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## Advancing the Rights of Vulnerable Palestinian Women and Children in East Jerusalem



*Itaf Zahaykeh- EU Program Coordinator at hbs, Marianna Bianchetti- Cofounder at Artlab, Ghada Rabah- Country Manager at Right To Play, Dr. Rene Wildangel- hbs former director, Ohila Shomar- General Director at SAWA, Khalil Khatib, Executive Manager at ACAD. At signing "Advancing the Rights of Vulnerable Palestinian Women and Children in East Jerusalem" project contracts. PHOTO hbs © EU*

In September 2014, the Heinrich Böll Stiftung-Ramallah & Jordan (hbs) Office has launched the EU-funded project "Advancing the Rights of Vulnerable Palestinian Women and Children in East Jerusalem" together with the five partners Right to Play (RTP), War Child Holland (WCH), Sawa, The Arab Center for Agriculture Development (ACAD) and ArtLab. The project was envisaged because of the human rights violations Palestinian residents in East Jerusalem still face and their marginalization when it comes to social inclusion, employment and access to healthcare and education. It focuses on two particularly disenfranchised groups, children and

women, especially members from minorities such as the African and Domari communities in East Jerusalem. As the leading partner, hbs oversees the implementation and supports the other project partners through management and capacity building measures. The project activities include a wide array of activities, including youth trainings on visual arts, support for female entrepreneurs and micro-businesses, workshops to raise awareness for violence against women, psychological relief work with children, and the promotion of child safety policies. The project runs until 2017 and is also designed to strengthen the target groups' capacities to defend their own human and political rights.



*The Project Partners Exchanging Ideas at the Inception Workshop part of Advancing Rights of Children and Women-Jerusalem at hbs office in Ramallah, October 2014*

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## Project Partners

Other than hbs there are five implementing partners. Sawa is a Palestinian NGO working towards the eradication of violence against women and children. As its main service, Sawa operates a call center which offers preliminary psychological support and counseling for victims of violence and neglect. However, they also offer and facilitate trainings on gender issues. WCH is an international NGO with extensive experience in supporting children and youth affected by conflicts and helps them to overcome their traumatic experiences. Similarly, RTP promotes the use of play and sport to educate children and to help them to cope with adversity. ACAD is a Palestinian microfinance institution that encourages sustainable projects. It provides loans and expertise to foster entrepreneurship among low-income communities. ArtLab is a platform for artistic training and cultural events based in East Jerusalem. Among other activities, it works with vulnerable youth to develop their artistic skills and their capacity to express themselves creatively.



Field Visit to the Domari Community in Jerusalem as part of Advancing Rights of Children and Women – Jerusalem.

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## Project Results

The project works towards six main results. First, protection mechanisms to woman and young girl victims of gender-based violence in East Jerusalem are established and strengthened. Women and young girls from East Jerusalem receive support in terms of health and of safety yearly through the activities of SAWA. SAWA also facilitates women empowerment groups (WEG) in local communities, in order to allow them to hold meetings about women's rights and roles in the society.

The second result concerns the improvement of the quality and access to creative psychosocial support (PSS) services and leisure activities for children and women in East Jerusalem. WCH and RTP work towards this result. Participants of psychosocial support activities improve their skills and increase their knowledge to enhance their psychosocial well being and use positive coping strategies. The number of girls and children with disabilities accessing targeted services is also increased. In addition, the capacity of local organizations to provide PSS activities using a clear methodology is enhanced. Finally, child safety standards are promoted and implemented in local CBOs and child friendly spaces are created or renovated

Thirdly, sustainable cooperative microenterprises are developed and the access of female micro-entrepreneurs to local markets in East Jerusalem is improved. ACAD works towards this result. It provides training on social empowerment and self-confidence (soft life skills) in East Jerusalem for women entrepreneurs. These women also receive training and coaching. Through the project, the women micro entrepreneurs sign contracts with local hotels, travel agencies and Souq Al-Quds to sell the catering, handicrafts services and products they offer. Finally, ACAD supports the organization of one exhibition by the micro entrepreneurs to market the projects and services offered, and the opening of a shop in East Jerusalem at the end of the project.

The fourth result aims at improving vulnerable youth's professional and artistic skills as well as their capacity to express themselves creatively. This result will be reached through the action of ArtLab. For this purpose, local youth (male and female) acquire professional artistic skills through extensive artistic training in the area of documentary photography, film moviemaking, staged photography, storytelling and animation. Artistic outputs related to gender issues are produced in these trainings and are exhibited in cultural events. Last but not least, scholarships are granted to students that show particular artistic promise, in order to support them with the production of their artistic work. All these activities will enable the participating youth to find jobs in the artistic sector.

The fifth project result is to raise awareness of the adverse situation of marginalized groups in East Jerusalem and to promote their individual and collective rights among community members, civil society leaders and international actors. HBS is in charge of this task. Hbs developed a

bilingual (English and Arabic) newsletter that is regularly sent out to stake holders both in the region and internationally. Moreover, research is conducted and published to explore the situation of the disenfranchised groups and advocate for them. In addition, social media platforms are created to give regular updates about the project and the situation in East Jerusalem and to widen the scope of the awareness raising. At the middle of the project, an open day is carried out to inform about the project and its results.

The sixth result of the project is the strengthening of capacities of CBOs and NGOs working with vulnerable groups from East Jerusalem in the promotion and protection of human rights. Hbs is the implementing partner for this result. To achieve this result, there is a call for applications for sub grants that are subsequently awarded to CBOs/NGOs at the end of the first year of implementation. During the second year, workshops will be conducted with sub-grantees to strengthen their capacities to reach their goals.



*An Installation at the Exhibition  
"Unlabeled" Showcasing the  
Artistic Outputs of the Artlab  
students as part of the first year of  
the youth startup multimedia  
training program which is part of  
the project Advancing Rights of  
Children and Women –Jerusalem.  
On 12 September 2015*

PHOTO hbs © EU

## Project Activities

The project began with an inception workshop held and organized by hbs, in which the project partners were informed about financial, procurement, communication and other regulations. During and pursuant to the workshop hbs helped build the capacities of the project partners and supervised their implementation.

In the first year of the project, the helpline operated by SAWA supported more than 300 women and girls from East Jerusalem. SAWA improved and widened its support infrastructure, including the establishment of a new mobile clinic. In addition, four WEGs were held and their participants conducted 50 workshops in their communities. SAWA also conducted six workshops for men, to raise their awareness of violence against women.

RTP and WCH worked towards improving the quality of and access to PSS services. Their work began with the preparation and execution of a needs assessment in the first half year, followed by capacity building and training activities. Trainers were trained in the different communities addressed by the action and more than 500 children took part in PSS and leisure activities. To further highlight the adversities children were facing, RTP and WCH both held child-led community based awareness raising events. Also in the second half of the first year six child friendly facilities were renovated and the development of child safety policies began.

Concerning the economic empowerment of women entrepreneurs, ACAD organized the training on entrepreneur skills for women. Towards the middle of the first year trainings to strengthen women's assertiveness and self-confidence took place. ACAD also began counseling of CBOs on economic feasibility of income generating projects for women began and the development of small business units through the provision of sub-grants was prepared.

ArtLab started the professional trainings to improve local youths' artistic skills. By the end of the first year, 14 youth had taken part in documentary photography, staged photography, film moviemaking and storytelling trainings. They produced artistic outputs that were presented in the exhibition "Unlabeled". The participants will continue their training in the next year in order to prepare them for getting jobs in the arts.

Throughout the first year, hbs has worked on the visibility and advocacy of the marginalized communities addressed by the project. A newsletter that covered both the activities of the project and the situation in East Jerusalem was developed and disseminated to all stakeholders. In addition the project was promoted through social media, giving regular updates and referring to interesting articles and initiatives related to the project.



Youth Leaders  
receiving their  
Certification as part of  
Advancing Rights of  
Children and Women –  
Jerusalem

PHOTO RTP © EU