

Programme Activities Annual Report 2004

Introduction:

The year 2004 was overwhelmed with the debate on the right of women to be represented at the decision making level, and the importance of having gender sensitive laws that ensure justice for women and for equality before the law. WATC used all its resources whether human or physical to enrich the debate whether through its bimonthly newsletter "The Voice of Women", or through its radio weekly programme "Against Silence", or through its TV programmes and the Video essays, and video and radio spots, posters, stickers, and billboards to support the advocacy and awareness campaign. The hottest debate was the one that took place at the PLC level where a change was noticed in the attitudes of the PLC members which resulted in a quota for women at the local council level.

At another level, WATC supported women's participation in the elections whether as voters or as candidates, through the community awareness campaigns conducted and supported with the media campaigns. Women candidates were trained how to lead their electoral campaigns for the local councils, and how their role in these councils can make a difference.

WATC worked hard to mainstream the issues of elections and reform (including laws) that were important for building a democratic state as part of its two programmes: Empowerment of Rural Women, and Empowerment of Young Women. For more efficient training, WATC updated its training center with new equipment, and trained a team of trainers where a manual was prepared with a film documenting the training to be used by the trainers in their areas.

WATC also worked with other partners to ensure that emergency services are gender sensitive and at the same time worked with 13 community based organizations (CBOs) in rural areas to build their capacities, and to enable them continue working effectively and efficiently.

This report covers the activities of the Women's Affairs Technical Committee (WATC) programmes and projects during the year 2004.

WATC Objectives:

During the year 2004, WATC worked on implementing its projects to achieve the set goals and objectives :

- * To mainstream Palestinian women's issues within the process of constructing a democratic society free of all forms discrimination.
- * To affect the devising of gender-sensitive policies and legislation in in various spheres of life.
- * To develop the self assertiveness of women using latest methodologies in adult education and training.
- * To enhance the involvement of women and their representation in political life, at all levels, especially the decision - making level.
- * To advocate decision makers on equal rights for women in the Palestinian society.
- * To empower and support existing women's committees and groups on the operational and organizational level.

The above objectives were achieved in the year 2004 though implementing the following programmes and projects:

1. Advocacy for Women's Rights Programme A: - Advocacy and Capacity Building For Reform

With the funding of the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), the Women's Affairs Technical Committee continued working on the implementation of the "Advocacy for Women's Rights Programme" for the 8th year through the project "Advocacy and Capacity Building for Reform". The project aims at a more efficient involvement of women in the reform process and in building the state, through empowering Palestinian women and advocating their rights, as well as coordinating all efforts with different groups to achieve laws and legislation that ensure equality for women in the Palestinian society.



With the networking and coordination of WATC with the General Union of the Palestinian Women, and other women and human rights organizations, a committee was established to follow up on the National Campaign for Promoting Women's Political Participation. WATC played a major role in this

committee and took a leading role especially in Gaza. WATC took the responsibility of organizing community work and coordinating among various institutions and centers. A written legal memorandum on amendments to the election laws in local councils was submitted to the PLC, in addition to a unified position by the civil society regarding the mixed electoral system. Another networking committee was established to monitor the draft laws where the legal consultants of WATC played an important role in identifying the gaps in the laws and in providing alternative non-discriminating items with legal justification for the proposed change.

The following achievements were made by the network Committee for elections:

- * The approval of the "quota of two women in each local council where available" was approved by the PLC. The quota approval led to the encouragement of women to nominate themselves, due to the feeling that they were supported; especially in marginalized areas.
- * The quota approval made political parties include women in their lists.
- * The trained women candidates could lead their campaigns effectively which was clear in the results of the elections.
- * Thirty three got elected on competitive basis while nineteen won by quota in the first phase of the elections that was conducted in December 2004 in the West Bank.
- * A change in attitude among many of the Palestinian Legislative Council members toward the quota system which was very clear in the number of voters for the quota.
- * Thousands of women who were reached in the different areas became potential supporters for women's political involvement.
- * A debate was open in the media at the community level on the quota and the role of women which was clear in the number and quality of articles and reports published, and the number of attendants and the discussions raised during the general meetings.

The following are the most important achievements made by the network Committee on laws:

- * Eight laws were reviewed and discriminating items were identified. These laws were the following:
 1. Election Law, Number 13, 1995
 2. Local Council Election Law, Number 5, 1996
 3. Social Insurance Law
 4. Palestinian Child Law
 5. Draft Palestinian Penal Law
 6. Palestinian Draft Family Law
 7. Draft Social Protection Fund (Support Fund)
 8. Draft Palestinian Constitution and Basic Law

- * Advocacy and lobbying for more gender sensitive laws using direct visits in addition to the media to reach a wide coverage of people.
- * Reaching a unified agenda related to the alternative laws to be submitted to the PLC.

In the year 2004, WATC used the following means in its advocacy and media awareness campaign:

1. Radio Programme (Against Silence)

Forty one episodes mainly on reform and elections were broadcasted with the Voice of Palestine. Most of the episodes were directly related to the reform and elections issues.

Some were indirectly connected; for instance, "Women and Health" was related to health law and the access of women to official and non-official health organizations. The legal age for marriage was raised and advocacy and awareness campaigns against early marriage were done. Since the West Bank and Gaza Strip still suffer from occupation, it was important to highlight the inhumane situation women detainees and prisoners suffer. This was an opportunity to advocate for human rights and to have them connected to national rights.



A major achievement during the year was the exposure of nominated and/or elected women to media. Forty women were interviewed; 25 of them reported that this was their first chance to address the public through media. Furthermore, "Against Silence" was the first programme to target nominated and/or elected women.

2. TV Programme:

Eight talk shows were produced on women's participation in the decision making, reform issues, and elections that were used in the community and awareness campaign for women's rights especially political rights.

3. Video Essays:

Two video essays related to women and decision making were produced. One by the director Mr. Subhi Zubeidi, and the other by the Media Institute of Birzeit University on women in the local councils and will be used as part

of the community awareness campaigns.

4. Radio Spots:

WATC in coordination with Studio I produced 12 radio advertisements related to women and decision making. These short radio messages encouraged elections of women candidates and were used in different ways; some were used to advocate for women's rights in the elections and were disseminated by Palestine Telecommunications Corporation during all the period of the first phase of the elections.

5. Hot line introduced:

A hot line was introduced to provide services to candidates during the first phase of the elections. Several women candidates contacted WATC in Gaza and in Ramallah requesting clarification on conditions of the propaganda campaign, kind of training provided by WATC to ensure that they will not be alone if they succeed, requesting solutions for some of the problems the candidates face in their campaign.

6. Interviews: in local and national radio and television programmes were made mainly with the legal consultants of WATC and the members of the networking committees to support the dialogue about the laws and their importance for people in general and women in particular.

Empowerment for reform took two forms:

1. Empowerment of potential women leaders. More than 400 women selected mainly from women member organizations to be trained on gender mainstreaming in laws, leadership and communication skills, and managing campaigns. These skills qualified them to lead campaigns for women's rights in their communities.

2. Empowerment of professionals to form pressure groups for more participation of women at the decision making levels where more than 50 lawyers, journalists, representatives of official bodies at the PNA were trained on advocacy and lobbying skills, gender reading of laws to become pressure groups defending and advocating for women's rights.



2. Campaigning with Rural Women Programme "Sanabel project"

Sanabel project has been ongoing since 1997 in different areas of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and has been funded from different foundations (National Endowment for Democracy (NED), Ford Foundation, Joyce Mertz, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, and Westminster Foundation).



The project aims at reaching women in remote rural areas to raise their awareness of their rights and empower them to participate in changing their status and become active participants in their communities. In addition, improve their competencies and skills through training on skills needed to lead advocacy and networking campaign for more gender efficient representation of women at decision-making levels. Furthermore, it aims at training those women on their rights as conscious candidates and voters for active participation in the election process, and to participate in the advocacy activities of the project and the activities related to reform launched by WATC and Women's Committees.

In the year 2004, and with the support provided by Ford Foundation and NED Foundation, WATC covered 43 villages. 10 in Jenin district, 5 in Nablus, 14 in Gaza, and 14 in Hebron.

Major achievements:

During the implementation of the project, two levels of training were conducted: the first level addressed 170 potential women leaders from Sanabel committees. To form the committees, three potential women leaders were selected from each village to participate in a central training course. The training for the committees covered women's rights and responsibilities as voters and nominees, gender reading of some Palestinian laws, advocacy, communication and community mobilization, training of trainers, crisis management, building and conducting election campaigns, and computer skills.

The other level addressed Sanabel groups, where almost similar training was conducted by the trained Sanabel committees' members along with the regional coordinators. As a result, around 1,150 women were trained in 43 villages.

As part of the awareness campaign over 30 public meetings and 5 workshops were conducted in the different areas for both women and men

discussing women's rights as voters and nominees and women's political participation in general. Participation of men varied from one area to another. The discussions were successful as they lead to more understanding of the importance of women's participation in the election process and changed men and women from opposition to supporters. Some men after listening and participating in the arguments were convinced of the importance of women's political participation as well as women who previously opposed the idea. They expressed their readiness to support women nominees only if they were really skilled and worth their support.

In addition, several networking activities were carried out with different governmental and nongovernmental organizations in the community. Networking was carried out by the coordinators and by Sanabel groups who have acquired networking skills through their active participation in Sanabel project and their involvement in community based activities. The networking efforts resulted in: providing women with services needed and training on topics of importance to them which enhanced their practical and strategic skills.

Following are some quotes taken during the final evaluation with focus groups:

A woman said:

"I remember the training I participated in when I face any problem. Now I am capable of making a decision. Before the training I depended on my good heart and not my mind."

Another said:

"We were somewhere else when we started. Now, we have the knowledge and experience regarding many issues especially those that have to do with leadership skills and it is all because of Sanabel project."

A man said:

"My wife now has a stronger personality and is more capable to discuss matters. I regained trust in women committees who are in charge of such projects. As my wife has acquired new concepts, values and attitudes, it has become easier for us to communicate and relate to each other. I want my wife to increase her knowledge and awareness."

Another said:

"I hope that my wife can now with her new skills and knowledge participate effectively in improving the family situation. I like my wife to be open minded and aware of what is going around her. All respect to WATC for conducting such projects."

3. Empowerment of Youth Leaders Programme

In an effort to participate in the creation of a new generation of young leaders, WATC launched a programme that is targeting young Palestinian women (YW) in order for the young leaders to continue the work of the older generation of women. Young women are trained, educated, empowered and enlightened of the importance of their role as agents of change in the society and in the struggle for women's rights, and human rights.



This programme commenced in 1997 and has been supported by the Swedish DIAKONIA (1997-2004), the Irish Representative Office to the Palestinian National Authority (1999-2004) and Oxfam Quebec (1997-1998), Women's Learning Partnership for Rights, Development and Peace (2000-2004), and the Representative Office of Canada (2004).

Following are some of the projects that were implemented under this programme:

A. Leading to Choices - Leadership Training for Youth:

supported by the Women's Learning Partnership for Rights, Development and Peace (WLP)

Since the year 2000, WATC partnered with the WLP . A training manual ***Leading to Choices - Leadership Training for Youth*** was produced in cooperation with WATC and other partners of WLP for training leaders. WATC target was the young women and men in Palestine, and hundreds of young women and men were trained on leadership skills. During the year 2004 this training was given to thirty one young women and young men. Following are some quotes from the youth leaders:

One female participant said:

"I am proud of my personal growth; you will not believe how much I have changed during this workshop."

One male participant said:

"I have come to learn that listening is an important tool for a leader. Before the workshop I thought that a leader is the one who acts and talks without going back to others."



B. Young Women Leaders and Community Awareness for Equality:

supported by the Canadian Representative Office.

Within the youth programme, WATC launched a project with the support of the Canadian Representative Office in mid 2004. The overall aim was to involve young women and men in the reform process and in building the Palestinian State. The target group was 100 young women and men selected from twenty sites representing four districts in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (Ramallah, Tulkarem, Gaza and Al-Mu'askarat Al Wusta) in order to conduct community awareness campaigns with messages related to equality in the laws and elections.

Main Achievements:

* ***Training:*** One hundred young women and men got trained on, gender, gender analysis, communication skills, lobbying and advocacy, laws and legislations, gender reading of laws, gender mainstreaming in laws, management and planning, training on management of election campaigns.

* ***Building committees for community awareness campaigns:*** in mid August, the trained young women and men leaders started working on recruiting new young women and men to be part of the project. Several meetings were conducted and different workshops related to the needs of the target group of the new potential leaders. The workshops covered issues related to elections, gender, violence against female student, laws, and management of community awareness campaigns. The number of the young women and men reached 110 in the West Bank, and 171 in Gaza Strip.

* ***Coordination and networking:*** This was done with several other organizations of the civil society and was very important for the young women and men where they started to see themselves as part of the whole

society and gave them the feeling of belongingness and self confidence.

* **Advocacy and awareness campaigns:** The campaigns for the different geographical areas were selected by the young women and men as follows:

1. Unemployment and equal opportunities - Ramallah and Tulkarem.
2. Elections law - Gaza.
3. Elections law - Al Mu'askarat Al Wusta - Gaza Strip
4. Youth Care Law - Al Mu'askarat Al Wusta - Gaza Strip

C. Empowerment of Young Women Leaders:

supported by DIAKONIA and the Human Rights and Democratization Grants Scheme - Department of Foreign Affairs of Ireland State.

With the support of the Swedish DIAKONIA and the Human Rights and Democratization Grants Scheme - Department of Foreign Affairs of Ireland State, WATC embarked on this project with the goal of preparing a group of future women capable of carrying the message of women's rights in order to build a democratic and civil society in which democracy, equality and human justice prevail. Three hundred and twenty young women from the West Bank and Gaza Strip were targeted. Young women and men from the very first group of the programme were included in the activities of the field coordinators and women's committees, the project managed to regularly keep in touch with around 80 young women and men of the old generation through their attendance to the regular meetings held in the different geographical areas (Jenin, Tulkarem, Qalqilya, Nablus, Ramallah, Bethlehem, Hebron, Gaza, Khan Younes and Rafah).

Main Achievements:

1. Meetings with young women and men leaders were held in the different areas. These meetings helped in; enhancing the relationship between the leaders, exchange of information and sharing of experiences, promoting their self-assertiveness, improving their expressive ability. In addition, these meetings strengthened the bond between the mothers and their daughters and sons; mothers were invited to some of these meetings and some attended which built bridges between the two generations.

2. Training: The new young women and men leaders were trained on gender awareness, leadership and communication skills, lobbying and advocacy, civil society and democracy, community intervention skills, first aid, dealing with media, community based rehabilitation.

3. Lectures and workshops: Around 50 lectures and workshops were held and all the workshops were conducted by the young women and men themselves under the supervision of the coordinators.

4. Advocacy and campaigning: Many activities were held by the young women and men and they have participated in several of the activities

which were held by the organizations and the political parties such as: the anti-apartheid wall campaign, solidarity with political Palestinian prisoners campaign, and Al- Nakba activities. In addition, they participated with the Central Elections Committee on the education of the importance of the elections.

5. Social Activities: Several social activities were held with the aim of bringing together young women and men at schools, colleges and universities within the same region.

6. Counseling Sessions: counseling sessions were held at all the districts to help the YWM to cope during difficult situations. The counseling sessions were focused at Gaza Strip especially at Rafah Camp after the Israeli invasions, killing people and demolishing their homes.

7. Conferences: three conferences were held, the first in Qalqilya "The Youth and the Challenges of the Apartheid Wall", the second was held in Bethlehem University "Palestinian Students Movement between Present and Past", and the third was in Gaza "Gaza after the freedom". All the conferences were implemented with the young women themselves, and the Qalqilya conference papers were prepared by the Young women and men themselves.

D. Empowerment of Young Women and Men

Leaders: supported by Diakonia

After completing the previous project of Diakonia, this project started in mid October 2004, where DIAKONIA supported WATC to empower groups of young women and men in four districts (Tulkarem and Jenin, Ramallah and Bethlehem) to increase their participation in the build-up of a civic and democratic society.

Main achievements:

* **Presentations:** 7 presentations were convened in the different districts for 124 young women and men potential leaders. The focus was on gender analysis, communication skills, laws and legislations from a gender perspective, the role of women and youth in building democratic civil societies, and gender and leadership.



* **Coordination and networking:** This was done with several other organizations of the civil society organizations. Ramallah youth group visited "Sharek Youth Forum" and discussed the role of Palestinian youth in building the society. Tulkarem and Jenin youth group organized an open day for people with special needs. Bethlehem group met with successful women in the local council elections (phase one) and discussed their experience, and the role of women and youth at a decision making levels.

4. Empowerment for Leadership Programme

A. Empowerment for Gender Awareness: supported by Diakonia

This project was funded by DIAKONIA, and its main goal was to train a team of twenty gender-sensitive men and women to be trainers on gender issues and gender streaming in laws, policies and programmes. The trained team was qualified to play an important role in training of decision makers, PLC members or candidates, political parties' leaders, and other civil organizations leaders.

Main achievements:

* Twenty women were selected from different women organizations and from different areas of the West Bank and trained as trainers on gender mainstreaming in laws, policies and programmes.

* Two training manuals were developed. One for training of trainers. The second on gender mainstreaming, and gender reading of laws.

* The trained participants participated in the training and the community awareness campaigns on the importance of laws in their areas and played an important role in supporting WATC advocacy and community awareness campaigns for more gender sensitive laws, and for more participation of women in the elections.

B. Gender Mainstreaming in Political Life:
supported by Friedrich Ebert Stiftung

WATC and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung started a cooperation agreement for more efficient participation of women at the level of elected councils in January 2004 as a new phase of the former two years of cooperation on women and elections. With the aim of increasing women's representation in political life at national and local levels as part of their equal rights; promoting gender equality, and empowering women for more efficient

participation in social and political development.

Main achievements:

* **Training workshops for potential women candidates:** About 150 potential nominees in the local councils and the Palestinian Legislative Council in the West Bank and Gaza Strip were involved in the training. The topics addressed were; integration of gender in laws and policies, management of election campaigns, the role of municipalities in women's life. The trained women became more confident in themselves and led their campaigns effectively, and got competitive votes.

* **Talk shows:** Five talk shows were produced and broadcasted with the theme of "Women and Elections". The talk shows led to more awareness at the community level toward the participation of women in the elections, and a debate was open in the media on the role of women at the decision making levels.

* **Networking activities:** WATC is a member of the National Committee for Promoting Women's Political Participation. The committee played an important role in disseminating the idea of the quota and the importance of the political participation of women.

* **Awareness campaigns:** WATC launched a national campaign to support the participation of women in elections along with several women's organizations. More than 25 awareness meetings were done.

* **Advocacy activities:** Several meetings were conducted at the levels of decision makers in the West Bank and Gaza.

- Meetings with Legislative Council members: women members, supporters of quota; those who are undecided about the quota. More than 40 meetings with individual members of the PLC, and meetings with political parties.

- WATC organized for the largest women's march in support of the quota, demanding its adoption by the Legislative Council.

- Meeting with the late President Mr. Yaser Arafat, as a result of the meeting, the decision against the quota was returned for discussion for another time by the PLC.

Following are some of the changes as a result of the long and extensive effort done by WATC and the Women's movement in their advocacy and awareness meetings:

* Neutralizing the position of several PLC members who were earlier opposed to the quota system.

* The Palestinian Legislative Council voted in favor of the quota system in its session dated 21 August 2004.

* The debate on the participation of women in the decision making levels was open at the Government level, the civil society level, community and

the media.

5. Community Education for Equal Rights:

A. Media Advocacy for Elections and Reform: supported by the Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)

Supported by the Norwegian People's Aid, and with the objectives of raising the community awareness on women's right to political participation in elections; to communicate with a large number of people through media about the demands of the Palestinian women movement concerning elections, and convince them on the right of women political participation in decision making; and, to advocate for the importance of registering and voting.

Twenty billboards were produced and posted for a month in the main cities of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Part of the campaign was covered through the use of posters and stickers. One had the motto "Partners in farming, partners in the harvest" and the second motto "Your trust in a woman is your trust in the whole nation". All posters and stickers were distributed throughout the West Bank and Gaza. These publications were used in training local council nominees by WATC in Gaza and the West Bank, were used by the candidates during their campaigns in the local community, distributed in all the training of WATC, panel discussions, forums, and general meetings and community awareness campaign for promoting women's political participation. In general, these posters and stickers served the purpose for supporting the advocacy and awareness campaign that was carried out with other women organizations such as the General Union of the Palestinian Women and civil society.

In addition, a brochure on Palestinian women Pioneers was developed to cover the biographies of five successful women that made a contribution to the National Struggle, and to the women's movement. The importance of the brochure is that it sheds the light on the struggle of women during a period where women's role has been marginalized and ignored. The brochure is a testimony not only of women pioneers, but also a valid justification for partnership at the decision making level.

B. Written Media - Voice of Women "Sawt Alnisa'

" Newsletter: supported by Konrad Adenauer Stiftung.

Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, has been supporting WATC for the production of Voice of Women" since 1997. The newsletter "Voice of Women," is one of the important Arab women's newsletters. It enjoys a high degree of regularity in its production and constant development in its coverage, which has earned it public credibility and visibility.

It is considered a major resource for researchers and observers in gauging public outlook on women's issues, by virtue of the newsletter's complementary role in the work of women's and civil organizations. The newsletter is one of the tools used by the Women's Affairs Technical Committee to pursue its objectives of following women's issues and in monitoring cases of discrimination against women.

"Voice of Women" continued to exert effective influence in 2004 as the venue for expressing the rights and demands of women. A survey of

specialists and analysts published in the newsletter and in Al-Ayyam confirms this status. "Voice of Women" continued to lead in the process of presenting informational and educational coverage of various women's workshops, seminars and conference. This process enables the public to become better informed and gives credence to the demand



for fuller participation by women in key position and decision-making. The newsletter has also succeeded in reflecting the essential role of Women's Affairs Technical Committee as complementary to other NGOs in the social arena. It discusses issues that are fundamental to the situation of women, such as discrimination against women in social status, marriage and inheritance, equal opportunity and political participation. What distinguishes "Voice of Women" is that it also has a human dimension in its stories about people, in addition to its political position, which attracts readers to its coverage. It draws on a large number of talented writers and journalists, and many researchers use material from the newsletter in their studies.

"Voice of Women" held a special training workshop for journalists and writers, the newsletter staff, and other journalists and writers who were interested in making future contributions. The workshop met its educational and practical objectives: it opened up discussion about gender and about the mission of the newsletter; it allowed contributing journalist to analyze their

skills and develop new strategies; it opened the opportunity for new writers and journalists to become convinced to contribute to the newsletter; and it produced a positive synergy among the writing team.

During the year 2004, twenty five issues were published and 375,000 were distributed along with Al-Ayyam Newspaper, and WATC distributed another 58,750 copies of "Voice of Women". The newsletter achieved remarkable success in covering women's issues as they relate to Palestinian political life and was effective in pressuring decision-makers to take positive measures in favor of women. One major initiative undertaken by "Voice of Women" focused on the demands made by women's organization to ratify the quota system in municipal elections, which resulted in approval of the quota system for women's participation and substantial results for women in the elections. "Voice of Women" has built up a great deal of reliability as a documentary source about the condition of Palestinian women that is relied on by official institutions and the media.

Two of "Voice of Women" writers won awards for articles published in "Voice of Women" in a contest for best writers on women and development, implemented by the Ministry of Women's Affairs. These writers are Ms. Shihnaz Daraghmeh and Mr. Ibrahim Abu Kamsheh.

It is worth mentioning that Al Ayyam Newspaper volunteered to cover the cost of printing the last issue of "Voice of Women".

6. Gender Mainstreaming in Development

A. *The Partnership Project:* supported by the World Bank through the Welfare Consortium

This project started in June 2003 and was carried in partnership with the Palestinian Hydrology Group (PHG) and supported by the Welfare Consortium with funding from the World Bank, and covered 13 villages selected from the rural areas of Hebron, West Ramallah, and Gaza (Beit Hanoon, Qezan Al Najjar, Khirbet Al Adas Wade Al Salqa in Gaza, Kharbatha Almosbah, Deir Ibzi', Beit Sera, Bileen, Ras Karkar in Ramallah, Al Burj, Al Ramadeen, Yatta in Hebron)

The roles of WATC and the PHG were complementary in the implementation of the Partnership project. The PHG provided their technical expertise in areas of infrastructure and WATC provided expertise in areas of gender mainstreaming and capacity building. Since gender mainstreaming need be taken into consideration at all levels, it was agreed that the administration of the programme is the responsibility of the PHG, while the financial component is the responsibility of WATC.

The overall goals of the Partnership Grant Programme were:

1. "to contribute to improve the standard and quality of living in the social, health, education and environment sectors of the impoverished rural areas of the West Bank and Gaza."
2. "to build the capacity of the CBOs and to empower women to take a leading role in society through involving them in the different activities of the project and through networking with other projects of WATC and NGOs."

Gender mainstreaming in the Partnership project took two levels: The first level is the level of the capacity building of the community based organizations (CBOs) where WATC played an important role in introducing a change in the perception of most of the CBOs toward the role of women through the continued follow up and through encouraging women take role in the capacity building training conducted for the CBOs.

The second level is the level of implementation of the project to ensure that gender mainstreaming is done at the level of the project. At this level, WATC prepared the criteria for selecting the beneficiaries and in evaluating the outputs of the project. In addition, gender mainstreaming was considered in the implementation of the Capacity Building component and in the Awareness component that focused on women representation at the CBO level and their involvement in the training conducted for the CBOs, in addition to the awareness in general that addressed women in the selected sites.

Accordingly, WATC value added was increasing women's participation at the decision making level, in addition to building the capacity of the CBOs as identified through needs assessment.

Main Achievements:

WATC trained the women committees formed in the previous year in the different targeted villages of the West Bank and Gaza, to become agents of change in their communities by playing a leading role in the coordination and networking process between the various existing organizations and through acquiring certain skills that help identify the needs of women in their communities and in addressing these needs. Most of the committees worked to ensure the integration of women at the decision making levels in their local communities and existing CBOs. In view of the results, the awareness campaign was designed and a program for its implementation was set in close coordination with the local communities.

The most important topics that were addressed were the following:

1. Gender issues
2. Communication Skills
3. Women's Rights in with special focus on political rights

4. Importance of the laws on Women's life

In addition, an awareness programme was conducted as part of the CBOs that focused on the needs assessment of the women as follows: women's health, early marriage, divorce, importance of women's political participation, communication skills, and gender issues.

Training was provided to the thirteen CBOs in Gaza and the West Bank, a total number of 95 participants of which 52% were males and 48% were females. The training covered seven topics: strategic planning, women's role in CBOs, accounting and financial training, project management, procurement and agreements, fund raising, and computer and internet skills. These topics were of great importance and basic to capacity building of these CBOs, and important for their sustainability after the project ends.

The participants started working on their own strategic plans, and some worked on writing proposals based on their community's needs using the new skills in networking to recruit funding. Some of these CBOs added two seats for women to join their executive committees. Furthermore, a link was built with these CBOs which facilitated the participation of many of the women in the different activities conducted by WATC and other institutions providing services to their communities.

