granted a fund by the EC and the EuroMed Youth Unit for the period of 6 months starting in August, 2014 but there was an amendment and the project was extended for an addition 2 months. This project aims to strengthen the contribution of young women in the Palestinian women's movement.

### **Achieved results:**

- An exchange workshop between the Palestinian young women and the Swedish young women took place from 9-11 February 2015 in Nablus. 4 Swedish young women and 20 Palestinian young women participated.
- 30 young female students were empowered and gained more skills and were integrated in the Palestinian women movement through offering them specific trainings.
- 5 field visits along with the implementation of the initiatives took place in February and March of 2015.
  - The first field visit was to Nablus where the initiative “my disability doesn’t limit my movement” took place. It is an initiative that raises awareness about people, especially women, with disability and how public transportation is not friendly enough for their use.
  - The second field visit was to Jerusalem. The young women from the program presented their initiative entitled “educate a girl” which aims at collecting funds in order to educate young women in need.
  - The third field visit was to Hebron and their initiative was entitled “women who are able” and the purpose is to create a group of women who will be attending a series of 6 sessions on mental health and women rights.
  - The fourth field visit was to Gaza; unfortunately, this visit didn’t take place as all the young women were denied access permits to Gaza. Yet, the 5 participants from Gaza managed to present their initiative “Recycle” to a good group of housewives in the Gaza strip.
  - The fifth field visit was to Nazareth, Akoa and Haifa where only few young women were able to get access permits in order to visit those areas and learn more about the feminist organizations there and meet feminist leaders.
- An evaluation of the initiatives took place on 30 March 2015 at Ankers Hotel in Ramallah. The best three initiatives that were selected were “educate a girl”, “my disability doesn’t limit my movement” and “recycle”. Those initiatives have been granted 1000 USD each so those young women would further develop their initiatives.

### **Challenges/ Obstacles:**

The WSC faced different challenges and obstacles in obtaining permits for the participants from Gaza to take part in all the field visits. Also the participants from the West Bank were denied access to Gaza. As for the field visit to Jerusalem, it only included women who were able to participate and they were mainly from Jerusalem due to the permits system.

Another challenge was that the young women from Naqab were only two and couldn’t conduct their initiative and the timing coincided with the governmental elections and it was very difficult for them to work on the initiative.

## ***Strengthening the Rule of Law in the oEJ: Justice and Security for the Palestinian People:***

This project was approved and funded by UNWomen and aims at analyzing the issue of access of women and girls to justice in the context of military occupation and a protracted political conflict in oEJ.

### **Main Objective:**

To prevent violence against women and girls and to expand access to services

### **Specific Objective:**

- To analyze the interrelationship between Palestinian women's experiences as they attempt to gain access to justice in the existing local justice system, be it through formal or informal institutions, while uncovering the various layers (both tangible and intangible) of bureaucracy, challenges, and restrictions they face in the process.
- To examine the ordeals women face when they interface with the various civil society organizations, political institutions, and formal and informal Palestinian and Israeli agents and institutions of social-political control when accessing justice.

### **Achieved results:**

- 11 focus groups were conducted in 2015; 4 focus groups with cleaning women and teachers, 2 with university students, 2 with Murabitat, and 1 with women from Shu'fat refugee camp.
- 65 in-depth interviews were conducted with Murabitat from the old city, with workers from Ras Al-Amoud, Sheikh Jarrah, Sour Baher, and Shu'fat refugee camp, women from mixed marriages (referring to marriages that take place between a couple where one is from the West Bank and the other from Jerusalem) living in Silwan, Ras Al-Amoud, Old City, Kufor Aqab, and Shu'fat refugee camp, students from Jerusalem, Old City, Wad Al-Joz and Um Toubah, meetings with released prisoners from Shu'fat refugee camp and Al-Tur, meetings with women from dire economic situation from Silwan and Al-Thory, meetings with an abused woman from Shu'fat refugee camp, meetings with mothers and wives of detainees and martyrs from Silwan, Al-Thory, Al-Tur, and Shu'fat refugee camp; and meetings with women whose houses have been confiscated in Sheikh Jarrah. Out of the 65 interviews, 2 were with children and 12 were with organizations.
- 50 letters from school girls and boys ages 13 to 18. This was done through school visits and the goal was to learn more about the girls' perceptions and challenges when facing or accessing the justice system.
- 10 cases relating to divorce and alimony presented in the Sharia court were collected and in the process of analyzing them.
- 4 meetings with the program manager, researcher, and research team were held at WSC to discuss the progress of the research, the challenges, and a plan on how to proceed.

### **Challenges and/ or changes:**

The activities were implemented as planned. However, in the first half of 2015 there were some challenges due to the status of oEJ which affected mobility and accessibility at times mainly during June-July; the month of Ramadan. Furthermore, the Separation Wall, checkpoints, and harassments by settlers in oEJ represent some of the challenges. Settler's violence in the old city of Jerusalem and Silwan prevented the team three times from meeting with our focus groups and from attending to the needs of interviewed women. In addition, when trying to access schools, UNRWA schools prevented the team from acquiring information from their teachers and pupils, and Israeli schools belonging to the Ministry of Education needed official approvals and explained that we might be rejected. To deal with such challenges, we used team member's connections, and managed to conduct focus groups and interviews with pupils and teachers, based on the team private connections and without the formalities requested.

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 2015 the research team faced some challenges corresponding with school girls as schools were out for the summer and the opening of the school year is problematic. Since the focus is on girl child and the school principals already granted the permission to access the schools, the research team decided to postpone this activity as it is an important part of the research. Therefore, the WSC requested at no cost extension till the end of March 2016 to be able to gather more data and have time to analyze the data properly. This request was approved by the donor. However, due to the recent unrest particularly in October and November when the political situation was so heated, it was very difficult to reach the targeted beneficiaries. Furthermore, the centre was also preoccupied with the political situation and it was a top priority. That said, and from reading and analyzing some of the letters written by school children, new themes have emerged that reflect on the new realities that these children are exposed to which the centre believes is important to tackle. Though this is a big challenge facing the team, this is also an opportunity to delve into the new themes to expose the violations against the Palestinian people. The team also decided to conduct street watches to observe school children to document any violations committed against them by Israeli soldiers and settlers. Another opportunity is that in order to face the political situation, the centre initiated to revive the Jerusalemite Women's Coalition in order to consolidate the efforts of all the involved organizations to support the women and girls who were violated and attacked by the Israeli forces during the past few months.

## **4. Institutional Development Program**

### **Main Objective:**

To improve the overall performance of the WSC and upgrade its managerial and technical capacity, and expanding gender-based programming in governmental and civil society organizations.

**Specific Objectives:**

- To develop the technical and managerial capacities of WSC staff members.
- To upgrade the governance and organizational structure of the WSC
- To improve the relationship with the donors and the international community
- To expand the volunteers base of WSC
- To develop public relation, advocacy and lobbying capacity of the WSC.
- To develop financial sustainability mechanisms at the WSC
- To strengthen and agree on a common understanding of the feminist approach of the staff of the Centre
- To build the capacity of governmental and civil society organizations to integrate gender into their programming and management
- To expand the cadre of development workers/ human rights activists who are technically and practically capable of promoting gender equality
- Strengthen the "gender-based" programming of Palestinian and international organizations.
- To generate additional funds to the WSC to increase the potential sustainability of its programs and activities.

***Component 1: Capacity Building for WSC Staff (achievements)***

- 2 staff members attended a 7-day well-being training organized by Kvinna till Kvinna in Bethlehem.
- 2 staff members attended a 3 days training on respectful confrontation organized by Kvinna till Kvinna and was held in Bethlehem.
- 3 staff members attended a 2 days training on Human Rights Based Approach Capacity Building Action Plan organized by the Secretariat..
- 3 staff members were trained in action researching over the course of a 3-day training workshop held in Jordan by the British Council.
- 6 staff members received a 3-day training in action research analysis in Ramallah.
- Around 20 volunteers have contributed to the center during the first half of the year 2015.
- The WSC has developed the following information and communication material during this reporting period that are also mentioned under relevant programs:
  - Developed a legal manual about the rights of divorced women in the Palestinian personal status law and the Israeli family law considering the fact that Jerusalemite women are subject to both the Israeli and Palestinian laws. In addition, the manual included a list of all the organizations that offer services to divorced women in Palestine.
- WSC conducted a training workshop on gender audit that will take place in July 2015 and will include a number of NGOs funded by the Secretariat.

- One staff member participated in a training along with the staff from the Women's Affairs Center. The training was on the victories against violence manual and took place in July 2015.
- One staff member participated in a training on advocacy and lobbying organized by the British Council. The training took place in July 2015 and it was for 3 days.
- One staff member participated in the active citizen training organized by the British Council in Jordan. The training was for 5 days and 2 additional training days were conducted with Ma'an in Ramallah. The training took place in September 2015.
- 2 staff members participated in a training on Monitoring and Evaluation in the U.S which was organized by the UN Trust Fund. The training took place in November 2015 and it was for 5 days.

***Component 2: The Consultancy Department (Achievements)***

- The Centre was Contracted in May 2015 by ILO to conduct Training of Trainers Capacity Building Workshop for the PGA National Team in Egypt.
- The Centre submitted and discussed the Gender Audit report in January 2015 in Amman with the Institute of Social Security
- The Centre submitted and discussed the Gender Audit report in January 2015 with Birzeit Municipality.
- The WSC conducted a well-being training that took place on 2 & 3/6/2015 in Bethany, Al-Ram, and Abu-Dis and targeted 14 women activists who are members of the local councils in each area.
- The centre was contracted by UNWomen to conduct a gender audit to the Bank of Palestine and Birzeit Pharmaceutical Company in Ramallah.
- The director trained the Iraqi national team in Erbil in gender audit.

## Organizational

**International/National Co-operation, Networking & Public Relations:**

During the year 2015, the WSC had participated in different international and local activities and was present in different events. The following is a brief description of the WSC participation:

- The WSC participated in a conference to launch the project on the development of women entrepreneurs that was organized by the chamber of commerce in Hebron.
- The WSC participated in a conference to launch the strategic plan to develop the city of Hebron. The conference was attended by a large number of governmental organizations and CBOs.
- The WSC participated in a conference entitled "Fostering Women's Participation in Economic life" which was held in Barcelona on March 19<sup>th</sup> 2015.

- Participated in a 2-day training (22 & 23/6/2016) offered by the General Union of Palestinian Women which focused on writing CEDAW shadow report.
- The WSC participated in the activities that took place during the Palestinian Child Week which included visiting an elderly house and an orphanage, organizing a workshop on child arrests, and participating in a march against child labor.
- The director of the WSC was invited to Berlin by Henrich Boll Foundation to participate in a speaking tour on 25-28/5/2015 about the situation of Women and children in East Jerusalem.
- The director of the WSC attended a UNWomen Consultancy meeting in Madrid on 8-12/6/2015 to discuss the UNWomen Strategy to combat violence against women
- A number of staff conducted a training on the Bereaved to Bereaved approach in Antakya, Turkey to share our experience with Syrian bereaved women there. This training took place in November 2015.
- The director participated in the 4<sup>th</sup> annual conference on the Palestinian problem and also participated in the roundtable discussion which both took place in October 2015.
- The WSC Contracted by the Foundation Open Society Institute's Arab Regional Office (ARO) to support and develop a 3 years strategic plan for ARO's grantee in Tunisia, the Association Tunisienne Des Femmes Democrates (AFTD) during the period 21st March-15th April 2015.
- The director of the WSC was interviewed by Radio Women FM to introduce and discuss the programs implemented at the Centre.
- The director of the WSC was interviewed by Wattan Radio to talk about the life of the late activist, Maha Abu-Dayeh.
- The director moderated the memorial service of the late activist, Maha Abu-Dayeh.
- The centre participated in a meeting and a round table organized by UNWomen and a number of partnering organizations on planning their program.
- The centre participated in a workshop organized by the Youth Development Department on school dropout in Jerusalem.
- The centre participated in a consultative meeting to discuss the UNDP funding of the Jerusalem organizations that are part of the agricultural relief.
- The centre participated in a program organized by Kvinna till Kvinna and the WSC and in one of the initiatives managed to raise \$5000 and provide 2 full 4-years scholarships to help female students in need.
- The director participated in and presented a paper at a conference in Bethlehem that focused on the issue of violence against women. The conference took place in December 2015.

- The director facilitated a session at a conference in Jerusalem around the educational system in Jerusalem and the challenges facing it. A staff member presented a paper at the conference as well. The conference took place in October 2015.
- WSC participated in a regional conference in Beirut in October 2015 that was on child marriage. WSC also presented a paper on the political and protective dimensions during conflicts that encourage child marriage.
- A paper on the violations Israel practices on Palestinian women that denies these women the freedom of movement was presented in Genève during a workshop organized by the Arab Center for Human Rights. The paper was presented but the director could not attend in person as she couldn't obtain an entry visa.
- The director participated in a conference in Madrid in September 2015.
- The director attended a meeting in Gaza to discuss a program to be implemented in collaboration with the Women's Affairs Center in Gaza.
- The director sat for the certification exams in Italy to become a certified in conducting international gender audits. The director received the certification from a center that belongs to the ILO.
- The director participated in the World Social Forum in Tunisia that took place in March 2015.
- Attended the General Union of Palestinian Women meetings.
- Attended the final conference of the regional project (Women after the Arab Spring) in Beirut and presented a paper about the Palestinian experience in promoting women's political participation. The conference took place in March 2015.
- Participated in a regional training organized by the Arab Center for Human Rights in Tunisia around promoting women's political participation. The training took place in May 2015.
- With the escalating political situation and the increase in the number of martyrs, the WSC conducted several home visits to support mothers and families of martyrs.
- A meeting was conducted with Mr. Ziad Al-Hamouri on 9/11/2015 to discuss the current political situation in Jerusalem and to organize events to get the bodies of martyrs and to support the Jerusalemites in their struggles and to call against home demolitions.
- The centre initiated to revive the Jerusalemite Women's Coalition in order to consolidate the efforts of all the involved organizations. The WSC took the responsibility to organize activities such as visiting the families of martyrs, detainees, and injured, to follow up on the issue of female detainees in Jerusalem, to provide some aid to some families, to produce some reports reflecting the current political situation and the violations committed against the Palestinians and

- to distribute these reports locally and internationally, documenting the struggles of the Jerusalemites, to document the violations against the child detainees in court through a number of volunteers who are helping in monitoring and documenting these violations (court watch), conducting support groups to help women and children vent, organizing activities for students at schools in Al-Aqsa and Jabal Al-Mukaber, a meeting at the Swedish consulate in Jerusalem to explain the struggles of Jerusalemite women, and meeting with a European delegation to explain the struggles facing Jerusalemites,
- WSC attended a conference in Hebron by the Family Planning and Protection Association on sexual and reproductive health services and Palestinian women's access to these services.
  - WSC in Hebron attended a conference organized by Muftah and organizations of the 1325 coalition in Hebron as part of supporting women's protection project focusing on the role of the community and legal organizations in documenting political violations against women.
  - WSC Hebron attended a training on how to deal with children during crisis that was initiated by the YMCA and the International Movement for Child Protection.
  - WSC Nablus organized Ramadan evening on 2/7/2015 that focused on boycott.
  - WSC Nablus organized boycotting events and used these events to raise money for needy female students. The events included a trip to Hebron on 12/9/2015 where they raised 1500NIS to support a female student.
  - WSC Nablus organized 3 lectures on boycotting Israeli products. These lectures took place on 21/10/2015, 29/10/2015, 4/11/2015. These lectures also aimed at promoting the national role of young women
  - WSC Nablus organized 4 events during the month of Ramadan to raise money for needy female students.
  - WSC Nablus met with a number of delegations from Italy, Spain, Germany, Norway, and Sweden to inform them of the violations committed by the Israelis against the Palestinians, to share with them the work of the centre and the important role the centre plays in the community, and to support the needy female students. These meetings took place in August, October and December 2015.
  - WSC Nablus in collaboration with the Health Care Center and Eternal Women Organization organized a number of lectures concerning various health issues.
  - WSC Nablus in coordination with the General Union conducted field visits to support families who were informed that their homes will be demolished.
  - WSC Nablus in collaboration with Eternal Women Organization arranged for a training on women's rights and inheritance on 28/11/2015.

### **Networks and Coalitions:**

The centre is an active member of the following coalitions and network and had attended their regular meeting during the reporting period:

- **1325 Coalition** – attended all the meetings and participated in developing the strategic plan of the coalition
- **NGO network of Hebron – development of a committee** that is capable of providing protection for women through contact of both legal, governmental and humanitarian organization, this was due to the alarming rise in so called honor killings in the West Bank within the reporting period.
- **The Palestinian Network for Child Rights Protection** –participated in the activities for the Palestinian child day entitled “protecting children and supporting their rights.”
- **The Civil Coalition for Jerusalemite Institutes**
- **The Feminist Jerusalem Forum.**
- **The Coalition of Safe Abortion**
- **Council of Family Affairs:** worked on providing financial aid to a family to help one of the daughters pursue her education at Hebron University. Also, the center provided aid to a family by donating clothes and blankets. The center was involved in planning the activities in Hebron for 8/3/2015
- **Coalition of NGO to combat violence against women (Muntada):** attended monthly meetings and participated in trainings and activities that call for ending all forms of violence against women.
- **Educational Forum:** conducted 2 workshops on the rights of people with disabilities in Jerusalem. The workshops took place at Al-Nithamiyeh school on 18 & 25/3/2015.
- **Boycott, divestment, and sanctions committee:** the Nablus branch is very active in this committee that calls for boycotting Israeli products.

### **Internal Matters of the WSC:**

Internally and within the WSC, the Board met 3 times during 2015 (on 18/4/2015, 23/5/2015, and 19/12/2015) and the general assembly met twice on 23/5/2015 and on 19/12/2015. The general assembly meeting was held in order to activate the committees that were assigned within the assembly. These committees were assigned in order to support and develop the work of the WSC.

### **Capacity Development by the HR/IHL Secretariat:**

As for the capacity development plan, 3 employees from WSC attended a 2 days training by the Secretariat in Ramallah on Human Rights Based Approach Capacity Building Action Plan. WSC conducted a training workshop on gender audit in July 2015 and included a number of NGOs. Furthermore, a committee was established to work on developing a volunteer policy and they started working on evaluating the needs in each program and the needs of the different offices and how we can benefit the volunteers whom we host as it is a reciprocal process and we are interested in providing the volunteers with new skills that would benefit them once they finish the volunteering period at WSC. Also, 3 workshops on IHL were conducted by the director and targeted

board members. The goal was to have Board members gain more knowledge of international conventions and treaties. Unfortunately and due to the escalating political situation and trying to meet the need in the community, it was very difficult for the centre with such a small staff to work on the rest of the capacity development plan so this will be postponed to 2016. Furthermore, the WSC will be working on a new strategic plan in the fourth quarter of 2016 and we will be working on the capacity development plan along with the new strategic plan so as the work would be in parallel and would meet the centre's visions and goals.

**Staff Capacity Development:**

Staff received trainings to develop their capacities. These trainings are listed in detail under the organizational section.

**Under Media and External relations:**

**Advocacy Strategy Development:** following the workshop with the consultant, Mr. Fathi Marshood, who was hired to develop an Advocacy Strategy for the WSC and taking into considerations the recommendations of the consultant along with the recommendations of a number of stakeholders and different governorate bodies that have posed different suggestions on how the WSC can improve its advocacy, the program managers are now in the process of reviewing their programs, target groups and activities in order to improve the work of the WSC and make it more effective in the community.

**WSC Website Development:**

A new website was developed as it was hacked and damaged in 2014 and the website was launched in April 2015 and it is being constantly updated.

**WSC feminist Library (System):**

The Feminist Library of the WSC which is stationed in the Nablus Branch Premises,( very close to Al-Najah University) since it is accessible to all the West Bank and Jerusalem beneficiaries as well, holds around 4000 books that are both in Arabic and English most of which are related to feminist issues and Gender, moreover the library is registered with different international and local statistics generating organizations that regularly provide it with the newest statistics whether related to women's issues directly or indirectly, in addition to the documentary film section in the library.

The library serves university students, school students, researchers and Civil society members by providing them with needed information and resources on women, gender and feminism, and an estimate of 400 people annually, and among the regular library activity of lending books and resources, the library has other activities such as holding a monthly cultural event in the library, (awareness session, discussion groups, book reviews, poetry evenings and film screenings, in addition to the discussion of children stories in relation to the Palestinian context.)

The WSC installed a new software to the library in order to increase the number of beneficiaries of the library, enhance the system within the library to track books and memberships, and gain more exposure among those that are not aware of the library – specifically through the global search engine and enrich the networking and with Universities and Colleges to develop and inter-lending system to facilitate the access of

students to WSC's Library. There is also a link to the library on the WSC website which also makes it more accessible and user friendly.

### **Success stories:**

Within the Bereaved to Bereaved program, the activities were successful in meeting the main objective of the program which is to improve the psychosocial wellbeing, and empower women victims of Israeli occupation violence. This was evident in the commitment of the bereaved women and their need to continue to be involved in the meetings. Through the use of art therapy, women exhibited points of strength in their personalities that they were not aware of. They feel more secure and safe which was clearly reflected in their interaction within the group meetings. The relationship between the bereaved women and their support of each other was not limited to the support group meetings but also extended to their day to day lives. Moreover, the families of the bereaved women feel more at ease during the home visits and some even encouraged their wives to attend the meetings conducted by WSC as they are becoming aware of the positive effect these meetings have on the bereaved women. The bereaved women are becoming more involved in the family and are having a more positive attitude. They are also expanding their social network through attending social events. Bereaved women who received the training to become supporters to other bereaved women are eager to work and help others. Bereaved women are more verbal and are more capable of expressing their feelings, thoughts, fears, and hopes for the future.

Sanad program particularly working with divorced women yielded a number of success stories. In collaboration with the Family Defense Society (FDS) in Nablus, the centre succeeded in helping 8 divorced women by integrating them in the entrepreneurship trainings offered at FDS for a period of 6 months. The WSC was also successful in helping a divorced woman who was kicked out of her house along with her 2 daughters by her husband. The centre managed to raise 3000 NIS for her and rented a house for her and her daughters and secured the rent payments for 5 months and found her a job with the help of other organizations. Also, friends of the centre donated a bedroom and secured an amount of money to help her take care of her daughters. 8 workshops targeting organizations were conducted through the legal clinic at Al-Najah University and 25 awareness raising workshops were conducted in collaboration with the legal clinic in Hebron University. 3 divorced young women decided to pursue their studies at Palestinian Universities. One of the graduate students at Al-Najah University who benefited from the awareness raising workshops decided to write her thesis on the community's perspective of divorced women. One of the successful stories that the centre is proud of as it reflects the sense of solidarity among divorced women is that one of the divorced women who participated in the program committed to financially supporting a divorced woman in pursuing higher education. Another success story was about a divorced woman who wrote poetry expressing her fear and pain and she managed to publish her work in her name despite her fear of the community. The office also hosted social work graduate students from Bethlehem University to lead an activity with abused women as a way to provide group therapy and support. This activity was very successful and women asked for more activities of this kind. The office also hosted Al-Muntada and

the YWCA for a 4-day training targeting new graduates and law students. The office took care of all expenses and coordination of the training.

The Spring Board project had a positive impact on some of the women involved in the activities. As this project aims to empower women, the WSC was proud to witness some of the changes that took place in these women's lives. For example, some women decided to pursue their education after completing the training, another divorced woman who's 60 years old decided to take a very courageous step and got married which is very unusual at this age, one woman decided to get a divorce knowing that she was unable to take this step in the past, and finally, one woman challenged her father and her family and with the support of the trainer, managed to find a job despite her family's opposition. Moreover, a women who received the Spring Board training opened an educational center for school students.

The different initiatives that took place in 5 locations served the purpose of supporting young Palestinian women to be feminist activists. These initiatives allowed women to believe in themselves and to have the confidence that they are strong and capable women. The volunteering experience they had at the women's organizations as they were preparing for initiatives and implementing them provided them with new skills and encouraged them to continue working at those organizations. Furthermore, these young women were not passive members but were very involved and had an ability to provide critical reflection on the work of some of these organizations.

The WSC office in Hebron received an Honorarium from Hebron Municipality and was asked to be a member in the committee to build a strategic plan to develop the city of Hebron. Despite the fact that the office participated in a number of meetings, the office decided to withdraw from the committee after realizing that the project is funded by the USAID. That said, the honorarium and the invitation are a form of appreciation of the work done by the staff in Hebron and of the time and energy they invest to make the work there very noticeable and effective. Furthermore, the office was approached by the law clinic at Hebron University in order to collaborate with them in conducting 25 awareness raising workshop on legal matters that protect and support women.

Additionally, the Hebron office initiated in helping one of the divorced and abused women who participated in the CFD project to issue an identity card as she was never issued one due to her family's neglect. Moreover, the Hebron office helped five families who live in dire conditions by providing them with basic products and financial aid. In coordination with Asalah and Tawasol center in Hebron, the office participated in workshops on how to establish a network to support and empower women who own small businesses. Also, the office provided the Palestinian Police – the family protection unit with clothes and blankets to women in their care. Not to mention the support the staff at Hebron office offer to University students as they facilitate their work in connecting them with organizations and in providing them with studies the centre conducted. Also, the centre hosted a number of volunteers. It is worth noting that the Hebron office is extremely active although there is only 2 staff members working at that office and though there are a lot of success stories; the staff faces a lot of difficulty due to not having

enough manpower and having a heavy load. This is one of the problems that the centre faces due to lack of funding and lack of financial resources to support staff.

AMAN Program as a whole is seen as a success story because of the importance of its mission as well as its achievements so far. However, the biggest challenge was to proceed with this program without external funding and to sustain it on a minimal cost as the WSC believes in the goals of the program. AMAN aims at reducing sexual violence against women and children within the Palestinian society and also aims to raise community awareness regarding the prevalence and consequences of sexual violence in the Palestinian society and build local capacity to prevent violence and support the victims. The program is still being implemented by school counselors and specialist from the Counseling Department in the Ministry of Education during the year 2014-2015 with almost no funding except for provision of program tools and materials. As a result of all the positive impact this program had in the community, the Ministry of Education in Jerusalem organized an honorarium for the WSC and delivered a shield of thanks and appreciation for the Centre and the director of the program. To raise awareness in the community regarding this topic, the WSC issued a calendar for the program as part of AMAN as an initiative by the Department of Counseling and Special Education. Furthermore, Nablus schools organized 24 open days for AMAN program and nearly 3000 students participated in these events.

It is worth mentioning that the WSC received official letters from some school districts (the Directorate of South and center of Hebron, and the Directorate of South of Nablus, and Salfeet) requesting that the centre provides them with AMAN manual and other publications in order to start training new counselors (a total of 109 counselors) by the counselors who previously took AMAN training. Finally, the program was successfully incorporated at Al-Najah University and the University of Hebron mainly with students from the law, media, and education and psychology departments. This was done through the trainings and the development of an action plan to be implemented throughout the year 2015. By reaching universities, the program has a higher chance of being more effective in the community by recruiting the young generation and having more access to community members.

The centre was honored by Al-Najah University and requested that the centre adopts the film festival for the following 3 years in order to produce documentary films that would serve the centre's programs and the Palestinian community as well. Moreover, the protection network and the social welfare system in Nablus requested that there would be collaboration with the Nablus branch and the social welfare office institutionalized the AMAN project in its services. Also, one of our employees in Nablus office was selected to be part of the smaller committee to attend conferences and meetings at the social welfare system.