

PRESS RELEASE

“HBS and partners celebrate the closure of their EU funded project in East Jerusalem”

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Heinrich Boell Foundation- Palestine & Jordan held on 2nd October, at the Notre Dame Hotel in Jerusalem, a closing ceremony to celebrate with its partners, beneficiaries and friends the achievements of their EU funded project. This three year project (2014- 2017), of more than 3 million euros, supported vulnerable communities in East Jerusalem, especially women and children, reaching more than 6,000 direct beneficiaries.

The project, “**Advancing Rights of Vulnerable Palestinian Women and Children in East Jerusalem**”, was funded by the European Union and implemented by hbs and its five partners: Arab Center for Agricultural Development, War Child Holland, Right to Play, ArtLab and Sawa, with the objective of improving the resilience and living conditions of marginalized Palestinian Jerusalemites. Through this project 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.

“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 project beneficiaries at the project closing ceremony.

The ceremony was well attended by the project partners and beneficiaries, as well as by local and international officials, who enjoyed Palestinian traditional music and dances and received information material of East Jerusalem and project souvenirs. **Deputy EU Representative Tomas Niklasson**, who has been present and supporting the project and the partners’ effort throughout all the stages of implementation, underlined during his/her remarks

"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. We are providing around €10 million every year. Our support addresses multiple needs and sectors: from education to health services, legal aid, human rights, culture and identity. The project “*Advancing the rights of Vulnerable Palestinian Women and Children in East Jerusalem*” demonstrates the importance and versatility of the projects funded under



the East Jerusalem programme" said the **Deputy EU Representative Tomas Niklasson**. "This project targeted the hardest hit areas affected by neglect, unfair treatment and lack of basic services, mainly focusing on women and children who are among 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," he added.

Meanwhile, Dr. Bettina Marx, Heinrich Boell Foundation - Palestine & Jordan Director said in her speech "Over the course of the project, we managed to reach out to more than 7,000 beneficiaries, especially many women and children, but also men who took part in trainings and workshops. Throughout the project, along with our partners, we have conducted dozens of activities; psychosocial sessions and fun days for children, trainings and workshops for youth, teachers and counselors. We have opened income generating establishments in East Jerusalem, we have held bazaars and provided women and young Palestinians with skills in different fields.

We have thus managed, with the gracious support of the EU, to improve the lives of thousands of Jerusalemite Palestinians. We do hope that the many activities carried out under this project will spill over into the future."

Finally, after thanking the EU for its continuous support to Jerusalem, financially and politically, and congratulating the Heinrich Boell Foundation and its partners on the conclusion of a successful project, the deputy Governor of Jerusalem Mr. Abdallah Sayyad reiterated the PA's commitment to the peaceful resolution of the conflict, its commitment to Jerusalem, the people of Jerusalem, and the development of Jerusalem, reemphasizing the official Palestinian position that peace is not possible without East Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Palestine.

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