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Women's Affairs Technical Committee, Palestine

Annual Report 2009

Women's Affairs Technical Committee (WATC)

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Introduction

The Israeli aggression that began at the end of 2008 and continued until the year 2009 put the WATC in front of new responsibilities created by the circumstances of war and displacement where it was not possible to continue the developmental programs in the absence of relief and emergency conditions. The WATC through its office in Gaza, and with support from the Women's Learning partnership (WLP), worked with lawyers and field workers and researchers to accumulate stories about violations of human rights on women, in addition to working with mothers in order to cope with this crisis and to deal with their children in difficult circumstances to minimize the trauma as well as providing material and financial support to women. It is worth mentioning that the number of martyrs exceeds 1300, about 36% of them are children and women.

Also, there was an increase in house demolitions and depopulation of Palestinians in Jerusalem, as well as the confiscation of land under the pretext of the security issue or the purpose of building settlements and the completion of the apartheid Separation wall. In the rest of West Bank, the WATC participated with the General Union of Palestinian Women and women organizations to protest in solidarity with Gaza people, and participated in calling out for a discussion for national unity. The marches continued through the streets of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, calling for national unity and confronting the occupation. The Voice of Women Newspaper issued by the WATC, and the radio program broadcasted every Tuesday on the Voice of Palestine, covered the hot issues, and the effect of the war on Gaza women, on one hand, and the steadfastness of women on the other hand. Both media covered the Arab and global solidarity campaigns against the war in Gaza, and focused on success stories of women and their initiatives.

The year 2009 witnessed several achievements for Palestinian women. President Mahmoud Abbas endorsed the UN Convention "Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women" on the occasion of the eighth of March, which gave a strong boost to women organizations. In addition, the level of women participating in decision-making positions has improved in the year 2009 as for the first time, 5 woman ministers were appointed in the new government. In addition, the first woman was elected to the Executive Committee of the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization); also, leftist parties elected women to their Central Committee or and even some women reached the political office. Furthermore, women females were appointed as Shar'i judges for the first time, and for the first time, a woman was appointed as the director of police in Bethlehem area.

At the level of the organization, the year 2009 is the first year of the WATC's strategy 2009-2011, which identifies WATC' vision as seeking a Palestinian democratic society that does not discriminate between men and women. The mission for the three-year strategy was identified as developing a unified feminist discourse based on the declaration of independence and the Palestinian women's Bill of Rights.

At the level of governance, there was a change in the members of the General Assembly members where three members resigned because they were elected as members of the Governing Council of the General Union of Palestinian Women in its Fifth Conference, which took place in May, 2009. In addition, two members resigned because they both were





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appointed as ministers in the new government; as for the sixth member, she resigned to obtain her PHD in Britain.

The year 2009 witnessed an increase in the number of donors who supported sustainability of the organization, and its projects. In addition, WATC was nominated to the Silver Rose Award by the Spanish organization "Movement for Development and Peace (MPDL). Furthermore, WATC won the WLP award for its two video spots on honor killing and domestic violence that were produced by WATC staff. The award was received in Amman in a big celebration organized by the WLP and SIGI in Jordan, in the presence of Princess Basmah.

The Economic and Political Situation

Political Situation:

The Israeli occupation continued implementing its policy of evacuating the land from its Palestinian citizens, and demolishing houses especially in the area of Silwan that is south of the Aqsa Mosque, and Sheikh Jarrah. Arabic names of areas and streets have been changed to Hebrew and the apartheid wall is still being built in Jerusalem particularly and in the West Bank generally.

In Gaza, the aggression, the siege and closure continued. People from all over the world are crying out for justice in favor of Gaza, where its infrastructure was destroyed and economic institutions couldn't survive under siege, and many civil society organizations closed.

The geographical separation between Gaza and the West Bank where all direct contacts between the two parts of the country were prevented, and the political division between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank made the situation worse leaving several Palestinians with low morale and frustration especially youth. In spite of all efforts and initiatives put forward to end the division by the civil society and the feminist movement, all initiatives and attempts failed. The situation has left its impact on vulnerable young groups as it deteriorated their optimism about the future and confidence in reaching a solution. This calls for restoring confidence to the young groups, making the question of the national unity issue a must top priority in the interest of civil society organizations and the feminist movement.

From the above context, it goes without saying that the focus of many events in the year 2009 is on the salvation from the occupation, and putting an end to the political separation, building an independent Palestinian state, return the parliamentary life to its natural state, making way for refining the Palestinian legislation from all forms of prejudices against women.

Economic Situation

It is not possible to isolate the economic situation from the political and security situation. The siege in Gaza led to the closure of many facilities; it also led to the inability to reconstruct, and the inability to work in the Israeli labor market. Thus, there is an increase in the numbers of those who find themselves without work because of this situation. The ratio of participation in the labor force (15 years and above) has decreased to one fourth, and the ratio drops even





more in the Gaza Strip for women. The proportion of unemployment in Gaza is 40.6% compared to 19% in the West Bank. As for the proportion of women's participation in the labor market in the Gaza Strip, it decreases to 11.7 compared to 17.1 in the West Bank. It is worth mentioning that most of the textile factories had stopped since the start of the siege on Gaza; these factories targeted women before they were shutdown due to the inability of these factories to import raw material. Although the unemployment rate among women is 23.8%, compared to 26.5% for males, a high unemployment rate among young women 15-24 has reached 47.7% versus 38.8% for males in the same group. It is interesting to consider the fact that the higher the level of education of the girls the higher the unemployment rate (35%) as compared to males. The highest rate of unemployment among women was found in the camps, followed by the cities¹.

Studies show, including the study carried out by the WATC, that a large number of youth groups have the desire to immigrate as a result of the impact of violence imposed by the Israeli military occupation, not only on the economic situation, but also on gender relations. Also, studies show how the economic and military factors affected the aspirations of young people (males and females), and how women's work is adapted to support the economic situation of the family. Many females worked in low-wage jobs, in situations that lack protection and safety, such as house cleaners.

Even the impact of small loans to women is different from men. Studies show that women who have benefited from small loans aimed more at increasing the family income. Also, it was noticed that most of the agricultural loans which women benefited from, were used for establishing home gardens, or in the establishment of chicken farms, while men organize the marketing process, which gives the impression that women can not generate income even though the loans granted were in their names.

With the confiscation of most agricultural land and groundwater, the proportion of women employed in the agricultural sector, which is considered the largest participation of women in different productive sectors, declined. As a result, their reliance on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip humanitarian aid and international aid continues, making the citizens feel insecure and lose stability.

As indicated in various studies and reports, an increase in spreading some of the traditional concepts and customs that were on their way to recession, such as marrying off young girls, and the preference for male offspring among the youth groups, and the increase in domestic violence. Reports also indicated that the nutritional status is deteriorating for women and children, where more than 62% of households in the Gaza Strip were experiencing this situation and needed to make adjustments to this pattern of living. Reports also pointed out the violence children are exposed to everyday of their lives, which lead to a large proportion of children to not want to take school seriously.

As a result of the political, economic and social situations, more than 400 institutions working in the community field were shutdown and their property was confiscated. It is not far from the truth to say that women were at the forefront of those who were affected, considering the fact that about half of these institutions provide community services for women. Also, the confiscations of land affected rural woman and deprived her from her means of productivity, the fact that changed her role from being very productive role in her land, to a more

¹ PCBS 2009, Survey of Labour force 2008, Ramallah, Palestine





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reproductive role. If we take this into account that women working in the agricultural sector, constitute the highest percentage of female workers, it clarifies the damage to the rural women in particular, and its impact on her family status and her participation in decision-making.

The continued closure and the siege on Gaza, the increase in the unemployment rate, the continuing deterioration of the economic situation, the rise in the poverty rate that is accompanied with many of the male heads of households losing their jobs, in particular in the private sector, and because of not being able to work in the Israeli labor market, where as women are responsible for housekeeping, and the provision of food at a time when family resources are scarce, especially in the areas where poverty is at its highest. It also forced women to seek new ways to provide health care, and education requirements for their children.

The difficult situation of the Palestinian families made it difficult to access health services, which led to deterioration in the health status, particularly among women who are unable to scan the cervix or take periodic examinations of the breast, considering that cancer is the second major cause of death in Palestine by 11.5%.

Studies indicate that there is an increase in domestic violence, and this increase is linked to the increase of violence imposed by the Israeli occupation on the Palestinian people. The increase in the rate of violence is also related to other factors such as including unemployment, poverty, and dreadful living conditions which are also associated more or less with the daily practices of the occupation on the Palestinians in the West Bank (including Jerusalem) and Gaza Strip. Added to this, the lack of security and safety which makes early marriage a "solution" to protect their daughters and to save them poverty. Early marriage is another way of discrimination against the girl child and deprives her from her rights as a child: her right to education, to play, to choose her mate, etc.

Strategy 2009 -2011

WATC worked as early as 2008 on the three year strategy of 2009-2011 which was approved by the General Assembly after an in-depth discussion on 8/11/2008. The WATC completed appointing directors of the different departments according to the new strategy. It was also reviewed by the administrative systems and regulations related to the WATC's administrative staff.

The year 2009 witnessed a real commitment from WATC Board to amend the WATC rules and regulations, the hierarchy of the organization to address the new changes produced by the strategy, the financial scale to accommodate for the new posts that requires the implementation of the programme document.

WATC believes in a **democratic Palestinian society that does not discriminate between men and women**. The assumption is based on the belief that there are different types of political, social, cultural and economic marginalization faced by Palestinian women, as well as a multitude of governmental and non- governmental women's institutions operating in various





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areas to empower women socially, economically, culturally and politically. In light of this, the Women's Affairs Technical Committee sees that the potential to achieve concrete results in diminishing the marginalization of women lies in activating women's role in the struggle for independence and in the creation of legislation and women's programmes based on the needs and priorities of women. These must be efficiently managed, based on extensive participation and volunteerism focusing on the Palestinian cultural heritage and national struggle, with integrity and transparency.

WATC sees its mission during the three-year period as **“seeking to develop and unify the discourse of women's institutions and committees within the framework of the principles of the Declaration of Independence and the Declaration of Palestinian Women's Rights”**.

Consisting of a group of organizations affiliated to secular and democratic political parties active both at the grassroots and leadership levels, WATC perceives itself as being responsible for providing a forum for the development of the Palestinian women's discourse and building the capacity of women organizations and committees to enable them develop a Palestinian women's discourse capable of facing the various forms of discrimination against women.

The Board of Directors, along with members of the General Assembly, as well as the staff of WATC, are committed to abiding by the values which are considered necessary to achieve the mission of WATC. WATC aspires to achieve the mission while abiding by the following values:

1. **Participation and Partnership:** Promotion of extensive participation of women committees and organizations who are members of WATC coalition to have adopt similar policies and programmes of women empowerment, enhancement of feedback mechanisms in work, and consolidation of relations with women at the grass root level in all communities. Furthermore, participation means the provision of genuine knowledge and information to all women in Palestinian Society, as well as the empowerment of women in communicating their issues of concern, and working on strengthening partnerships with the communities as well as with all the institutions which believe in and work for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.
2. **Heritage and National Struggle:** Strengthening and emphasizing the role of Palestinian women in the national struggle, at the social, economic and political levels, and the institution of the rights of the Palestinian people and pluralism. Respect for the history of the Palestinian national struggle and its rich heritage. Respect for the particularity of the Palestinian people.
3. **Creativity and Critical Thinking:** Promotion of creativity and critical thinking, for the purpose of affecting social and cultural change through the preservation of the social spirit and values. This will be done through a focus on the positive aspects of Palestinian values and the reduction of the negative aspects, which limit and marginalize women. It will also be done through the promotion of participation, benefiting from lessons learnt from local initiatives and reviewing experiences from other countries. In addition, WATC renounces violence and intolerance that limits creativity and cripples critical thinking and progress.
4. **Volunteerism:** Volunteerism is one of the most important privileges of civil action. This is not limited to the role of the Board of Directors, but also includes all members





of the WATC General Assembly. In addition, this aspect involves the promotion of volunteerism on a national level. WATC programmes will work on the recruitment of supporters and volunteers from the different sectors of the Palestinian people.

5. **Human Rights:** Within the framework of the Basic Law, which seeks to eliminate discrimination against women and individuals, WATC will work to develop beliefs in relation to human rights for all. WATC will support the initiatives of all institutions which advocate for the rights of various groups, irrespective of the targeted group, as well as international initiatives which promote human rights at a global level.
6. **Integrity:** WATC believes that the civil and governmental institutions will not be able to achieve their noble objectives without taking into account the overall system of integrity. Integrity signifies transparency and accountability. WATC will develop administrative and financial procedures in coherence with the highest standards of transparency, and establish a system for dissemination of information for WATC programmes, developing planning and reporting processes for accountability purposes.

Programme Document:

Strategic Objectives :

In order to achieve the mission of the 3 year strategy, Four objectives were identified:

Objective 1: Promoting establishment of Palestinian policies which do not discriminate between men and women²

Objective 2: Enhancing the capacity of women to claim their rights at the family and community level

Objective 3: Community awareness of the rights of Palestinian women in all locations

Objective 4: Enhancing WATC's effectiveness and efficiency to ensure institutional sustainability and the achievement of its objectives

Strategy Implementation in 2009

The strategy 'For a Unified Discourse' reformulates WATC's direction for the next three years. This is the first key step in WATC's organizational development process towards achieving its vision and mission. This strategy is considered a means for communication, cooperation and networking with local and international institutions which deal with women's issues.

To achieve the strategic objectives, a series of activities were implemented and the internal environment was prepared with the needed human resources who are capable of implementing and monitoring the different activities of the strategy. A new organizational structure consistent with the new strategy was adopted, and new staff were recruited to the

² They include law, by-laws, plans, programmes, and various administrative procedures.





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new positions of Advocacy Officer, Capacity Building Officer, and Local Empowerment Officer, in addition to the Fundraising officer.

Objective 1: Promoting establishment of Palestinian policies which do not discriminate between men and women³

Strategy:

The creation of specialized coalitions from women's committees to network with institutions concerned with women's rights and the facilitation of their work in designing campaigns, monitoring achievements and contributing to the implementation of some activities related to campaigning, especially in the media and lobbying of decision-makers. This includes conducting specialized studies and organizing and hosting the various meetings of these committees that will work on revising laws, budgets and Palestinian development plans.

Achievement:

One of the most important achievements for the Palestinian women's movement is the endorsement of the CEDAW by President Mahmoud Abbas on March 8, 2009 without reservation. This important step followed the endorsement of the Women's Bill of Rights document submitted to the President on March 8, 2008. Although this is a great achievement, a lot of advocacy, networking and awareness are still needed to integrate the concept of gender quality at the legislation level, policies and plans.

WATC as a coalition considers networking, forums and coalitions are major means for achieving gender equality. WATC coalition meets regularly; and WATC, take seriously its membership in the different coalitions that are related to women's rights. These coalitions meet on regular basis, and most of the decisions are taken by consensus.

One of the most important coalitions is **the family law** which works at two levels: a national level and chaired by the General Union of Palestinian Woman (GUPW), and at a regional level where the Women's Center for Legal Counseling (WCLC)⁴ plays the role of the coordinator at the regional level. A review was conducted for the pre final draft of the family law by WATC and the GUPW, and some articles were amended. WATC also prepared legal studies to be used for advocacy and awareness campaigns.

The **Forum Against Violence Against Women** is another coalition, in which WATC is a main member. WATC participated in draft its strategy for the next 3 years. It is worth mentioning that UNIFEM is supporting the forum to implement its strategy. In Gaza, The forum is called AMAL, and it was established toward the end of 2009, and its has been hosted by WATC's office in Gaza. It is worth mentioning, that WATC coordinate its media, advocacy and awareness activities during the week "against violence against women" to complement and cover the activities of the week.

As for the Palestinian **Women's Bill of Rights** document, which states the rights of the Palestinian women, it is considered one of the pillars for WATC's strategy, WATC coordinated with the GUPW for an advocacy and awareness campaign at central and grass roots levels. WATC, in coordination with the GUPW, trained and is still training GUPW members in the

³ They include law, by-laws, plans, programmes, and various administrative procedures.

⁴ WCLC is a member of WATC coalition





different areas, WATC coalition members and committees, in addition to women organizations and CBOs in the different areas of the West Bank and Gaza. WATC has trained two groups of women leaders to monitor to monitor the progress of the Women's Bills of Rights document in the different areas of the West Bank and Gaza. In 2009, the Women's Bill of Rights document was reviewed in a video-conference workshop between WATC offices in Ramallah and Gaza that was attended by the Ministry of Women's Affairs, the Palestinian Center for Research and Documentation, the General the GUPW and WATC staff and Board, in addition to other women organizations and women activists. Recommendations were submitted to GUPW for their reference. The workshop's review was covered in the Voice of Women newspaper and different media.

As part of the Penal Code coalition, and in the absence of an active Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC), the focus was on the items in the current law that encourage honor killing through diluting the sentence, or legitimizing it such as articles 340 and 98 in the Personal Status Law, and article 62 in the Gaza Family Law⁵. Also, WATC is a member for the **coalition** Against the Death Sentence with AlHaq and the GUPW, and other women and human rights organization.

It is worth mentioning that all participating members in the above mentioned committees and coalitions are convinced of the importance of the committees and consider them integral for gender equality.

In the absence of an active Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC), WATC decided to focus its work on advocacy and awareness targeting specific items of the family law and the Bill of rights so as to gain community support to these items. Campaigning included organizations and CBOs, trained women and youth. The campaign mobilized local councils, youth centers, cultural centers, women's committees, and women organizations and CBOs.⁶ The trained youth were main actors in the campaign either in coordinating the meetings, or in facilitating the discussion after the film or the play. WATC provided the films used for the discussion, and supported the cost of the play performances. A petition was used at the end of the awareness to be signed claiming raising the age of marriage to 18 The petition is addressed to the President, and will be submitted after the campaign ends. WATC media is involved in disseminating messages in support of the campaign and in publicizing the event.

In Gaza, the campaign addressed violence against women in general, and used direct awareness meetings, in addition to media. Posters and stickers were used to disseminate messages related to "women's rights are human rights", either through media or through printing the motto on school bags, or through flying sheets, in addition to production of a play related to the motto to be performed in 2010 in Gaza⁷.

In addition, WATC conducted 12 awareness workshops in Gaza and 10 workshops in Jenin governorate in the West Bank on UN resolution 1325. About 550 woman and men participated in the workshops. In addition, about 150 awareness meetings were conducted where films on women's rights for protection were discussed. Plays were used when possible to elicit responses of participants. All the awareness meetings were conducted in coordination

⁵ The Personal Status Law is the old Jordanian Law that was applied before 1967 in the West Bank. The Jordanian law was amended in Jordan, but did not change in the West Bank. Similarly, the old Egyptian Family Law is still effective in Gaza Strip although it has been amended in Egypt.

⁶ This campaign was supported by Diakonia





with other CBOs in the different areas. About 200 participants, representing CBOs, and local councils, participated in the networking meetings, and about 2400 women and 155 men participated in the awareness meetings.⁸

Moreover, about 200 women benefited from the legal and social consultancies through the intensive training on the women's bill of rights, gender issues.

It is worth mentioning that WATC office in Gaza coordinated with the Women's Affairs Center and the different CBOs to be partners in the campaign for adopting the motto "Women's Rights are Human Rights". The networking will be continued through Bina' coalition for advocating for women's rights as human rights. Networking is also continued with the Palestinian Center for Democracy, the Free Thought and Culture Society, Gaza Mental Health Program, the GUPW, PNGO, the Regional Campaign for amendment of the family law, and media personnel.

It is worth mentioning, that an assessment was conducted for the needs of women and men in Ramallah and Gaza strip where 50 youth conducted 54 focus group discussions to identify women's needs and men's needs in both areas. The needs assessment aimed at identifying the most important needs to be addressed by the trained youth in a campaign, and to gain alliances from the local communities to support women's participation in public life and in decision making levels⁹.

Stories were collected on violations against women which will be used in the advocacy at the local level or international level, in training, or for data material for documentation or publication as fact sheets.

Objective 2: Enhancing the capacity of women to claim their rights at the family and community level

Strategy:

To achieve the above objective, there is a need to develop the work methodologies and the human resources of women's institutions that work at the national and local levels in women's economic, political or social empowerment. This includes the development of training and awareness curricula, training of trainers and women organization in local structures.

Achievement:

In order to enhance the capacity of women, it was important to build the capacity of women organizations and CBOs working directly with women, and to assess their training and work methods. Accordingly, WATC documented and developed models to be used in women's empowerment programmes and their integration into the work of institutions that aim at empowering women.

Women Organizations' needs were assessed and many of the curricula used for training in leadership and human rights have been compiled, and reviewed. In coordination with the Palestinian Woman's Center for Research and Documentation (PRCRD),¹⁰ a committee from the different women and media organizations was formed, in which WATC was a basic

⁷ These activities were supported by CARE International.

⁸ These activities were supported by NED.

⁹ The needs assessment was supported by the MPDL





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contributor. A training manual has been drafted to be used in the training on gender-based violence. A meeting was conducted with all the different organizations to provide feedback to the development of the manual and recommendations. The manual was drafted to be used in 2010 to train professionals from the ministries and for different youth and women organizations on gender equality.

In addition, and through the support of the OSI, Training of different groups in skills of collection and documentation of stories on violations of women's rights took place in Hebron, Bethlehem, Ramallah, Tulkarem, Jenin, Qalqilia, and Nablus. Stories collected from the field will be used as case studies in the training and for advocacy purposes in 2010.

With the support of NED, and in order to address the need for a manual to be used for training on UN resolution 1325, a manual was drafted for this purpose. The manual included a part related to human rights, women's rights, and another part to train the UN resolution 1325. The manual included cases and stories that were tailored to suit the Palestinian context. The manual will be tested in 2010 in Gaza and in the West Bank as well.

Training on how to use the manuals took place in the different targeted groups representing youth, women, and professionals who were nominated by their organizations. This resulted in building the capacity of the organizations, and at the same time, ensuring their sustainability.

Targeted groups:

The most important groups that WATC worked with in 2009 are youth (men and women) professionals women (lawyers, social workers, media personnel, and artists), in addition to rural women and refugees. It is worth mentioning, that WATC uses "Leading to Choices"¹¹ manual for all its leadership training to all different target groups. This training is considered integral to change attitudes and perception towards the concept of leadership, and for changing practices where participatory leadership is proposed to the traditional one way leadership. WATC considers this kind of leadership as women leadership.

Youth

50 young women in the West Bank and Gaza have been trained to be leaders in their communities¹². After completion of training, the 50 trained women youth conducted 53 focus group discussions in their communities, and collected information on challenges facing women¹³. The information was analyzed and compared to other published studies and statistics forming the basis for future interventions, and advocacy purposes. A conference was held in Ramallah to share the information with related ministries and women and youth organizations and led by the youth themselves. The Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Youth and Sports expressed his admiration to the level youth reached in terms of skills and knowledge which was demonstrated in leading such important conference. These youth were exposed to 205 hours in participatory leadership, and community mobilizations, etc.

¹⁰ With support from UNESCO

¹¹ The manual provides a new concept for leadership, and was developed by the WLP in which WATC is a major partner in the development of the manual, and in testing it. Some Palestinian cases were added as a supplement in the Palestinian context.

¹² With MPDL support

¹³ The training and the study were supported by the MPDL.





In addition, about 80 youth (women and men) were trained in leadership skills, community awareness management, and advocacy skills to conduct awareness campaign in their communities¹⁴. The trained youth agreed among themselves to address the issue of early marriage as a critical issue in all sites. A plan of activities was designed and shared with the different institutions present in the selected communities to be part of the campaign. WATC supported implementation of the campaign financially, and through providing films, supporting theater plays, and in being present in the discussions and in the media coverage.

After the training ended, 50 young women and men in the age group 19-28 in skills and knowledge needed to empower 400 youth in the age group 14-17. Knowledge and skills provided to the youth age group will be transferred to the younger age group. These areas cover issues of democracy human rights, women's rights, citizenship, voluntary work, community mobilization, leading group discussions, and facilitation. Special focus will be given to the Participatory leadership approach and concept. The training was completed in 2009 in Gaza, and will continue in the West Bank in the year 2010¹⁵.

Some of the comments of the trainees are the following:

Nisreen AlShawa from Gaza said, "What I learned in 60 training hours through the project "From Youth to Youth" is much more from 98 training hours I took earlier.

The trainer Mahmoud Al Minyarawi reflect on the training, "What WATC has given me in this training, goes beyond training. It gave us new values and skills."

It is worth mentioning that the trainees called themselves "The will-be group", and their motto was "Youth from Palestine meet the challenge". The group designed a logo for the group, and opened an account on the face book.

Professionals:

60 women (30 *lawyers and 30 social workers*) were trained through the support of the Welfare Association to provide legal guidance and counseling in the West Bank and Gaza, and to conduct awareness workshops related to women's issues and human rights. The awareness workshops were accompanied with media coverage (see the media section).

Twenty journalists (women and men) were trained in Gaza on concepts and skills needed to qualify them become advocates for human rights and women rights in the media. The training helped them identify gender-based discrimination and highlight it as an issue in the media. The trained journalists played an important role in the awareness campaigns of WATC on women's rights¹⁶.

In addition, 12 artists were trained on integrating a gender perspective in literature and art, where a new vision of women and their role was explored¹⁷.

Rural and refugees women:

50 rural and refugee women in Jenin governate and in Gaza Strip were trained in participatory leadership, and in human and women's rights, and in 1325 resolution, in addition to skills for leading focus group discussions and the role of women in peace and war.¹⁸

Women organizations and CBOs:

¹⁴ The training and the campaign were supported by Diakonia

¹⁵ The training was supported by MPDL

¹⁶ In Gaza, the training was supported by CARE.

¹⁷ Through the support of the EC.

¹⁸ Through the support of NED





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As a result of the training above, the capacity of more than 100 women organizations and CBOs in the West Bank and Gaza was built in human and women's rights, and hopefully, in 2010, these new skills and knowledge will be integrated in their work plans, and activities.

Objective 3: Community awareness of the rights of Palestinian women in all locations

Strategy:

The strategy used to reach the above mentioned object is mobilization of media, private, public and non-governmental organizations to support women's issues and the development of methodologies and institutional programmes for public and community awareness about women's rights and issues as well as the organization of public awareness campaigns.

Achievement:

WATC had trained on annual basis media people to be part of the effort to change the stereotyped roles of women and men. In 2009, the **Twenty journalists (women and men)** that were trained in Gaza strip played an important role in the awareness campaign on women's rights and human rights mainly in Gaza Strip. The trained journalists highlighted gender-based discrimination using different media. A contest for the best article on human rights was organized by WATC\Gaza office, and Mirvat Abu Jamei' got the first prize on her article on honor killing. WATC media personnel are in the media forum for advocating for women's rights, and through their relationship with the rest of the forum members, they form a friendly media body that is standby to support human rights and women's rights.

In the West Bank, WATC media staff trained youth on how to address community for awareness on women's rights. This training was helpful and prepared the trained youth on facing difficult questions, and handle critical issues.

The local media covered all WATC activities, and the way they presented their reports and the articles related to these activities show a more positive attitude towards the image of women and their role in society. Several reports covered the mural activity which reflects the role of women in the literary and artistic arenas. Also, the cultural week for creative women was covered by media. Many interviews and articles addressed the role of women in areas that were exclusive to men.

WATC also used success stories collected from the West Bank and Gaza showing women in decision making levels, and in areas that are not traditionally considered for women either in the form of a film, or a book, or through the website. Some of these stories are collected by the journalists themselves and by WATC field coordinators.

Many radio and video stations became more sensitive to women's issues. WATC receives innovations to participate in talk shows or to be interviewed on one of the women issues. This shows high interest in women's issues and human rights issues. With the work that is being done by WATC media and the forum Against Violence Against Women have been highlighted in the media compared to 4 years ago, when this issue used to go without being noticed by the media or by the PA. In February 15, the Prime Minister's office took a decision to freeze the article 340 and the article 98 of the Jordanian Personal Status Law that is still applied in the West Bank, and article 18 of the Family Rights Law that is being applied in Gaza. This decision came after publishing a petition directed to the President in AlQuds newspaper requesting the President to take action and to consider what is called "honor killing" as a





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crime to be punished. The decision of the Prime Minister's Office was sent to the President's office to approve; however, up till now, nothing formal was issued.

Al Watan TV programme is an example of the new interest in women's issues as they cooperate with women organizations and give them a special price for 12 episodes related to women's issues. WATC is now in the process to cooperate on this. Also Ma'an News is giving special attention to women's issues. The play "Hekayet Muna) that was produced by Ishtar's theater, and was based on the legal consultancy provided by WATC, was another example of the genuine interest of media in women's issues. Not only the play was recorded, but the discussion that followed the play in which the General Director of WATC had a major role.

Media people in Gaza and the West Bank became more gender sensitive. The articles and reports that come to the Voice of women and to WATC radio programme show this improvement. In addition, the messages that come from the readers of the Voice of Women and WATC radio programme demonstrate a change in the perception of media personnel to women's role in the community and public life. In addition, the written articles by men and women journalists have positive attitude towards women's right for protection and gender equality. Writers now show women as active participants in their communities and not as the case before where women were perceived as victims and passive with only one role to play which is the reproductive role.

WATC media was very well received as per the comments sent to WATC from different sectors of people. Yet, there is a need for an evaluation to evaluate satisfaction of different groups of people with WATC media programmes.

Decision makers became more sensitive to gender-based discrimination in the media. The Prime Minister in his famous speech on the occasion of the conference against all kinds of discrimination noted the necessity of integrating gender equality policies in all ministries' strategies. The strategy meetings for each ministry discussed the gender component which raised the awareness on gender equality and human rights issues.

Decision makers and public became more positive towards participation of women at political decision-making levels. (5 women ministers, and two women as Shar'i judges were appointed)and this was observed in their interviews and their discourse.

Media people became more gender sensitive to women's issues, and women's role in development.

WATC produced 12 issues of the Voice of Women addressing women's issues and human rights issues. In addition, 39 radio episodes of the radio programme were produced and aired on human rights issues and good governance.

Objective 4: Enhancing WATC's effectiveness and efficiency to ensure institutional sustainability and the achievement of its objectives

Strategy:

The strategy to reach the fourth objective is capacity-building of women's organizations affiliated to WATC which constitute the main body for governance of the organization, as well as capacity-building of human resources for the mission and vision of WATC, and establishing systems that ensure proper monitoring of programmes, improve joint learning mechanisms and guarantee transparency in financial and administrative procedures.





Achievement:

The year 2009 witnessed a good amount of core funding to support for the implementation of WATC strategy compared to the years before. The funders were varied, and increased in terms of number which ensured the sustainability of the organization. This gave a high morale to the staff especially the officers of the different departments.

In addition, the review of the administrative and financial scales by WATC board, helped in improving the morale of the staff.

As the year 2009 is the beginning of a new strategy, a workshop was conducted to WATC staff to clarify the vision, mission and strategy objectives, in addition to the values that govern WATC work. Other workshops were conducted to discuss the Palestinian Woman's Bill of Rights document, and the UN resolution 1325, in addition to the discussion on the draft family law. It was important to have staff aware of the new strategy and the stand of WATC Board from basic issues. The family law was discussed from the point of view of the bill of rights document, and with other laws used in the oPt.

With the capacity department established, a needs assessment of WATC coalition members was completed to gather information related to the needs of the coalition members in terms of skills, human rights knowledge, attitudes and governance.

Accordingly, training took two forms: One form is addressing the common needs, and another addressed the individual needs. The common training addressed issues of human rights and women's rights, and the Palestinian Women's Bill of Rights document, the development of the family law, participatory leadership as a concept and as skill. While individual training covered IT skills and how to start their own website. The rest of the training will be continued in 2010.

As for building the capacity of the organization, WATC worked on developing the skills and knowledge needed to improve the work performance of the staff.

Training was organized as per the needs of WATC staff and the organization. The training reflected positively on the organization as it brought new expertise to the organization. For example, three staff members were trained to produce video spots; two video spots were produced and won the award that was organized by the WLP.

Also, two media staff members were trained on Children's rights, and how to address it media. The training was reflected in one issue of the Voice of women where several articles were prepared to that effect and came in harmony with the campaign on early marriage campaign.

In addition, two of staff members participated in the workshop arranged by the Regional Coalition of the Family Law that was held in Cairo on the status of the family law and acquired skills that help them train on the Palestinian family law.

Several meetings were conducted between WATC offices through video conference meetings to ensure the unity of the West Bank and Gaza in the new political context of Gaza, and to understand better the new social and political context for WATC work. A needs assessment was conducted to identify needs especially after the war on Gaza. Meetings were conducted





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with women organizations, human rights organizations, WATC general assembly, media people, and WATC staff.

In order to have more safe and relaxing environment, doors were replaced to give feeling of security to staff, and WATC offices were painted.

A needs assessment was conducted to WATC staff to identify issues needed to work on. Accordingly, special sessions were organized for WATC team on issues related to the mission of WATC. Two day sessions on the Bill of Rights document in the West Bank and Gaza. Also, training was conducted on the family law, and the UN resolution 1325 and how the resolution can be used in the Palestinian context.

Regular meetings of the Executive Board took place in the first half of the year, and issues related to the financial and administrative bylaws were discussed by them and approved. Meetings were also conducted with all staff using the video conference to listen to the feedback from staff on these bylaws. However, due to the elections of three of WATC Board members to the Board of the GUPW, these members had to resign. In addition, due to the appointment of two members of WATC Executive Board as Ministers, these two members resigned. A sixth Board member resigned to get her PHD in Britain. This situation affected the chorum in the meetings. A committee from the remaining board members continued the meetings and prepared for the meeting of the General Assembly. Accordingly, a new Executive Board was elected in November 2009. The new Executive Board showed great enthusiasm and interest in their first meeting of December, and emphasized the necessity of regular meetings.

The number of Board members, who participate in WATC's activities, has increased. This was noticed in the several activities and projects such as celebrating woman in culture and art project, the Cultural Week of Creative Women, the events celebrating women in decision-making levels, training of staff, attending or chairing panels, representing WATC with the donors and international visitors. The board also considered certain activities of WATC as a major task of the Board such as representation at the family law, the Penal code, and the Forum Against Violence Against Women.

WATC Board of Directors in as per the elections of November 2009

Name	Position
1. Nahla Qourah	President
2. Abla Rimawi:	Vice President
3. Fadwa khader	Treasurer
4. Ikram Muhtaseb :	Member of Executive Committee
5. Islah Jad :	Member of Executive Committee
6. Dr Areej Audi:	Member of Executive Committee
7. Ibtessam Zedan:	Secretary of Executive Committee
8. Nada Twair:	Member of Executive Committee
9. Dr Sabah Sharsheer:	Member of Executive Committee
10. Sana' Anabtawi:	Member of Executive Committee
11. Dr Hadeel Qazzaz:	Member of Executive Committee





Challenges:

At the political level:

The most important obstacle that faced WATC is the aggression on Gaza, which obliged WATC to address emergency needs of Gaza people. WATC' office in Gaza was closed and some staff lost relatives, and one lost her house. The impact of the aggression on Gaza affected all people in Gaza. As our staff in Gaza reflected on the situation "even the mental health workers need ventilation sessions". Once, the aggression ended (temporarily), WATC office in Gaza got involved in providing ventilation sessions to mothers and children, and at the same time stories of violations on human rights were collected.

At the organizational level:

WATC's Executive Board went through major change in membership due to appointment of two board members as Ministers, (Siham Barghouthi and Rabeeha Diab as Ministers of Culture and Women's Affairs). In addition three other board members who were elected as members of the Executive Committee of the General Union of the Palestinian Woman (Samia Bamia, Dalal Salameh, and Khawla AlAzraq), had to resign to avoid conflict of interest. A sixth member who was WATC Deputy President had to resign to travel abroad for her PHD study. Due to the new situation, the General Assembly met, and the Executive Board resigned to allow for new elections.

At the programme implementation level:

One of the challenges that faced the implementation of the programme document was related to the new hierarchy structure. The move from being project oriented towards programme oriented was not easy. In addition, a lot of networking was needed to coordinate the departments with each other especially that WATC continued to recruit projects support to cover the remaining budget needed for the strategy programme. This added a lot of work on the different departments, and sometimes, increased the load on the field workers.

In addition, the different projects requested different reports. Some donors requested reports every month (financial and narrative) which was too much for the officers to handle. This situation prevented the officers from going to the field, and from having time to coordinate with each other. In addition, most of the officers, being involved in the paper work did not leave them much time for following up on the programme implementation, or using their expertise in training. With the financial situation of the organization, it was not easy to recruit an administrative assistantship for the programme officers which add a lot of work to the officers.





At the beneficiaries level:

Many of the trainees whether from women committees or from other women organizations and CBOs reached a very good level as trainers or facilitators; however, WATC did not make good use of their potential for training or facilitation.

At the logistics level:

It was impossible for staff in the West Bank to visit Gaza, and for Gaza staff to visit the West Bank. The same applies to Jerusalem. In addition, mobility was not easy. Sometimes it takes 3 hours to go from one place to another especially in the West Bank due to changes in the roads, check points, or closures. This leaves little time to follow up. That is why WATC had to train its staff especially who are in the field to ensure quality of work.

Programme Impact

The most important impact is the endorsement of President Mahmoud Abbas to the CEDAW without reservation on March 8 of this year. This makes Palestine the first Arab country that adopts the CEDAW without reservation.

WATC has been recognized as one of the most important advocate for women's rights by decision makers at the highest level of the PA and political parties. It is also recognized as having an effective board from which woman ministers are recruited.

The appointment of two board members from WATC , and 3 members to the highest governance of the GUPW, although reflected negatively on the organization, as it was difficult to have a chorus; it gave WATC more visibility and credibility as an organization, and to WATC 's work as well. In fact, it provided new opportunities for cooperation with two important ministries that were headed by two woman ministers who are former board members at WATC. The fact that the Minister of Woman's Affairs, and the Minister of Culture are both former members of WATC Board gave WATC special importance and credibility at the public level, and in media and with decision makers. In addition, the Minister of the Social Affairs comes from an organization that is affiliated to WATC.

An effective communication was built between WATC and women member organizations. Some suggestions were made by the women organizations to improve the relationship. In addition, communication between the different members of the organizations improved through meetings and getting engaged in on women issues or national issues.

A consensus reached on a draft of the Family law (Personal Status Law) prepared by the Family Law coalition, to be discussed at a larger circle that includes political parties, and other civil society organizations.





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WATC intervention after the Israeli aggression on Gaza was very important for the families who suffered at all levels from the Israeli aggression. WATC intervention gave it credibility at the community level, and facilitated its work later on.

The trained social workers and lawyers that were trained in Gaza and the West Bank became reference people for advocacy and awareness in their communities, and their organizations capacity was built due to their training.

Young women and men became more aware of their rights and their role in the community and they became sensitive to the needs of their communities, and capable of planning for a campaign to address urgent needs. Young women and men could identify violations of human and women rights, and record them for advocacy for women's rights especially the right for protection.

The data collected by youth on the situation of youth in their communities was highly accepted by related ministries, local councils, and NGOs working with youth. A strategy for youth was developed based on the accumulated data by WATC youth.

Some of the trained young women and men were employed due to the knowledge and skills they acquired through their participation in WATC training.

There is an increase in the number of male supporters to women's rights, in at least 10 districts, who attended training in women's rights and gender issues, in addition to training of trainers who are participating in community awareness campaigns in their communities.

There is an increase in the number of rural women who demand their rights at the household level and at the public level.

There is more awareness on the participatory leadership by organizations which is reflected in the increased demand on Leading to Choices manual. Many trained youth expressed the effect of the training on Leading to Choices on their personalities, at the family level, at the work level, and at a national level.

The networking with the different organizations have developed to coalitions such as Bena' coalition against violence against women in Gaza.

WATC became the hosting organization for AMAL Coalition in Gaza due to its work in the advocacy against violence against women.

WATC visibility increased at national, regional, and international level due to the activities that were conducted locally, yet recognized internationally, such as the mural where 3 international artists were invited to participate in accomplishing this important event, the website where some events are reported, the voice of women which is usually posted on the website, articles translated and posted, or due to participation in the national events, regional and international events, such as the conferences that took place in Jordan, Lebanon, and Malaysia on the Family Law.

WATC's strategy was considered as a reference document for the strategy planning manual developed by the WLP. WATC' General Director was invited by the WLP to facilitate the strategy of SIGI in Jordan.





WATC's value added in gender training is recognized at a regional level, where WATC was invited to train Diakonia's partners in Jordan.

Success Story

¹⁹H.H., a 34 years old woman who lives in a village between Ramallah and Jerusalem, married since 1995, and has a son (Mohammed in his 7th year). She is a new member of one of the member organizations affiliated to WATC coalition. She used to be silent; yet a good listener. At the first sessions of the training, she abstained from interacting with neither with the trainer, nor with other participants. Suddenly, on the fourth day, she began to cry which made all the trainees confused. The trainer, Soraida Abd Hussein, asked her if she would like to share her feelings with the rest of the group; so she began telling her story. "I was married when I was 19; my family forced me to marry a man who is 10 years older than me. I had to drop school, and move to my husband's family house. No one ever cared about what I want in life. People see me laughing and smiling; they think I am happy. But this is the first time I feel important, and there are people who care for me."

H.H. continued, " My husband, my mother in law and before them, my father, they all hit me, shout at me even in front of my son, they want me to get pregnant and to have another baby boy. I went to many doctors, and they all said that I have nothing wrong; yet my husband and his family do not believe me, and they convinced my husband to marry another woman. This is the first training I attend in my life, and this is the first chance for me to talk with other people about my life. I have no friends, no job, and no activities except this training which I joined with the help of one of the women organizations a month ago.

H.H. attended all the training sessions, and started participating in the different activities. She began to share her ideas and feelings with the trainers and the trainees which made everybody astonished for the change. They were surprised to discover how much knowledge she has, and how willing she became to share her ideas with others. One day, she came to the training, holding beautiful handmade decorations. She said, "You all helped to change my life. I do not have any certificate, but I have skills that I have not used. Yesterday, after the training, I went to the market and I bought raw material to make decoration to sell. I will make you reduction; this is my first step in building my own business. The trainees, the trainer and WATC coordinator clapped for her and encouraged her to continue the project. On the last day of the training she said, "I want to tell you something; with your support I have changed many things in my life; yesterday for the first time when my husband tried to hit me I caught his hand, looked him in the eyes, and told him " I am equal to you; you must not hit me anymore." She continued , "He was shocked, and said that he discovered that he has a strong wife whom he hurt all those years!!! The second shock was when he discovered that his wife writes beautiful stories. H.H. read some her storied to the participants and they were really amazing. The trainer promised her to help her publish her stories to help battered woman when they read them.

¹⁹ The initials are used for privacy





Other projects

1. Economic Empowerment of Deprived Palestinian Families:

This project was conducted in partnership with the Palestinian Union of Agricultural Committees (PUAC) where each party participated through its expertise. The project was implemented in Gaza due to its difficult situation in terms of poverty and unemployment. Accordingly, the PUAC provided their expertise in empowering families in knowledge and skills that allow them to make their living through raising life stock and agriculture; while WATC ensured that the project is gender sensitive and women are empowered in leadership skills to have a more effective role in their families and at the level of the project, in addition to managing income generating projects. The project also aims at dissemination of awareness messages related to safe agricultural practices. The project will continue until the end of 2010²⁰.

2. The Cultural Week for Creative Women:

This project was one of WATC contribution to Jerusalem/the Arab Cultural Capital 2009. The project aimed at highlighting the role of women in areas that are usually exclusive to men. 13 Palestinian and Arab women were invited to Palestine as part of the events of the Jerusalem/the Arab Cultural Capital 2009. In addition, creative women from different areas of Palestine were invited. Unfortunately, women from Gaza could not make it due to Israeli policies. The week was organized in partnership with the Ministry of Culture (MOC), and covered all areas of the west Bank (including Jerusalem). During this week, several events took place such as a book exhibition for women writers, art exhibition for women artists, several literary sessions for poetry reading by the Arab and Palestinian women writers, 3 panel discussions on women's novels that are related to women's issues, a play related to the situation of women in different stages, and a film produced by a woman on a woman, and a musical evening with a woman signer. The different activities showed that women do exist in all creative fields, and this area is not exclusive to men. The events attracted the media, and WATC staff covered the events but from a different angle.

Although this event was organized by WATC and MOC, but it was coordinated with municipalities, governorates, and intellectuals and men writers.

3. Celebration of Women in Arts and Culture:

Journalists called this event as "the creative idea of Jerusalem/the Arab Cultural Capital - 2009. The event is creating a mural using texts of Palestinian women writers for artistic inspiration. Each artist has to select a sketch to be used for his/her artistic piece. The pieces will be put together to form the mural which is 20 m long, and 5 m width. The mural, which will use ceramic, in addition to other material was divided into two pieces" one half to be situated in Jerusalem, and the other half in Ramallah. It is worth mentioning that the two halves are not the same, but complement each other as one piece.

It is also worth mentioning that WATC trained the 12 artists on gender issues before they started reading the women writers texts. This was not well received by artists at first, but gradually as the training started, one by one joined until all of them participated. It was the first experience for the artists in such training; and the first experience of WATC in training of artists. But it worked.





The organization's potential lasting impact:

WATC is a coalition of women organizations, women's centers and individual women activists with a General assembly of 55 women. Over the last eighteen years, WATC has been working for a democratic society that does not discriminate between men and women. WATC, not only a coalition but it also promotes coalition formation and partnerships at local level and at regional and international levels. WATC coalition is much more than the sum of its partners. They together give an example of how woman's cause can unify people with different backgrounds. WATC as a coalition has the experiences of political women activists, professionals, and national activists. The experiences of these women provide a valuable input to the organization and to its direction. The direction of WATC has shifted from a networking relationship with other women's organizations to a partnership relationship with many of them, embracing the full agenda of the women's movement and welcoming broader membership within WATC.

The Relationships built through the networks and coalitions represent an investment which will continue after the action with minimal funding and will provide an invaluable foundation for further actions in the future.

In addition, the networking model which is used for the Board constituency, where member organizations work together as one body, is being duplicated at the regional level. WATC's Board was restructured to be less exclusive and be more accountable to the General Assembly, and this keeps WATC sustainability. In addition, WATC through its programmes and projects, and in cooperation with the women's committees, seeks to reactivate women at the grassroots level and to build local leaders who are active in their communities, through its various training programmes, campaigning for equal rights and reaching remote rural areas with their work, and this widens WATC popularity between the Palestinian Women and among women organizations.

The networking among the different programmes at WATC ensures complementarity of the programmes to achieve the targeted goal. In the campaign for raising the age of marriage that is still on, (based on the Women's Bill of Rights), theater and films were used to open a debate on women's rights for education. At the same time, WATC radio programme "Against Silence" and the Voice of Women" newspaper support the community awareness campaign and complement each other in providing a national media. The youth programme ensures that youth area part of the campaign, where petitions are signed against early marriage. This complementary approach ensures the messages regarding woman's rights are highlighted and reinforced. Films and play discussions ensure information is not imposed but inferred. This gives again the ownership for the participants for the information gained which is the first step toward changing attitudes towards women's rights.

During the current phase of its development, WATC has started to decentralize, and by doing so, more investment took place in the regional and field coordinators to ensure that they can lead the areas even if trainers from the center could not make it. This is a necessary step to overcome the 612 barriers and check points, and to ensure that the work is done. The

²⁰The project is sponsored by UNDP





indicators to measure the impact is the work being completed and concepts are relayed correctly. At the level of the targeted groups, the indicator is the change in their practices, and in their personalities and their attitudes. These are usually assessed before the training starts. The trainees through the training process demonstrate their abilities in communication, facilitation, using a participatory approach in leadership. Some of them usually express how they changed through the process of the training and give examples how this change affected their family, and their community, and sometimes their work mates. Quantitative indicators give numbers, but not the quality of the work and the level of performance. It is of course important to know how many completed the training, but it is more important to know how many of those who completed the training could change their lives and made a difference in their communities. The story of H.H. is one example of the impact of the training, although it is still early to judge.

WATC, by training the different organizations staff, is building their capacities which is important to multiply the impact at the grassroots level. In addition, the networking model which is used for the executive Board, where member organizations work together as one body, is being duplicated at the regional level. WATC's executive Board was restructured to be less exclusive and be more accountable to the General Assembly, and this keeps WATC sustainability. Also, through its programmes and projects in cooperation with the women's committees, WATC sought to reactivate women at the grassroots level and to build local leaders who are active in their communities, through its various training programmes, implementing several lobbying campaigns for equal rights and reaching remote rural areas with their work and this widen WATC popularity between the Palestinian women and women organizations.

Also, WATC designed the training methodology for local ownership of knowledge and skills, with its participatory approach ensuring focus on participants' needs and priorities. This increases the probability of lessons learned being converted into long-term improved practice in each individual's own context. We anticipate that participants will develop lasting capacity to ensure their grassroots campaigning reaches the public domain and influences decision-making, and WATC will continue to monitor training on effective campaigning and media advocacy post-project.

Moreover, WATC focuses on enhancing existing grassroots strategies rather than introducing new ones as experience shows strengthening existing work is vital for local ownership and sustainability whereas programmes specifically introduced for a project usually end once funding finishes. The project aims to impact attitudes towards women's rights in the Palestinian society, working to ensure that a balanced and representative view is provided.

Also, there is real need to continue in the raising awareness campaign related to the Palestinian Women Bill of Rights , the suggested Panel Law and Family Law to raise the community awareness toward these laws from progressive view especially that these laws have not passed by the Legislative Council according to the disruption of its work during the current period.





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Lessons Learnt and future prospects

WATC learnt that there is a need to hold more indepth training (theoretical and practical trainings) to ensure that women organization's capacities are built, especially in the area of human rights concepts, and women's rights. The gender concept needs a lot of training to ensure it is internalized. Statistics, children's literature, and literature in general can be used to make the gender concept more tangible and comprehensible. There is also a need for more community mobilization skills and more training on the participatory leadership skills, as the concept is still new. Furthermore, the fact that women organizations are used to a top-bottom approach in leadership, it is not easy to create change in a short period of time. Many woman activists are still believers in this form of leadership and their organizations are built accordingly. Gender equality and participatory leadership are two revolutionary concepts that need to be internalized. This means localizing them, to ensure they become part of the culture.

Also, there is a need to hold advanced training on Facilitation skills for the Women organizations' leaders to enhance their skills in working with the community, and in working with other organizations for unifying the women's discourse.

Publications

WATC has produced a new book in the series Women Pioneers (Raidat Min Baladi) and it is the story of 14 women who could make a difference in their communities and parties and could reach decision making levels. What connect them is the fact that they all were all either founders of WATC or contributed to its development.

WATC will continue publishing success stories of women who could make a difference in their communities. These stories provide examples of women who played different roles, and penetrated the public arena.

WATC also continued publishing the Voice of Women on a monthly basis in the different areas of the West Bank and Gaza. WATC distribute 23000 copies of each issue through AlAyyam newspaper, and 6000 copies are distributed by hand to different governmental and nongovernmental institutions, universities, public libraries, cultural centers, UN agencies, in addition to field coordinators.

In addition, WATC published some information material related to women's rights. Some examples of these are given below, and the media annex includes more.



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المكتب الرئيسي: شارع

فرع غزة

دعوة المرأة

مشروع تمكين النساء الفلسطينيات
تحت إشراف المجلس الوطني



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Acknowledgement

The Women's Affairs Technical Committee would like to underline the efforts of its women volunteers and their communities, participating decision-makers, rural women, youth and adolescents, women committees, organizations and CBOs, media personnel, social workers, lawyers, artists, and donors who have helped in the success of all activities in 2009.

On behalf of all beneficiaries, WATC , would like to express its deep gratitude to all the financial supporters in 2009, mainly:

1. Women's Learning Partnership (WLP)
2. Ford Foundation
3. The Open Society Institute Foundation (OSI)
4. NGO Development Center (NDC)
5. Diakonia
6. CARE International
7. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES)
8. Movimiento Por la Paz, el Desarme y la Libertad (MPDL)
9. Spanish Cooperation
10. National Endowment for Democracy (NED)
11. European Commission(EC)
12. Welfare Association
13. UNRWA
14. Woman Center for Research and Documentation/UNESCO,
15. Jerusalem as the Arab Cultural Capital
16. Ministry of Culture





Annex

WATC in media:

1. **WATC Celebrating the 5 ministers:**

- <http://www.womengateway.com/arwg/Reporters/Palestine/phe1stine254.htm>
- <http://www.womengateway.com/arabwg/pages/SaveArticle.aspx?Guid=%7B7B6B32F8E D-CB20-4FDB-8A36-F9E7273A7BB9%7D>
- <http://pgftu.org/site2/news.php?action=view&id=173>
- <http://www.amad.ps/arabic/?action=detail&id=40308>
- <http://albald.net/news/3/91.html>

2. **A Panel discussion on the Personal Status Law:**

- www.palestinefuture.net/news.php?action=view&id
- <http://www.palestinefuture.net/news.php?action=view&id=75438>
- <http://www.al-ayyam.ps/znews/site/template/article.aspx?did=126049&date=11/10/2009>
- <http://www.samanews.com/index.php?act=Show&id=53957>
- <http://www.ekharyat.net/internal.asp?page=articles&articles=details&cat=23&newsID=15295>
- <http://www.masader.ps/p/ar/node/7291>
- <http://www.palestinefuture.net/news.php?action=view&id=75438>
- www.ngo-portal.ps/p/ar/node/7291

3. **A panel discussion on Violations of women workers**

- <http://www.pgftu.ps/news-action-show-id-664.htm>
- news.maktoob.com/article/2878671
- www.pgftu.ps/news-action-show-id-664.htm

4. **A workshop on Goldstone report in coordination with the The Palestinian Center for Democracy and Peace.**

- <http://pgftu.org/site2/news.php?action=view&id=772>
- <http://www.al-ayyam.ps/znews/site/template/article.aspx?did=124513&date=10/22/2009>
- www.pgflp.net/vb/showthread.php?t=5654
- <http://www.aawsat.com/details.asp?section=4&article=375589&issueno=10106>
- <http://web.alquds.com/node/205321>

5. **A panel discussion on women Prisoners: work opportunities and society attitudes:**

- <http://www.sanabil.org/articles/index.php?news=362>
- <http://news.maktoob.com/article/2701213/>

6. **The Cultural Week for Creative Women:**





- <http://www.maannews.net/arb/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=241838>
- http://arabic.pnn.ps/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=67900
- <http://www.palestine-pmc.com/arabic/inside1.asp?x=200&cat=5&opt=1>
- <http://www.alapn.com/index.php?mod=article&cat=MAHRAGANAT&article=8884>
- <http://www.alzaitona.net/ar/news.php?go=fullnews&newsid=36514>
- <http://www.palestinefuture.net/news.php?action=view&id=77327>
- www.alquds2009.org/atemplate.php?id=1976

7. Celebrating women in Culture and art: The mural of life

- <http://www.sheemapress.com/news.php?id=16789&sub=19>
- www.maannews.net/arb/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=253718
- <http://www.alquds2009.org/atemplate.php?id=1426>
- <http://www.womengateway.com/arwg/Reporters/Palestine/plstn.htm>
- <http://www.paltoday.com/arabic/News-42078.html>

8. A Panel on feminizing poverty

- <http://www.sanabil.org/articles/index.php?news=712>
- www.womengateway.com/NR/rdonlyres/...D5BF.../WomencallOct.pdf
- www.falastinyat.org/ar/view_new.php?newID=321

9. Youth as Seeds of Change:

- www.qudsnet.com/arabic/news.php?maa=View&id
- <http://www.qudsnet.com/arabic/news.php?maa=View&id=104995>

10. Study on Youth Challenges and Needs from a gender perspective in the West Bank and Gaza:

- <http://www.bokra.net/?cGF0aCUzRGFydGJjhttp://www.womengateway.com/NR/rdonlyres/EDCD17B1-D5BF-4C80-818D-88FDCDDBCDFD/25265/womencallJuly.pdf&GUIMjZpZCUzRDEwNjgzMg%3D%3D>
- <http://www.pgftu.ps/news-action-show-id-664.htm>

11. Marrying children/ The dream of Haleema play"

- <http://www.maannews.net/arb/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=245281>
- <http://news.maktoob.com/article/3199147/%22%D8%AD%D9%84%D9%85>
- -
- <http://www.ekhbariyat.net/internal.asp?page=articles&articles=details&newsid=16164&cat=2>
- <http://www.salfeet.net/news-action-show-id-1497.htm>
- <http://www.qudsnet.com/arabic/news.php?maa=View&id=129923>

11. A panel on the impact of war on Gaza children

- http://arabic.pnn.ps/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=47654&tpl_color=red
- <http://www.ma3hd.net/vb/ma3hd3/arab57139/>
- <http://www.alquds.com/node/143352>





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12. The visit of the Swedish Parliamentarians to WATC.

- <http://www.qudsnet.com/arabic/news.php?maa=View&id=105751>
- <http://www.qudsnet.com/arabic/news.php?maa=PrintMe&id=105751>
- <http://www.maannnews.net/ARB/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=165811>
- <http://test.ct-eg.com/amad/old/amad.ps/arabic/?action=detail&id=38080>

Media Activities:

- Interview with MPDL newspaper on war and its effect on Gaza women. Published in Feb 2009.
- A radio interview with People's Voice in Gaza on youth problems aired on April 2009.
- Establishing an account in the face book by the youth trained in the project "From Youth to Youth" in the name of "Will be" new face in December 2009.
- Covering WATC activities in Gaza as part of Bena' project :
 - <http://www.alwatanvoice.com/arabic/content-138851.html>
 - <http://www1.wafa.ps/wafa/arabic/index.php?action=detail&id=43928>
 - <http://www.pbc.ps/ar/1/6/10444/>
 - http://arabic.pnn.ps/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=57321
 - <http://www.maannnews.net/arb/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=171147>
<http://www.maannnews.net/arb/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=166173>
- Broadcasting informational programme on women's rights through Palestine TV and Palestine Radio, and the People's Voice in Gaza as part of CARE project in Gaza.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E3hoPJxXo4c>
- Coverage of WATC meeting with women institutions in Gaza as part of CARE project.
http://www.amanjordan.org/pages/index.php/news/arab_news/4175.html
- The coverage of EU grants to the project "Empowerment of Women" to Bena CARE
<http://web.alquds.com/node/152459>



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