

PALESTINE فلسطين

Y.W.C.A.



Annual Report 2015

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Reflections on the year 2015 by the National President

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Haifa Baramki

Since its establishment in 1893 by a number of dedicated Palestinian women, the YWCA of Palestine has been in the forefront of the organizations that focus on women and girls in their totalities, trying to forge environments and conditions to improve their lives on all its aspects: the social, political, economic and human rights. Every year of these 122 long years brought with it new challenges that those women met with a sincere sense of commitment to serve and bring about change in the lives of Palestinian women.



The year 2015 brought along with it more challenges for the YWCA amongst them was the finalization of the registration of the National YWCA of Palestine as a Palestinian association. The 1967 Israeli Occupation of the West Bank including East Jerusalem and Gaza brought about lots of political changes that resulted in creating new facts on the ground. The status of the National YWCA presence in Jerusalem throughout the 122 years since it was established, was endangered and thus, in order to keep its presence as a Palestinian association, required a new registration in Palestine. This process took a number of years and lots of legal work, and I am happy to announce that at the beginning of this year 2015 it was successfully completed.

The National YWCA of Palestine presence in the International Conference of the World YWCA movement in October 2015 in Bangkok, Thailand was very impressive as well as very visible. The Palestinian delegation consisted of women and young women from the members of the National YWCA, the YWCAs of Jerusalem, Ramallah, Jericho and Bethlehem. The election of the president of the National YWCA of Palestine, Ms. Haifa Baramki, as a Vice President of the World YWCA by the 600 attending delegates from all over the world was another remarkable recognition of the National YWCA of Palestine.

The year 2015 saw also a considerable increase in the young women participation in the local boards of the member associations as well as in the National Board. This is important as we as Young Women Association should live up to the Y in our name, and should reach up to the 25% young women under the age of 30 in our membership, committees and boards, which is a requirement for our continued affiliation to the World YWCA. We are still not there but our awareness of the importance of engaging young women in our decision making bodies and processes and our activities, is growing stronger.

Our role in the National Committee and the National Coalition for UNSCR 1325 became more effective and more visible, which motivated us to work towards the implementation of the terms of this resolution. With our Palestinian partners in the National Committee and the National Coalition for UNSCR 1325, we still have a long way to go to effect positive changes in the local laws affecting all aspects of the lives of the Palestinian women.

As a final note in these reflections, it is important to point out that all that has been achieved throughout this year would not have been accomplished without the support and commitment of both the voluntary body that governs this association, and the diligence and hard work of our executives and staff who made it possible. We express deep appreciation to every one of them and to all our friends and partners who believed in our mission and who have been great supporters of our work.



Foreword by the National General Secretary, "Moving Forward"

Mira Rizeq

There is no doubt that 2015 was a prolific year for the YWCA of Palestine on many levels. Significant breakthroughs of the year included the National Council's registration at the Palestinian Ministry of Interior, the YWCA's highly-esteemed representation, participation, and networking both locally and internationally, as well as the influential role it played within civil society and policy makers.



After five years of challenges, the National Council obtained formal registration status by the Palestinian National Authority at the end of 2015, by which it administers the three member associations. This new status comes as a great advantage for the YWCA of Palestine as it reinstates relations and affiliation within the world movement, as well as with the member associations at the local and national levels.

The year started with working on the 2016-2020 strategic plan, in cooperation with the consulting firm of Hulool, and with the participation of the associations' executive board and staff members. This process included some challenges, but the teamwork put into the planning and formation of the legal framework for the Council paid off. The developed strategic plan focuses on empowering women and educating community members on how to claim their rights and hold the duty bearers accountable. Clearly, there is much work that needs to be done, and there is a need to come up with new plans, partnerships, and skills in order to make the change aspired within the targeted communities. Therefore, the National Council has put much of its focus on human resources, and delivered various trainings to its board and staff members on women's rights, national and international resolutions and statements including the universal declaration of human rights

On the international level, the YWCA participated actively in a number of conferences; the two most significant were at the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in New York City (in March 2015), and at the World YWCA Council meeting in Bangkok (in October 2015) where the YWCA of Palestine had six representatives in addition to the President and General Secretary.

The National YWCA of Palestine continues to build on its partnerships and affiliation to several local organizations, including the Violence Against Women Forum (Al Muntada), the National Coalition for UNSCR1325 chaired by the Minister of Women's Affairs, as well as with other women's and governmental organizations. Moreover, the YWCA of Palestine has recently embarked on new initiatives within the YWCA movement, including the YWCAs of Canada, Australia, Denmark, England, and Ireland. The new alliances that were established are bringing forthcoming projects, such as the joint cooperation of the YWCAs of Palestine, Ireland and England, which is comprised of a new generation of young dedicated women who are working together to build a better future and work towards peace with justice.



The National YWCA of Palestine Highlights in 2015

1. The World YWCA Council Meeting in Bangkok

The high-level conference of the World YWCA Council, which takes place once every four years, was organized in Bangkok - Thailand in October of this year. The delegation of the YWCA of Palestine played an influential role in the implementation of the program, and in the decisions made during the meetings as follows:

1. Representation: Eight delegates from the YWCA of Palestine participated in the World Council.
2. The representation of the Palestinian delegation at World Council was very effective. The National YWCA of Palestine held three workshops, the most prominent of which was the session on the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign. The delegation also had visible participation in several other workshops and sessions.
3. The preparedness, good standing, and diversity of the Palestinian delegation were evident through the team's representation, and manifested all the hard work that preceded the event by more than eight months.

The National YWCA of Palestine delegation, together with the YWCAs of Jordan and Lebanon, presented a Resolution/ Action Statement on the situation in the Middle East that got unanimously voted by the movement. The resolution, which relates to peace and justice, has been endorsed by the World YWCA and included in its new vision and strategic plan for the year 2035. This endorsement confirms the World YWCA's commitment to the UNSCR1325, its support for the Middle East's mission towards liberation, as well as its advocacy programs that aim to ascertain the rights of women in political participation, security, just peace, and stability.

The National YWCA of Palestine successfully held side meetings with a good number of associations within the movement in order to develop joint ventures and actions. The effective participation of the Palestinian delegation was obvious in the influence they made on the political level and the solidarity to the Palestinian cause.



2.The Peace and Justice Task Force

The National YWCA of Palestine formed the Peace and Justice Task Force, comprised of local members from the YWCAs of Jerusalem, Ramallah, Jericho, and Bethlehem. The team is made up of thirteen young women (board members, staff, and participants in YWCA-related programs and activities) who are actively engaged in recruiting new members to partake in training workshops set by the Task Force on issues that are relevant to peace and justice in Palestine.

The youth committee meets once or twice a month and works on a shared vision and agreed-upon objectives. The first activity the committee had organized was an 'open day' where they invited all young women members from the YWCAs of Jerusalem, Ramallah, Jericho, and Bethlehem to take part and discuss the goals and tasks of the association. The results were reflected in the genuine interest and commitment to work ahead and enhance the role of the youth within the associations. The Task Force is currently preparing to deliver training sessions for the members of the joint project with the YWCAs in Ireland and England that relates to conflict, war, and peace.



3.The New Strategic Plan for 2016-2019

At the beginning of 2015, the YWCA selected the consultation firm of Hulool to work on its new Strategic Plan for the years 2016-2020. Despite the challenges faced, the plan was successfully achieved with the participation of board and staff members. The National Strategic Framework is comprised of three strategic priorities and fourteen objectives for each of the four member associations. It also has thorough guidelines on the working relations, roles and directives between the National Council and its Member Associations.

The National Council's Strategic Plan was formally presented to the Executive Committee in their meeting in August, 2015.



4. The EU Funded Project and Implemented by the National Council

The European Union project is being implemented in seven locations and villages in the governorates of Ramallah and Al-Aghwar (Jordan Valley): Al-Nwei'meh, 'Oja, Aqbet Jaber, Safa, Al-Tireh, 'Aboud, and Bani Zeid. The project started in February 2014 and will be carried out until January 2017. This project has a Steering Committee made up of the General Secretary, Finance Officer, the National Program Development and Monitoring Supervisor, and the Executive Directors of Ramallah and Jericho. It is worth mentioning that this particular project has a distinctive set of strategies that require intensive tasks and efforts.

During the year 2015, which marks the second year of the project since its startup in February 2014, the YWCA continued to carry on the tasks related to the implementation of its objectives, and various training was carried out to assist the beneficiaries, get grants and participate in local and national campaigns. One of the most prominent accomplishments of this project in 2015 was granting funds to the youth who had participated in the economic empowerment workshops in the project's first and second years, and who had acquired relevant expertise from having participated in those previous workshops.

A new sequence of grants began in July 2015, where 54 applications were submitted by individuals and groups with whom intensive work was carried out to submit project proposals in a short time span of less than a month. The submitted projects were then evaluated by the steering committees in the targeted areas, and three of the projects from each village were nominated in the final selection process. In addition to those projects, the committees included three additional projects by and for the youth.

Twenty-four projects were evaluated by an overarching committee comprised of the project's general steering committee. Based on the results of the evaluation, ten initiatives were selected for funding. These initiatives are currently being implemented on the ground and their needs are being met. The projects are expected to be finalized by the end of January (which would be at the end of the second year of the project).



5. Advocacy on Women's Rights, Peace, Security, and the United Nations Security Council Resolution UNSCR1325 - Achievements and Challenges

5-1 Capacity Development of the YWCA Members and Staff

The National Council held three training workshops in September 2015 to develop the cognitive skills and orientations of all its management and technical teams, emphasizing on the international treaties of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the UNSCR1325 which focuses on the protection and participation of women in armed conflict. The workshops fit within the strategic objectives of the world movement, particularly in activating all of the associations' frameworks pertaining to it at the global level, and based on fostering the status of women rights and youth leadership in various fields. Moreover, the workshops carried out by the YWCA are in tune with the dynamism of civil society institutions working towards the preparation of the parallel report to be presented to the relevant CEDAW treaty committees in 2017, and the women's institutions deliberating the final report supervised by the General Union of Palestinian Women.



Results Achieved:

- Nurturing the participants' sense of knowledge about the international development of women's rights (and the development of women's rights declarations in conventions and international accords).
- Deepening the understanding of participants in the concept of discrimination and its offshoots locally and within the Arab framework.
- Empowering the participants in endorsing international conventions to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW).

- Acquiring a cognitive network of skills and orientations that are related to the application of CEDAW within the Palestinian context.
- Empowering the participants to have cognitive knowledge on UNSCR1325 and resolutions that are related to secure women’s rights and enhancing their participation under armed conflicts.
- Developing working mechanisms for the implementation of UNSCR1325 within the local and international contexts.
- Coming up with a work plan to merge the CEDAW treaty with UNSCR1325 in the direction of strategic orientations presented to the YWCA.

5-2 The High National Committee for the Implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 and the Palestinian National Coalition for this Resolution

The National YWCA of Palestine is an active member in these committees, and during the year, the following tasks were achieved:

- Placing and approving the national strategic action plan for the implementation of the UNSCR1325 on the national scale.
- Approving a legal framework for the functioning of the committee, its plan, as well as the mechanisms of implementation.
- Approving recommendations and endorsing the meeting protocols.
- Taking necessary measures to resolve urgent issues that face it.
- Forming technical association committees.



- Following up on the implementation of the modus operandi on behalf of the committee.
- Preparing the reports associated with the committee and associating it with the council of ministers.
- All other tasks that the committee deemed appropriate to achieve its vision and objectives.
- At the end of 2015, the National Council was appointed to host and manage the new session for the years 2016-2018.

5-3 The Stop Poverty Campaign

This campaign was formally adopted by the YWCA during its “Women’s Freedom, Peace and Dignity in Palestine: UNSCR1325 for Accountability” International Conference that was held in Bethlehem at the end of September 2014. Formally, it was announced that the campaign was launched in a manner to stop poverty in Palestine as part of the international campaign that started through Y-Global in Norway.

Since then, the National Council was involved in implementing a number of activities under the campaign interventions. The main focus during the year was to train a number of youth from various areas on the campaign’s objectives and interventions in order for them to promote it to other communities mainly within the Jericho and Al-Aghwar (Jordan Valley), Ramallah and El-Bireh, and the Bethlehem governorates. The youth in Jericho, Ramallah, and Bethlehem were also trained on the principles of lobbying and advocacy as part of the process of preparing volunteers for the campaign.

Furthermore, the campaign’s publications and stickers were put on public and private vehicles and an open day of activities was also organized for children and youth in five schools within the targeted governorates.





Highlights of the YWCA of Palestine's Member Associations

The YWCA of Jericho

Economic Empowerment Highlights

The food production unit at the YWCA of Jericho is one of the main components under the economic empowerment area and during the year 2015 the food production unit was able to increase its marketing channels and selling points in several cities in Ramallah, Nablus and Hebron, as well as meeting the increasing demand on the produced items such as pastries by new customers and institutions.

Furthermore, the production team was offered a series of trainings in Good Manufacturing Practices GMP in collaboration with the Rural Development Department in the Ministry of Agriculture which has also contributed to enhancing the production

standards and marketing potentials. Team building, stress relief and recreation sessions were also organized for the staff and sometimes joined by the YWCA Jericho Board members. The sessions were carried out in cooperation with specialized trainers and facilitators seconded by partner NGO's.

Morover, Shadia Mustafa Abd El Aziz Hamza 43 years old, one of the establishing women of the Food Production Unit at the YWCA of Jericho participated in Oxfam-Quebec's "female food heroes" campaign to represent the YWCA and highlight its contribution towards women economic empowerment in Palestine. The event was carried out in Montreal Canada in March 2015 and included other women from Honduras, Haiti, and Burkina Faso to celebrate their achievement as productive women in the occasion of International Women's Day.

Shadia's portrait and information about the campaign was featured on Oxfam in OPTI Face book page. The voting



process for Shadia created a public enthusiasm and a social responsibility towards supporting women in the economic sector and it was a good visibility tool for the YWCA of Jericho and Palestine highlighting the YWCA's successful achievements in women's economic empowerment.

Shadia has developed her empowering personality through the various interventions offered by the YWCA of Jericho; she is an inspiring woman, with good leadership qualities and a vision for herself, her family and her country. Her trip to Montreal was very empowering for her and gave her a great motivation to go ahead;

Furthermore, and in order to keep up with the growing demand of products and the need to expand the food production unit, a remarkable step was done by the Board members, relevant staff and consultants of revising the architectural plans of the proposed construction works for building a facility for the food production unit and finalizing this process for next steps to be taken on the ground.





Youth Leadership Development and Civic Engagement Highlights

The highlight for the year 2015 was centered towards the participation of youth members in international forms. Two young members from the YWCA of Jericho represented the YWCA of Palestine in two prominent international events. Minerva Halteh, represented the YWCA of Palestine in the CSW 59th session in New York during February 2015, and Christeen Darwish represented the YWCA of Palestine in the World YWCA Council meeting in Thailand in October 2015.

Moreover, members and staff from the four local YWCA's had a good opportunity to socialize, network and share ideas with each other through the YWCA national strategic planning sessions and many other distinguished conferences or gatherings including the special event organized on the occasion of the International Women's Day, YWCA Global Breakfast, Ramadan banquet, CEDAW Trainings and other activities organized within the campaign of combating Violence Against Women executed over a period of two weeks in November 2015.

The YWCA of Jericho hosted several meetings with many delegations from Norway, Denmark Switzerland, Britain, Germany, the USA and other countries either through the YWCA/YMCA Joint Advocacy Initiative (JAI) program and or partners meetings/ visits to Palestine. Some of those meetings enabled interactions with community leaders or members for a better understanding of current or future interventions.



Children's Cognitive Learning Highlights

The year 2015 was a distinguished year for the kindergarten in Aqbet Jaber Refugee Camp for it was full of activities and interactions with formal and informal organizations. The number of children enrolled in the scholastic year 2015/2016 was 67 kids.

On the 18th of May, the YWCA KG hosted the sports festival for all KG's in the Governorate at the front yard of the KG supervised by the Jericho Directorate of Education

The YWCA held the 59th graduation ceremony on the 26th of May for the children of KG2, attended by the Education Director of Jericho and many representatives of the local community and parents of the children.

The KG was also supported by UPA with distributing healthy snacks for kids, uniforms, books and stationery at the beginning of the scholastic year 2015/2016

The KG staff participated in most of the trips organized by the YWCA of Jericho administration for the purpose of stress relief, team building or "know your country" tours, one of the trips was organized to Jaffa City in April, after the YWCA Jericho administration applied and got permits for all employees. What was really emotional and touching in that trip was the fact that it was the first time for Mr. Muhammad Hasan Salameh the guard at the Aqbet Jaber KG, a refugee from Jaffa to visit Jaffa after al Nakba in 1948. He started to remember what his parents were saying about the neighborhood where they were living near the Big Mosque at the City Center and the sea view was something remarkable and amazing for him.



The YWCA of Jerusalem

Economic Empowerment Highlights

The year 2015 was a vibrant year for the YWCA of Jerusalem on various levels. On one level, the Vocational Training Center (VTC) proceeded to provide the vocational education specializations in a creative, innovative manner and in such a way that is imbued with positive and practical steps within the center's programs. On the other level, the YWCA achieved a breakthrough by providing professional vocational training to more marginalized women residing in closer neighborhoods around the VTC premises in Jerusalem.

To achieve all such activities, the YWCA of Jerusalem sought to continually review the training material, making it relevant for the local market, and adding up renewed contents responding to the practical aspects of the local market needs. It also introduced innovative training materials to the multimedia courses held in and out of the association's premises. The participants in the Center enjoy remarkable opportunities that are offered through distinguished trainings focused on developing practical skills that are required in competitive jobs in Jerusalem.

One of the most rewarding aspects in the VTC is that the trainees who have had a chance to achieve their ambitions felt productive and considered themselves as contributors; able to improve their families economic situation as well as fulfill their aspirations.

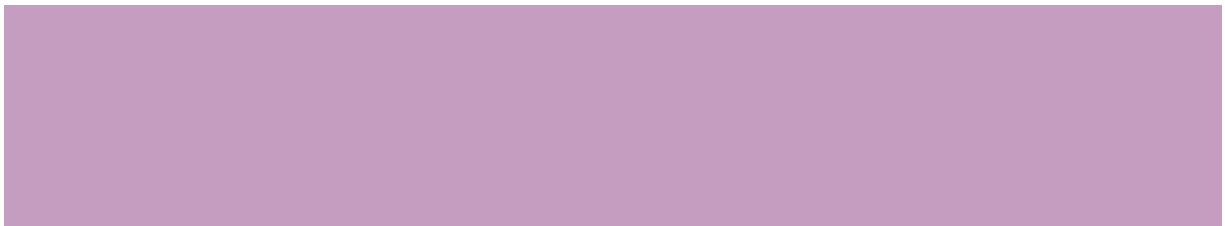
An example of this is Hadeel: Her determination and persistence to learn photography and editing has led her to take part in the Multimedia course at the VTC, which, in turn, helped her embark on the adventurous world that she





long aspired for. Her passion for capturing the scenes from reality through her lens is conveyed through the living images and dynamic photographs of the recurrent Jerusalem daily scenes that she has taken. Another example is Knar, a mother of two, who, upon having taken part at the Center, has excelled in utilizing her language capabilities to illustrate the stories she prepared. What we cannot miss is the shine emanating from the eyes of the students at the moment of their graduation which conveys their passageway into real life.

Furthermore, the YWCA of Jerusalem provided specializations for professionals and employees who aspire to advance in their work place, such courses included practical math and accounting and three-dimensional drawings (3Ds max), which has been a unique learning opportunity for the them.





Youth Leadership and Civic Engagement Highlights

In the course of 2015, the youth who had acquired theoretical training got the chance to practice what they have learned through the implementation of seven initiatives planned under the “Know Yourself” campaign. This opportunity provided the youth with the special know-how to manage activities, and instilled within them the awareness on the significance of community participation.

In addition to the participation of youth in various local and community activities, the YWCA provided the opportunity for one of the group members to travel to Lebanon and participate with the youth members there on the theme of just peace. This initiative was made possible through the partnership with the International Work Organization which focuses on issues related to human rights in areas of civil conflict. The youth member, Adnan Jaber, expressed that his participation was highly significant and that it positively influenced his personality and instilled within him the capacity and opportunity to work and cooperate with other international youth groups.



The YWCA continued its activities with the Jerusalem Youth Forum and contributed in drafting an appeal addressed to the international community in light of the encroachments that the

Palestinians were facing at the end of 2015. The text of the statement was:

“We, the youth from the Jerusalemite community, request the international community to provide immediate protection for our Palestinian people who are exposed to the Israeli Occupation measures within their surroundings. The encroachments and violations are overwhelming to all Palestinians affecting every aspect of their daily lives, particularly those residing in Jerusalem and Hebron. We consider these encroachments as discriminatory policies that defy the fundamentals of human dignity and the security of citizens, and breach the international conventions and agreements as well as and the International Humanitarian Law.”

Promoting Women's Rights Highlights

The YWCA Women's Rights Program attains distinction every year in its diversity and focus areas that are portrayed in the extensive and qualified team work and networking with women organizations and activists in Jerusalem within the framework of the Jerusalemite Women Forum. The cooperation with and participation of the relevant networks has been exemplified in its ability to reach larger numbers of women in the area, as well as in the expansion of the forum membership which is now comprised of twenty organizations joining forces to support community members while calling attention to the visible and non-visible issues facing the residents of Jerusalem.



The women's forum had an active and eminent role at the end of 2015 when they issued a number of appeals and statements pertaining to international protection. The text of some of those statements were as follows:

"We call on the International Community to provide the much-needed protection for the Palestinian people in Jerusalem and to implement UNSCR1325 pertaining to women, peace, and security. We urge the supporters of human rights to advocate for the protection of our community from the repressive systems of the Occupation. We ascertain our right to feel secure so that our children would be able to reach their schools safely; that we would be able to communicate with our families safely; that we would reach our work locations without fear and anxiety; that the senior residents would safely be able to access their health care services; and that we would be able to commute between our towns and cities without the fear of being attacked by the Israeli defense forces and armed settlers."

The Children's Cognitive Learning Highlights

In mid 2015, the YWCA established a new Kindergarten in the children's department, which was successfully promoted after it was qualified to comply with the safety and security requirements. Moreover, professional trainers with high expertise in the field were hired. The Kindergarten formally commenced on September 1st, 2015, with the opening of two classes: The first class is for newborns from 3 to 14 months old, while the second class is for infants over 14 months and under three years. There is a total of 30 children, and 5 babysitters and a supervisor.



One of the goals of this Kindergarten is to nurture the emotional skills of the children, and develop their mental capabilities, exploratory skills and experiences, in addition to nurturing their physical abilities amidst a healthy and convenient environment and providing them with the proper nutrition. The Kindergarten also aims to develop the children's cognitive, energetic, and social skills, and to provide the space for self-discovery and for the understanding of social patterns and behaviors.



Also, the YWCA persisted in providing non-methodological activities for children, whereas more than 60 children graduated from these activities (ballet, dance, chess, taekwondo, gymnastics, and drawing), in addition to more than 223 children who have been enrolled in the summer camps that took place between June 1, 2015 and August 19, 2015. The summer camps provided lunch meals and trips with the participation of the volunteering leaders from the YWCA youth.



The YWCA of Ramallah Economic Empowerment Highlights



Vocational education is considered a core component of the YWCA of Ramallah economic empowerment interventions, during the year 2015, 55 students, 37 females and 18 males completed the office management specialization. The students also participated in an employment day to increase their employment opportunities and an awareness day about breast cancer. The latter event was organizing an annual event hosted by the YWCA to introduce VTC graduates to the local market. 100 students and fourteen well-established local institutions and companies were invited to present themselves and hold individual interviews for potential employment opportunities.

Additionally, an agreement with PUM senior experts from Holland was forged to provide experts in curricula development in the IT sector. Accordingly, a new IT specialization was designed and ready to be certified by the Palestinian Ministry of Higher Education to be the first certified specialization in Palestine. It aims to prepare IT individuals to be capable of outsourcing, and producing associated techs. As for the event management, an MOU was signed between the YWCA and the Grand Park Hotel as a platform for shared experiences.

Furthermore, Joint efforts, between the YWCA and other educational institutes, have been intensively done to raise awareness about vocational education as an alternative for university education. Field visits to various schools in the Ramallah region were organized to reach as many students as possible.

Moreover, the YWCA of Ramallah helped and supported two marginalized women to establish their small-sized business at the Jalazone refugee camp through building their capacities to manage their own gyms located at the YWCA premises at the Refugee Camp.

Youth Leadership Development and Civic Engagement Highlights

Supporting youth initiatives and maintaining their participation and contributions to either the YWCA and or their communities is the YWCA ultimate priority. A student council was created for the VTC Students as an initial step to support youth leaders. Twelve students were nominated and resulted in having a female leader to occupy the head of the committee by retaining the vote's majority and five other members were elected.

Furthermore, the YWCA's youth and VTC students together participated in several community activities such as: olive harvesting in Ein- Areek village as a sign of supporting the Palestinian case and Stop Poverty Campaign. They also organized fun activities to sick children at Ramallah Government hospital during Christmas to bring joy, hope and happiness to the children.

The "Ten sing" youth group from Y-Global – Norway introduced drama and art work and performances to the YWCA's youth as supplementary skills for expressing and handling individual challenges and stress. Nevertheless, BDS trainings and Stop Poverty Campaign awareness sessions were implemented by the YWCA's youth. They took TOT trainings to be equipped with necessary skills to run trainings and spread awareness among their communities about the BDS. Those campaigns focused on supporting and promoting local products in the local market and thus increase job opportunities and income for the producing groups particularly women.



Children's Cognitive Learning Highlights

Working with children is as crucial as working with youth. It is a priority to enhance the well-being and the surrounding environment of the people and children the YWCA serves mainly at the Jalazone refugee camp. During the year, an MOU was signed between the YWCA and the Polish Aid to rehabilitate the YWCA kindergarten at the Jalazoune Refugee Camp, to create and provide a healthy environment for the children and to enhance the current KG educational curricula through preparing YWCA's teachers to integrate sport, music, art and drama into the educational material and tool.

Similarly, the Australian office representative supported the rehabilitation of the health and sanitation facilities of the KG to sustain a healthy environment for the kids. The overall changes had a positive impact on the quality of the KG education and services which attracted more and more kids even from outside the camp.

Finally, a 10 week summer camp for kids was organized, where 100 children aged between (5-12) years old have participated. It offered diverse educational and recreational activities and concluded by planning a volley ball festival, in partnership with Palestine Olympic committee.





The YWCA of Bethlehem

Elections of the YWCA Board of Directors and the Distribution of Roles

The year 2015 witnessed the successful finalization of all procedures related to the YWCA registration process as well as the election of its new and abiding Board of Directors. Elections took place on November 28, 2015, with the attendance of Ms. Latifeh Al-Mashni, the Palestine Interior Ministry Representative in Bethlehem, and the participation of 22 out of the 31 general assembly from the YWCA. The nomination process for the new Board was then commenced, whereby seven members were elected.. On December 3, 2015, the seven elected board members held their first board meeting and distributed the roles and functions including the validation of the financial committee as follows:

Rose Odeh Yacoub Basel Misleh, President

Rojis Jiries Qumsieh, Vice-President

Nadera Carlos Nicola Sarras, Secretary

Hanan Issa Yacoub Qara'a, Treasurer

Nadia Yacoub Theodore Theodorie, Member

Rabab Ibrahim Salim Misleh, Member

Shaden Muhammed Ibrahim Hamad, Member



In accordance with the YWCA bylaws, which determines that the number of its board members should be comprised of nine, the board members held a second meeting whereby two more members were elected: Doris William Habib Raba', and Ilham Said Issa Asfour.

The YWCA of Bethlehem Activities in 2015

Upon its formation, the members of the YWCA of Bethlehem worked on initiating the new association by first renting its premises, which is in an easily accessible location on the main road of the Bethlehem and Deheiseh. The premises was then supplied with the basic furniture,

tools and equipment to be used for the upcoming workshops and awareness-raising campaigns. The board members also hired an administrative assistant to coordinate the programs.

The YWCA of Bethlehem made the initiative to develop relations with the YWCAs of Ramallah, Jericho and Jerusalem, by inviting all of the YWCAs on May 1, 2015 for breakfast in Bethlehem, in the occasion of the World YWCA – Geneva Global Breakfast that takes place every year in this date.. The breakfast in Bethlehem was attended by almost one hundred women, including board and staff members from all of the three local associations.



In order to start up and introduce community members to the new association, the YWCA of Bethlehem held several workshops under “the Stop the Poverty” Campaign by supporting national Palestinian products (which would in turn reduce unemployment rates). Those activities are per the Y-Global funded project supervised by the National Council.

Five of these workshops were carried out between the months of October and November in Bethlehem areas as follows:

Bethlehem University, January 28. Number of participants: 84

Al-Amal School in Beit Jala, October 28. Number of participants: 56.

The Lutheran School in Bethlehem, November 4. Number of participants: 19.

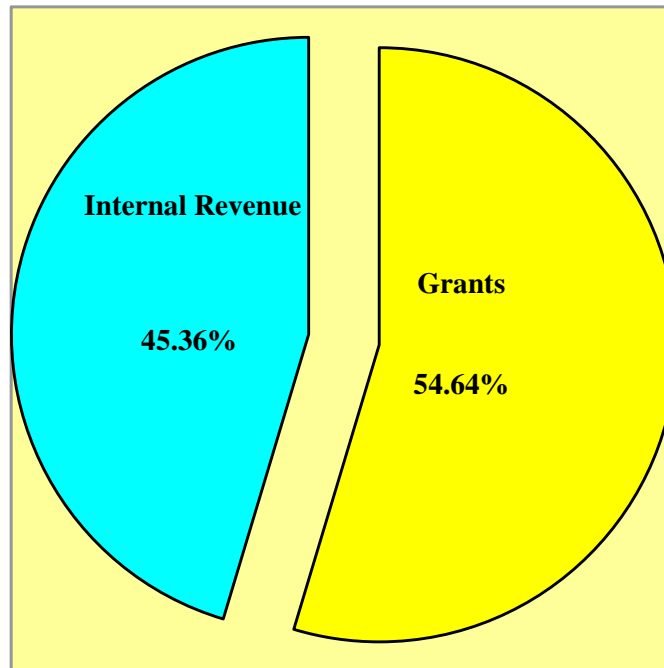
The Lutheran School in Beit Sahour, November 4. Number of participants: 2.

The Latin School in Beit Sahour, November 12. Number of participants: 50.

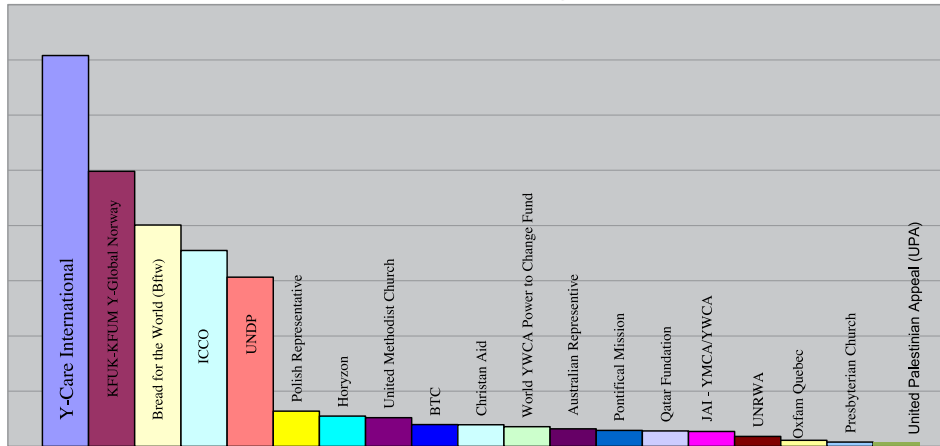
Moreover, young female students in the eleventh grade/literary field from the Beit Sahour Elementary School were trained in lobbying and campaigning for a period of three days on November 30 and December 1-2, 2015 with instructor Marleine Rabadi.

These workshops were well-attended and full of interaction, and the most notable influence on the youth and adolescents was observed upon seeing a film that was centered around the issue of eliminating poverty in Palestine.

YWCA External Versus Internal Funding



Donor Funds Received During 2015



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