



Diversity in East Jerusalem

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

1st edition | September 2015



ADVANCING
THE RIGHTS OF
CHILDREN AND WOMEN
JERUSALEM

HEINRICH
BÖLL
STIFTUNG
فلسطين والأردن

Dear Friends,

We are happy to present our new electronic newsletter, which focuses on Jerusalem. As settlements continue to expand, and overall conditions remain stagnant or deteriorate, Palestinian East-Jerusalem remains at centre stage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and is under immense economic and political pressure. In recent months, the level of violence has risen. This quarterly edition will help keep you up-to-date with the major debates and developments in the city with an emphasis on diverse information and updates on our EU-supported project "Advancing the Rights of Vulnerable Palestinian Women and Children in East Jerusalem." This project covers a variety of programs aimed at improving social, psychosocial, economic, and cultural opportunities and well-being of vulnerable children, youth, and women in occupied East Jerusalem, as well as contributing to the enhancement

of their political and human rights. This is implemented through our partner organizations Artlab, ACAD, Sawa, Right to Play, and War Child Holland, all of whom carry out a variety of activities in their respective fields. Furthermore, the newsletter will attempt to present voices from the city, up-to-date analysis, and useful links to publications and further reading on a number of pertinent subjects. I hope you will find this information useful and it will do its part in putting the spotlight on East Jerusalem, both its hardship and manifold opportunities to positively progress the situation for East Jerusalemite Palestinians. This is also an opportunity for me to say goodbye, as I am leaving HBS Palestine/Jordan after almost four years. Starting in October, my successor Dr. Bettina Marx will be in charge of the office.

Dr. Rene Widangel
HBS Director

Selected Project Activities

ACAD

(Arab Center
for Agricultural
Development)

ACAD is a non-governmental development organization that contributes to the development of the agricultural sector in rural communities, and the involvement of marginalized farmers, both male and female, as well as youth, in decision-making processes.

ACAD, a project partner, implements a program to support women's small-scale businesses and community based organizations through the development of sustainable cooperative microenterprises, access to local markets, and training and counselling measures. Between March and May 2015, ACAD implemented one of the first activities of the project, a training on social empowerment and self-confidence (soft life skills) to improve communication, conflict resolution, and management skills. The activity consisted of seven training sessions, with each session lasting four hours (28 training hours in total per CBO.) The training also included 12 educational activities, and coaching and counselling through discussion groups and a private session with the social worker. The activity was implemented at the CBOs partner's venue, Burj Al-Laqlaq Community Organization, the African Community Center in the Old City and the Domari Society in Shuafat. For more information, please visit the organisation's website: Arab Center for Agricultural Development - ACAD



Right to Play

Right to Play is an international humanitarian institution and a project partner that uses sports and recreation to educate and empower children and youth to overcome the effects of poverty, conflict, and disease in disadvantaged communities. In cooperation with the Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education, represented by the Education Directorate in East Jerusalem, Right to Play held an event to honour and certify 34 teachers who implemented the program under the title: "Advancing The Rights of Vulnerable Palestinian Women and Children in East Jerusalem." This was conducted during the second semester in 2014/2015.

Additionally, to achieve its objective to raise community awareness in child protection and inclusion, Right to Play held two informative sessions in the East Jerusalem villages of Al-Jib and Beit Surik to increase local community awareness on child protection, inclusion of children with disabilities, and promoting girl's participation in sport and recreational activities. During the sessions, the coaches discussed the priorities and needs of their communities with children who represented four villages, using the knowledge and skills they acquired through the trainings provided by Right to Play. Following the discussions, the coaches initiated the process of planning to work on their initiatives, which will then be vetted and supported by the project. For more information on Right to Play, please see their website: www.righttoplay.com



War Child

War Child is an international independent and impartial NGO who has been working in the occupied Palestinian territory since 2006. It supports all children regardless of their religion, race, social status, or gender. War Child is a project partner implementing an activity focusing on harnessing the energy of children into creative and inclusive activity. It started the project activities by assessing the available psychosocial services in the villages of Biddu, Beit 'Anan, and Beit Surik near Jerusalem. The three selected CBOs were the Biddu Women Centre, the Beit 'Anan Cultural Forum and the Beit Surik Women Centre. Thirty coaches were selected (10 per CBO) to receive training on how to provide creative psychosocial support services in the targeted locations, following War Child's standardized psychosocial methodology "IDEAL" which addresses a number of themes including, the IDEAL facilitation skills that aim to help children learn how to deal with their emotions, how to engage in positive relationships with adults and their peers, and how to plan for the future through positive boosting of their self-confidence and self-esteem.

The 37 coaches also received intensive capacity building training on child safety, rights of the child, leadership skills, stress management, how to deal with children, how to manage Child Friendly Spaces (CFSs), and how to organize leisure activities for children. Around 500 children (200 per community), aged 9-14, are participating in the IDEAL sessions. Through coordination with the Palestinian Ministry of Education, the three CBOs have had better access to schools in their communities in order to involve the children and their parents, and to inform them about the project activities. For more information on War Child, please see their website: www.warchild.nl



SAWA

SAWA has been implementing activities to towards the improvement of the situation for women and young girls who are suffering, or at risk of suffering, from gender-based violence. The political situation in East Jerusalem remains a major obstacle for the project, with volunteers and target groups in the various neighbourhoods of East Jerusalem struggling to attend workshops. To meet this particular need, SAWA has provided a mobile clinic to three women's empowerment groups in Jerusalem. The first was held at the Social Development Center on Salah Adin Street, with 7-10 women participating. The second group was at the Sur Baher Community Center with 17-20 women who participated, and the third was in Kufr Aqab, with 20-25 women participants. The sessions were held to raise awareness on adolescence, violence, sexual abuse, and gender related issues, but also included a relaxation session, entertainment, and exercise, to give hands on trainings in health education.

SAWA also completed a series of awareness meetings engaging women on various means of combating violence against women and children in Kufr Aqab with the Jerusalem Social Advocacy Network. The meetings addressed issues such as adolescence, domestic violence, electronic bullying, and drugs. Lastly, it included a session on enriching their knowledge in regards to maintain a healthy nutrition. For more information on SAWA, please see their website: www.sawa.ps



ArtLab Jerusalem

ArtLab is a cultural and creative platform founded in early 2014, in Jerusalem, to help Jerusalem youth develop new creative ways to express their concerns and needs. It was conceptualized and founded on the basis of promoting self-expression and cultural empowerment by increasing professional opportunities for youth interested in developing a career in the field of artistic multimedia. ArtLab believes that through the participation in the activities held by the lab and inspired by its outputs, stereotypes are being challenged and the local and international community is actively invested in cultural debate designed to open minds and encourage individual expression. Art-Lab is implementing a multimedia training, called the Youth Startup program, which includes photography and filmmaking training sessions. This activity comes under the Advancing the Rights of Palestinian Women and Children in East Jerusalem Project. For more information, please see the organization's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/artlabjerusalem>



Views from Jerusalem

“...and Jerusalem as its capital”

22 years after Oslo: The
demise of Jerusalem
(Translated from the
Arabic original)

Raja Khalidi*

Today, we witness a growing segregation of the three “peripheries” of the occupied territory. We have the Gaza Strip, Arab East Jerusalem, and areas classified as “Area C” in the West Bank. Area C accounts for 61 percent of the West Bank, while Jerusalem is considered the oldest and largest Palestinian city, and Gaza occupies the equivalent of 6 percent of the West Bank, but shelters an estimated one third of the occupied Palestinian population. All of these peripheries are located outside the access of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA). They are economically marginalized and are subject to direct Israeli rule (or siege). This is not merely the result of new political circumstances but the outcome of the Oslo Accords, agreed upon 22 years ago. In 1993, the Palestinian negotiators agreed to defer action on the issue of Jerusalem to a future “final status negotiations.” Since then, the influence of the PNA is limited to Areas “A” and “B,” which amounts to 39% of the area of lands occupied in 1967 and less than 10% of the land of historic Palestine.

We can assume that the Palestinian side did not expect the situation to reach such a state after two decades of

signing the Oslo Accords. However, Israel has certainly done everything it could to turn such a situation into a permanent reality, which appears increasingly irreversible. Although the political isolation of the Gaza Strip has yet to be addressed through national reconciliation, and only a fraction of the Palestinians who reside in Area “C” can have access to some services and connect with the Palestinian community in areas “A” and “B,” East Jerusalem is no longer Arab. Its once central economic, political, historical, and cultural status is falling apart.

A study conducted by the United Nations in 2013 on the Arab Jerusalem economy, in which I took part (“The Palestinian economy in East Jerusalem: Enduring annexation, isolation and disintegration, UNCTAD 2013”), examined trends of the economic indicators (domestic product, employment, poverty, services, construction, etc.) which attest to the systematic exclusion of Palestinian East Jerusalem from the State of Israel to which it was unilaterally annexed, while it simultaneously became totally separated from the occupied West Bank. Consequently, East Jerusalem’s economy now finds itself in a world apart from the two

economies, Palestinian and Israeli, to which it is linked. Yet, it is structurally dependent on the West Bank economy to sustain its production and trade of goods and services and for employment, and forcibly dependent on Israeli markets to whose regulations and systems it must conform and which serve as a source of employment and trade and as the principal channel for tourism to the city.

According to the UN report, these paradoxical relations have served to effectively leave the East Jerusalem economy to manage and fend for itself, awaiting the fate of its projected development. On the one hand, it is severed from the PNA's jurisdiction and on the other hand, it is subordinated to the Jewish-Israeli population imperatives and settlement strategies of Israeli municipal and State authorities. The economic trajectory of East Jerusalem has diverged from that of the rest of the West Bank. Such trends jeopardize the concept enshrined in United Nations resolutions and the Oslo Accords, namely that the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, constitute a single territorial and legal entity; a concept that is no longer meaningful.

This abnormal status of Jerusalem does not only contain strategic risks to the Palestinian unity project and national independence and sovereignty, but rather reflects deep chronic economic and social crises experienced by the Palestinian population of occupied Jerusalem who constitute an estimated 300,000 (within the barrier) in addition to more than 100,000 Jerusalemites residing in the northern and eastern suburbs of the city (outside the barrier). The latter reside in areas that are legally subordinate to the Jerusalem municipality (such as Qalandya and Kuf Aqab) or to the PNA jurisdiction (such as Izzariya/Bethany and Abu Dis).

The Israeli government mandates that these Palestinians are "permanent residents" (as classified in the Israeli law) and as such are not represented in the municipality and are heavily neglected in service provision. This is clear in the poor provision of basic services such as garbage collection and the process of infrastructure provision, including planning, pavement, lighting, sidewalks, and regular provision of water to poor neighbourhoods. It stalls the issuance of building and renovation licenses (even prevents the entry of any construction materials into the Old City without previous permit) and refrains from providing housing to low-income people, in addition to forcing every Palestinian citizen to pay all the municipal taxes, water and electricity bills, fines, and other expenses that make the stay in the city a very costly, almost "heroic" action. Furthermore, the rising level of poverty (which is more than 70% for the Palestinians of Jerusalem by Israeli standards), the growing unemployment among youth,

and the aggravate social problems such as addiction, misdemeanours or domestic violence, all contribute to a negative and burdensome living for Palestinians in Jerusalem.

All these crises lack public bodies to address them. There are only some small community based organizations funded by European or other international donors who provide some local social programs to fill the services gap. Ever since the leading Palestinian political institution, the "Orient House" in Jerusalem was closed down in 2001 and the passing of the late Faisal Husseini who used to unify the voice of Jerusalemites, the city does not house any actual Arab "institutions" except such establishments as the Maqassed hospital, the Jerusalem District Electricity Company, and some college buildings of "al-Quds University." Additionally, there is the Jordanian operated General Waqf (Islamic endowment) that is in charge of managing the Al-Haram Al-Sharif (al-Aqsa Compound). Whereas the PNA is struggling to maintain a role in Jerusalem, the Jerusalem governor/the Jerusalem Affairs Minister is not allowed to work inside Jerusalem publicly and is not equipped with resources or mechanisms to exercise his power. This is why a political and services gap has emerged in addition to the dual (rather triple) legal status of Jerusalem, necessitating that the PNA tries to behave officially on the basis that Jerusalem is part of the state of Palestine, whereas Jordan deals with it as part of the limited Hashemite responsibilities towards the holy places, while the valid effective sovereign jurisdiction is that imposed by Israel through her own laws and various government agencies (the municipality, planning committees, taxes and national insurance, Jewish settler organizations, police and security forces). This is how East Jerusalem was decapitated due to the ambitions of making a unified Jerusalem the eternal capital of Israel by means of erasing its Arab Islamic (and Christian) identity and its central political history embodied in the Palestinian struggle for the sake of their liberation and independence.

What raises questions and provokes confusion is that from a distance less than 20 kilometres from the Old City of Jerusalem, the city of Ramallah/al-Bireh is growing and expanding quickly incubating high towers, commercial complexes, and huge buildings for the PNA's ministries, businesses, banks, and luxurious housing projects in the vicinity carrying nice names (al-Rihan, Rawabi, Reef, and the Diplomatic Neighbourhood). A visitor to Ramallah could be amazed by the intensive planning and the enormous resources provided by the municipality simply in the process of organizing and paving streets and sidewalks, setting up traffic lights, or painting traffic and pedestrian signs.

The inhabitants of Ramallah might object to any speculation or doubts about this "normal" economic trajectory that was actually launched when the post-Arafat political regime took power in 2005. Nonetheless, such a way of life in the Palestinian "centre" is becoming more and more divergent from that of the peripheries; perhaps from that of 99 percent of the Palestinian people (as compared to only one percent in the centre). This diverts Palestinians from the focus on their national struggle to other internal social, economic, and political fronts. The vast gaps in real life between Jerusalem and Ramallah have become a threat to the Palestinian state project as much as they reflect paradoxes in one of this project's main demands: "... and Jerusalem as its capital."

* *Specialized in economic development, worked for UNCTAD between 1985 – 2013 and currently resides in Palestine.*

Beneficiary Contribution

“If we did not have faith in the success of such projects, we would not participate”

Interview with Marwa Idrees



Marwa Idrees at the African Community Center where the ACAD training is taking place

On an almost daily basis, Israeli settlers, who are often accompanied by Israeli military forces, enter the Al-Aqsa compound in the Old City of Jerusalem. Muslim worshippers including female “Murabibat” (those who stay at the Mosque day and night to protect it) try to resist attempts to violate their sacred place. Just below the Al-Aqsa Mosque, the small African Community quarter is located, which also faces daily harassment from settlers.

Marwa Idrees, is a participant in the Arab Center for Agricultural Development’s (ACAD) project training, lives inside the African Community compound, the birthplace of her family. She joined the training for life skills with the hope that she will be able to apply those skills in order to build her own future career, despite the difficult situation in East Jerusalem. She does not have high expectations: just a job and a life in dignity. Marwa was shot with a rubber bullet by Israeli soldiers during the protests that followed the murder of Mohammed Abu Khader in 2014; the young boy from Jerusalem’s Shu’fat-neighborhood who was burned to death by Israeli settlers. She spent one month unconscious in the hospital. In this short interview, Marwa talks about her aspirations in the project and her current life situation.

How did you learn about the project?

I am a member of the African Community in Jerusalem. Representatives from ACAD came to the community centre and introduced the project to us. We had a brainstorming session with them in which each participant shared ideas on future plans or dreams. We had so many ideas! In the end, all of us agreed on the need to open a community centre which could cater to the community's diverse needs: a space for social events with a sound system, a space for trainings on activities such as making embroidery and handcraft goods, cooking, making flower arrangements, photography, DJing, or any other dream pursued by the participants. The ACAD team explained that at the end, three project ideas would be selected and the most successful one would be accepted for future implementation after we completed the training courses. I am personally interested in photography and news publication.

What are your expectations for this project?

You know that the majority of women in Jerusalem are marginalized. They face violence externally through the occupation and domestically, which impacts their ambitions too. It is so hard for them to find jobs. Women and fresh graduates need a lot of support. At the same time, women themselves have many ideas and are capable of developing them to benefit their local communities. I felt that this training goes to a great extent in order to fit our ambitions.

We started in a course that highlighted self-esteem; how to break the barriers and how to build courage and confidence. ACAD will provide us with a three-year vocational training including office management, accounting, project development, and business management. At the end, we will get certificates and they will also support the African community with the needed infrastructure to make our project sustainable.

One of the pilot project ideas was to use the roofs of the Old City for agricultural purposes, mainly planting organic products. The Old City lacks spaces for planting and the Israeli authorities do not allow agricultural projects in the Old City. So the idea of planting the roofs can be a profitable and sustainable source of income to many families.

Your community is located very close to one of the gates of Al-Aqsa, how does the recent violence affect your access to the training, which takes place inside the community and your future project activities?

As you know, Israeli settlers, unfortunately often protected by the police, attack citizens of the Old City and this area in particular, on a constant basis. On another level, we face discrimination by the Jerusalem municipality. We pay taxes, but do not get services. In order to start any kind of business, we have to go through very complicated procedures to get permission, which is often denied.

It is hard for us to get into the project site near the Al-Aqsa mosque. It is known in Jerusalem that due to its proximity, members from the African community including women, often step forward to protest against the attacks. Therefore, we are often targeted. The police always asks us to prove our place of residence if there are confrontations, but there is no guarantee for free movement. The fact you participate in a project or any activity would not give you access to the place, if the Israeli police refuses. You might end up losing a few working days, which can impact the project negatively.

Are you confident that you can overcome all these obstacles?

We don't feel confident regarding the current level of Israeli restrictions. We fear we might not get business licenses. I then think that for the partners it will be difficult to help us to continue. If we don't have a license, the municipality can come and confiscate our equipment any minute, causing us a huge loss. Also, we believe that three years might not be enough to improve our source of income and eventually our economic condition.

But women are very active and ambitious in our community. We, as communities of Jerusalem, are often not aware of our rights. We need people such as lawyers to educate us on our rights, especially how to confront Israeli discrimination or settler attacks. Awareness is very much needed everywhere in the city about citizens' rights. We are Palestinians, we want to maintain our Jerusalem identity and we want to enjoy our rights. We want the international community to help us gain our rights. If we did not have faith in the success of such projects, we would not participate.

Useful resources on Jerusalem

A new, detailed **report by “Palestine Works,”** was released, which includes extensive material on human rights violations in East Jerusalem. The report focuses on the violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law that have taken place in East Jerusalem since June 2014. <https://goo.gl/BIM0U0>

- In **“East Jerusalem: Facts and Figures 2015,”** the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI) reports on human rights violations against Palestinians in Jerusalem. <http://goo.gl/oGVJkO>
- **EU statement** on recent demolitions in the Jerusalem periphery. <http://goo.gl/UP9zJX>
- **The Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine** appeals to Security Council for immediate attention towards the dangerous situation in East Jerusalem - Letter from Palestine. <http://goo.gl/5rll5s>
- **UN OCHA factsheet on “East Jerusalem: Key Humanitarian Concerns.”** <http://goo.gl/HD3Adn>
- The 2013 **UNCTAD report on the “Palestinian Economy in East Jerusalem: Enduring Annexation, Isolation, and Disintegration.”** <http://goo.gl/PvDCCD>

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. 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. www.palestine-studies.org/jq/issue
- **Israeli Human Rights Organisation 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. www.btselem.org/topic/jerusalem
- The **“Jerusalem Tourism Cluster”** is a network working for the promotion of tourism in Jerusalem and linked to civil society. On their site, you can download a mobile “Jerusalem visitor guide” on your smartphone. Under “external links,” you can visit the websites of different Palestinian tourism organizations, as well as an online Jerusalem guide. www.jerusalemtc.org

- The **“Civil Coalition for Palestinian Rights in Jerusalem”** is an independent, non-governmental coalition of organizations fostering the respect of the human rights of the Palestinian population in Jerusalem. The coalition provides in-depth political and legal analyses through reports, fact-sheets and links to external publications. <http://goo.gl/Y2G7Ko>
- **PASSIA** – The Palestinian Society for the Study of International Affairs located in Jerusalem offers current information, resources, and events on Jerusalem. www.passia.org

Recommended Articles

An article from **Al-Monitor** which depicts the situation in Kufr Aqab, a neighborhood on the outskirts of Jerusalem, which is separated from the city by the Separation Wall but still belongs to the municipality of Jerusalem. <http://goo.gl/UXo3me>

In an article on **972mag**, Betty Herschman reflects on discrimination against Palestinians in Jerusalem and the “silent transfer” of citizens to neighborhoods outside of the barrier. <http://goo.gl/A3F6hi>

Nureddin Amro, the founder and principal of a Jerusalem school for disabled children, writes in the **Washington Post** about the destruction of his house, where he lives with his family in East Jerusalem. <https://goo.gl/kuoXo1>

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