

The Palestinian Initiative for the promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy



MIFTAH ACTIVITIES REPORT 2011

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Letter from the Chair of the Board of Trustees

This has been a particularly challenging year for Palestine and for the Arab region as a whole with the radical changes taking place in this part of the world. However, as always MIFTAH has been able to rise to the occasion of its mission, its programs and its services to several sectors of Palestinian society with excellence. I am honored to be part of this team and congratulate MIFTAH's administration, board and staff on the outstanding results it has achieved this year and all the years before.

As Chair of the Board of Trustees, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate MIFTAH on its 13th year running and the publication of this year's activities report. Each year's achievements are a reflection on the efforts of the year before, and I can see that MIFTAH has excelled both in efforts and outcome. Over the years, MIFTAH has created strong and independent leaders, not just in the target groups it works with but among its own family as well. MIFTAH's administration and staff are professional and dedicated to their work and their mission, which is reflected in the reputation it has fostered for itself. In many areas of the West Bank, Gaza and Jerusalem, MIFTAH has become a household name, linked to the opportunity for marginalized sectors to have their voice heard. It has become the name for honest and credible dissemination of ideas and information, which is a rare commodity in today's world of untethered information.

So, I commend MIFTAH for its hard work, its commitments and its ability to rise above the challenges of our time in order to maintain the excellence with which its name has come to be recognized.

Sincerely,

SawsanFahoum-Ja'far

Foreword by the Chief Executive Officer

This year has been full of challenges, achievements and unexpected turn of events for the Palestinians and the entire Arab world. As always, throughout the 13 years since its establishment MIFTAH has catered to the changes in its society in a way that it felt could best serve all of its members, especially those on the margins. This year, MIFTAH brought together youth and political leaders to discuss strategies for the up and coming youth movement in Palestine aimed at ending the political split and the Israeli occupation. Youths were given the opportunity to sit with leaders for the PLO, the PLC and civil society and both tried to formulate the best possible method of learning from the youth uprisings in the Arab world tailored to Palestinian demands.

Furthermore, MIFTAH continued with its projects in remote areas of the Jordan Valley, which both strengthened their community and also their resolve to remain on their land, constantly being threatened with confiscation by Israeli authorities. We continue to work and empower women leaders to become more involved in their own communities and in political decisions and we continue to host policy meetings where the top echelons of political and civil society come together on pressing issues. We have published papers on a revision of the Paris Economic Protocol, on the ongoing reconciliation and on prospects for a peaceful solution in light of the deadlocked peace process. And we will continue to do so in a bid to shed light on our society's most urgent issues where all sectors can come together for dialogue and discussion.

In the field of dissemination of the Palestinian narrative, MIFTAH continued in its message of promoting a democratic, pluralistic and tolerant Palestinian state based on the two-state solution. MIFTAH has won itself a respected reputation among its readers and supporters who have come to rely on its information as credible and accurate.

It is with great pride that I present to you this 13th annual report on MIFTAH's activities for 2011. However, just as we pride ourselves on our achievements, we always strive to improve, advance and learn from our shortcomings in a bid to forge a better future. This is what has maintained MIFTAH's caliber among Palestine's civil society organizations and I am confident will continue to for many years to come.

I would like to show my appreciation to MIFTAH's board, its management team, staff and field workers for the excellent work it continues to do. This year has proven that our organization can continue to overcome challenges and obstacles and remain at the pinnacle of non-governmental work.

Lily Feidy, PhD

MIFTAH'S VISION, MISSION AND OBJECTIVES

VISION

An independent, democratic and sovereign Palestinian state, which grants Palestinians their basic rights, preserves their dignity, and enjoys international recognition and respect.

MISSION

Established in Jerusalem in December 1998, with Hanan Ashrawi as its Secretary-General, MIFTAH seeks to promote the principles of democracy and good governance within various components of Palestinian society; it further seeks to engage local and international public opinion and official circles on the Palestinian cause. To that end, MIFTAH adopts the mechanisms of an active and in-depth dialogue, the free flow of information and ideas, as well as local and international networking.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. To disseminate the Palestinian narrative and discourse globally to both official and popular bodies and decision-makers.
2. To empower effective leadership within all components of Palestinian society in order to enhance democracy and good governance and raise public awareness concerning the rights and responsibilities of good citizenship.
3. To influence policy and legislation to ensure their safeguarding of civil and social rights for all sectors and their adherence to principles of good governance.
4. To bolster MIFTAH's capacity and its capability to achieve its objectives and mission efficiently and effectively.

MIFTAH'S BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Hanan Ashrawi	Founder and Head of MIFTAH's Board of Directors
Sawsan Fahoum-Ja'far	Chair of the Board of Trustees
Sa'id Khouri	President and co-owner of Consolidated Contractors International Company (CCC), Athens
Adbel Muhsin Al-Qattan	Founder and President of A.M. Qattan Foundation, London
Rashid I. Khalidi	Professor, Columbia University
George Salem	Attorney at Law and Partner at Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer and Feld, Washington, DC.
Khalil Jahshan	President of the National Association of Arab-Americans (NAAA), former President of the Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee

	(ADC), Washington, DC.
Khalil Hindi	President of Birzeit University
Ziad Abu-Amr	Member of the Palestinian Legislative Council
Sabih Al-Masri	Chairman of ASTRA
Maha Abu Dayyah-Shammas	Director of the Women's Center for Legal Aid and Counseling
Eyad El-Sarraj	Director General of the Gaza Community Mental Health Program
Azmi Shuaibi	AMAN Commissioner for Combating Corruption, MIFTAH's Treasurer
Rima Hammami	Professor of Anthropology, Birzeit University
Ghassan Al-Khatib	Director of the Prime Minister's Media Office
Mohammed Abdel Qader Hussein	Head of the Board of Directors of the Faisal Hussein Foundation; member of the Board of Trustees for the Jerusalem Society for Welfare and Development
Raji Sourani	Director of the Palestinian Center for Human Rights
Lily Feidy	MIFTAH's Chief Executive Officer

WHO'S WHO AT MIFTAH

Employee	Title
Dr. Lily Feidy	Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
Dolly Nammour	Development Director

Rula Muzaffar	Director – Financial and Administrative Affairs
Joharah Baker	Director – Media and Information Program
Bissan Abu Ruqti	Director- Good Governance and Democracy Program
Muath Barki	IT Coordinator
Ruham Nimri	Project Coordinator – Media Monitoring Unit
Mohammad Abed Rabbo	Media Analyst
Ala' Karajah	Media Coordinator
Nida' Ibrahim	Media Coordinator (Left in March 2011)
Najwa Yaghi	Project Coordinator
Lamees Hantouli	Project Coordinator
Taghreed Dueibis	Project Coordinator
Marina Qaqish	Accountant
Kholoud Joubeh	Administrative Assistant
Bisan Samamreh	Administrative Assistant (Left in May 2011)
Riham Kharroub	Administrative Assistant (Left in September 2011)
Sahar Rafidi	Administrative Assistant
Maram Abu Rmeileh	Administrative Assistant
Jafar Ladadweh	Receptionist
Nawal Shawamreh	Services (Left in April 2011)
Ghada Al- 'Araj	Services
Julie Holm	Intern- Media and Information Program
Harriet Jane	Intern- Media and Information Program

Meghan Walsh	Intern- Media and Information Program

GOOD GOVERNANCE AND DEMOCRACY

I. Empowerment of Palestinian Women Leadership

MIFTAH's Empowerment of Palestinian Women Leadership Program responds to its strategic objective, "To empower effective leadership within all components of Palestinian society in order to enhance democracy and good governance and raise public awareness concerning the rights and responsibilities of good citizenship." Following is an overview of the projects, which are representative but by no means exhaustive.

1. Gender Responsive Budget in Local Councils

[Funder: Heinrich Boell Foundation]

[Duration: June 15-November 24, 2011]

Project Background

The project Gender Responsive Budget in Local Councils is a continuation of three previous pilot initiatives, implemented in the three municipalities: Birzeit, Halhoul, Anabta in the West Bank through 2007-2010. Over a period of five months this year, MIFTAH conducted several activities within the project which included a revision of three strategies of the above mentioned municipalities from a gender perspective; the local councils were also provided gender indicators and guidelines for integrating gender. In addition, the project targeted a new local council: the BaniZaid Municipality and worked with the mayors, members and staff for almost 12 weeks on developing a Participatory Needs Assessment report from a gender perspective. This is in addition to formulating a well-developed strategic development plan that takes into consideration gender as cross-cutting with all community developmental dimensions included in the strategy. The impact evaluation workshop was an added value to the project as it included recommendations raised to the Minister of Local Governance.

Achievements

- BaniZaid Municipality has become a model for a gender-based strategic development plan, which should be interpreted in gender responsive budgets.
- The Birzeit, Halhoul and Anabta municipalities are more aware of the importance of adopting the participatory approach in reaching out to different community sectors and were provided with a descriptive report including guidelines and indicators for integrating gender within their development strategies.

- Women societies and elected women members in both Anabta and Halhoul played an important role in facilitating meetings with focus groups (women and youth) for supporting data for the analysis of the strategic plan from a gender perspective.
- UNDP, GIZ, MoLG are more aware of the importance of integrating GRB within their programs as a tool for achieving equality, justice, transparency and accountably.
- The recommendations raised at the evaluation workshop were drafted and submitted to the Minister of Local Governance, upon his request.

Implemented Activities

1) Preparatory and regular networking meetings with key players

During June and July 2011, MIFTAH's project coordinator held several preparatory meetings in the Anabta, Halhoul and Birzeit municipalities to strengthen cooperation with the target local councils, and to proceed with MIFTAH's initiatives concerning gender responsive budgets aimed at a complete process of gender-based strategic planning. A new local council, BaniZaid Municipality, was also targeted to start gender-based strategic planning

MIFTAH's project coordinator conducted several orientation meetings with the Mayor and staff of BaniZaid Municipality, to prepare them for the process of gender responsive intervention (gender-based needs assessment and a gender based strategic planning), An MoU was prepared by MIFTAH and signed by the Mayor of Western BaniZaid Municipality.

2) Participatory Needs Assessment survey at BaniZaid through gender perspective

MIFTAH contracted PLAN consulting firm to develop a gender-based needs assessment survey for BaniZaid including two local communities (Beit Rima and Deir Ghassaneh) throughout August to September 2011. A one-day training was held at the municipality on September 11 targeting municipality staff members and active CBOs on issues such as urban planning, municipal and social services, security and crisis management and environment and public health.

The final draft of the needs assessment was distributed among CBOs during strategic planning procedures from October 18-20, 2011 and November 3, 2011.

Participatory needs assessment at BaniZaid Municipality-September 2011

3) Participatory Gender-based strategic planning process for BaniZaid local council

Based on the needs assessment report, PLAN developed a strategic development plan from a gender perspective, which included the following activities.

- *One day training* at BaniZaid Municipality on September 18, 2011 on gender concepts and gender mainstreaming;
- *Three full-day strategic planning workshops* at BaniZaid municipality (October 18-20, 2011), which included various sectors. Throughout the workshop, vision, mission, strategic objectives, were determined, in addition to developing the action plan for the coming three years (2012 -2015).
- On November 3 2011, the draft strategic plan was presented at a workshop to BaniZaid local communities. All the documents were gathered, organized and reviewed, and finalized in one comprehensive strategic plan document.
- One of the major achievements when developing the strategic plan is that gender was a cross cutting issue with the different strategies and developmental dimensions; thus the local council adopted the policy of equal opportunities for both men and women in recruitment, and committed themselves to open 20% of vacant positions to women.

4) Revision and evaluation of Birzeit, Halhoul and Anabta municipalities' strategic plans from a gender perspective.

Birzeit, Halhoul and Anabta municipalities completed the strategic planning process through a CHF and GIS intervention program from 2010 to early 2011 and succeeded in drafting their strategic plans.

Hence, MIFTAH, through the current fund, succeeded in preparing a specialized review of the three strategic plans of the three target local councils, from a gender perspective. The main findings and results of the readings and review of the strategies of the three local councils were presented through one workshop at each local council between October and November, 2011.

5) Impact evaluation session

On November 17 2011, MIFTAH organized an impact evaluation workshop with the participation of representatives from the four municipalities, Gender Unit from Ministry of Local Governance, Local Governance Support Program/ UNDP, Development of the Local Governance and Civil Society Program/ GIZ, Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS),

HBF, PLAN consulting firm, and MIFTAH. The workshop included a presentation of the framework of gender indicators and guidelines in reference to the gender review of the three strategies of Anabta, Halhoul, Birzeit. Then PLAN representative presented the model of the strategic developmental plan of BaniZaid from gender perspective, explaining the different stages and the whole process and highlighting the gender mainstreaming in each stage. About 25 copies of the needs assessments report and 25 copies of the gender based strategic plan for BaniZaid were distributed to participants.

Impact evaluation session-November 17, 2012

2. Towards Instituting a Gender Responsive Budget

[Funder: NDC]

[Duration of Project: January 1-December 31, 2011]

Background

MIFTAH's Engendering the Palestinian National Budget is a major component of its Good Governance and Democracy Program responding to its strategic objective of "[influencing] policy and legislation to ensure the safeguarding of civil and social rights for all sectors and their adherence to principles of good governance." MIFTAH has been working on this initiative for a gender-sensitive Palestinian national budget since 2003.

Throughout 2011, MIFTAH carried out a series of NDC-funded interventions and advocacy activities within the program "Towards Instituting a Gender Responsive Budget, summarized as follows.

- 1) MIFTAH worked on developing an assessment study of the services provided by the Ministry of Labor (MoL) from a gender perspective, in coordination with the Ministry of Labor which comes as a complementary effort to previous studies prepared on the Health and Education sectors. The assessment study is published on MIFTAH's website. It was provided to the Ministry of Labor as a reference document to endorse the feasible recommendations and interventions for integrating gender in the MoL plan, policies and budget.

Assessment study of services provided by the Ministry of Labor

- 2) MIFTAH conducted a series of specialized on-the-job training on gender mainstreaming, social analysis and participatory planning and budget analysis targeting 43 members of the planning and budgeting committees in five line ministries (including the Ministry of Women's Affairs). The training was conducted in two days at each ministry.
- 3) Based on the training workshops at the five ministries, MIFTAH published a GRB Guidebook which was developed and finalized by a team of specialists. The guidebook was provided to all ministries to be used as a guide for gender budgeting applicable procedures. In addition, it has been disseminated to relevant CSOs, universities, municipalities, the Prime Minister's office and the office of the PLC.
- 4) MIFTAH also prepared a policy paper on the status of Palestinian women and the Informal Labor Sector to advocate to policy and decision makers for better endorsement of policies that respond to gender needs and demands.
- 5) MIFTAH conducted a seminar on gender responsive budgets in cooperation with the Ministry of Finance, which brought together stakeholders, representatives of different ministries, NGOs and partners. The aim of the seminar was to come out with practical future interventions to execute and to process a gender responsive budget at the national level. The outputs and recommendations were documented in a report to be used for advocacy purposes with policy and decision makers.

Gender-responsive budget training

Achievements

- The formal declaration by the Prime Minister Dr. Salam Fayyad to adopt the Citizen Index Budget
- Active contribution in the preparation of an action plan for the review of laws and legislations concerning Palestinian women in the labor market from a gender perspective by the National Committee for Palestinian Women's Employment.
- Active contribution in the preparation of a position paper presented to the Prime Minister through the participation in AMAN's annual conference through MIFTAH's membership of the Public Sector Team for Promoting Accountability and Transparency towards the National Budget.

3. Ensuring a Legislative Environment that is Supportive of the Reduction of Gender Based Violence through working on MDG3

[Funder: UNESCO/Palestinian Women's Research & Documentation Center]

[Duration of Project: January – October 2011]

Background

The project *Ensuring a Legislative Environment that is Supportive of the Reduction of Gender-Based Violence through Working on MDG3* aims at influencing policy and legislation, to ensure the safeguard of civil and social rights for all sectors. By promoting the use of data pertaining to Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Violence Against Women (VAW) in the legislative and policy making process, it is anticipated that policies and laws become more sensitive to gender based needs and support the protection of women and gender equity.

Achievements

Despite the obstacles and challenges that MIFTAH's team faced during the implementation of the project, it succeeded in making the following achievements:

- contributing to making the Penal Code and the Personal Status law a priority for the PLC members
- activating political party representatives in advocating women's rights and influencing the policies and law-making process in this regard
- familiarizing ministers and deputy ministers who participated in the sessions with the statistics indicators related to GBV
- motivating ministers and deputy ministers who participated in the sessions in fighting GBV
- motivating PLC members to adopt a modern Penal Code and Law of Personal Status, which play a role in reducing violence based on gender

Implemented Activities

- 1) MIFTAH carried out the following training sessions with political parties:
The first training held February – May, 2011 showed the participants' seriousness (political parties representatives "Fateh Movement, Peoples Party, FEDA, Democratic Front, Arab Liberation Front, Popular Struggle Front and Popular Front") to work with their representatives in the Palestinian Legislative Council in solving many women's issues relevant on the ground in their target communities.

- 2) MIFTAH developed an action plan to activate the role of political party representatives in advocating women's right and influencing the policy law-making process concentrating on two steps:
 - Familiarizing the target group with the gaps in the Palestinian Penal Code and the Palestinian Family Law
 - Defining further steps towards changing both the Penal and Family Laws by both PLC members and the target group.
- 3) MIFTAH conducted two sessions – one in Gaza on May 23, 2011 and joint one in Ramallah on July 23, 2011 aimed at familiarizing the target group with the gaps in Penal Law and Family Law.

**Working with PLC members on gaps in Palestinian Penal Law and Family Law-
July 23, 2011**

- 4) As for Step 2, MIFTAH organized one joint session in Nablus on September 18, 2011 between PLC members and political party representatives from Hebron and Nablus. The parties and PLC members agreed to hold a preparatory workshop to form a national committee comprising all political parties, legal experts and activists on issues of women's rights to formulate a unified discourse aimed at applying pressure on decision makers to change the law.
- 5) Training sessions with PLC members:
 - A hearing session entitled "Violence against Women is a Social Matter" was held in Ramallah on May 23, 2011. The session was headed by PLC member Intesar Al Wazeer and moderated by Fidaa Barghouti. Three PLC female members presented 6 different cases reflecting VAW in Palestine. Most of the cases they presented were related to sexual abuse against wives and girls with special needs, early marriage, forcing young women into drugs and prostitution, in addition to honor killing and physical violence.

Hearing session with PLC members-May 23, 2011

- Another meeting was held in Ramallah on August 8, 2011 entitled, "The Palestinian Family and its Daily Issues" to highlight issues that lack justice and equality in the law.
- A workshop on gender concepts, Gender Responsive Budget (GBV) was held in Ramallah on September 13, 2011.
- To stimulate ministers and deputy ministers in fighting GBV, MIFTAH held a meeting for ministers and deputies from the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of

Health and the Attorney General. As a result, the Attorney General declared that the draft Penal Code is being finalized and will be approved via a presidential decree soon. He also added that the draft of the Penal Code will be published for comments through sessions and through the webpage of the Ministry of Justice.

3. Gender Equity and Security

[Funder: UNFPA]

[Duration of Project: January 1 - December 31, 2011]

MIFTAH is an implementing partner with UNFPA in the Gender Equity and Security Program, in reaching the outcome of gender equality and the human rights of women and adolescent girls, integrated in national policies, development frameworks and laws. This program has supported the national plans which consider the issue of women's protection one of its partial components, and consistent with the third goal of the MDGIF program, which emphasizes the role of the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) in achieving this goal through the elimination of discrimination between men and women in the laws and policies of the Palestinian Authority.

The Millennium Development Goals program and the Palestinian national development goals meet in targeting the marginalized group and in the process of poverty reduction. In addition, it aims to positively affect the concepts and directions that could become an obstacle in the development process.

Implemented Activities

- 1) Three policy dialogue meetings among stockholders were conducted and facilitated to develop a national frame work for the implementation of SCR 1325 and 1889
- 2) Three joint meetings for coalition members of the CBOs in Jericho, Jordan valley, Hebron and Nablus were conducted to exchange knowledge and experiences.
- 3) An action plan for 2011 to activate SCR 1325 in both Nablus and Hebron was developed.
- 4) The coalition plans and initiative were supported in Hebron, Nablus, Jericho and Jordan valley.
- 5) Two trainings on reporting and documentation of human rights violation using SCR 1325 were implemented in both West Bank and Gaza for six days in each location.
- 6) A film making contest for media student at An-Najah University was supported.
- 7) International Women's Day was marked through conducting a joint meeting between the coalition and youth activists (face book groups calling for national unity).
- 8) The 2009-2010 films of An-Najah University were distributed to women's organizations, coalitions, and local TV stations. They were also discussed and printed on DVDs.
- 9) The MDG-F programme webpage was updated.

March in Jericho observing the 11th year of the issuing of UNRSC 1325

5. The Empowerment of Palestinian Women and Youth in Rural Areas through Income-Generating Projects-Phase II

[Funder: OFID – OPEC Fund for International Development]

[Duration of project: February 2011-February 2012]

Project Background

This is the second phase of the “Empowerment of Palestinian Women and Youth in Rural Areas through Income-Generating Project,” which MIFTAH began in 2011 in which it supported five small income-generating projects (two bee-raising projects, one cow-raising project, a household supplies store and a food-production project) in five villages northwest of Ramallah and in the Jordan Valley: Al Jib, Qalandiya village, Nabi Samuel, Fasayel and Zbeidat. The project had 32 women beneficiaries otherwise living in extremely difficult economic and social circumstances. The first phase was implemented in 2009 through five projects in Ramallah-area villages.

The locations were selected due to the difficult conditions under which they live. In the Jerusalem area villages, the residents suffer from Israel’s occupation measures such as the Wall, land confiscation and lack of sufficient services, which has led to extreme poverty. In the Jordan Valley, the villages fall in Area C and are extremely marginalized and suffer from poverty and unemployment in addition to Israeli confiscation of land and natural resources.

Implemented Activities

- 1) Choice of locations for the projects with the aim of improving women’s and residents’ standards of living there and promoting women’s participation in the social development and decision making processes
- 2) Cooperation and coordination with a number of organizations, both official and non-governmental including the Ministry of Women’s Affairs, Jericho municipality and ASALA, which carried out training sessions for the women on micro-management of small projects
- 3) Implementation of a comprehensive survey for a number of centers and societies targeted to ensure their suitability to the project.

- 4) Formation of a steering committee comprising representatives of various sectors with experience in the small business sector
- 5) A number of preparatory field visits to women's cooperatives and centers to prepare them for the project and what is mutually expected from both sides
- 6) A number of training sessions carried out for the women to empower them and strengthen their financial and administrative capabilities between April and October, 2011
- 7) Follow-up on the projects of the first phase in the villages of Mughayer, Nabi Saleh, Deir Ibzee' and Kufr Nimeh

Names and venues of projects implemented

- Bee-raising projects: Qalandiya and Al Jib
- Cow-raising project: Nabi Samuel
- Jiftlik: household appliances store
- Zbeidat: food-production project

Achievements

- The workshops and training sessions the women received in managing small projects helped to develop their skills and raised their awareness of their rights as women to empower them socially and economically.
- The project also helped the women break away from the social and familial constraints imposed on them, which limit their ability to be involved in decision making at all levels. Their involvement in the projects helped change social perceptions of women in their communities and allowed for more acceptance of women in active roles, not to mention the obvious economic benefits reaped by these poorer families.
- Those initially opposed to women working outside the home became more tolerant and accepting and even began supporting and helping the women improve the quality of their projects, especially in the more remote and Israeli-targeted areas of the Jordan Valley.
- The project was implemented in marginalized areas such as the Jordan Valley and Nabi Samuel where most organizations do not work or work intermittently. This project allowed for continuity and continuation and most importantly, changes in perceptions towards women.

Bee-raising income-generating project

II. Election Support

[Duration: June 27-December 31, 2011]

[Funder : International Republican Institute]

Background

Support of Municipal Local Elections 2011 is a project that MIFTAH implemented in the period from June 27-December 31, 2011 in partnership with the International Republican Institute (IRI). To achieve the objectives of the project, MIFTAH implemented several interrelated activities such as town hall meetings and TV/Radio talk shows. Through these activities, which are entitled “*Active Citizenship and the Importance of Community and Political Participation*,” MIFTAH targeted Palestinian citizens –both men and women – to participate in civic dialogue with the goals of providing a platform for the public to enhance its knowledge of active citizenship, the importance of community and political participation and to encourage people to conduct lobbying initiatives independent of IRI/MIFTAH. This is in order to attain the goal of holding elections and explore the needs, issues and priorities of the community.

Implemented Activities

- 1) Through the whole period of the project, MIFTAH conducted 57 town hall meetings in 48 different locations in West Bank, including east Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip. The total number of attendance was (2021), divided into (764) males and (1257) females. Topics discussed included: Encouraging Active Participation in Elections; The Palestinian Reconciliation and Its Impact on Local Elections; the Role of the Local Councils and Active Citizenship; the Role of the Youth and Women in the Electoral Process; the concept of Citizenship; active community and political participation; Arab spring revolutions; and the role of youth in the change process and state-building.

Support of municipal elections-town hall meeting (August 2011)

- 2) Two coordinators from MIFTAH’s team participated in an intensive two-day media capacity building training entitled “*Media Production for Effective Political Dialogue*” which was conducted by IRI in Amman on September 16-17, 2011. The training covered the following main topics: the electoral debate; interview guidelines; skills for managing dialogues; broadcast interviews; message development and public speaking; delivery of political discourse.
- 3) MIFTAH conducted 9 Radio/TV talk shows in the main eight districts in cooperation with the local radio/TV stations. The shows were divided into five TV and four radio talk

shows. The talk shows included subjects such as: Upcoming National Elections 2012; local elections: the role of women; the role of women in local governance/ councils; the role of women in enhancing active citizenship and civic peace; elections and active citizenship; the role of youth in upcoming national elections; the role of the Palestinian Economy

- 4) Throughout the project, MIFTAH's project team coordinated with the Central Elections Commission (CEC), civil society organizations and stakeholders to ensure a continuous follow-up in preparation for the local council elections, and keep an update of information on the electoral process, renew its local observation papers, and coordinate on the legitimate time of conducting debates. By referring to the (CEC), MIFTAH also hosted specialists of the commission in the town hall meetings.

Support of municipal elections-town hall meeting (Jiftlik)

Achievements

- A wide platform for a democratic dialogue and discussion especially among youth was opened.
- Participants in some places took responsibility for holding town hall meetings to advocate holding elections, as a form of political and community participation and citizens' rights.
- Youth and women voices were heard.
- Targeting both men and women was very positive. In the past activities held in the different locations, women refused to attend activities that have men and vice versa.

III. Program of Empowerment of Palestinian Youth Leadership

Active Youth for Social Change: Palestine

[Funder: National Endowment for Democracy]

[Duration of Project: January 1 – June 30, 2011]

Background

This project builds on MIFTAH's long experience in the areas of youth empowerment and active citizenship and responds to its strategic objective, "To empower effective leadership within all components of Palestinian society in order to enhance democracy and good governance and raise public awareness concerning the rights and responsibilities of good citizenship." It addresses MIFTAH's concern for the situation of youth in east Jerusalem and its suburbs and aims to support young people in the city as active Palestinian citizens. The project mainly targets youth local groups and non-governmental organizations in Jerusalem and its suburbs, which in turn take responsibility for mobilizing their own local communities for more social activism towards change.

Implemented Activities

- 1) Networking was carried out with youth groups in Jerusalem and its suburbs with the aim of the following: reaching interested young activists from Jerusalem who are concerned about the status of the youth and the city; expanding youth activists' networks in Jerusalem, and motivating the youth to work on substantial issues affecting them in Jerusalem; discussing specific topics of interests and needs to enhance communication and coordination among them. Several meetings were held with youth groups and individuals from Jerusalem to discuss with them the upcoming activities and to make sure they fulfill their personal goals and expectations. Other meetings were held at the level of organizations to unify their efforts, avoid potential conflict or duplication, and guarantee the best achievement of goals.
- 2) Two preparatory workshops were held. The first workshop brought together three Jerusalem NGOs – The Palestinian Family Planning and Protection Association, Old City Counseling Center-Caritas Jerusalem, Saraya Al-Quds Center for Community Service – to organize and plan for a joint plan of action. The second workshop targeted the candidates for a training workshop on *Conflict Transformation*.
- 3) A two-day training workshop on *Conflict Transformation* was held on May 29-30, 2011 and targeted 18 young political leaders, males and females (ages 20-26) from Jerusalem. It was designed to help the participants explore the nature of conflict, analyze its causes, explore different interventions, and assist them in acquiring appropriate knowledge, skills, behaviors and attitudes useful in nonviolent conflict transformation. The topics covered in the training are the following: Concepts of conflict, types and impact on society; basic human needs; and finding creative and transcending solutions for conflict.

Active Youth for Social Change-Training on Conflict Transformation

- 4) A political dialogue session was held on May 28, 2011 to discuss the Palestinian national reconciliation and role of youth in the political parties, in addition to the youth Arab revolutions in the neighboring Arab countries.
- 5) A Policy Meeting was held on June 22, 2011: The meeting discussed the implications of changing the Palestinian curricula in Jerusalem as part of the Israeli policy to obliterate Palestinian identity. A policy paper was prepared and a number of recommendations were made including: forming a higher educational council in Jerusalem; Placing pressure on the PNA to carry its responsibility towards the educational process in Jerusalem; involving teachers, students and parents in responding to the policies followed by the Israeli occupation in various ways; developing a strategic plan to face the educational policies implemented by the Israeli municipality; and activating the role of youth, the largest sector of society, to face the threat caused by the Israeli occupation towards the implications of changing the Palestinian curricula.

**Policy meeting on implications of changing the Palestinian Curricula in Jerusalem-
June 2011**

- 6) An additional two-day awareness-raising workshop was held on June 24-25, 2011 on the *Promotion of Democracy of Citizenship and National Identity* in response to the needs and expectations of the youth. The workshop targeted 17 female and male (aged 20-26 years) young political leaders and university students from different fields and specializations from Jerusalem and its suburbs.

Achievements

- The targeted youth became more aware and better informed of the problems they face and of their own needs and interests and are more confident in dealing with these problems.
- The project gave youth a platform to express themselves in light of the critical challenges they face as Palestinian youth in Jerusalem.
- Cooperation was strengthened among the three Jerusalem organizations in terms of empowering and supporting youth in Jerusalem.
- Through this NED-funded project, MIFTAH's visibility and role as a leading organization and as a reference on the issue of youth empowerment was further promoted.

IV. Community Development

1. Fostering Community Change in the OPT

[Funder: EU]

[Duration of project: April 2010 – July 2011]

Background

Oxfam GB, UK, in partnership with MIFTAH, Pal Vision, Women Studies Centre and Ansar Centre, developed the project entitled “Fostering community change in oPt” based on situation analyses of six marginalized locations: four in the Jordan valley and two locations in Bethlehem area. This was the direct result of over seven years of escalated conflict in the West Bank and Gaza which has led to a dramatic decline in Palestinian living standards and social conditions. Internal and external movement restrictions, limited control over natural resources, and reduced rates of employment and economic production are leading to the collapse of an already fragile economy, increased levels of

poverty, and the gradual breakdown of social cohesion in communities in the oPt. These factors combined have together served to weaken the resilience of many Palestinians to respond to and engage in economic, social and political spheres. At the community level, the West Bank separation barrier construction and checkpoints are isolating thousands of people from their land, dividing communities and restricting access to essential services.

The capacity of Civil Society in marginalised regions of the West Bank to input into policy processes and affect change has been weakened at all levels by lack of organizational capacity, isolation from centralized political decision-makers and the scarcity of resources available to Non-State Actors (NSAs). Hence, MIFTAH and its partners felt it was necessary to initiate a project of this kind.

Implemented Activities

- Formation of/strengthening the mechanisms of community committees-comprising local government, CBOs, youth and women- for overseeing development projects. The general role of these committees is being an oversight body for community prioritization of development projects, administrator of the Community Development Fund and a representative body for facilitating donor and government networking.
- Training on conflict resolution/social transformation was conducted on January 7-8 of January 2011. The target groups were participants representing LGUs and members of the community committees from Walajeh- Bethlehem and Jitlek- Jordan Valley. The training aimed at raising the participants' awareness of the related conflict issues and assisting them in analyzing setbacks within their communities.
- A 30-hour training on participatory strategic planning was organized to target LGUs officials and members of the formulated Community Committees at the five target locations.
- A Citizens' Rights Guidebook was designed to increase the local communities' awareness of their rights, roles and responsibilities, and to empower them in advocating their rights, needs and priorities to decision and policy makers for accessing services in their marginalized areas. The Guidebook is divided into four units; citizenship, community participation and assessing community needs, advocacy and lobbying and was launched in a media event in Ramallah on June 13.

2. Developing Public Services at Palestinian Marginalized Areas

[Funder: Jerusalem Fund]

[Duration of project: June –October 2011]

Background

This project is part of MIFTAH's Project "Fostering Community Change in the OPT", which it runs in partnership with OXFAM GB, and Non-State Actors organizations such as the Women's Studies Centre. Over the past 15 months, MIFTAH, with its partners formed community committees in five target locations. In Jiftlek, a village in the Jordan Valley, MIFTAH assisted the community committee there to complete the construction of a public park and a wide theatre stage with an awning. This public park, considered as a priority to the Community committee of Jiftlek, was completed within their three-year strategic plan for 2011-2013. It serves the majority of Jiftlek residences, especially children and women, who do not have easy access to safe open and public places. The park is also close to the UNRWA elementary school. In addition, the wide stage is multifunctional for all the residents and the neighboring villages, which hold public festivals, school festivals, and public meetings there.

Implemented Activities

MIFTAH held several meetings with the Jiftlik community committee and the community coordinator, to organize and coordinate the construction activity, including administrative and financial issues related to processing the fund.

MIFTAH conducted three field visits during the construction process, until the stage with the awning was well established at the end of October, 2011.

The community committee held an Open Day in coordination with different partners which included a vast number of participants from different social sectors, to celebrate the opening of the public park in Jiftlik.

Park and multi-functional stage (Jiftlik)

V. Policy formulation

Introduction

Policy dialogue meetings are one of MIFTAH's ongoing activities aimed at enhancing multichannel communication among all sectors of society including government, civil society organizations, and the private sector with a view of supporting policy formulation. The meetings address pressing issues by engaging academics, ministers, decision makers and politicians in open and candid exchange of information and ideas. From these meetings, a series of policy papers are published which formulate ideas, alternatives and strategies. The meetings and policy papers show the discernable impact MIFTAH

has had on national decision making with many papers used by government officials as high up as the Prime Minister.

In 2011, four policy meetings were held with subsequent policy papers of the discussions and conclusions published.

Policy Meeting #1: *Options and Initiatives for Addressing the Current Impasse (January 18, 2011)*

This meeting focused on putting forth a strategy for creating a Unified National Front and shedding light on the necessary steps to achieve this as one possible method for addressing the current situation in the West Bank on the backdrop of the September obligations announced by President Mahmoud Abbas. In light of this, in addition to Israel's continued policies on the ground in the occupied territory, there were serious speculations as to whether the Palestinian Authority can continue or not, especially with the current political divisions. Another question was to what extent the PA in its current form and mechanisms can work towards ending the occupation

The participants agreed on the need for reconciliation between Palestinian political parties to create a unified front in the West Bank. The formula of a National Front in the West Bank does not require the dissolution of the PA but rather a change in its style and form of government. The government would be comprised of a smaller number of ministers in addition to a number of state ministers in various districts. There is also a need to form national guidance committees at the level of governorates. Some of the main recommendations of the meeting included the following: The need for a long-term strategy and a review of the national program in addressing the current challenges; we should also not put our wagers on the role of the US; The need to reactivate the role of the PLO where it would have a practical role in communicating with the people; A call for a national agenda for popular resistance in which the people and the Authority would participate under the leadership of a non-partisan national front.

Policy formulation session: *Options and Initiatives for Addressing the Current Impasse (January 18, 2011)*

Policy Meeting #2: *Special session on the popular youth movement in Palestine (March 31, 2011)*

In line with the Arab revolutions in Tunisia, Egypt and other Arab countries, Palestinian youths took to the streets on March 15 under the slogan of ending the political division and the occupation. In light of this popular movement and the youth initiatives taking place at the time, MIFTAH decided to

hold a special session that brought together political, civil society and youth leaders to discuss clear ways on how to move this popular trend forward and to identify motivations for expanding the platform for participation in this movement. The attendees discussed ways of reaching a common and united goal for the current popular movement and discussed motivators by which to expand the foundation for popular participation.

Policy Meeting #3: *September Obligations and Possible Scenarios (June 14, 2011)*

This meeting discussed the Palestinian bid at the UN General Assembly in September to gain membership and recognition of an independent Palestinian state on the 1967 borders. In light of this effort, the possible scenarios that may ensue were all put on the table. Given the weakness of the Palestinian political position at present and the current political vacuum, it seemed inevitable that ways should be found to fill this void through confronting the occupation in all areas and waging a political battle that would make a significant strategic change. The Palestinian move to head to the UN for recognition of their state and to gain membership comes within this context. This can only be considered as a new and different phase. Two options were discussed: First: going to the UN Security Council and requesting membership for Palestine from the Secretary General; and second: going to the General Assembly and applying for a change of Palestine's status from observer to member state. Participants also discussed ways of pursuing Israel at the ICC and ICJ to hold it accountable for its crimes.

Policy Meeting #4: *A critical view of the Paris Protocol (November 2, 2011)*

In this meeting, the participants focused on the Paris Economic Protocol. With Israel's continued settlement expansion on the ground and the end of the time period which the Protocol covered, the Palestinian leadership felt it was time to reevaluate the protocol and the ramifications of its implementation on the ground at the Palestinian, Israeli and international levels. They asked questions such as: What does it mean to "modify" or even "cancel" the Paris Protocol and is it a matter for discussion? The participants all agreed that what was needed was an assessment of the economic situation to see if international parties could help implement the protocol rather than renegotiate it with Israel until a final solution is reached. They also recommended taking legal steps against Israel over violations of the protocol and finding ways to create economic stability without entering into unfruitful negotiations. The participants also agreed that the leadership should organize relations with Israel instead of signing agreements and not open the door to negotiations with it on the Paris Protocol, especially in light of the current political impasse.

Policy meeting-MIFTAH

VI. Transformation in Conflict

Beyond Managing the Israeli Palestinian Conflict: Demonstrating the Effectiveness of a Model for Social Transformation in Conflict.

[Funder: European Union]

[Duration of project: January –December 2011]

Background

The project Social Transformation in Inter-Cultural Conflict-Israel and Palestine-a Step Towards Enhancing Cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean Region began in 2010 and has been ongoing since then. The activities include holding two multi-national workshops for representatives of hitherto excluded groups, holding two training workshops, translation of the KUMI manual to Arabic, Hebrew, German and French, and establishing a Euro-Mediterranean regional network of facilitators with a much-needed Information and Communication Technologies infrastructure. The action makes use of a specially-designed practical synthesis between identity-based conflict resolution methods, a structural framework for conflict analysis and action-oriented organization development approaches.

In the period between May 30 and June 5, 2011 MIFTAH and its other partners (YIFC and Transform) implemented a “Kumi” training and strategic planning workshop on Beit Jala. The workshop, funded by the Anna Lindh Foundation, was part of the program *Beyond Managing the Israeli Palestinian Conflict: Demonstrating the Effectiveness of a Model for Social Transformation in Conflict*. About 30 Palestinian, Israeli and European activists and facilitators participated on this event to deepen their understanding of the different components of KUMI, the name of a new method for social transformation in conflicts. The workshop concluded with a plan of action on using Kumi in contexts inside and outside Israel/Palestine, in addition to a clear structure for KUMI network.

VII. Networking, Lobbying and Advocacy

As part of its commitment to influencing legislation in a participatory approach, MIFTAH maintains strong networking and advocacy activities. Following is a highlight of the activities implemented in 2011:

- MIFTAH is an active member of the Civil Society Coalition for Amending the Penal Law. One of the achievements of the coalition has been the drafting of a draft amendment of the Penal Law.
- Four-hour presentation and discussion of the Penal Law and the Law of Personal Status gathering political party representatives held on May 23, 2011. The discussion aimed at enabling the representatives of political parties to advocate women's rights and influence policies and the law making process.
- A three-hour hearing session was held on May 23, 2011 under the title of "Violence against Women is a Social Matter" between 18 PLC members (11 males and 7 females) to motivate the PLC members to adopt a modern Penal Code and Law of Personal Status which would play a role in reducing violence based on gender.
- MIFTAH's membership in The National Committee for Palestinian Women's Employment headed by the Minister of Labor has widened the circle of networking and connection among related organizations, which in return has facilitated MIFTAH's role as an advocating civil society organization. MIFTAH participated in developing the action plan for the coming six months for the Committee. Currently, the focus of the committee is reviewing laws and legislations concerning Palestinian women in the labor market from a gender perspective.
- MIFTAH is a member of the Gender Audit Team facilitated by ILO and directed by the specialist Sama Eweida (Director of the Women Studies Centre); MIFTAH will participate in the process of gender audit to be conducted at the Ministry of Culture.
- MIFTAH's membership in the Public Sector Team for Promoting Accountability and Transparency in the National Budget has had its impact as shown in the formal declaration by Prime Minister Dr. Salam Fayyad to adopt the Citizen Index Budget; allowing every Palestinian the right to read and access the needed information included in the national budget (revenues, expenditures according to sectors, level of rise and fall of GDP, depts., and international aid) on annual bases.
- MIFTAH participated in the annual conference of AMAN Coalition and participated through the Public Sector Team in preparing a position paper presented to the Prime Minister, Dr. Salam Fayyad.

MEDIA AND INFORMATION

In 2011, the Media and Information Department at MIFTAH continued with the publication of three original articles a week, penned by MIFTAH's media staff. This includes an editorial, a viewpoint and a week in review, which is a compilation of news on Palestine over a seven-day span. Once every three months, MIFTAH's media department also publishes a success story on one of the organization's projects to highlight the impact these projects have had on Palestine's society. This applies for both the Arabic and the English media website. In addition, the Arabic website publishes up-to-date news on MIFTAH's activities. The Arabic website has also begun translating some of the factsheets from English, which are available on the site for a wide range of topics on Palestine.

The Media Department is also responsible for organizing and writing MIFTAH's policy papers in both Arabic and English, which result from the policy meetings held by the organization with leading political and civil society leaders.

Furthermore, the MID published four special studies on pressing issues, which is one of the highest number of special studies published in a year. Additionally, MIFTAH's former director, Joharah Baker was published in the European Institute of the Mediterranean's 2011 Yearbook. The article, entitled, "The Palestinians' Past and Present: Striving for Freedom" was part of the book's Key Issues section. <http://www.iemed.org/publicacions-en/historic-de-publicacions/anuari-de-la-mediterrania>.

In March 2011, MIFTAH's Media and Information Director conducted a political briefing for 29 members of the Danish Lutheran Church on the situation in Palestine, Israel's ongoing occupation and internal Palestinian disputes.

This year, Facebook and Twitter pages were created for MIFTAH where all of the organization's publications and articles are published. This has increased our visibility, our readership and feedback to our content. Currently our Facebook page has 780 friends while our Twitter account has 181 followers. We hope to double these numbers by next year.

Media Monitoring Unit

Promoting Good Governance through Empowering Media Students: The Critical Reading of Print Media

[Funder Konrad Adenaur Stiftung]

[Duration of project: January – December 2011]

Background

As part of its endeavor to influence the education of young journalists and instil values of tolerance within society, MIFTAH continued its implementation of the project entitled Promoting Good Governance through Empowering Media Students: the Critical Reading of Print Media in its second phase.

The overall goal of the activities is to contribute to promoting a Palestinian media discourse that is professional and conducive to peace and stability. The specific objectives are to educate Palestinian media students to become more critical media producers and consumers and forge partnerships between NGOs and educational institutions

Implemented Activities

The monitoring unit published four media monitoring reports and subsequent presentations in all as follows:

- 1) The first report, published in May was entitled “Revealing the Hidden: Al Jazeera Documents”, revolving around Palestinian media coverage of the ‘Palestine Papers’
- 2) The second report published in June was entitled “The Jerusalem bombing.”
- 3) The third report was published in September and entitled, “Media coverage of the 63rd anniversary of Al-Nakba”
- 4) The fourth report entitled “FATAH and HAMAS signing of the Egyptian paper and the understandings paper” was published in October.
- 5) The final presentation was on the publication of “Rayun Akhar”. The event was held at MIFTAH’s offices in Ramallah where the exemplary newspaper was presented to a number of students and journalists for discussion and feedback.

Presentation of exemplary newspaper “Rayun Akhar” December 2012

- 6) The reports were presented to media students at various Palestinian universities including Al Najah University in Nablus, Hebron University, Al Aroub College and

Al Quds University to expose the largest possible group of Palestinian media students to critical reading of Palestinian print media and train them on finding alternatives to lacking media coverage.

Empowerment of Media Students: Critical reading of Print Media

AMONG MIFTAH'S SUPPORTERS

- 1. The National Endowment for Democracy (NED)**
- 2. International Republican Institute (IRI)**
- 3. United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)**
- 4. The Representative Office of Norway**
- 5. Irish Aid**
- 6. Heinrich Boell Foundation**
- 7. NGO Development Center (NDC)**
- 8. Palestinian Women Research and Documentation Center/UNESCO**
- 9. OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID)**
- 10. Konrad Adenaur Stiftung (KAS)**