



DIVERSITY IN EAST JERUSALEM

Newsletter of the EU Project "Advancing the Rights of Vulnerable
Palestinian Women and Children in East Jerusalem"



ADVANCING
THE RIGHTS OF
CHILDREN AND WOMEN
JERUSALEM

HEINRICH BÖLL STIFTUNG
PALESTINE & JORDAN

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Dr. Bettina Marx hbs Director

Dear Friends,

This is the fifth and final edition of our bi-annual electronic newsletter on Jerusalem. Our three-year project "Advancing the rights of Vulnerable Palestinian Women and Children in East Jerusalem", funded by the EU, has come to an end. We concluded it on the 2nd of October 2017 with a wonderful closing ceremony in Jerusalem in the presence of the Deputy EU Representative Tomas Niklasson and the deputy Governor of Jerusalem Mr. Abdallah Sayyad. All partners were present at that occasion, we heard moving testimonies from our beneficiaries and enjoyed the music of Sabreen and the Dabkeh performance by the young dancers of the Old City Youth Association

With this publication hbs Palestine & Jordan, based in Ramallah, is happy to update you on the final activities, progress and success-stories of the project that provided support to the marginalized communities of East Jerusalem.

Together with our five main partners, Right to Play, War Child Holland, ArtLab, ACAD and Sawa and their smaller partners we tried in the last three years to improve the lives of the most vulnerable groups in Jerusalem: Palestinian women and children. They are the ones who face most of the challenges in the neglected and impoverished communities of occupied East Jerusalem. They are the group that is most marginalized and overlooked, their rights are often violated and they are not given the right and the space to express themselves and feel safe and cared for. With our project we tried to support them and provide what is missing for the Palestinian Jerusalemites: psychosocial and educational support, cultural activities, services and facilities for the disabled and economic opportunities for women entrepreneurs. It is our hope that our support will carry on, that our many activities will prove



successful and sustainable and that we will have contributed to strengthen women and children in East Jerusalem.

The Newsletter in front of you focuses on the various challenges facing women, their access to the job market, their position in the family, their status in society.

The editorial was written by Alessandra Viezzer, the EU Head of Cooperation who has accompanied and supported this project during the last years. Well-known feminist Jerusalemite and political activist Rana Nashashibi shares with us her view on the role of women in the Palestinian struggle to stay and keep up their claim in East Jerusalem. American born and Ramallah-based journalist Marian Houk writes about the many social challenges facing women in East Jerusalem. Rand Hamad, a 19 year old student that struggles to make a living working in a bookshop in East Jerusalem, writes about her own and very personal experience as a young Palestinian woman and gives us an impression of what is important for her generation.

Finally we have included a short article about the Closing Ceremony in Jerusalem, together with a selection of pictures to give you an impression about our final event.

As usual our partners have contributed updates on their work and activities and Vanessa Veltgens has prepared an infobox with information on women in East Jerusalem.

Furthermore, we have for you a collection of useful links to additional articles and publications.

I trust that you will find this Newsletter informative and that it will keep you interested and involved in Palestinian Jerusalem.

Dr. Bettina Marx, hbs Director

Alessandra VIEZZER

Head of Cooperation

Jerusalem is a beating heart to billions of people with its religious, historical and cultural magnitude; This city has experienced peace and war, prosperity and destruction in a combination that is unique only to its specific character through old and modern times. Today, East Jerusalem continues to be afflicted by conflict, violence and the twin plagues of poverty and inequality.

The European Union considers East Jerusalem part of the occupied Palestinian territory. Peace negotiations should include the resolution of all issues surrounding the status of Jerusalem as the future capital of two states. The EU will not recognize any changes to the pre-1967 borders including with regard to Jerusalem, other than those agreed by the parties.

To this end, the EU supports the city and residents through the East Jerusalem programme with its strategic objectives of sustaining the resilience of the Palestinian population, and preserving the Palestinian character of the City. This multi sectoral programme has grown to approximately 10 million Euros annually, covering a variety of sectors including education, social and economic empowerment, legal aid, Human rights and protection, advocacy, and culture.

We are proud to say that at the end of each project we see that we are closer to our joint Goals. At these times, and at the closing of "Advancing the rights of Vulnerable Palestinian Women and Children in East Jerusalem" EU-funded project, we know that many lives were changed to the better, we know that many women were able to establish their own businesses, we know that the future must be better for this city.



This project in particular demonstrates the importance and versatility of the projects funded under the EJ programme. Since the beginning of the project in 2014, HBS and its main partners: Right to Play, War Child Holland, ArtLab, ACAD and Sawa, and many smaller community based organizations, provided support to EJ's most marginalized communities. The project targeted the hardest hit areas affected by neglect, unfair treatment and lack of basic services, mainly focusing on women and children who happen to be amongst the most vulnerable groups. Throughout the past three years, the project focused on psychosocial support, awareness raising, sports and culture, services and facilities for the disabled, it gave space for self-expression and creativity, and provided economic opportunities for women and youth entrepreneurs.

As the project almost comes to an end, I'm privileged to contribute to the last edition of its electronic newsletter. I take this great opportunity to sincerely thank you all, in particular HBS and its partner organizations who have worked hard to overcome the challenges facing the men, women and children of East Jerusalem. This must have made life a little less difficult, this gave opportunities that would not have been possible, and most importantly, this allowed for hope enter the city again.

I conclude with the wish that may we all achieve the vision of Jerusalem as a city of peace: a capital for two states; a place where all can live in dignity and freedom.

Alessandra VIEZZER, Head of Cooperation



During this 3-year project, ACAD trained more than 250 Palestinian women across 4 Community-Based Organizations in East Jerusalem to increase their confidence, strengthen their assertiveness, develop their business and technical skills required for the successful management of micro-enterprises in East Jerusalem.

Five businesses led by women entrepreneurs are now opened in Aizarieh (Simsim – pastries & sweets), Shuafat (Gypsy Kitchen – traditional gypsy's restaurant & catering), Silwan (Maqdasiyat – tailoring workshop) and in the Old City of Jerusalem (Jerusalem seeds – medicinal and decorative plants, Jerusalem hands – Jams & pickles).

The beneficiaries have been learning how to market their products, report on the business's income, ensure quality of production and take strategic managerial decisions. Further, ACAD has set up a website and has organized a market fair for all five businesses on the 13th and 14th of September at the French Institute in Salah Eddin to further increase the visibility of the businesses.

As the project was nearing its end, all micro-businesses were on the edge of success



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Hbs together with the five project partners and many CBOs has been working on this project for three years and today we are proud to see all the results, success stories and change in the lives of our beneficiaries. Through the businesses opened by ACAD many Palestinian women are now more independent and gain their own income. Through the work of RTP and WCH, much needed psychosocial support has been provided to thousands of children in the marginalized neighborhoods of East Jerusalem. ArtLab started the debate on gender and diversity between the young artists and developed their creativity and skills. Through the HelpLine of Sawa thousands of Palestinians had the opportunity to share their thoughts and problems.

Throughout these three years, hbs had the coordinating role for all these different activities, achieving the creation of synergies between the different organizations and creating a network of NGOs and CBOs, working together towards the resilience of the Palestinian Jerusalemites. Moreover, through the publication of the study on "The impact of the current situation on the human

rights of the vulnerable Palestinian groups in East Jerusalem", conducted by Dr. Safa Husni Dhaher, hbs identified the gaps and the challenges for the organizations working in development aid and provided recommendations for more efficiency and success. The study is available on the project website (<https://ps.boell.org/en/2017/03/15/study-impact-current-situation-human-rights-vulnerable-palestinian-groups-east-jerusalem>). Finally, a closing ceremony for the project was held on 2nd October at the Notre Dame Hotel in Jerusalem. hbs celebrated with partners and friends the end of the project with the presence of EU and local officials, enjoying traditional Palestinian dances and music.

As this is the final Newsletter, hbs wishes to express its warmest appreciation to the European Union for financing this project, as well as to all the partners that worked hard throughout these three years to achieve the best possible results, given the political and economic constraints that development organizations face in East Jerusalem. We sincerely hope that this kind of efforts will continue in order to ensure that all Palestinian Jerusalemites receive all the needed services and assistance.



ArtLab Jerusalem

<https://www.facebook.com/artlabjerusalem/?fref=ts>

ARTLAB has completed the 3rd and last year of the project “Advancing the Rights of Vulnerable Palestinian Women and Children in East Jerusalem”. Within this framework, ARTLAB implemented its specific component: the “YOUTH StARTup” MULTIMEDIA PROGRAM. Our keywords were: youth, freedom of expression and opportunities.

ARTLAB offered professional trainings in the audio-visual field for the Jerusalemite youth between the ages of 16 to 25. The overall theme of the work was “gender and diversity in Jerusalem”. Our initial intuition was confirmed: gender identity is such a delicate issue in Jerusalem and there are not a lot of opportunities for the Palestinian youth to question themselves, the common gender-related stereotypes and the society they are living in. The age group is biologically interested by that debate and it was tremendously important to start a discussion about that theme.

In addition to that, ARTLAB’s approach was also essential: it was never about a theoretical definition of gender identity; our effort was devoted to providing a space where youth could express themselves freely and share their point of view in a creative way. ARTLAB managed successfully to bring the discussion about gender identity into the audio-visual training and production offered to the young beneficiaries.

The training and production process determined an increased awareness by the beneficiaries about the theme, the audio-visual

language and the tools. It was about providing youth with specific tools, giving them a chance to utilize those tools to deliver a message that was relevant for them and to discuss and challenge the stereotypes related to the topics. Our beneficiaries are now far more professionally trained, more confident and more aware about themselves than 3 years ago.

The events offered to the Jerusalemite community were also crucial milestones of our work. In those occasions, the local and international community had the chance to enjoy the artistic outputs of our beneficiaries and, hopefully, to go back home with some more questions and some less answers.

As ARTLAB we are also very proud because some beneficiaries found a job in the audio-visual field during the duration of the project for some UN Agencies in Jerusalem and some other beneficiaries started their artistic career in art academies and independently. For sure all of them, no matter what job will they have in their future, experienced a completely different and innovative learning process which we know they will remember.

We are happy of the great results achieved but we are even happier for the millions of things that as ARTLAB we learnt from the beneficiaries and from the project experience itself. The gender identity discussion just started in town and we strongly hope that it will continue in the next future.

Right To Play (RTP), as one of the six project partners, worked in the framework of the “Advancing the Rights of Vulnerable Palestinian Women and Children in East Jerusalem” project in coordination with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) and the Higher Council for Youth & Sports - Palestine (HCYS), with the aim to enhance the rights of vulnerable women, children, and youth, as well as improving social, psychosocial, economic and cultural opportunities and wellbeing, in occupied East Jerusalem. During the project cycles, RTP built partnerships with 21 CBOs in East Jerusalem along with the two main governmental partners.

RTP reached 62 schools, 131 teachers (Females: 98 and Males: 33), 76 youth coaches (Females: 50 and Males: 26) and around 4,102 children (Females: 2, 482 and Males: 1,620).

As part of RTP’s sustainability approach, it opened the channel for the most committed leaders to participate and practice their

leading role actively in the community through engaging them in activity’s implementation either by supporting other coaches in the follow up visits, or by leading games in awareness sessions, or supporting RTP staff in play days.

RTP rehabilitated 18 access facilities (ramps and bathrooms) for different CBOs and schools in East Jerusalem, to facilitate the participation of children with special needs in the regular activities at schools and CBOs. The locations for the access facilities were selected according to initial and technical needs assessments conducted in cooperation with MoEHE in schools and youth clubs. In addition, Right To Play rehabilitated 6 different play spaces at schools and CBOs to provide children with safe places to play in.

Moreover, RTP conducted Child – led activities “play-days” in AL Azariye, Shufat and Burj AL Laqlaq, Beit Hanina, Wadi Al Joz and Ras Al Amood. 863 children participated in these activities of the “play days”, including children with disabilities, in addition to 20 youth leaders and community members. Main slogans raised in the play days were “Junior Leaders, We Play We Learn, Participate Play and learn, we are energizers not barriers”.

**“WE KNOW
AND WE CAN REACT”**

**RIGHT
TOPLAY**

www.righttoplay.com





Empowering and Engaging Women and Men to Combat Violence

www.sawa.ps

Three years have passed and the lives of thousands of people have changed. Knowledge, strength, confidence and relief are the new life style elements for most of Sawa's beneficiaries.

Sawa's Toll Free Helpline

Within the project, Sawa's Helpline has provided psychological support for **40,792** cases in need, of which **21,580** were girls and women and **19,212** were boys and men. Callers have shared various issues related to violence and sexual violence, inquiries of how to deal with their children, academic performance problems, issues related to their psychological and social health, while others shared problems related to their relationships with their families and peers.

Women Empowerment Groups

Sawa has raised awareness for 122 women in East Jerusalem in sexual education issues; dealing with children and teenagers without using violence; sexual violence, particularly within the family and towards children. Those women have transferred the knowledge acquired within workshops that reached 456 other women.

Women were able to debrief their own inner feelings that couldn't and sometimes weren't willing to bring out within their daily life, as they often did not have the time and the right person to talk to. Moreover, women shared that they felt much stronger following the workshops, noting that those surrounding them have felt the change they have come to; "I could say NO out loudly...I could say to my mother in law not to hit my kid anymore...I could bring out my

own opinion without hesitation and consideration of what others may think... I rediscovered the many positive beautiful things I have, that I totally forgot about within the daily pressured life.... I noted that I have become patience, much less nervousness, I tend to count to 10 when any teasing behavior happens with me...I have taught my son and daughter that no one, regardless of who he/she is, whether a relative or a stranger can touch their body or even look at them in a non-comfortable way, encouraging them to address me and my husband directly whenever such thing happens... I told my husband about the sexual harassment I have experienced, whereas before I couldn't do so... Those are frequent quotes heard from different women participating in the workshops.

Engaging Men

In addition, Sawa has raised awareness for 68 men from different areas and field of work in East Jerusalem. Those groups of men varied between bus drivers, traditional mediators, teachers and male social workers working with girls and boys in risk of danger.

Men have discussed violence issues, getting to a conclusion that violence in all its' forms is never a good method for bringing up kids, for dealing with their wives or with any person. They could identify that regardless of the pressure the man is facing and notwithstanding his temper, he has many other healthy methods to debrief his pressure first and then deal with the people surrounding him. Moreover, men from various target groups acknowledged the importance of raising their children, grand children and relatives' awareness regarding sexual violence issues.

WAR CHILD HOLLAND: EMPOWERING CHILDREN TO SHAPE THEIR OWN FUTURE

www.warchildlearning.org



As partner of the project “Advancing the Rights of Vulnerable Palestinian Women and Children in East Jerusalem”, WCH worked with 9 community – based organizations (CBOs) and provided children and young people with creative psychosocial support services and leisure activities, in order to increase their opportunities of learning and developing through playing in safe spaces.

The 9 CBOs were selected through a comprehensive needs assessment of availability and quality of psychosocial services in East Jerusalem conducted by external consultant commissioned by WCH, in order to identify locations, CBO's and target groups.

The needs assessment study was disseminated to the partners and relevant stakeholders. It is currently available on the HBS website: <https://ps.boell.org/en/2016/05/15/needs-assessment-psychosocial-needs-children-east-jerusalem-our-partner-wch>

Over three years, WCH was able to successfully support the 9 targeted CBOs in the following domains:

1. Training coaches, especially females, from CBOs to implement creative psychosocial support services.

At the end of the project, WCH had trained 92 coaches, representing the 9 different CBOs. The coaches received full training packages on the I-DEAL methodology.

For more information about the I-DEAL methodology, please check the link below:

<http://www.warchildlearning.org/>

In addition to the technical training on the I-DEAL methodology, the coaches received capacity building trainings on Child Rights

and Child Safeguarding to be able to understand:

2. Provision of psychosocial support activities for children in East Jerusalem communities, including the most vulnerable children.

During the 3 years project the trained coaches from the targeted 9 CBOs were able to implement with groups of children the I-DEAL methodology which combines creative activities with games and group discussions to build the resilience and improve the coping skills of children to better ‘deal’ with their daily lives.

At the end of the project, WCH have reached 2,044 children through different activities in the project.

3. Child-led Initiatives that enabled children in East Jerusalem to design and advocate for their own solutions to the problems that affect them.

This activity was conducted with the 9 targeted CBOs through child led initiative training delivered separately to the CBOs.

As the name implies, children are the ones leading the initiatives, based on their thoughts, opinions and perspectives; coaches are present to provide support, make sure the participation of the children is meaningful and safe, but not to take decisions on behalf of the children.

At the end of the project 9 initiatives were developed and led by the children, the topics of the initiatives were on violence in schools, lack of safe play areas/playgrounds, garbage and hygiene and domestic violence.

All those issues were raised by the children through different tools like radio spots, short video, poster designed by the children and awareness sessions led by the children.

Development of Child Safety (CS) Guidelines by CBOs and renovation of child friendly facilities and spaces.

In total WCH renovated 9 safe play areas for children during the 3 years of the project and worked with 9 CBOs on developing their code of conduct and child safeguarding reporting procedures.

Child safety: WCH has a policy of 'zero-tolerance to violence' towards children. Through the whole process of the project implementation, WCH staff ensured that the safety measures are in place.

War Child Holland website: <http://www.warchildholland.org/occupied-palestinian-territory>



Facts about women in East Jerusalem

- Women face multiple pressures from Israeli-occupied East Jerusalem's limited access to education, work and future prospects, in addition to patriarchal social norms that restrict opportunities inside and outside the home
- Between 75 and 80 percent of the 360,000 Palestinians in East Jerusalem live below the poverty line and around 85 percent of women and 40 percent of men are unemployed
- Only 11 percent of East Jerusalem women are in the workforce
- The Employment Office in Israel does not provide sufficient service for the residents of east Jerusalem
- Between 2008 and 2014, poverty rates increased from 65% to 82%
- among families of five, with a single working member, poverty arose from 66% to 89%
- 70% of working age women living in East Jerusalem do not have more than a high school education and this leads to the fact that the small percentage who do find employment are forced to accept hard physical labor under abusive conditions
- There is a growing tendency, however, of Jerusalem women to fight enter the labor market
- In East Jerusalem the situation of a discriminatory and competing legal system, a lack of trust in and responsiveness of justice services, the difficulty to navigate a foreign language bureaucracy to seek redress and the family and community stigma are particularly challenging in comparison to other places in Palestine



Palestinian women of Jerusalem

A lifetime battle with the occupation

By Rana Nashashibi

Short bio: Ms. Rana Nashashibi is the director of the Palestinian Counseling Center. She is a native of Jerusalem, graduated from Birzeit University with a degree in Business Administration and later studied in the United States where she completed her master's degree in psychological counseling. Rana is currently a PhD candidate and a University lecturer in Birzeit University. Under her leadership the Palestinian Counselling Center became a leading mental health organization that was successful in introducing counseling services and models such as school counseling in private and UNRWA schools in the oPt and the integration of mental health in primary health services.

Jerusalem, the Holy City, holy to the three monotheistic religions and one of the most important spiritual centers of the world. An ancient city that witnessed countless civilizations and conquerors who all somehow left their marks on the city's physical and psychological being. The so-called city of peace has seen anything but peace in its long years of history. Quite the contrary: it has witnessed long brutal wars that ended up with thousands butchered and civilizations destroyed. Yet this city has a certain magic to it, an attraction, that can become addictive even to the many visitors who flock to it every day from all over the world.

For us Palestinians, Jerusalem is and will always be our home, our capital, our socio-economic and cultural centre and our place of worship. This reality came to face a serious check in 1948 when the state of Israel was established and half of Jerusalem was forcefully annexed. Since day one Israel has made it publicly known that it aims to fully annex the remaining parts of the city. In fact all consequent Israeli governments have shared this policy to complete the annexation and make Jerusalem the united Jewish capital of the Jewish State. All pursuant measures came to realize this by attempting to alter the physical and demographic characteristics of Jerusalem destroying its rich mosaic mixture of religions, races and cultures. In response and as a natural reaction to these policies the Palestinians resisted. To resist is to exist, to counter the hegemony

of the Israeli colonization, which attempts to occupy the space and mind of those colonized.

To recapture our space, preserve our cultural identity and recompose our psyche in a liberating sense has been our preoccupation. Women played and continue to play a very significant role in this resistance. Looking back, it is safe to say that the resistance carried out by women took different forms mainly due to the nature and needs of the struggle. One thing remains in common among all those women struggling throughout the past 69 years and that is the ability of women to hold and contain. Some argue that women through child bearing instinctively become natural holders and protectors of life and its value. In the context of the Palestinian resistance this translates into women playing the role of maintaining the communities' coherence and unity. For instance Hind Al Hussein, a prominent middle class educated woman from Jerusalem, transformed part of her family house into an orphanage in 1948 in response to the need to shelter orphan victims of the Deir Yaseen massacre. She believed that resistance is to ensure that these orphans in addition to thousands of Palestinian girls receive the best school education possible. Education according to Sitt Hind will equip them to become highly functioning Palestinians capable of controlling their lives and choices.

Hind Al Hussein as well as other prominent female personalities like Zleekha Shihabi, Asia Halabi and Hanan Ashrawi have all resisted by contributing in their own ways towards strengthening community work and development. In Jerusalem it is essential to maintain the coherence of the community in order to keep the struggle alive and to defeat the Israeli plans to marginalize the Palestinians. Similarly ordinary women in Jerusalem go about their daily lives trying to maintain the coherence of their families and smaller communities. A typical day in the life of a Palestinian woman in Jerusalem often starts with a visit to one or more of these Israeli governmental institutions; the national insurance offices, the Ministry of Interior, the income tax offices, social welfare offices, etc. These visits are necessary to prove that her and her family's centre of life is indeed Jerusalem, otherwise this might lead to their residency being revoked and their expulsion from the city. These visits are not only extremely stressful and humiliating but also very

time consuming. So by now its noon time, time to rush back home to attend to the needs of the family and in many cases the extended family too. In addition to the above stressors for a large number of Jerusalemite women they either have members of their families detained in Israeli prisons, have pending home demolitions orders, or have their family unification applications suspended. But in spite of all that, you find women in Jerusalem initiating and organizing protests, holding art exhibitions, producing movies, dancing the traditional Palestinian dance, the dabkeh and trying to lead their lives as normal as possible. They know it's still a long tortuous walk to freedom but the alternative of living outside Jerusalem is simply unacceptable.

For a Palestinian woman in Jerusalem the daily battles for survival and sustenance does not change the special place that Jerusalem has in her heart and soul.



The Social Problems of Women in East Jerusalem

By Marian Houk

Short bio: Marian Houk, an international journalist, currently based in Ramallah

In East Jerusalem, “people are living in confusion, they are lost”, Fadwah Khawajah said in early August. They are stateless (but have Israeli ID as “permanent” residents of Jerusalem), living in a condition of permanent insecurity.

Many are “living in trouble”, Khawaja said, “running between a house in the West Bank, where some of the family may live, and their home in Jerusalem – and maybe two or three of the children have no ID at all”.

“They are overwhelmed, and don’t know how to manage”, according to Khawajah, who’s the elected chairwoman of the board of the Jerusalem Center for Women, based in Beit Hanina.

“Before, Jerusalem was an open city”, Khawajah said. “Now, there is a big circle, closed by the Israeli side, with Jerusalem in the middle; if you want to enter – and they let you – they open a very small opening for you to get inside.

Tens of thousands of people from various Palestinian neighborhoods that Israel still includes as part of its unilaterally-constituted “Greater Jerusalem Municipality” must pass through a checkpoint at least twice a day, every day – to get to jobs, or for medical care, or to go shopping – even children, to go to school. It’s terrible for adults; for children, it’s terrifying.

Nazmi Jubeh, in *Jerusalem Quarterly*, wrote¹: “The myth of a united Jerusalem has been debunked—not only have the occupation authorities isolated Jerusalem from the West Bank

with the so-called separation wall and the ever-expanding settlements, they have separated East Jerusalem from West Jerusalem with a myriad of checkpoints and fences and concrete barriers. Jerusalem is, de facto, divided”.

Human Rights Watch has just published a report² attempting to describe the “onerous requirements” that Israeli regulations impose on East Jerusalem Palestinians to maintain their status as residents of East Jerusalem. There are “significant consequences” for those how fail to meet these requirements, HRW notes³. “Between the start of Israel’s occupation of East Jerusalem in 1967 and the end of 2016, Israel revoked the (residency) status of at least 14,595 Palestinians from East Jerusalem, according to the (Israeli) Interior Ministry.

Most of these revocations were “based on a failure to prove a ‘center of life’ in Jerusalem”, HRW reports, but in recent years – under Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu’s increasingly right-wing and nationalist governments – “they have also revoked status to punish Palestinians accused of attacking Israelis and as collective punishment against relatives of suspected assailants”.

(And now, Israel is considering new unilateral changes, designed to remove at least 140,000 Palestinians from {East} Jerusalem.⁴)

An immense amount of time, and anxiety and anguish, as well as money has been expended by Palestinians trying to anticipate/avoid problems that might threaten their status as East Jerusalem residents.

What to do, Fadwah Khawajah asks? “This is our homeland”

and there is no place to leave to, she says. "People want change, and they want to save their kids, but it's not easy to wait for something coming from the sky. There is a lot of pressure, and people in Jerusalem feel they are in a big prison".

Yet, she says, they are also feel the obligation to try "to save Jerusalem for the Palestinian side".

The education system is a catastrophe, she says: there are private schools (many religious, either Christian or Islamic), and there are also Jerusalem Municipality schools (very expensive, Khawaja says) -- and yes, there are Palestinian government schools in parts of East Jerusalem (in the Old City, Sur Baher, and A-Turi) run by the Palestinian Ministry of Education. Israel now wants all schools to use the Israeli curriculum (which doesn't teach Palestinian history), and to teach Hebrew, and "it's a big fight", Khawaja says. There's a shortage of classrooms, 30-35 or more students may be in each class, and some schools now operate double shifts.

As things are, Khawaja says, "our youth learn in the streets. Israel encourages our kids to leave school". If they can find work, the drop-outs take menial jobs, in hotels or restaurants.

The Israeli health system that's available to Palestinians in East Jerusalem (who pay into the insurance system) is far better than the education situation, Khawaja said. Women even have access to a full range of information about family planning methods, and to whatever pharmaceutical products they need -- unlike in the West Bank, where many items are not available, and where many doctors advise girls to get pregnant as soon as possible to "keep their husbands" and hold their marriages together.

Lina Saleh, of SAWA, notes however that "women all over have no control over their bodies, when it comes to sexual relations with their husbands, or the decision about having babies or not". In fact, "she cannot say she doesn't want a baby". Yet, having several children in quick succession, with the absence of the man all the time at work, means that the mother's physical and

emotional resources are stretched to the limit, children may be outside while she's feeding the youngest ones, and each child may not get the health care or education he/she needs.

The effect of what's happening, Saleh says, is double on women, who are under social pressure in the home and under political pressure outside, non-stop.

Women have no privacy -- many in East Jerusalem live in one room together with their husbands and children, in the man's family home, with her in-laws around all the time. "We see many women do not have any economic independence, which creates social and psychological dependency", Saleh says. "And, from what we see in the field, and from calls we've received from the West Bank and East Jerusalem, we know that some (educated) women have been sent out to work, either by their parents or their husbands -- who will then take her salary, and won't give her money".

Women also have no safe places, Saleh says. If they experience violence at home, in East Jerusalem, they'd have to go to the Israeli Police, and it's not easy for them. In fact, Saleh said, "if she goes to the Israeli Police, she'll be socially dead."

Fadwah Khawajah says that women used to have a greater role -- the first Palestinian women's conference was held in Jerusalem in 1929, and the women's movement started, "using the charity approach". During the First Intifada, women were leading the uprising and working for economic independence, she adds. "What happened?" Khawaja repeats the question, then replies: "The worst thing -- in the Second Intifada, with no organization, everybody going different ways, we went backward, as Palestinians, and the world started to speak of us as 'terrorists' -- since then, all the people have been paying the price".

Please find footnotes from "Social Problems of Women in East Jerusalem" at end of newsletter

Problems that Palestinian women face in occupied Palestine.

By Rand Hamad

Short bio: Rand is a 19 year old student of occupational therapy at Bethlehem University. She is very passionate about making a change in her community and gender equality.

I think the first problem I have seen is forced and child marriage. As a teen in my high school years, and even a little bit before, I've witnessed cases in my school where girls were forced to accept marrying a complete stranger. Forced and scared they were neither mentally nor physically ready for this sort of change in their lives. They are then forced to leave school and be housewives because the husband doesn't want his wife working or studying as he considers this a shame for his reputation. The choice lies always with the man and his family, whether to accept the girl and her family or not. The girl then grows up to be the typical illiterate housewife who will bequeath the same fate to her daughters and family and so on. The vicious cycle continues.

Another problem Palestinian women suffer from is the gender stereotyping; that's prevalent in our culture. If you give a woman her rights and let her speak for herself, it will be against the norms of society. But this is not normal! Every girl and woman should have the right to speak for herself and stand up for others as well. Some small mistakes or what people define as "HARAM" in Islam, or inappropriate socially in general in most Arab cultures, like smoking or cursing, might be considered normal for a guy but forbidden for a girl. Most girls and women are put in this box where we are expected to think and act in a certain way. Society always expects perfection in everything we say and do. Most women, for example, are forced or expected to accept whatever

problems they might have in their marriage -- they have to be patient and wait for things to get better, even if it is clear that they won't.

"You're a girl, you can't stay up late!" "You're a woman, you can't speak when men are speaking!" "You're not a leader, you're always a follower!" "No matter what your education is, you'll end up in the kitchen!"

Women in Palestine also face many problems professionally. That means they don't get the same opportunities as men do, on the job market and at work. Men always get the raises, and when there is a job that requires hard work, a man is always the right person for the job. Some institutions don't even give paid leave for mothers.

Harassment is one of the biggest problems we have in our Palestinian communities. Sexual or mental harassment has been there for a long time and unfortunately is still going on. Most women and girls have experienced harassment in their lives and the experience is humiliating and disgusting. It makes you feel like there is no justice anymore and you will remember the face of the harasser for the rest of your life. This is how a dear friend who was harassed in the bus described it to me.

Domestic violence is definitely also the lot of many women, not only in Palestine but worldwide. In our community it tends to be more intense but at the same time it's generally hidden from the eye. According to statistics collected by UN Women Palestine, 29,9 % of married women in the West Bank and 51% in the Gaza Strip have been subject to a form of violence within the household. In the West Bank 48,8 % of women have been

psychologically abused, a staggering 76,4 % in the confined and impoverished Gaza Strip. 17,4 % of women in the West Bank have declared that they were physically abused and 34,8% in the Gaza Strip. Sexual abuse has also been reported for 10,2 % in the West Bank and 14,9 % in the Gaza Strip.

As an activist in women's right and as a Palestinian woman who has seen at least one woman or girl in my community, family or school going through this, I can say that we women will lead this community to better places. Because women's rights are human rights, and human rights are women's rights!





Closing the Project after Three Years

After three years of intense but gratifying work our EU-funded project came to an end at the beginning of October 2017. We celebrated this, together with our partners, beneficiaries and friends with a heart-warming closing ceremony at the Notre Dame Hotel in Jerusalem, opposite the walls of the Old City. In the presence of the Deputy EU representative Mr. Tomas Niklasson and the Deputy governor of Jerusalem Mr. Abdallah Sayyad we enjoyed traditional Palestinian music and dance and listened to beneficiaries, who summed up their experience with our project.

"As a result of this project, I feel more economically secure; as a result of the trainings that we received we were able to set up our small women's cooperative, and now my work in the cooperative is providing me with a modest income that is contributing to covering parts of my household's monthly expenses" said one of the women. And another proudly recounted how she developed her self-esteem and awareness and is now supporting women and children fighting against violence and harassment.

Over the course of three years more than 7000 Palestinians of East Jerusalem were directly reached by the project's activities, implemented by hbs and its five partners: Arab Center for Agricultural Development, War Child Holland, Right to Play, ArtLab and Sawa. Five new micro-businesses were opened in East Jerusalem for women entrepreneurs that were also trained in marketing and business management. Thousands of children, youth and women received psychosocial support and participated in recreational and artistic activities.

"This project targeted the hardest hit areas affected by neglect, unfair treatment and lack of basic services", said the EU Deputy Representative Tomas Niklasson. He added: "The preservation of

the viability of the two-State Solution, with Jerusalem being the capital of the two states, is at the core of EU policy. Over the past years, the EU has developed a growing programme of support for East Jerusalem in an effort to improve living conditions of the Palestinian population." To this end the EU is providing around €10 million every year, addressing multiple needs and sectors: from education to health services, legal aid, human rights, culture and identity.

The deputy Governor of Jerusalem Mr. Abdallah Sayyad reiterated the PA's commitment to Jerusalem, the people of Jerusalem, and the development of Jerusalem. He emphasized the official Palestinian position that peace is not possible without East Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Palestine. The Deputy Governor also warned that more than 18000 houses and apartments are under the threat of demolition by the Israeli authorities, an issue that result in the displacement of 18000 Jerusalemite families.

Before parting, the partners and guests were presented with souvenirs from the project, little olive trees, jams and pickles and embroidered bags, produced and handcrafted by the project's participants.



USEFUL RESOURCES ON JERUSALEM

General Facts on the situation in East Jerusalem

- "Israel: 50 Years of Occupation Abuses", a report by the Human Rights Watch, includes the elaboration on unlawful killings and war crimes, illegal settlements, forced displacement, the Gaza closure and abusive detention. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/06/04/israel-50-years-occupation-abuses>
- In "East Jerusalem Facts and Figures 2017" the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI) reports among others on the continuous neglect, oppression and poverty in East Jerusalem. <http://www.acri.org.il/en/2017/05/24/east-jerusalem-facts-and-figures-2017/>
- Information on East Jerusalem provided by the UN under <https://www.ochaopt.org/location/east-jerusalem>

General Websites

- The website of the "Wadi Hilweh Information Center" contains current updates on the situation in Silwan and adjacent neighborhoods of Jerusalem, particularly focusing on violence perpetrated against its inhabitants. <http://www.silwanic.net/>
- The Institute of Palestine Studies publication "Jerusalem Quarterly" offers insightful analysis on the politics, history and culture in Jerusalem. Free articles are accessible on the website. <http://www.palestine-studies.org/jq/issue>
- Israeli Human Rights Organization B'tselem – The "Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories" provides frequent coverage of Israeli violations of human rights in East Jerusalem. <http://www.btselem.org/topic/jerusalem>
- PASSIA – The Palestinian Society for the Study of International Affairs located in Jerusalem offers current information, resources and events on Jerusalem. <http://www.passia.org/>
- Palestine-Israel Journal – The Palestine-Israel Journal publishes quarterly in-depth analyses and articles on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. With its office in East-Jerusalem and an editorial board comprised of equal number of Israelis and Palestinians, the Journal puts a focus on understanding the viewpoints of both sides and works on a balanced exchange and communication between the two people. The last issue's topic is "Time For Justice And Peace - End the Occupation". <http://www.pij.org/index.php>
- The Coalition of Women for Peace constitutes a feminist organization against the occupation of Palestine and in favor of just peace. It is today a leading voice in the Israeli peace movement and brings together women from a wide variety of identities and groups. <http://www.coalitionofwomen.org/about-1/about/?lang=en>
- Al-Haq – It is an independent Palestinian non-governmental human rights organization based in Ramallah with the mission to protect and promote human rights and the rule of law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Many reports on East Jerusalem can be found on the website. <http://www.alhaq.org/>

Women organization in East Jerusalem

- Sawa Organization – A leading Palestinian organization, dedicated to provide support, protection and social counseling for survivors of violence. Its priority is to combat all types of violence, abuse and neglect against women and children. It networks with community

stakeholders to spread values of humanity and gender equality for the creation of a safer society and a decent life. <http://www.sawa.ps/en/>

- Women's Center for Legal Aid and Counseling (WCLAC) - an independent Palestinian, not-for-profit, non-governmental organisation that seeks to develop a democratic Palestinian society based on the principles of gender equality and social justice. Established in Jerusalem in 1991, the organization has special consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). By forging a feminist vision based on equality and social justice, WCLAC plays a prominent role in addressing gender-based violence in Palestinian society in both the public and private spheres. <http://www.wclac.org/english/index.php>
- Women's Studies Center - a human rights organization that actively promotes gender equality and women's rights in Palestinian society. Its work promotes social change, equality and justice in the midst of strong social and political oppression. Since its establishment in 1989, the WSC has been promoting gender sensitive laws and policies on a national level, and engaging in program implementation on a community-level, to transform prevailing social attitudes on the status and rights of women and the female child. <http://wsc-pal.org/>

Other interesting links

- Graffiti in Palestine: Female Street Artist from East Jerusalem and Rockets over Gaza. <https://www.pinterest.se/pin/495325658986608163/>
- Artolution – An arts project in which Palestinian and Israeli youth aim at creatively creating social change. <http://artolution.org/palestinian-israeli-youth-change-artolution-middle-east-projects-2016/>
- Palestinian Vision (PalVision, or "Ru'ya") was created by a group of young Palestinians in 1998. It arose as a response to an urgent need for Palestinian youth to have an outlet through which to express themselves and their desire to build a strong and healthy Palestinian society. The aim was to provide opportunities for young Palestinian leaders to become agents of positive, constructive change within their communities; to give them the space, tools, and training they need for their voices to be heard and taken into account. <http://palvision.ps/en/>

Interesting articles

- Palestinian Women in East Jerusalem struggle to escape poverty – Article on the economic hardship of Palestinian women in East Jerusalem. <https://www.newsdeeply.com/womenandgirls/articles/2017/04/14/palestinian-women-in-east-jerusalem-struggle-to-escape-poverty>
- The latest news on the situation in East Jerusalem on Aljazeera. <http://www.aljazeera.com/topics/subjects/east-jerusalem.html>
- The Palestinians won the 2017 Battle for the Temple Mount. That's good for Israel. An opinion piece on the Temple Mount crisis and its profit for Israel in Haaretz, <http://www.haaretz.com/opinion/.premium-1.804553>

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1. Jube, Nazmi, "Jerusalem's Haram al-Sharif: Crucible of Conflict and Control", Jerusalem Quarterly, Vol 45, 2015/2016, p. 278
 2. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/08/08/israel-jerusalem-palestinians-stripped-status>
 3. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/08/08/israel-jerusalem-palestinians-stripped-status>
 4. Amira Hass, "The Mantra of 'United' Jerusalem Is a Macabre Joke", Haaretz, 2 August 2017, <http://www.haaretz.com/opinion/.premium-1.804634>

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ADVANCING
THE RIGHTS OF
CHILDREN AND WOMEN
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This is a newsletter by the Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung Ramallah

📍 (Palestine/Jordan Office): Tal az-Zaatar St. 6

Ramallah, Palestinian Territories

☎ Phone: (00972) 02 296 1121

✉ Email: info@ps.boell.org

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