



2014

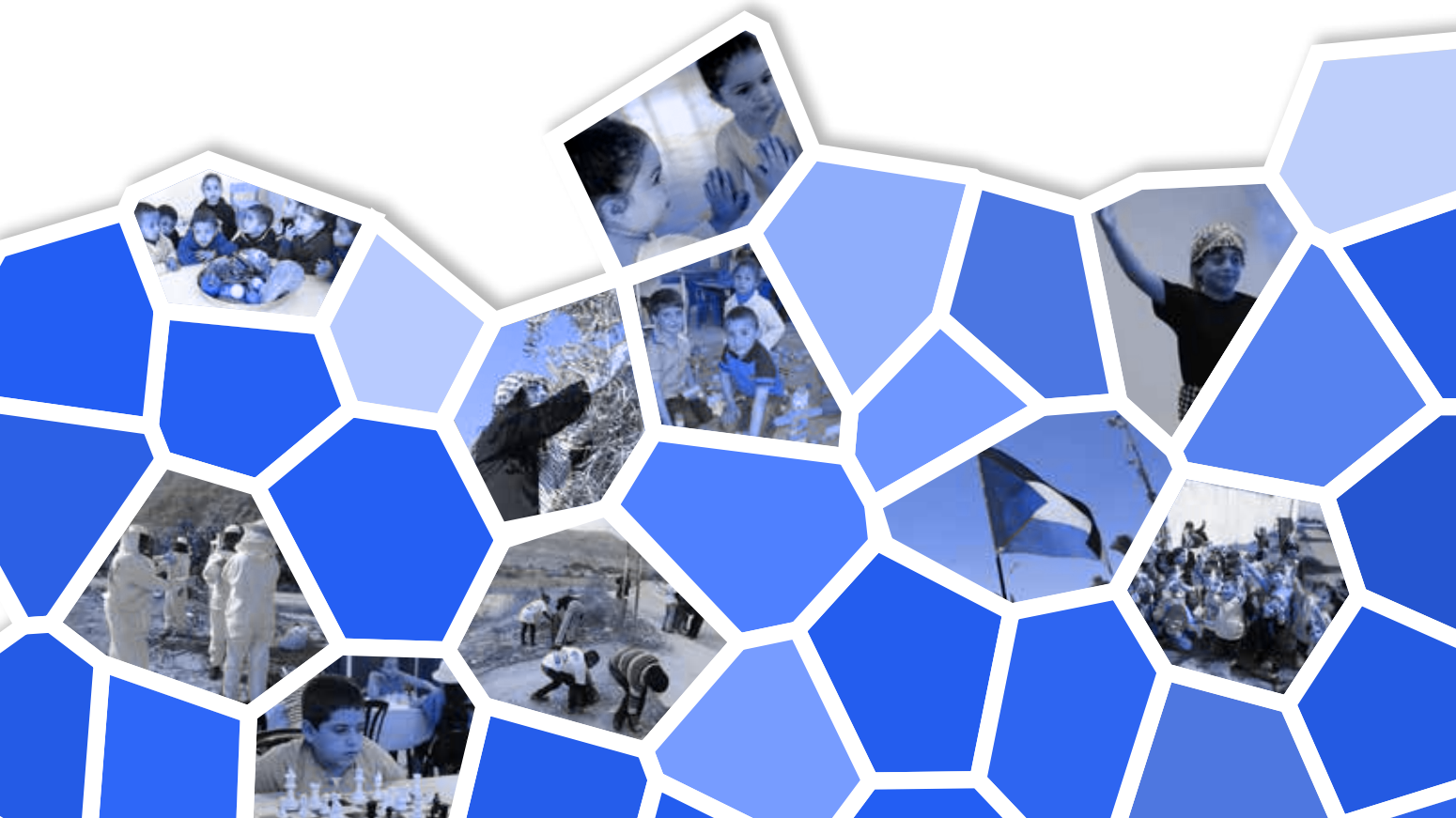


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Reflections by the National General Secretary: Mira Rizeq

For the past five years the YWCA has gone through tremendous shifts and transformations in its programs from being a traditional membership based service delivery organization, to an organization leading change that targets and addresses the needs of more and more marginalized people especially the women who always in this system and country are the most marginalized. By marginalized we mean those who are excluded of the decision-making and civic engagement or public forums, and those who either do not receive very many services—educational or economic opportunities or those surrounded by settlements, or impacted by the Wall, or those who suffer violence from either the settlers or soldiers on a daily or weekly basis, as well as the victims of domestic violence.



The 2014 has been a very strategic year for the YWCA in terms of integrating and impacting national mechanisms. The YWCA convened a very successful international Conference titled “Women’s Freedom, Peace and Dignity in Palestine: UN Security Council Resolution 1325 for Accountability”. The importance of this Conference is that it served as a catalyst for finalizing and issuing the National Action Plan for UNSCR1325, and highlighted the YWCA’s effective role in the National Committee and National Coalition for UNSCR1325. This has put the YWCA in a very strategic position to impact national policies and implementation.

On the global level, this has enabled the YWCA to support the concept of a Peace and Justice Task Force, to be established by the World YWCA, to enhance the global movement’s role in Peace and Justice. The YWCA takes pride that it has been able to impact global networks and national networks through its successful strategies that will set the record for others to follow.

The YWCA has also managed to forge a new partnership with Y-Care International, to test a new approach for community development. The national association took the initiative to establish a pilot implementing unit, as an incubation and learning platform for the local associations. The implementation strategies applied and the local partnerships developed at the community level with local governments and Community Based Organizations, in addition to the training kits and manuals being produced, will strengthen the role of the YWCA of Palestine vis-avis its local associations. The challenge now is to integrate this learning in the structures of the relevant local associations where the project is being implemented.

All this has fallen in place to help the YWCA of Palestine to rethink its strategy, objectives and role, as well as its relationship with its member local associations. With the help of some of the strategic partners, the YWCA was able to initiate its strategic planning process, with the hope of finalizing this process in 2015, and producing its new strategic plan in the fall of 2015. This plan will be a result-based plan, which will guide the organization and drive it by objectives and results. This is also a new shift for the YWCA to enable it to focus its work, produce and monitor its impact in the communities. The YWCA continues to build its capacity as a leading organization facilitating a process of change. We recognize that change is slow, difficult and complex, and we are grateful for all the support of our partners, and for their dedication and long term commitment to venture with us as we explore these new dimensions, and as we try to produce positive changes that will affect the lives and status of women in the communities. Seeds are being sown for new ways to live into being a rights-based organization dedicated to eliminating poverty and working for peace and justice.

Introduction

This has been a year of transition as we continue to move towards a deeper understanding of what it means to follow a rights- based approach and put poverty at the center of our work. Throughout the world, poverty has become one of the main injustices of our time. Here in Palestine poverty is maintained by practices and policies, laws and structures by both the Israeli Occupation and its practices, as well as the Palestinian government's lack of resources and/or imbalance in allocation of resources coupled with ineffective policy frameworks.

To combat this injustice we are making this the cornerstone of our program and advocacy work, or the foundation of all that we do. All four thematic areas: Economic Empowerment for Women; Promoting Women Rights; Leadership and Civic Engagement for Youth; and Cognitive Learning for Children, were revisited and more in depth strategies were developed in our programs and advocacy activities.

Towards helping local associations to be more responsive, various rapid needs assessments, community sensitization and studies were carried out to help explore strategic directions. In preparation for our strategic planning, the National office also hired several consultants to help it produce strategy papers that will determine the new strategic directions for the next few years.

Moreover, the year 2014 started with the commencement of a new 3-year EU funded project in partnership with Y-Care International and YWCA-YMCA Sweden. Because the YWCA of Palestine and all the associations will be impacted by our commitment to economic justice and poverty alleviation, this project is proposed to integrate economic strategies and civic engagement strategies to produce the desired program or strategic results, thus pulling the thematic areas into a more cohesive integrated program approach targeting to achieve measurable results in the direction of poverty alleviation.

This year we decided to ask our dedicated Executive Directors in the local associations to focus on the highlights of the year and their programs and outreach activities to the communities in their area. We acknowledge in this report the successful vocational training that is offered in our associations and our ongoing work on gender

rights and equity. What you may not be aware of is how each association is revising or adding new components to their work and reaching out to the most marginalized communities in the program work on economic justice, civic engagement, and women's rights, which this report focuses on.

Most of our partners and readers know already from past reports about our work on our advocacy project Fabric of Our Lives. We are developing new partnerships around this work, and connecting it directly as a tool for promoting UNSCR1325 with the coalitions that we are now part of. The YWCA of Palestine has further developed the communication work to include timely Action Alerts, position statements and newsletters to inform the world on the status of violations and the importance of our struggle for peace with justice, and to encourage our partners to engage and lobby with us as we actively engage women in the work and call for peace with justice..



Local Association Highlights

YWCA of Jericho

Economic Justice

In 2014 the YWCA of Jericho made further progress in empowering more women from the Jordan Valley economically. Through organizing various technical skills trainings, women gained considerable experience in food processing from a theoretical and practical level as well as new financial management skills. Marginalized community members from Nuwei'meh and Dyouk villages were offered practical and theoretical Apiculture (beekeeping) training in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture. The training was given to farmers as a strategy for minimizing the risk of selling their lands to investors for low prices or having Israel confiscate those lands and give them to settlers with the pretext that they are not being used.

This initiative came in order to create options and find alternatives for farmers to increase their income and create better livelihoods for them. After completing the trainings, five groups of women were provided with 20 beehives and needed tools to start their own business in this field.

Other women's groups were supported technically to establish their own small projects in food processing and help them market their products through the YWCA food outlet or in exhibitions within the YWCA booth.

This training was done with two groups in Aqbet Jaber Refugee Camp, one group in Nuweimeh and another group in Dyouk village. Also the YWCA helped to train women from Zubeidat village in the production of pastries through cooperation with Zubeidat Women's Association.



Throughout the years, the Food Production Unit (FPU) in Jericho has shown great potential in improving women's livelihoods, and their overall social and economic conditions. The FPU presently serves 15 women and 3 men as direct beneficiaries, representing around one hundred family members. Four women were added to the staff in 2014. Additionally, the FPU serves marginalized farmers as suppliers of raw materials who are paid fair prices for their crops.

The year 2014 saw considerable achievements. Organized promotion and marketing campaigns during the year enhanced the visibility of the YWCA food production unit and increased the demand of its products. The fact that the community is supporting small business enterprises as a strategy for livelihoods enhancement for women is key to women's integration in formal markets.

Other achievements or new developments include the following:

- New food processing equipments were installed to enhance productivity and meet the increase in demand. New cooling/freezing units were installed to enable the YWCA store more seasonable products.
- A marketing specialist was hired, supported by Oxfam Quebec, who succeeded in expanding the marketing outlets of the YWCA food products. New markets were opened and for the first time women's products were sold in large and competitive grocery stores in Ramallah;
- Gender equality concepts were promoted amongst the public in addition to raising their awareness about the YWCA mission and social responsibility;

The Production Supervisor, who comes from Aqbet Jaber Refugee Camp participated in Oxfam's GROW global campaign on Food Security called "Heroines of Food Security" in Canada. This was very instrumental for both the YWCA in raising awareness to its customers and citizens on the role of Palestinian women in economic development, as well as to the woman herself, who has never been part of a global event like this, or never even travelled outside of her own locality. This was a genuinely empowering process for both the woman and the institution.



Youth leadership and Civic Engagement

The YWCA of Jericho encouraged board members and staff of the YWCA of Jericho in addition to community members to defend their national identity and express citizenship through participating in solidarity activities with other Palestinians particularly those suffering at the Yarmouk Refugee Camp in Syria or with Palestinians in Gaza after the Israeli invasion to Gaza in July 2014. Moreover, the YWCA took the lead in organizing a campaign to promote keeping the Jordan Valley villages and surroundings clean and green. This was done in cooperation with the local council of Nuwei'meh and Dyouk and community representatives where 120 young citizens participated in this activity.



Women's Rights

During the year, the YWCA of Jericho provided 17 young women from the Jordan Valley a 4 day training workshop about gender and human rights in addition to organizing a workshop in cooperation with NGOs and Ministry of labor about the rights of laborers working in Israeli settlements.

These workshops were also attended by workers from the Jordan Valley.

Moreover, members of the YWCA Jericho participated in festivals and activities organized on the occasion of International Women's day on the 8th of March. Finally, the Executive Director of YWCA Jericho participated in very informative and successful Conference titled "The 2nd International Forum on Prevention of Domestic Violence based on the Family-Centered Approach" in Taipei - Taiwan during the period 24th -27th September 2014.



Children's Cognitive Learning

During 2014, two new interesting themes were introduced in the Aqbet Jaber Refugee Camp Kindergarten curricula:

1. Introducing music and rhythm to KG kids in cooperation with Edward Said Conservatory was an easy and interesting way in teaching music to KG kids and later on providing the talented ones with instruments such as violins to develop their talents. Parents welcomed this step and started to sense its positive effect on their kids' responses and behaviors,
2. Promoting healthy nutrition diets from an early age; kids participated in preparing some traditional dishes or sweets such as the traditional meal called Mujadarrah made of rice and lentils, lemon cake, fruit salad, and boiled corn.etc. These interesting and entertaining activities emphasized the importance of eating healthy food especially fresh vegetables and fruits and to know how food is prepared and served.



Nazar Halteh, YWCA of Jericho Executive Director

The YWCA of Jericho has been working with women and community based organizations in the Jordan Valley for many years. During 2014, we strengthened our work with these organizations and groups for our work on economic empowerment and especially women's entrepreneurship. We expanded our outreach in 2014 to small villages and towns like Al Oja village in the Jordan Valley. One of the main challenges for youth and women in the Jordan Valley is that most jobs are found in the nearby settlements. Helping youth and women to set up their own businesses and learn the skills for marketing and promoting their products is an important step for economic freedom.

The YWCA of Jericho also helped market some of these new products through the YWCA of Jericho Food Unit which is expanding its marketing channels to include locations in different parts of Palestine.

One of our most important partnerships for our economic justice work is with Oxfam Quebec. We have worked with them since 2012. They have supported us in the development of new training units and workshops about labor and gender rights and how to work toward sustainable development.

We are grateful for our local partnerships which include the governor's office, Jericho Municipality, local councils and local community based organizations and international groups from the Presbyterian Church, the World YWCA or groups through the JAI Program and new groups like the World Council of Church's Ecumenical Accompaniment program in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) where we serve as a contact for their new work in the Jordan Valley.

However we are most grateful for the dedication of our board and staff and the women we serve who are becoming leaders in their homes and communities. Economic empowerment is a justice issue because it supports women's freedom and dignity.



YWCA of Jerusalem

"The last day, when we summed everything up, I seriously felt that I want to change and I CAN change if I chose to, it made me feel eager to turn words into actions, it really gave me that push and made me feel like I want to go home right now! But at the same time I felt like I want to stay there forever..." from Jwanna Hussein who participated in Y Sweden Program Working for Change.



Economic Empowerment

"Now I know what it feels like to earn a salary. Now I know for sure how to calculate the value of my contribution to the family project, and definitely will make sure to cash it in." Kareema is a beneficiary of the economic empowerment outreach program that the YWCA of Jerusalem launched in 2014. This program was part of a new approach to reach women who were not able to reach us and offer them the needed skills to enable them later to start their own businesses.

There are high numbers of women trapped in their neighborhoods in Jerusalem for all sorts of reasons. Some of them cannot reach our premises because of movement restrictions due to the Israeli checkpoint system that locks Palestinians in their neighborhoods and prohibits them from moving around, others have family responsibilities to take care of and thus cannot leave the house or family for a long time.

This outreach strategy is a deliberate strategy for making our programs more relevant and responsive to women's needs.

The plan was to train them on employability skills such as skilled office workers, multimedia practitioners, and project managers and then introduce them to the market as trainees and later connect them with the donors of small and medium enterprises in order to bring them closer to the idea of initiating their own small businesses in their homes or neighborhoods. This pilot program was a continuation of the ongoing vocational training program that the YWCA has always been offering through its vocational training center at the premises of the association in Jerusalem since 1956.

The result was a success. The women became breadwinners. It was an opportunity for them to break the routine of the house chores and transform their energy into providing for their families economically.

The Multimedia specialization is now nearly two and half years old. It involves training young men and women in a career that was otherwise reserved for males only. Our female students cover various activities happening in Jerusalem from conferences to demonstrations to confrontations to weddings and have secured their position amongst their male peers in this profession. Our only male student is on his way to start his own small business.



All these young men and women are breadwinners in a new and adventurous career that we can proudly say: we as YWCA were partners in creating.

Office managers are also on the way to prove that they can use all their newly acquired skills in order to help run the offices that they joined. The young ladies that joined this specialization were employed in all sorts of business enterprises from working in a women's organization to an insurance company to book keeping in a store to working in a bank. Seeing them behind their desks validates our mission in bringing them closer to enhancing their rights and roles in the Palestinian society.

Definitely all this work was performed while broadening their awareness about their rights and roles so that they will look at themselves as activists in building a better future for the generations to come.

During the year 2014, the VTC of YWCA of Jerusalem was able to graduate 74 students in office management, and 7 in multimedia and 6 in Project Management.

Youth Leadership and Civic Engagement

The YWCA of Jerusalem focused its work in 2014 on “Social Integration for Youth” through enhancing youth abilities and connecting them with the society to complement their collective identity. The program was mainly focusing on democratic citizenship and interaction of youth within the surrounding society by volunteering, socializing, offering assistance and exchanging experiences.

The YWCA youth group organized various activities amongst which was a fundraising campaign for Gaza's children during the latest war on the Gaza Strip, in which they succeeded to raise \$1,250 which was sent to the children of Gaza through a local Church.

This initiative was rewarding and paid off to the YWCA itself in many ways. This youth group benefited from many sessions organized by the YWCA on volunteerism and civic engagement. This simple initiative encouraged team work, commitment, and dedication among the youth members, particularly in a time where voluntarism is disappearing in Palestine. They wandered to the retail stores in the Jerusalem area to hoard contributions in



order to express their outrage towards violating the “right to live” for the children and youth in Gaza. Despite the difficulties, youth also committed themselves to promoting the BDS campaign in Palestine particularly by boycotting Israeli products.

“Working for change program was a great experience for me: it gave me the power and encouraged me to make a change in the world especially in my country. I am so glad that I had this experience, it added something to my life and my knowledge.” Muna Daher



On the other hand, two of the young females from the YWCA participated in the “Working for Change” which is a program supported by YWCA-YMCA Sweden aiming at empowering young females and increasing their effectiveness in the society.

Another remarkable achievement was the launching of the Jerusalemite Youth Forum that was formed with the initiation of YWCA Jerusalem and with the participation of 15 youth organizations namely, Spafford, Sawa, Charitable Union of NGOs, Palestinian vision, Palestinian counseling center, the Social Solidarity, Youth for Jerusalem, Burj Al luqluq Organization, Abna' Al quds Club, Health work committees, Caritas Jerusalem and YWCA. The forum will facilitate voicing the needs and aspirations of young people on local, national and international levels.

There were a number of youth campaigns including an environmental cleanliness campaign done at the Shu’fat refugee camp which is known to suffer from lack of cleanness in it. They cleaned a school and its walls because they believed students have the right to learn in a safe and clean environment. They also painted the walls and planted plants and flowers.

In the Old City the students explored the theme “Palestinian Identity” as a title to its campaign utilizing a cartoon movie to spread the word amongst children and youth.

In March the youth joined the JAI olive tree planting campaign, as they have joined other internationals from around the world in planting olive trees in the West Bank. During the planting some of the youths faced angry settlers. This proved to be an important learning moment for everyone.



“While we were near the village of Tequa, south of Bethlehem the settlers started being aggressive. I started to steer the youth to withdrawal from the area when one of the settlers started to scream and curse at me and said, “Get out of our land.” I was so angry and humiliated with myself because I could not talk back. What we did that day was not a defeat. We were there! We could prove our Palestinian existence in a land that wasn’t touched for three years...We did not get to plant the 300 olive trees but only about 80 but we did plant the love of the land in souls of 35 Palestinian youth from Jerusalem.”

Maya Sahlieh Khoury, Youth Coordinator at YWCA of Jerusalem

Additionally, in October, the youth group joined the JAI in the Olive Picking campaign as well.

Last but not least, the YWCA “Waylala dance group” added to the year 2014 delight and joy around the Christmas season which helped Jerusalemites put behind some of the horrible experiences of the year which included the brutal war on Gaza and the burning alive of a 16 years old Jerusalemite by Israeli settlers. The dance group managed to spread some hope and happiness towards the end of the year.



Women's Rights

The women's Program Coordinator at the YWCA of Jerusalem, Ms. Naheel Bazbazat participated in the Commission of Status of Women (CSW) held at the UN in New York where she was part of the advocacy committee of the World YWCA

that advocated for protection of Palestinian women living under occupation and the implementation of UNSCR1325. Ms. Bazbazat had the chance also to present some papers about the reality of the Jerusalemite women to raise awareness of the attendees about women issues and violations in Palestine particularly political violations with the aim of soliciting global support for justice in Palestine.

Moreover, and during the attack on Gaza in the summer of 2014, the YWCA of Jerusalem took the lead together with other women organization within the

Jerusalemite women coalition to formulate a petition directed to various stakeholders among which the EU and the red cross condemning the brutal attack on the civilians particularly women and youth. The petition condemned the continuous loss of lives, as the silence of the global and regional communities and complicity with the Israeli Occupation. Here is an excerpt from the petition:



“In the name of al-tajamo, Al-nasawiy, Almagdasy, a group of “Coalition of Jerusalemite women” and Jerusalem feminists from all segments of society, we write to convey our deep condemnation to the continuous loss of lives as we express our rejection to the silence of the global and regional communities and complicity with cruel Zionist project. We women are appalled with the unending dispossession and mundane suffering of our people in occupied Gaza, the West Bank, and Jerusalem. We refuse to accept violence as par for the daily lives of the Palestinian refugees in the various camps, as well as among Palestinians of 1948 in the Galilee, Naqab, Triangle and more...”



Children's Cognitive Development

A diverse program of activities was offered to children during the 2014 at the YWCA of Jerusalem which led to attracting different target groups and higher enrollment in all the programs.

The YWCA of Jerusalem continued to organize its annual art- based day summer camps which targeted more than 360 children between the ages 4-12. These camps offered dancing, cooking, photography, ballet, Dabkeh, drawing, chess classes as well as organized trips. All with the aim of developing cognitive learning for children during the summer.

The camps also provide a safe place for parents to leave their children thus allowing women to work or take care of other responsibilities in the home.

The YWCA also organized an open day on the anniversary of the Palestinian Child Day which attracted children through story telling with special focus on the Palestinian heritage. Another day was planned on the anniversary of the Prisoner Day where the children and siblings of prisoners were invited to sing with the Palestinian singer Rim Banna. This event allowed the children the space and platform to share their feelings and to have some joyful moments. Finally the children who are enrolled at the YWCA children courses namely Chess and Taekwondo participated in national competitions and gained some golden and silver medals.



Sandrine Amer, YWCA of Jerusalem Executive Director

2014 is marked by a new strategy for reaching out to women and youth in marginalized communities. The YWCA of Jerusalem expanded its activities and interventions with the aim of reaching out to various surrounding communities where men and women are most marginalized. These communities include Silwan, Issawiyyeh Village, the Old City, and the Shu'fat refugee camp. These young women and men are living in extremely difficult situations with sometimes weekly violence from either settlers or soldiers and also suffering from a patriarchal system.



The YWCA of Jerusalem programs are more and more attracting a number of children, youth, and women, thus, making us a hub for those who live in communities without youth services or vocational training opportunities. Reaching them was reaching out to them, reaching out to the most marginalized. We did this by entering their neighborhoods, touching their lives, believing in their capacities and offering them a window of opportunity.

We are also very proud of our youth this year for the way in which they have engaged in their communities and of the establishment of the Jerusalemite youth forum attracting other 15 youth organizations. We are also proud to have been part and take the lead among other Jerusalem women within the Jerusalemite women coalition, speaking out against the attacks on Gaza.

In October the Jerusalem Y was also proud to contribute to the success of the



Women's Conference on 1325 and worked hard on an evening traditional dress fashion show for the participants and the opening Gala dinner welcoming all guest international participants where the Y Jerusalem Dance Troupe "Weilalah" performed few dances .

All of these achievements and accomplishments would not be possible without the Association's board and volunteers. These people believe in the persistence of this vanguard Jerusalem institution which continues to work towards empowering Jerusalemite women to sustain a society which respects and integrates equality, social, and democratic justice.



YWCA of Ramallah

"I feel that doors are being opened in front of me. Things that I dream of are starting to happen, even though they are small dreams but they are important to me"

Lana Daraghmeh

Lana Daraghmeh is a lovely 29 year old woman with lots of hopes and dreams. She was an honour student at school and did very well in her general certificate exam (tawjihi). She had high hopes of completing her studies but her parents wanted her to get married. She got married at 18 and was married for 8 years. Her husband didn't want her to continue her education and find employment.

After a bitter divorce, three years ago where her husband got custody of her two lovely daughters, her life was in ruins but nonetheless she had high hopes for a better future.

People told her that the YWCA offers a diploma in Office Management and the YWCA has a good reputation in the local community which encouraged her to study at the YWCA, as it is not easy for a young divorced woman to go out of her house unaccompanied by a relative in Palestine. After graduating as an honor student, she attained a full time job at one of local companies in Ramallah as an Office manager.



Economic Empowerment

Vocational education is a main component of and strategy for Economic Empowerment. Through its Vocational Training Center (VTC), the YWCA of Ramallah is working towards women becoming active citizens in all aspects of life as they become agents of change in their local community.

The YWCA of Ramallah believes that according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights "Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality". So the YWCA does not only provide trainees with technical expertise, but it also provides them with life skills training and gender related empowerment trainings. This approach has proven to have a positive impact on the lives of the graduates where 95% of female graduates (155 females graduated from the VTC in the years 2011-2014) reported a positive change in their gender role. In 2014, the YWCA of Ramallah VTC graduated 69 (46 F, 23M) students in Office Management Specialization and another 14 (11 F, 3 M) students in Events Management.

As the VTC considers employment internships as the most important means for linking the VTC graduates with employment opportunities, and Annual Employment Day was organized on May 20th, 2014, with the participation of over 50 young men and women from the Office Management Specialization. Twenty four local companies and institutions participated in this employment day, where each company was provided space to present itself and hold individual interviews with the VTC graduates.



Youth Leadership Development and Civic Engagement

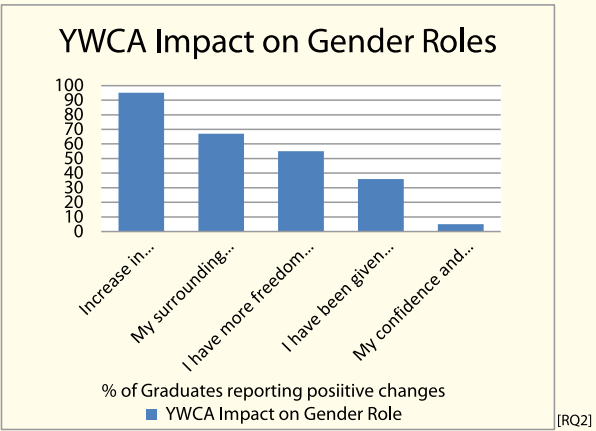
Through youth projects supported by Y Sweden and the Pontifical Mission, the YWCA of Ramallah was able expand its work in the Ramallah Governorate by focusing on women from the Jalazoune refugee camp, in addition to two more groups in Aboud. The Ramallah YWCA was able to attract and increase the number of youth members to 100, who participated not only in youth activities but also in all YWCA social activities which has led to enhancing the platform of youth leadership serving the community.



These projects focused on enhancing the psychosocial wellbeing of youth living under the occupation; especially for the young women residing in the Jalazone Camp. Our projects included music, dance and sports and counseling sessions.

• Women’s Rights

A three year evaluation study was completed in 2014 which measured the impact of the VTC program on women’s lives. 95% of female graduates reported an increase in self-confidence and change in their gender roles after joining the YWCA VTC specialization as following:



[RQ2]

Children’s Cognitive Learning Highlights

“I felt happy when my mom told me I am going back to my kindergarten because I am going to see my friends again but now I am happier when I saw that we have a new play ground that I can enjoy with my classmates. I feel this is my second home where I can bring any one I love to play with. Thanks for giving us the opportunity to play together” (Ayham Kamal- fiveyears old).

“This is where I can play with children and be happy without being afraid of anyone. I love my teachers, my classrooms and most of all the new play area that we have this year. Thank you for making us happy and safe.” (Jana Alkhaldi – 5 years old).

With the support of United Palestinian Appeal (UPA) for the second year in a row, the YWCA of Ramallah was able to run a program for enhancing the psychosocial wellbeing of children in the Jalazoune Kindergarten where 97 children are currently registered (55 girls and 42 boys). In Phase I, the outdoor playground was rehabilitated.

Teachers highlighted that they have been implementing different outdoor activities for children specially that it is now convenient, safe and enjoyable for them. This was also reflected in the children’s behavior since all children are now involved and



can play and participate in the activities at the same time given that there is more space for outdoor games.

Adham Nidal is a five year old kid who suffers from speech impediment which prohibited him from expressing himself and limited his participation in class. His words were very

limited and he had a hard time putting a sentence together. His teacher worked closely with Adham to improve his speech through outdoor games while clapping and spelling out words loudly as a methodology for improving his speech. Adham paid attention to his teacher's approach and started putting the words in correct formats and developing correct sentences. Ahmad is now able to write complete sentences and his overall academic performance improved substantially, he is also more able to interact and speak with other children in the Kindergarten.

Additionally, a 10 week summer camp was organized which is considered a core activity for children and held yearly. 120 children ages (5-12) years participated in the different educational and recreational activities. Children enjoyed drama, arts, sports, cooking and photography. Moreover, awareness raising sessions were offered for children in safety and first- aid in cooperation with civic based organizations in the area.

From Ropina Rafidi, YWCA of Ramallah Executive Director

The YWCA of Ramallah has achieved many of its goals and objectives for this year. Through its vocational programs and trainings it contributed positively to the social, economic and political development of its students and trainees. It has developed and deepened its strategic partnerships with the Ministry of Labor, the private sector and Belgium Technical Cooperation.

The Vocational Training Center (VTC) upgraded its course on Events Management and added a new one called Customer Relations. This revision and upgrade has contributed to raising the employment rate of the graduates in the Ramallah Governorate as these are highly desired skills



In addition, by advocating for vocational education, the YWCA of Ramallah was able to build new strategic partnerships with various sectors within the Palestinian market to promote women's economic empowerment. It is worth mentioning that the YWCA of Ramallah continues to work with youth in marginalized areas within the Ramallah Governorate by establishing youth platforms for civic engagement and leadership. Our interventions in the Ramallah Governorate include Aboud village, Jalazone refugee camp, and areas in the northern part of West Bank.

The YWCA of Ramallah is particularly proud of the outcomes from our youth leadership training. This was strongly reflected in the recent YWCA board elections where 6 youth board members were elected below the age of 30. There will now be 6 youth on a board of nine members. They have been elected for the board cycle period 2014-2017.



National YWCA of Palestine Highlights

The highlight of the national office was the international conference on Women's Freedom, Peace and Dignity in Palestine: UN Security Council Resolution 1325 for Accountability held in early October and all the work that went into preparing for the conference and successfully pulling it off. Therefore, the highlights for 2014 revolve around new coalitions and partnerships that we joined to work on gender based violence and developing a national action plan for implementing UNSCR1325 in Palestine.

We also deepened our work on refugee rights by adding new tools to our Fabric of Our Lives project as we continue to explore venues and partners for promoting it and selling our dolls. Our advocacy work went into high gear during the war on Gaza when we committed ourselves to produce Weekly Action Alerts for our partners.

Additionally, we began two new pilot initiatives : the Stop Poverty Campaign and a new partnership project called Shumous.



The Stop Poverty Campaign

In September 2014, the YWCA launched The Stop Poverty Campaign, a global campaign supported by Y-Global (YWCA-YMCA in Norway). This campaign is the primary message that the YWCA of Palestine wants to promote within all its programs and projects. As the YWCA of Palestine and its associations move more and more in the direction of a rights-based approach, the organization is committed to addressing the social, economic, and political justice issues in all the work it does. It is both foundational and the backdrop for all that we do.



“Poverty is an injustice” which demands our utmost attention. It requires educating the right bearers, our students and trainees, in knowing their rights and how to hold the duty bearers accountable and responsible. These duty bearers might be local authorities or national authorities.

The Campaign, thus, is not just an advocacy campaign as much as it is a sustainable learning process or a new strategy for implementing programs, where more young women and men can engage and explore the issues in their communities that are the root causes of poverty and lobby for changes.

In addition to the youth and women groups we work with in the communities, a new partner for this work were the universities as they have always been the place where freedom and justice were taught and where many community and political leaders were developed.



Reaching this new target group will allow us to contribute to the leadership development of a whole new generation. University students are trained in advocacy and lobbying, and will be working as trainers in their communities all over the West Bank to raise awareness of the root causes of poverty, and work jointly to promote local production and economic development as appropriate strategies for poverty alleviation.

The YWCA embarked on the theme “Production is Our Right” as a starting sub-campaign within the big umbrella national campaign, and is supporting business entrepreneurship development programs with women as a strategy for poverty reduction.

The Stop Poverty Campaign was officially launched during the YWCA’s Women’s Freedom, Peace, and Dignity in Palestine UNSCR 1325 for Accountability Conference in the fall. Prior to the launch of the campaign, a committee that consisted of staff from the National YWCA of Palestine and its local associations, as well as young volunteers from various communities in Palestine, was established in August 2014 to plan and lead the campaign activities.

The committee designed the logo for the campaign which was adopted from the international campaign’s logo. They also designed and produced posters, T-Shirts, and an information booklet. The video and booklet to promote the campaign are in process of being created and will be used in the year 2015 in trainings and community initiatives.



Partnership Project with Y-care International and YWCA-YMCA Sweden funded by EU and SMC: Shumous Project

In February of 2014 we launched our new multi-year European Union sponsored program called “Shumous” which means the brining of the light. This is a partnership project with Y-Care International and YWCA-YMCA Sweden.

The Specific Objective of this project was to enable 18 Community Based Organisations (CBOs) in the Jordan Valley and Ramallah District and YWCA of Palestine to effectively support 1450 disadvantaged young women and 50 disadvantaged young men to improve their economic and social status and advance their ability to participate in decision making. To be able to do this, the YWCA’s capacity as a community mobilize and facilitator for positive changes also had to be strengthened. Most importantly, building the YWCA’s capacity as a rights-based organization was a deliberate objective of this project.

The target locations of this project are three areas in Jordan Valley Auja and Nuweimeh villages, and Aqbet Jaber Refugee Camp, and four villages in the Ramallah District, namely Aboud, Saffa, Tireh, and Bani Zaid.

The National YWCA of Palestine established a project office as soon as the project was funded, and hired the project staff, some of which were already staff of the local associations.

Major achievements of the project were:

- Establishing Village Community Steering Groups [CSGs], which were formed to help in facilitate the project’s activities, and be the focal point of the project in the



communities. CSGs helped in announcing the project in the villages. The CSGs met several times in the year and participated in evaluating different steps of the implantation of the project. This has been crucial in ensuring community ownership, accountability and transparency specially when planning for the distribution of the sub-grants for both the trained youth and the Community Based Organisations [CBOs].

- A Market Analysis was conducted by Solutions company and submitted in December 2014. This market study will be the basis for designing the vocational and livelihood training sessions for the first and the second years.

- Design and Delivery of livelihood skills training, which was delivered to 232 uneducated and unskilled unemployed young people in seven communities in 2014.

- Seven sessions of business trainings were delivered to 334 uneducated and unskilled young women and men to enable them to start/expand their own businesses.

- Career Counseling and Employment Placement Services: an employment officer was recruited during the first year of the project, and a data base of all beneficiaries was established. Following up with the beneficiaries by the employment officer will ensure they have the ability to be recruited by different businesses and companies especially in their communities.



- Capacity Building and Training, which was delivered to 18 CBOs. This started with a capacity assessment carried out by the staff themselves. The main weakness identified was low institutional capacity of CBOs. A 40 hour training program over 8 days was designed and carried out in September and October 2014. Topics covered included gender, human rights, citizenship and training on project cycle management, fundraising and building institutional capacity. 104 CBO representatives, 56 women, 48 men, attended the training, which used dynamic training methodologies and pre and post training evaluations.

One of the major outcomes and successes of the activity was initiation of a serious discussion of women in the governance structures of CBOs starting with expanding membership and services to catering for women and their needs. As a result of this activity, five young people including two young women are planning to participate in upcoming elections of their CBOs' boards. One young man has already been elected to the board of a local CBO. Further activities on capacity building for CBOs are planned for Year 2.

Conference on Women's Freedom, Peace and Dignity in Palestine: UN Security Council Resolution 1325 for Accountability

In the holy land of Bethlehem, Palestine, the international conference on Women's Freedom, Peace and Dignity in Palestine: UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR1325) for Accountability, took place from September 29 to October 1, 2014

The preparation for our International Women's Conference included bringing together women's groups, networks, NGOs, community based programs, and coalitions in a national preparatory committee for this purpose. It was decided early on that the conference would be jointly sponsored by Ministry of Women's Affairs that is heading the UNSCR1325 National Committee (the governmental committee), the UNSCR 1325 Coalition which is the NGO coalition headed by General Union of Palestinian Women (GUPW),



the National Forum Combating Violence Against Women hosted by the Women's Affairs Technical Committees (WATC), alongside Kairos Palestine, as well as the World YWCA, who supported the Conference all through by technical assistance and support, allocating staff time, and financial resources.



Bi-monthly meetings began early in 2014 to agree upon topics, speakers, and conference design. At the Y office other meetings worked on logo design, promotional materials for the conference and materials to hand out at the conference.

Renowned women's rights activists, religious leaders, human rights defenders and politicians gathered to share and discuss the realities faced by Palestinian women and the effects of the Israeli military occupation. Through the lens of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR1325), the conference aimed to address women, peace, justice and freedom. UNSCR 1325 recognises the right/need for women's participation in peace processes, as well as prevention of, and protection from all forms of violence, including gender based violence.

The Conference which was initially planned as the closure activity within a project funded by FOKUS through Y-Global (YWCA-YMCA Norway), soon became a major national/international joint activity between the YWCA of Palestine, the World YWCA and other leading national partners already engaged in UNSCR 1325, including the Ministry of Women Affairs and the National Committee for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325. The timing of this international conference coincided with the 14th anniversary of the launch of UNSCR 1325, and also came at a time when the Israeli military occupation continued to perpetrate systematic ethnic cleansing, to abolish or destroy the Palestinian National Unity plan, to sever the Gaza strip from the rest of Palestine, to intensify settlement construction, to increase land confiscation and stealing of national resources, to complete the building of the apartheid wall, to expand and resume the Judaization of occupied Jerusalem and the transformation of its character.

Prior to the Conference, the YWCA of Palestine organized a 3-day witness visit from 26-28 for the International participants who had not visited Palestine at all or not recently. We wanted the participants to see the realities of the situation on the ground and how it is affecting the Palestinian people and women and children particularly.



In addition to creating promotional materials for the conference, the YWCA also created a small calendar focused on our work with refugee women and The Fabric of Our Lives. Participants at the conference were given this calendar and other materials about the YWCA of Palestine in their conference bags.

As one participant said, *"The conference proved to be a very meaningful and thought provoking platform for the exploration of these issues. While UNSCR 1325 does not directly address*



issues of women under occupation, it does not exclude action within this framework. The Resolution is particularly important for Palestinian women, who suffer from two forms of oppression: one is the oppression, violence, and brutality of the Israeli military occupation itself and the other is the male oppression that

impedes their full equality as citizens in accordance with the Palestinian Charter of Independence and the Palestinian Basic Law."

As follow up to the conference we issued a Call to Action reminding those who attended and those who could not make it what actions they could take at this time. Included in the Call were links to articles about calls for boycotts and sanctions.

Supporting Women's Rights and Implementation of UNSCR1325

As part of the Y-Global partnership project, and under the just peace thematic area, the women from the refugee camps of Jalazoune and Aqbet Jaber kicked off their anti drug campaign in the end of 2014. Prior to that, women groups were trained in advocacy, lobbying, and designing public campaigns.

The rest of the year revolved around working within the National Coalition Combating Violence Against Women, and participating in the global action week for ending violence against women in November. The end of the year was devoted to putting the Conference proceedings into a report and following through the recommendations for next steps of making the framework into a National Action Plan (NAP).



National and International Advocacy

In the summer of 2014 we added a new tool for our Fabric of Our Lives project. Our Advocacy Officer interviewed three generations of women in Iqrit, a village that was evacuated in 1948, about why returning to Iqrit is essential for this Christian community that was displaced during the formation of the State of Israel. This short video is now on the YWCA of Palestine website and available for viewing or use as another tool for talking about the Nakba and its ongoing effect on women's lives.

In addition to this new tool, seven Action Alerts during the offensive bombardment on Gaza and the attacks on youth in Jerusalem last summer were drafted and issued to all our national and international partners. The YWCA of Palestine contributed in a very strategic way for partners and donors that value hearing directly what was happening to women and children during this latest attack on Gaza and the violence raging in the streets of Jerusalem targeting many of our youth, so they can use this information in their own advocacy for Peace and Justice.

In November the YWCA of Palestine drafted its Statement with the World YWCA to be read on November 29, the day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People at the United Nations.



The Establishment of the YWCA in Bethlehem

The YWCA of Palestine assisted a group of women to start up the fourth local association in Bethlehem. Historically, members of Bethlehem have always been members of the Jerusalem YWCA until the checkpoints and separation wall made this impossible. The association aspires to start its services and programs in the southern parts of Palestine during 2015. The YWCA of Bethlehem was officially registered in the Palestinian Ministry of Interior on October 11th, 2014. Since then, the founding board has been functioning with support from the National General Secretary, President and Vice President. The National Office will also provide all technical, programmatic, financial and or human support to ensure that the association becomes an active catalyst in the communities and be affiliated to the National Association. In the mean time, the National office is helping the Bethlehem YWCA board to find a temporary premise for the association until a more permanent premise is secured.



The Young Peace Performers (YPP)

The Young Peace performer (YPP) is an exchange program funded by the Fredskorpset and managed by Y-Global (YWCA/YMCA of Norway), partnering with different YWCA's and YMCA's: Palestine, Norway, Kenya, Tanzania, Sri Lanka, Zambia and Southern Sudan. Each year, the program is hosted by one of the countries. In 2014, the YMCA of SRI LANKA and YMCA/YWCA in Tanzania, hosted the program. Every year 20 youth between the ages of 18-25 from seven different countries come together for eight months to travel to different countries to advocate for justice and peace through drama, music, theater and workshops. Three Palestinians youth members took part in this program and all were from Ramallah YWCA youth group, Jouleen Faqes, Issa Khalil and Yacoub Sayej.



Reflections

I would first like to thank the YWCA of Palestine and the JAI for this amazing opportunity, it's been a life changing experience! We have travelled through Sri Lanka and Africa for eight months and experienced different cultures and different environments, and it was hard to fit in but we did our best to survive. We faced a lot of challenges, but those challenges were eye opening to me that gave me the opportunity to see the reality of our world which made me more perseverant to challenge it. I will never forget this trip we laughed and cried together I was very sad when we parted but also I learnt that friends don't meet to part, but they part to meet. YPP will forever be in my heart and I can't wait to share my experience with the Palestinian youth, so that we can help each other in creating a better future.



Yacoub Sayej – YPP Participant 2014/2015

The YWCA gave me the opportunity of my life to travel to new places and meet people from different countries. I was a participant at the youth exchange program called “young peace performers”.

Meeting people from six different countries and living with them for eight month was an experience of a lifetime for me.

As a girl who never traveled alone for this long, we went to Sri Lanka and Tanzania in a mission of stopping poverty.

This opportunity made me see that there are people out there in the world that share the same unfair life as us Palestinians, which made me think that we are not alone in this world.



Seeing people leaving school at the age of 10 just to help the family with earning some money was heartbreaking even though we have it in Palestine but on much smaller scales. I was shocked to learn that they work from 6 in the morning until 6 in the evening only for 15 shekels adding to that the difficult and dangerous work environment. That was just a small part of what I saw, but the thing that made me really thankful to God for what I have, is when I saw a little kid waiting for someone to give him his food leftovers so he and his family can eat. Going to school without shoes and with a plastic bag as back bag and with a uniform that is torn was another heart breaking fact to witness. But their will to educate themselves made me respect them even more.

One of the things we used to say a lot is that: “A Cause Supported by Youth Never Fails” by Nelson Mandela, and everyone can be a successful person no matter where he comes from just the will to work hard to get there is enough. At the end I just want to thank the YWCA of Palestine and JAI for giving me this opportunity to experience things I never thought about and to see things I never dreamt of. And to make me learn about other people’s cultures and the way of living and how they think.

Jouleen YPP Participant 2014/2015

YWCA Friends and Partners’ Visits

During the year 2014 we had a number of visitors to the YWCA of Palestine, who also visited local associations and projects. Most of our visitors were from our partners or donors and we also welcomed ecumenical partners and faith-based delegations. We thank them all for believing in our work and for their ongoing support. Here is a short list of some of our visitors:

- Ms. Marie Claude, Program Manager for Violence Against Women from the World YWCA Office in Geneva visited the YWCA of Palestine to understand the context we are working with under Occupation, and met with the Minister of Women Affairs and other local partners in the UNSCR1325 coalition. Ms. Claude visited the Local Associations and had an orientation session with all YWCA Staff and members on the World YWCA work especially on the Violence Against Women and UNSCR1325;
- Jacque Koroï from Fiji YWCA came as a volunteer nominated by the World Office to help the YWCA of Palestine in the initial conference preparations from January – April 2014;
- Ms. Pheobe Aranki, Head of the Resilient Livelihoods Department, and Hannah Griffiths, Program Officer from Christian Aid, a main partner of the YWCA visited and met with various YWCA staff to discuss achievements of supported projects and future interventions and strategies;



- Mr. William Bell, Head of Advocacy – Middle East, represented Christian Aid in the International UNSCR 1325 Conference in September/October 2014 held in Bethlehem;

- Mr. Lutz Wollziefer from Middle East Department of Bread for the World and Evangleisher Entwicklungsdienst Development (EDD) visited the YWCA of Palestine in May to introduce the new staff for Middle East Ms. Katrin Eiben, and discuss our partnership and new potentials;

- Mr. Bruno Essig from Horyzon in Switzerland also visited the YWCA of Palestine in February to overview our partnership and projects, and again participated in the UNSCR1325 Conference in Bethlehem on behalf of his organization;

- A Delegation of eight Ministers from The United Church of Christ (UCC) came with Rev. Peter Makari for the International Conference in Bethlehem;

- The YWCA of Palestine and the JAI office hosted Two volunteers from Horyzon in Switzerland Ms. Elena Policante and Mr. Marcus Graf part of their work was assisting the national YWCA of Palestine in preparing and implementing the women's conference in October.

- Twelve YWCA's from around the world in addition to the World YWCA participated in our International Conference held in Bethlehem in September/October 2014. These representatives came mostly Europe, Canada, Australia, Asia and Jordan/Middle East.



- A Delegation from the Scottish Church headed by Mr. Kenny Roger, Middle East Secretary, visited the YWCA of Palestine for an introductory meeting and briefing about the YWCA work and the political situation. They also visited the YWCA center in Jalazoune Refugee camp met with the women who works there and had a tour in the camp and visited some families from the camp and heard their stories;

- Mr. Dylan Mathews, Director of International Programs for Y-Care International visited the YWCA of Palestine and attended the Launching of “Shumous Project” funded by the EU in November 2014;

- Rev. John Boris from the Pacific Northwest Conference visited us and Jalazoune Camp with his wife also towards the end of 2014.

- Like every year the YWCA hosted the Journey for Justice Group and the Olive picking group for a day in July and presented to them the YWCA work and advocacy campaigns.



Regional and International Representation

Members of the national and local associations, both staff and boards also attended international meetings hosted by our international members as well as International UN events:

- Mayadah Tarazi, Office Manager and Program Assistant for Youth at the YWCA of Palestine office and Naheel Bazbazat, Women's Coordinator for YWCA of Jerusalem, attended the 58th Commission on the Status of Women Session at the United Nations in New York in March 2014;
- Wael Obeidi, National Field Manager, attended the technical training offered by Y-Global for all its partners in Kenya in March 2014;
- Mira Rizeq, National General Secretary, attended the United Church of Christ Board meeting as one of the international board members, representing the YWCA. This was in April in Indianapolis – USA;
- Rev. Loren McGrail, Communications, Church Relations and Advocacy officer, attended Church of Scotland's General Assembly meeting in Scotland in June 2014, honoring our long standing partnership with the church and representing the YWCA of Palestine;

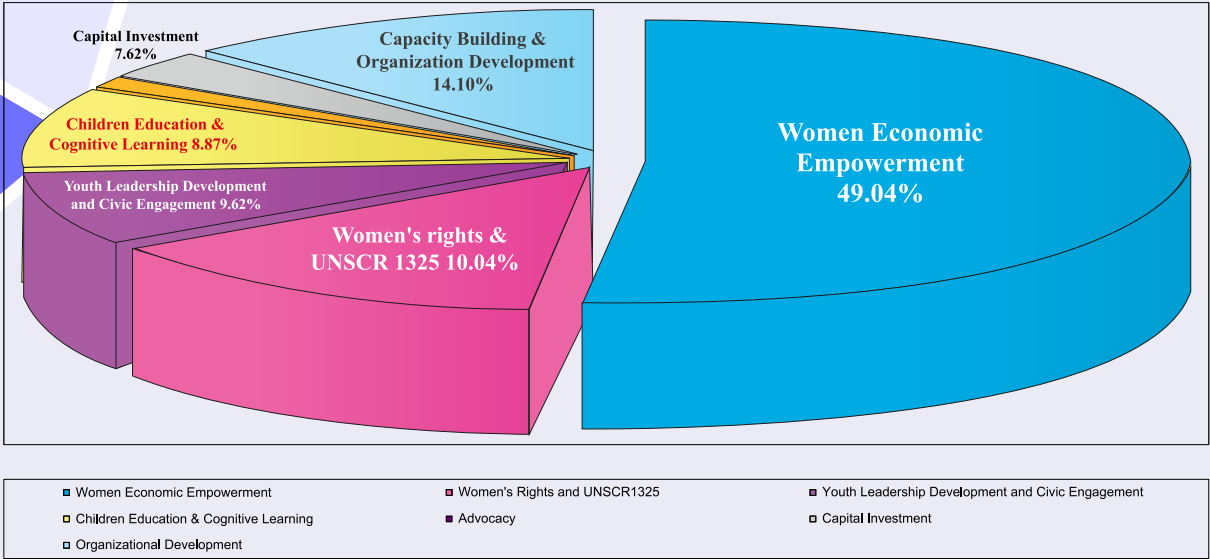


- Nazar Halteh, Executive Director of Jericho YWCA, and Mireille Ghneim, President of the YWCA of Jerusalem Board represented YWCA of Palestine in Taiwan in the Violence Against Women Conference hosted by the YWCA of Taiwan in September 2014;
- Mira Rizeq, National General Secretary, attended the World Council of Churches workshop and exhibit on Palestinian Refugees in Geneva "From the Nakba to the Kairos Palestine document: From Despair to Hope" in December 2014. She facilitated one of the main plenary sessions, and presented the Fabric of Our Lives Project for the audience as well as in the exhibit.

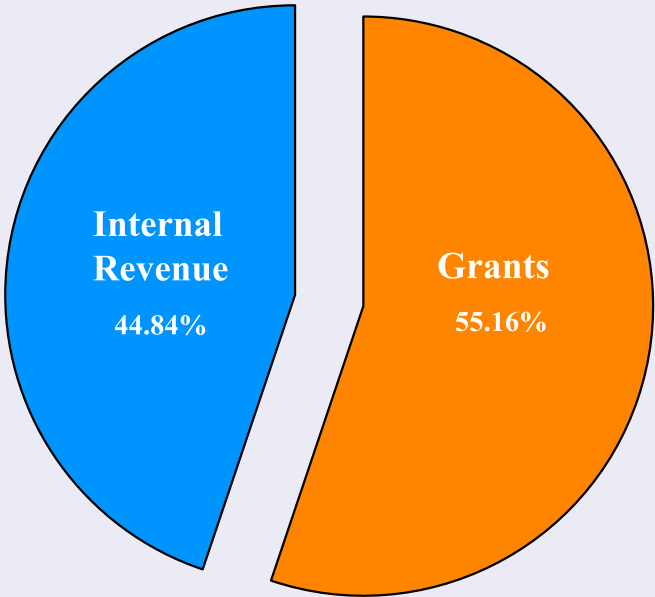


Financial Analysis 2014

YWCA of Palestine 2014 Expenditure by Sector
مصرفات الجمعية حسب القطاع لعام 2014

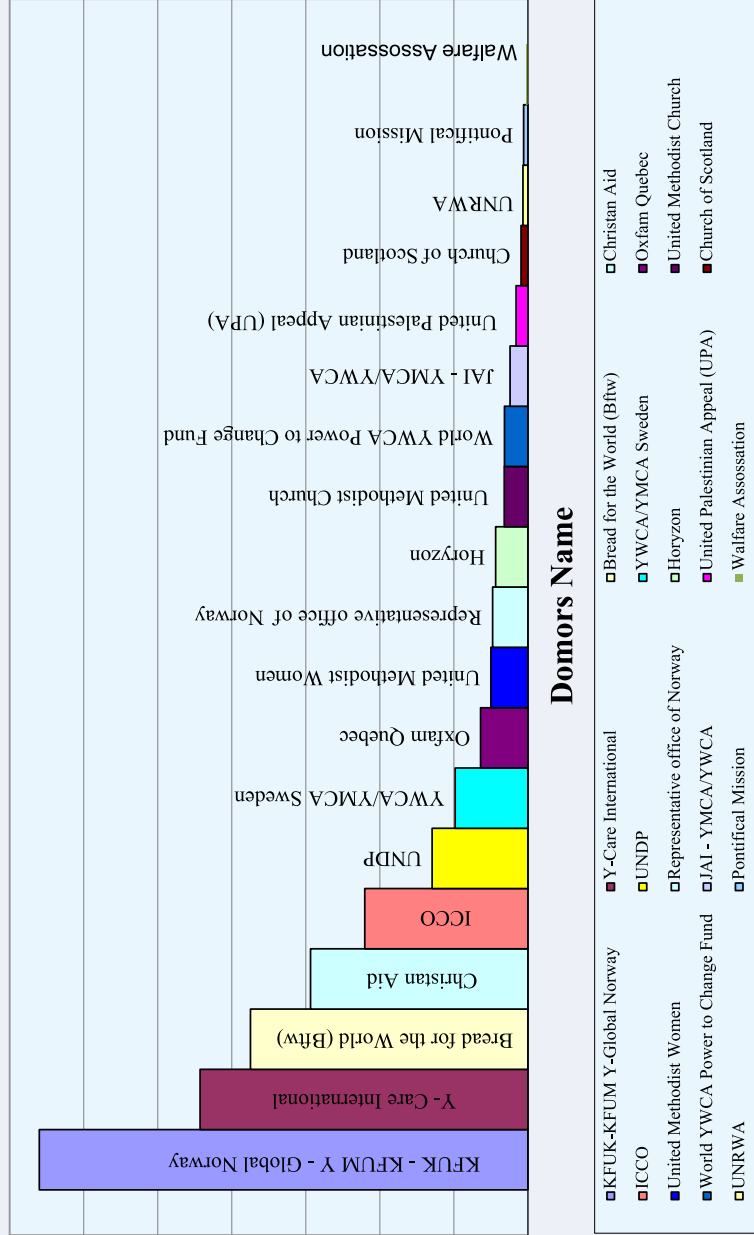


YWCA External Versus Internal Funding
حجم التمويل مقابل الموارد الداخلية



Donor Funds Received during 2014

حجم التمويل خلال العام 2014



National YWCA of Palestine Founding Committee

أعضاء الهيئة التأسيسية – إتحاد جمعيات الشابات المسيحية فلسطين

الاسم	Name
هيفاء برامكي	Haifa Baramki
لمى ترزي	Luma Tarazi
مار غريتا قهوجي	Margaretta Kahwaji
فيرا بانو	Vera Pano
فيرا مستكلم	Vera Mustaklem
كرستين درويش	Christeen Darwish
ناديا ثيودوري	Nadia Theodorie
ديانا الياس	Diana Elias
روز مصلح	Rose Misleh

YWCA Jerusalem Board Members

أعضاء الهيئة الإدارية – جمعية الشابات المسيحية القدس

الاسم	المنصب	Position	Name
ميرلا غنيم	رئيسة الهيئة الإدارية	Board President	Mireille Ghneim
فدوى خضر	نائبة رئيسة الهيئة الإدارية	Vice President	Fadwa Khader
منال حزان	أمينة السر	Minutes Secretary	Manal Hazzan
هالة سالم	أمينة الصندوق	Treasurer	Hala Salem
هالة خشرم	عضو	Member	Hala Khashram
ناريمان أبو عطا	عضو	Member	Narima Abu Atta
أيرين بحبح	عضو	Member	Irene Bahbah

YWCA Ramallah Board Members

أعضاء الهيئة الإدارية – جمعية الشابات المسيحية رام الله

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الينا ترزي	أمينة السر	Minutes Secretary	Elena Tarazi
كوين مسعود	أمينة الصندوق	Treasurer	Queen Masoud
مار غريتا قهوجي	عضو	Member	Margaretta Kahwaji
حنين موسى	عضو	Member	Haneen Mousa
رنا طوباسي	عضو	Member	Rana Toubassi
لانا رنتيسي	عضو	Member	Lana Rantisi
ديما حنانيا	عضو	Member	Dima Hanania

YWCA Jericho Board Members

أعضاء الهيئة الإدارية - جمعية الشابات المسيحية – أريحا

الاسم	المنصب	Position	Name
فيرا بانو	رئيسة الهيئة الإدارية	Board President	Vera Pano
فيرا مستكلم	نائبة رئيسة الهيئة الإدارية	Vice President	Vera Mustaklem
رانية حلتة	أمينة السر	Minutes Secretary	Rania Halteh
نادرة مخلوف	أمينة الصندوق	Treasurer	Nadira Makhoulf
ليندا أمار	عضو	Member	Linda Amar
كرستين درويش	عضو	Member	Christeen Darwish
ماجدة حنر	عضو	Member	Majida Hatar
مريانا نصار	عضو	Member	Marina Nassar
جورجيت ميكيل	عضو	Member	Georgette Meckel

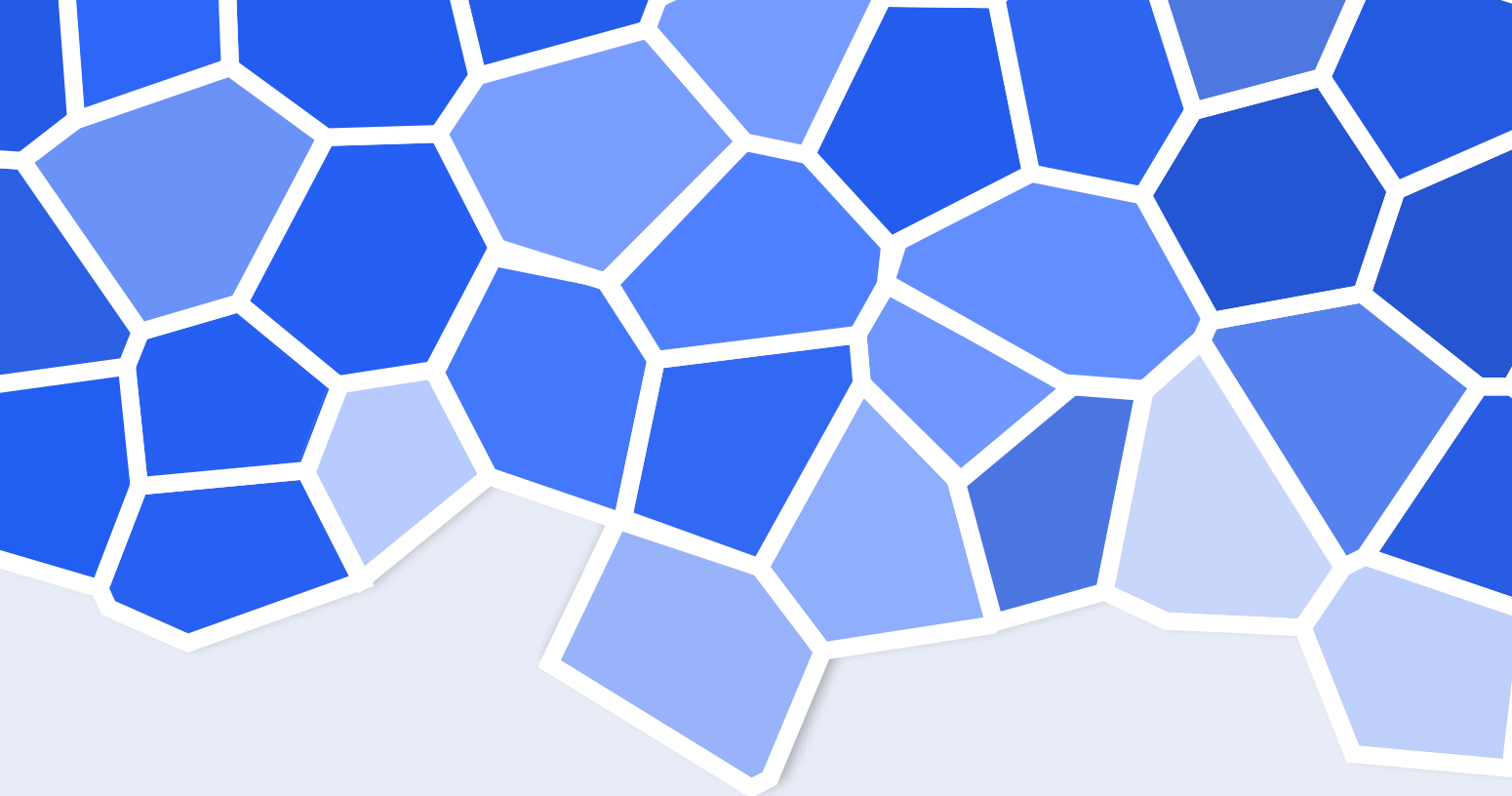
YWCA Bethlehem Founding Committee

أعضاء الهيئة التأسيسية – جمعية الشابات المسيحية بيت لحم

الاسم	المنصب	Position	Name
ناديا ثيودوري	رئيسة الهيئة الإدارية	Board President	Nadia Theodorie
عطاف رصاص	نائبة الرئيسة	Vice President	Itaf Rassas
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روان جحا	عضو	Member	Rawan Juha
لميس عبد المعطي	عضو	Member	Lamis ABd Mu'ti
رنا قمصية	عضو	Member	Rana Qumsiyeh







PALESTINE فلسطين



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YWCA Palestine