

Newsletter 01/2016



Dear friends of the Heinrich Böll Stiftung,

We present to you here the newest edition of our newsletter. As you may already have remarked we have skipped one issue due to the heavy workload in connection with the change of directors at our office. Therefore you find here an extended version, which includes the events and activities of our office and our partners since last July.

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself as the new director of hbs Palestine & Jordan. My name is Bettina Marx and I joined Heinrich Böll Stiftung last September taking over the Ramallah office from my predecessor Dr. René Wildangel at the end of October 2015. I am a journalist by training and have worked in radio and online-journalism for the last 20 years, mainly for Deutsche Welle. I served as Middle East-correspondent for the German broadcasting network ARD covering Israel and Palestine and in 2009 I published a book on Gaza.

My first six months in Palestine and Jordan have been awesome. It is a huge privilege to live here in Ramallah, to implement interesting projects with our esteemed partners and to work towards the freedom of the Palestinian people in its own independent state. The work in Jordan is equally challenging and rewarding and we aim to intensify our engagement there.

Since I arrived in Ramallah the political situation has been extremely tense in both countries. A wave of violence and grief has shaken the Palestinian society and in Jordan the civil war in neighbouring Syria and Iraq and the resulting refugee crisis have put a heavy load on the population. The oppressive occupation is driving Palestinians to despair, especially in Jerusalem, Hebron and Gaza, where the day to day life becomes ever harder. Our work too is being affected by the worsening circumstances. It gets more and more difficult to travel and to move freely, to meet and to communicate with our partners in Gaza and Jordan, and to welcome Palestinian and international friends to Ramallah.

In spite of all the difficulties the Ramallah Team is keeping up the spirit. In our newsletter you will find an abundance of information about the activities we are conducting with our partners in Palestine and Jordan. I hope you will enjoy the read!



Bettina Marx

Dr. Bettina Marx,

Director hbs Ramallah
(Palestine/Jordan Office)

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Our Middle East Blog (in German): <http://heinrichvonarabien.boellblog.org/>

News from hbs Ramallah Office (Palestine & Jordan)

VISITS AND DELEGATIONS

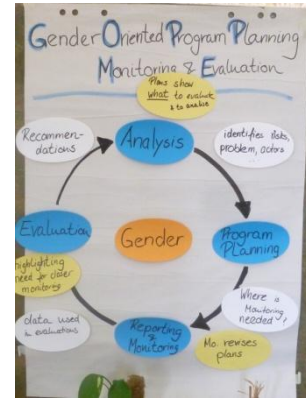
hbs hosted a group of EU Green parliamentarians from different EU countries on July 23rd, 2015 for a round table with representatives of the Palestinian Civil Society. Their talk focused on several aspects of the occupation, such as the situation of prisoners in Israeli prisons, the siege on Gaza, BDS, and the Palestinian liberation movement. The meeting was part of a five day visit of the Green group to Palestine and Israel.

Ms. Claudia Roth, MP, Vice President German Bundestag, and **Mr. Jürgen Trittin**, MP, Former Federal Minister for Environment, visited our office from September 13th-15th, 2015. Furthermore, they participated as speakers in our Böll debate on the refugee crisis in Europe on September 14th. During the last year, the Heinrich Böll Stiftung Ramallah hosted several delegations from Germany, including the President of hbs, Mr. Ralf Fücks.

PAST EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

On September 14th, 2015, **Dr. Bettina Marx** succeeded **Dr. René Wildangel** as Director of the hbs Ramallah Office. Official representatives, partners, colleagues, and friends were invited to celebrate both farewell and welcome at Khalil Sakakini Cultural Centre in Ramallah. The reception was held within the framework of the visit of the Vice President of the German Parliament, Ms. Claudia Roth and the Former Federal Minister of Environment, Mr. Jürgen Trittin, and the opening of a photo exhibition on Gaza by Al-Hoash (Palestinian Art Court). More than 200 representatives of Palestinian civil society organizations attended the event.

In April 2016, the hbs Ramallah Office team held a workshop on **Gender-Oriented Programme Planning (GOPP)** for the period 2017-2019. The team conducted problem analysis for the three programme components (Environmental Justice, Democracy and Human Rights, as well as Policy Analysis) and defined goals, target groups, and activities for the upcoming three years. The GOPP forms the basis for the foundation's work with local partners and projects and the upcoming events and activities.



Jerusalem? – This question was raised in our latest Böll Debate which took place on July 12th, 2016 in the Meeting Room of the hbs in Ramallah. The discussion was based on a policy brief presented by the excellent young expert Ms. Nur Arafah, Policy fellow of Al-Shabaka: the Palestinian Policy Network. In her paper she had researched **“Israel’s Little Known Master Plans for Jerusalem”**, which aim to develop the city exclusively for the Jewish people and to further marginalize the Palestinian population.

Her presentation was followed by comments and input by two renowned experts on Jerusalem and development: economist Raja Khalidi (formerly at the UN Conference on Trade and Development, UNCTAD), and Prof. Youssef Jabareen, expert on urban planning at the Technion in Haifa.

Afterwards, a lively and engaged discussion developed between the three experts and a large Palestinian and international audience, which included foreign diplomats and representatives of the civil society, as well as journalists and academics. The debate was moderated by hbs director Dr. Bettina Marx.

On May 9th, 2016, a Böll debate **“From Amman to Marrakesh towards COP22”** was held in Amman, Jordan in partnership with the Jordanian Ministry of Environment, the Royal Marine Conservation Society of Jordan (JREDS), and EDAMA- Energy, Water & Environment Productivity. Ms. Indira Al Dahabi, Director of Climate Change Directorate in the Ministry of Environment; Mr. Wael Hmaidan, International Director of Climate Action Network (CAN); Mr. Faisal Abu Sondas, Executive Director of JREDS; Ms. Shermine Dajani, EDAMA’s Board member and Executive Director of PanMed Energy; and Ms. Safa’ Al Jayoussi, Head of Climate & Energy Campaign in the Arab World for IndyAct, discussed the influence of COP21 on the Arab region, the importance of COP22 to the Arab countries, the role of civil society and private sector in COP22, and the Jordanian government's policies towards COP22. The experts also suggested some recommendations for Jordan for their preparation for COP22 that will take place in Marrakesh, Morocco in November 2016.



The first Böll Debate of 2016 was held on April 5th, again jointly organized by hbs Ramallah and Al-Shabaka: The Palestinian Policy Network, discussing **"How Israeli Settlements Stifle Palestine's Economy" and the EU-Labeling of Settlement Products**. The guest speakers Ms. Nur Arafah, Policy Fellow at Al-Shabaka; Mr. Omar Barghouti, Co-founder of the BDS movement; and Ms. Ulrike Hauer, Head of Political Section at the Office of the EU Representative for the West Bank/Gaza Strip, provided their perspectives on the contested Interpretative Notice issued by the European Commission on 11 November 2015. The debate was opened by Dr. Bettina Marx (hbs) and moderated by Nur Arafah (Al-Shabaka).

Another joint Böll debate of hbs and Al-Shabaka: The Palestinian Policy Network was held on November 11th to discuss **"ICT: The Shackled Engine of Palestine's Development"**. The speakers at this debate were: Al-Shabaka analysts Ms. Nur Arafah, Mr. Sam Bahour, and Mr. Wassim Abdullah as well as Mr. Mashhour Abudaka, the Executive Director of the Palestinian Information Technology Association (PITA). All four debaters provided a comprehensive account of the Israeli obstacles to the Palestinians' ability to take advantage of their electromagnetic spectrum and radio frequencies and the many difficulties in the way of the sector's infrastructure development including the restrictions on essential equipment. The guests were welcomed by our director Dr. Bettina Marx.



On September 14th, 2015, a Böll debate on **"The Current Refugee Crisis in Europe"** was jointly organized by hbs Ramallah and Al-Shabaka: The Palestinian Policy Network. The speakers were Ms. Claudia Roth, Vice-President of the German Federal Parliament (Green Party), Mr. Jürgen Trittin, former Environment Minister and Parliamentarian of the Green Party, and Ms. Irene Nasser, journalist specialized in the Middle East region. Dr. René Wildangel welcomed the debaters and the audience. Several aspects of the refugee crisis were discussed, such as the need for a common European Union policy respectful of human rights. As well as the need to address the root causes of the crisis, starting with making strong changes to the European foreign policy and finding a political solution for the situation in Syria. Dr. Bettina Marx, now director of the Ramallah Office, moderated the debate that followed.

hbs' EU project is happy to announce its new sub-granting partners: **Al-Mortaqa Women's Organization, Nibras Al-Quds Society for Individuals with Special Needs, Sabreen Association of Artistic Development, Al-Razi Cultural and Social Association, Spafford Children Center, Jerusalem Center for Women, and Old City Youth Association.** These community based organizations work



towards advancing the situation of vulnerable groups, especially women and children in East Jerusalem. The organizations and friends were invited to a signing ceremony on May 25th, 2016 at Spafford's premises in East Jerusalem. In their speeches, the Ms. Alessandra Viezzer, Head of EU Cooperation, and the Palestinian Governor of Jerusalem, His Excellency Adnan Al-Husseini, expressed their support for the project and highlighted its value for the community.

The seven attributed grants are part of a 3 million Euros EU-funded project titled **"Advancing Rights of Vulnerable Palestinian Women and Children in East Jerusalem"** implemented by hbs and its five partners, **Arab Center for Agricultural Development (ACAD), War Child Holland, Right to Play, ArtLab, and Sawa.** The main objective of this project is to enhance the human rights of vulnerable women, children and youth in the occupied East Jerusalem through improved social, psychosocial, economic and cultural opportunities. The Palestinians in East Jerusalem face serious human rights violations and are strongly disadvantaged when it comes to social inclusion, employment, and access to healthcare and education. You can find the EU Project's latest newsletter **"Diversity in East Jerusalem"** [here](#).

UPCOMING EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Our colleagues at hbs Berlin were organizing an evening discussion event titled **"In the Centre, yet Marginalized – Children and Youth in East Jerusalem"** on July 13th, 2016. The event aimed at discussing the realities Palestinian children and youth in East Jerusalem are facing, and to find answers to questions such as: what are their wishes and dreams? Why are violent protests increasing now among the Palestinian youth? What measures can be taken to give children and youth better prospects? Speakers have been representatives and partners of hbs Ramallah's EU Project, namely the project coordinator Maria Fraskou, War Child project manager Sahar Smoom, Advocacy Unit Coordinator of Defence for

Children International Ivan Karkashian, and Deputy Manager of Madaa Creative Center Sahar Baidoon.

hbs Ramallah is conducting a **training course for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)** from 01 - 03 August 2016. SEA is a systematic, decision aiding procedure for evaluating the likely significant environmental effects of a policy plan, or programme (PPP) through their development process and beginning at the earliest opportunity. The overall objective of the training course is to learn international theories, terminologies, principles, and practical processes related to SEA, with particular focus on methods of performing and producing SEA. Dr. Suha al-Madbouh will instruct the course, for which 30 participants were selected.



hbs, represented through its offices in Ramallah, Beirut, Rabat, and Tunis, and in cooperation with the Royal Marine Conservation Society of Jordan (JREDS), will be hosting a **regional Summer School** with the topic **“The End of MDGs – Beginning of SDGs. Achieving Gender-Just Sustainable Development?”**.

The summer school will be held in Amman, Jordan from 14 -18 August 2016. hbs carries out these regional schools for young professionals from Arab countries in the MENA region to build the capacities of the participants, to initiate debates on certain policy and environmental topics, and to provide a platform for exchanging experiences and networking among different actors.

News from our partner organizations

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

hbs' Jordanian partner The Royal Marine Conservation Society of Jordan (JREDS) conducted a legal review related to **garbage and right to access to clean beaches**. The review includes all laws, regulations, and legislations in Jordan in general, and Aqaba in particular, as well as international agreements signed by the Government of Jordan related to waste disposal by individuals on Jordan's beaches. It was developed into a concept legal paper and presented to parliament members and representatives in Aqaba, as an attempt to encourage them to take actions towards the right to access to clean beaches, by providing them with alternative practices for beach management.



Arini Creative Platforms, hbs' partner in Jordan, carried out Phase II of their project **“Community Empowerment via Strategic Design”** in Jabal al-Natheef in Amman, Jordan. The project addressed the hard living conditions, and the lack of infrastructure and basic living conditions in Jabal al-Natheef. Along with the neighbourhood community, Arini conducted physical interventions related to waste management, safety and security, and architecture. Find Arini on facebook [here](#).

Common Spaces ABC - Camp #1 is a project that took place in the urban landscapes of Amman, Jordan from September 30th- October 11th 2015. Common Spaces is a project conducted by artists from Jordan, Morocco, and Germany. The project addressed the role of art and culture in recapturing and redefining public spaces as platforms for social actions with the local communities. The project enabled art exchange between artists and cultural activists from Jordan, Morocco, and Germany. Find out more about the Common Spaces project [here](#) and [here](#).

MA'AN Development Center, one of hbs' partner in Palestine, published its monthly online environmental magazine **“Afaq Environmental Magazine”**. The magazine addressed various environmental issues in Palestine, the Arab region, and the globe. In addition, MA'AN published two films: **“Palestinian Organic Farming ... National Environmental Interest or Utopian Dream?”** and **“Water Taps - Strangling the Necks of the Poor”**. Both can be found on Youtube.

MA'AN also launched its radio environmental programme “Green Horizons” in cooperation with Raya FM. The radio programme broadcasted several episodes on different environmental issues in Palestine. To review the programme and online magazine, please visit <http://www.maan-ctr.org/magazine/index>.

On October 20th, 2015, the Palestinian American Research Center (PARC) and hbs organized a public roundtable for NGOs and women's organizations to present the results of a study conducted by the former fellow researcher at PARC, Dr. Issam Al-Khatib's. the title of the study was: **“Role of Women and Men in the Palestinian Household Environment: a Comparative Study”**.

Al-Haq - Defending Human Rights in Palestine since 1979 published a study on **“Environmental Injustice in Occupied Palestinian Territory: Problems and Prospects”** in July 2015 in [English](#) and [Arabic](#). The findings were presented in a panel in the International Conference on Critical Geography that was held in Ramallah from July 26th to 30th, 2015 and in a round table discussion at Al-Haq. You can find the study [here](#).

The Palestinian Environmental NGOs Network (PENGON), in cooperation with **MA'AN Development Center**, published a study on “**2014 War on Gaza Strip: Participatory Environmental Impact Assessment**” in English and Arabic. The findings of the study address the impact of the 2014 war on the environment in Gaza. The war drastically affected the environment in Gaza including air quality, loss of wildlife and agricultural lands, pollution, soil damage, and deterioration in marine life and ecosystems. You can find the study [here](#).

DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Our partner Taghyeer for Social Media launched their online platform “**Mapping Her**” to electronically document cases of violence against women. Despite the fact that a press conference for the launch, scheduled for October 2015, was cancelled due to the tense political situation, their partners, followers, journalists, researchers, university students and digital activists have been invited to use the platform. It is now accessible for citizen reporters. The electronic tool aims to map violations against marginalized, harassed, unprivileged and largely invisible women, mapping their stories for people to find, explore, discover, and make a change. It can be accessed [here](#).



“Mapping Her” is also publishing information about Palestinian women leaders and entrepreneurs in different fields. In 2016, it organized a Blog-bus trip to the north of the West Bank to write about the working women and social security law.

Our partner Al-Hudood in Jordan uses online satire to reach new audiences and tackle subjects that are often avoided by other independent and official media. Al-Hudood believes that the Middle East, along with its media ecosystem, are in dire need of original satirical content, due to the increasing political polarization and the rising threats to diversity, dialogue, and freedoms of speech and media.



Satire continues to prove potent at addressing local and regional sensitive and controversial issues, as it remains less confrontational and more difficult to censor or attack. Embracing the motto “**Defending Our Right to Laugh**”, the issues include freedom of speech and media, human rights, gender equality, governmental policies, rule of law, and corruption. The organization conducted **two training workshops** in Amman for aspiring satirists, enabling them to produce material to publish on [Alhudood.net](#) or on other platforms.

Our partner Al-Mezan Centre for Human Rights conducted two workshops on Palestinian judiciary in September and November 2015. The first workshop entitled **“Mechanisms to Unite Palestinian Judiciary”** was held on September 17th, 2015 in Gaza City. Approximately 60 legal experts, journalists, and politicians took part in the workshop, which was part of an effort by Al-Mezan and the Palestinian civil society to end the split within the judicial system and the Palestinian internal schism in general. The **second workshop** on November 5th, 2015 aimed at gathering various components of Palestinian Authority's justice system and creating a debate about the unity of the judiciary. It took place as an open meeting where most important barriers hindering the reunification of the judicial authority were discussed, and practical mechanisms to unite the judicial authority were put together.

Furthermore, a following conference with the title **“Mechanisms to Unite the Palestinian Judiciary,”** was held on November 22nd, 2015 and discussed new possible mechanisms to unite the Palestinian judiciary in a manner that would ensure independence of the judiciary, have a positive effect on achieving justice, and be in service to the Palestinian people. 143 participants attended the event.

On October 2nd and 3rd, our partner organization Muwatin hold their **21st Annual Conference** at the Red Crescent Society Building in Ramallah. The Conference was dedicated to present the findings from a year long Muwatin policy research project on the issue of Laws passed by decree in the West Bank and in Gaza since the split took place in 2007. In this period more laws have been passed by decree than in the proper legislative cycles of the PLC following the first parliamentary election of 1996.

Furthermore, Muwatin held a **workshop on the proposed Social Security Law**. This workshop was organized with the General Federation of Independent Labour Unions in Palestine. Over forty representatives of various trade unions and CSO's participated to debate the Social Security Law and the need for a better one that can address the basic needs of the Palestinian population.

The pro-active media advocacy organization Filastinyat held a five-day **social media training** for 20 female journalists at its feminist news agency NAWA in August 2015. It focused on how to use social media as a journalist promoting her work, the values and issues she stands for. The training group launched two social media campaigns with two hash tags that spread widely on social media: **#we_want_to_visit_the_west_bank**, **#media_ethics_protects**; in Arabic: **#بدنا نروح الضفة، #بدنا نروح غزة و #أخلاقيات الصحافة**. In addition to that, NAWA publishes different articles and reports by young women journalists [on its website](#).

In 2016, the **Media Development Center at Birzeit University** conducted four training workshops in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip that targeted young media professionals on issues of legal awareness and the gender sensitive editorial policies.

Our partner organization Center for Women's Legal Research and Consulting (CWLRC) in Gaza was featured in **three episodes on Al-Quds radio station** in October 2015. Their work on protecting the political rights of Palestinian women in the Gaza Strip was presented in the broadcast, such as a petition with 500 signatures demanding women's participation in the negotiation committees for Palestinian reconciliation and rebuilding.

The Universities of Birzeit and Windsor held a student conference on **"Made in Birzeit – Organic Thought"** within the Windsor Birzeit Dignity Initiative on November 14th, 2015. The conference was part of the umbrella initiative "Thoughts Factory – Four Dimensional Thinking" that the two universities conducted from March until November 2015.

POLICY ANALYSIS

From 14th to 29th February 2016, our partner **Youth Against Settlements (YAS)** sent two of its activists, Murad Amro and Jawad Abu Aisha, residents of Shuhada Street, to Germany to join actions, events and school workshops in support of the **Open Shuhada Street Campaign**, as well as meetings on political and diplomatic levels. For example, they had students engaged in a role play, taking the roles of Palestinians, Israeli soldiers, EAPPI observers in simulated checkpoint situations. In addition, a **Ghost Town Exhibition** accompanied the tour, conveying a vivid depiction of the life under occupation. YAS reported a positive feedback by the German audience, who felt better informed and expressed disbelief about the details of the occupation and empathy for the Palestinians' suffering.

Open Shuhada Street Campaign, which started in 2010, is a Palestinian-led local and international nonviolent campaign to protest against the measures of closure and separation in Hebron. Since 1994, the formerly flourishing street in Hebron's historic centre has turned increasingly into a ghost street and has become a symbol for Israel's policy of human rights violations and segregation.



From 7th till 9th November 2015, the Institute of Jerusalem Studies and Mada al-Carmel - Arab Center for Applied Social Research hosted a conference on "**The 48' Palestinians and the Palestinian National Project: Role and Status**". The first two days took place at Birzeit University, with a following roundtable discussion at Golden Crown Hotel, Nazareth. The Conference aimed at constituting a concrete debate on the statues and role of 48' Palestinians regarding the Palestinian National project as seen by Palestinians in all their diversity.

Resources/ Miscellaneous



The latest publication of our regional magazine **Perspectives** #8 with the title "**The Fight against Corruption in the MENA Region: Between Discourse and Reality**" came out in July 2015. Find past issues [here](#).

In November 2015, our partner Muwatin published the [latest issue](#) of **Parliamentary Horizons**, a critical newsletter focusing on the work of Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) and other critical issues.

You can find the **Jerusalem Quarterly** which is edited by our partners from the Institute of Jerusalem Studies with many full text articles [here](#).

As always, the **Wadi Hilweh Information Centre** provides a wide range news and footage about the deteriorating situation in Silwan, and East Jerusalem in general, on its [website](#).

You can find recent articles released by our partner organization **Masarat – Palestinian Center for Policy Research and Strategic Thinking** [here](#).

You can review articles of MA'AN's online environmental magazine here: <http://www.maan-ctr.org/magazine/>

You can review more publications of Al- Haq here:
<http://www.alhaq.org/publications/publications-index/item/environmental-injustice-in-occupied-palestinian-territory>

hbs Ramallah offers **internships to students and graduates** from Germany and elsewhere, for those with a strong interest in political and social developments in the region and whose interests align with the hbs programme. Our next call is for the period from April through June 2017 (application deadline is 15th August 2016). For further information please check our [website](#).

Imprint:

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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