

ANNUAL REPORT 2012



WORKING TOWARDS CHANGE



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1. Reflections from the National President



Throughout the history of our association, we have been blessed by the leadership of courageous women who have had a vision directed by a mission to effect change and make a difference within the Palestinian Community. The YWCA has been an initiator for a number of programs that were launched and developed for women's empowerment and economic independence. We have advocated for women's rights and have worked with young women to make them aware of these rights. This was never done in a vacuum. Awareness about rights has always been coupled with vocational training or skill development.

The challenges have been numerous but they have never caused us to compromise our objectives. With every difficulty, we saw an opportunity to grow stronger to face the challenges. This is who we are and this is the message we relay to the women we work with. It is a big responsibility but

all along the YWCA of Palestine has proved to itself and the community that its mission is sincere and genuine. This is how this association has maintained a high respect for what and how it reaches out to others. It has been a model for other women's organizations in Palestine and the Middle East.

Our aspirations are made possible with a strong will and commitment to change. We continue to fulfill needs arising within the four thematic areas of our strategic plan. This year, for example, our program for women's economic justice will address new areas including preparing for an Economic Development Center and extending our outreach to more women.

For all of these reasons, I wish to take this opportunity to thank our staff for their hard work and perseverance in implementing these new strategic plans. I especially wish to give thanks to our General Secretary for her leadership. I also wish to extend much appreciation to the members of our General Assembly, namely the three boards of Jerusalem, Ramallah and Jericho and the Vice Presidents of the council for their support.

At the YWCA, we have learned that change is possible when one has the determination, the courage, and the tools to bring about change. We work towards change in an ever widening circle. The wheel keeps turning, bringing new generations of women with new vision and energy. They keep the candle of hope lit so that it sheds light on our path towards success.

2. Reflections for 2012 from the National General Secretary



It is not coincidental that we gave this year's report the title of "YWCA working for Change", because this was the year we took steps to deliberately direct a process of change for ourselves as an organization and for our members.

In 2012, we managed to prepare and issue two Strategy Papers which has given us direction for our two most important thematic areas in our Strategic Plan: Economic Justice/Economic Empowerment, and Youth Civic Engagement and Leadership Development. These papers and the strategies they propose have defined the shift that the YWCA has been working on for the past few years. It is a shift from a service delivery approach to a rights-based approach. Our whole thinking has changed from the way we define who we are to what kind of interventions we want to support and with whom. This change happened when we classified the development world in two parties: the powerful, and the powerless, the duty bearers versus the right holders. Thus, the challenge for the years to come will be: will the YWCA contribute to creating a more equitable process of development, and "empowering the poor and marginalized" and

making the duty bearers responsible and accountable for the public, the people, the citizens.

The Economic Justice strategy analyzed, for the first time, the constraints women face in terms of economic participation, and the proposed interventions that would tackle these social, economic, and political constraints. It was reassuring for us to see that the study that the YWCA commissioned to Birzeit University "Barriers to Female Labor Force and Entrepreneurship" calls on us, the YWCA, and other women's institutions to challenge the norm, to expose the "duty bearers" for consciously or unconsciously contributing to the further marginalization of women. The paper points out that women need to not only be empowered through education and skill training but to have access to financial resources and markets. Equally important they need to know about labor laws and economic structures. They need to know in order to advocate for their own rights and ensure that whatever they achieve is sustained and respected.

We celebrate that we have proposed to establish the first Business Development Center (BDC) for the YWCA in 2013 which will provide this much needed knowledge and skill development so that women's economic development is directly related to their empowerment and visa versa. Preparations for this shift were completed in 2012 which will allow us to move forward in 2013 with the hiring of a Director of the Center.

The youth strategy, which took months to develop and refine from our paper, also concluded that youth under Occupation have limited rights, are often excluded and marginalized and see no future for themselves. We believe, thus that the YWCA as a youth organization has a major role to play in empowering our youth by offering them both employment opportunities and skills to actively engage in society. The YWCA takes pride today that after a very thorough participatory needs assessment process carried out in 6 localities, and after an indepth analysis of the data, we are prepared to begin to implement some of the recommendations that would lead to reducing youth unemployment and contribute to youth empowerment. The YWCA believes that our young people are agents of change and with the right support will lead us into a brighter and freer future.

At the core of all our work and especially in these two new strategic areas is the YWCA's belief in the dignity and rights of all human beings, which are at the core of our Christian values. Consequentially, we believe these rights need to be protected and defended and are integral to our mission and goals as an organization serving women and youth throughout Palestine. The year 2012 will be remembered as the year we worked hard to make this true in all aspects of our work from programs to advocacy.

Mira Rizeq / National General Secretary

Honoring a committed and long-time friend of the YWCA: Elizabeth Knott

Every time I see Elizabeth Knott and Connie DePond back in Jerusalem, it brightens my day and assures me that our situation is not hopeless. Their commitment has been amazing, and for Liz to be traveling back and forth at her age is admirable. They have touched so many people by reaching out to help a number of organizations. I felt honored to be at the luncheon the YWCA held in their honor during their last visit

By Samia Khoury

This year, in July 2012, Elizabeth Knott celebrated her 85th Birthday, and I was asked to write something for Liz, on that special day. Later that year, we had the honor to receive Liz Knott and Connie Depond, and celebrate their long partnership with us at the YWCA for over 30 years.

I have known Liz for many years, and I have come across many many people in my life, but very few left an impact on me the way Liz did. I personally and the whole YWCA are moved with her commitment to justice, not just lip service, but her courage and her willingness to say the things that very few people would be willing to put their neck out and say, albeit with a smile, and her willingness to support and fight for justice.

In many ways, Liz has challenged us, challenged our Christian values, our principles, and we learnt so much from her. She has brought so much comfort to all the Palestinian women, children and youth that she supported over the years, and in times of destitute, has brought so much hope into our lives, and smiles on the children faces when she visited them at the refugee camps, always with lots and lots of gifts.

Liz made sure we never stood alone, and she made sure to bring light into all of our lives, following the path of Jesus and helping the people that needed her most, the refugee women and children. Fifteen years ago, Liz started Pal Cratfaid, as a project of the Presbyterian Women, to support livelihoods of women through supporting production projects that few Palestinian organizations are supporting. Through this project, she helped support the women working at our Jalazoune Refugee Camp center.

We hope that all her efforts will yield the fruits she wants to harvest, planting hope and the seed of Peace in Palestine. I personally am honored to have Liz in my life, and the YWCA is grateful and honored to have the chance to honor her in her lifetime.



3. Highlights for 2012: Strengthening the Strategic Direction of the YWCA's Work

3.1 Economic Justice Paper: A Step Forward in Women's Economic Empowerment and Strategic Thinking

In 2012, the YWCA of Palestine went through a process for redefining its strategy in the Economic Justice (EJ) thematic area. A concept paper was the main output of the process, which was carried out following a participatory methodology, involving an in-depth literature review of existing studies, as well as a set of meetings and focus groups with the YWCA's key staff and Palestinian women living in remote areas of the West Bank. The EJ Paper was thus intended to push the YWCA's strategic thinking a step further: building on the objectives as stated in the 2010-15 Strategic Plan for the economic development thematic area. Through the Strategic Plan and now the EJ paper, the YWCA intends to create a framework for both ongoing and upcoming initiatives, as well as define targets and geographic areas of intervention. We have grouped our programs under two groups. Those that serve the YWCA directly are classified as programs that are internal or institutional. Those programs that support women in their communities are classified as external or supporting economic empowerment.

So what are some of the changes being recommended in the EJ Strategy Paper, as compared to the YWCA's previous approach in supporting women's economic rights and participation in the labor market? The main change is a focus on making women leaders for change in all levels of their life.

The YWCA acknowledges that women's economic empowerment is not simply a matter of creating employment opportunities for women through the establishment of income-generating projects directly managed by the YWCA staff. Even though initiatives like

the Food Production Project in Jericho have an undeniable and outstanding impact on the women employed in the food unit, as well as on their families and the economy of the Jordan Valley as a whole, women's economic empowerment can only be achieved through a broader strategic perspective. More specifically, the concept of women's economic empowerment must include the following:

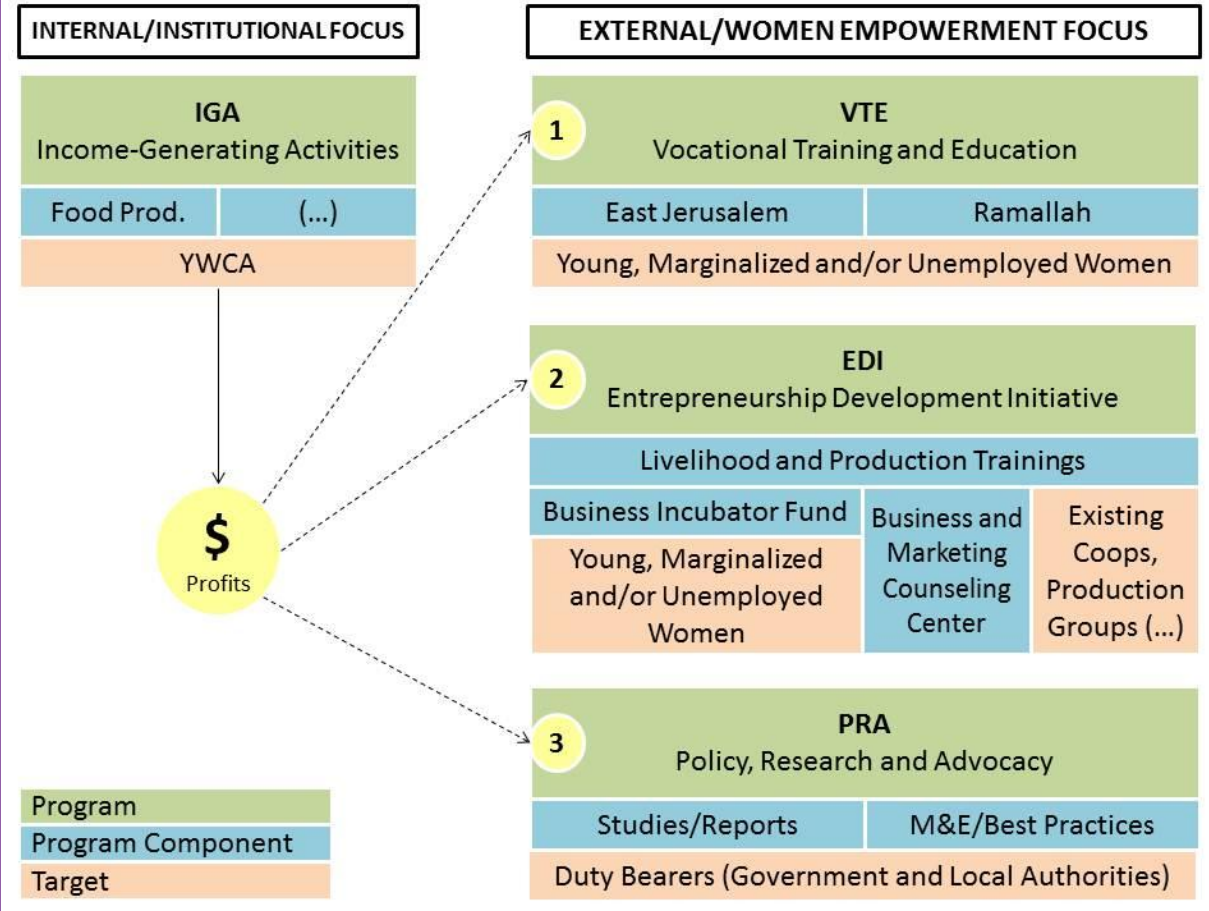
- access to economic opportunities (employment and entrepreneurship development; access to training, credit and equipment; etc.)
- legal status and rights (family and labor laws, including access to kindergarten and maternity leaves; ownership and inheritance laws; etc.); and
- inclusion in the decision-making process in the economic and social spheres.



Based on the EJ concept paper the YWCA will introduce a new program that will support Palestinian women’s entrepreneurship. Through the Entrepreneurship Development Initiative (EDI) and its implementing arm, the *Business Development Center* (BDC), the YWCA will provide groups of women owning and directly managing a small-scale business with all the financial and non-financial services needed to run a sustainable collective enterprise. Using a tailored approach taking into account the political and social barriers in Palestine, as well as internal and external market potentials and opportunities, the BDC staff will strive to answer women businesses’ specific needs, in order to enable more women

to gain a sustainable and fair income.

What is more, the EDI is not only an ambitious idea defined in the YWCA EJ Strategy Paper, it has been translated into a proposal to one of the YWCA’s international partners for funding. At the end of 2012, Oxfam-Québec accepted to support the YWCA-Jericho in implementing a pilot project to test the EDI. In early 2013, four out of the fifteen young women will be extensively trained in photography and video making. They will have the chance to launch the very first women-owned photo and video studio in the Jordan Valley.



3.2 Youth Civic Engagement and Leadership Development Approach and Strategy

The YWCA's latest strategic plan covers the period 2010 - 2015, and was built on the achievements of our previous strategic plan. It takes into account the significant political, economic, and social changes that have occurred in Palestinian society as a result of local, regional, and global factors. In the Strategic Plan issued in 2010, the YWCA identified "Youth Civic Engagement and Leadership Development" as one of its thematic areas. During 2011 - 2012, we have worked on defining our objectives and activities that will enable us to implement our strategy.

In 2012, the YWCA of Palestine got a grant from YWCA-YMCA Sweden, through the Swedish Mission Council (SMC), to develop our strategy. We did this through a thorough needs assessment process in 6 geographic areas. We facilitated several workshops with youth and youth organizations, as well as members and Board members, to develop the new strategy. The most important shifts in our strategy involve taking a clear rights based approach and deliberately focusing on marginalized youth and geographic areas. Palestinian people live under Israeli Occupation, and although the whole population is adversely affected by this Occupation, we recognize that our youth are suffering the most. They are struggling against various types of challenges to improve their situation and build a better future. They lack the opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills, to express themselves creatively, or to contribute to building their families and society. Their efforts are challenged by many internal and external restrictions, different types of oppression and restrictions imposed by the Israeli Occupation which limit their employment options. They also

suffer from social exclusion. All of these factors have given a rise in personal and social negative behaviors.

The lack of a national plan to address these issues and the rise of unemployment among youth has led to a fragmentation of efforts and ineffective and inefficient interventions. The new YWCA strategy recognizes that creating jobs and livelihood opportunities, especially for women, is the most relevant approach along with creating opportunities for increased civic engagement.

In an economy where employment opportunities are scarce, Palestinian youth are required to acquire the right combination of human, financial, and social skills to compete in the labor market or get a chance to turn their energies and ideas into entrepreneurship or self employment opportunities. Additionally, the social norms that restrict the educational choices for females limit their work opportunities. All this has led the YWCA to propose an integrated approach and strategy, which proposes to empower young people economically as well as socially and politically. Without creating opportunities for civic engagement and supporting them to become part of the decision making processes in the private and public spheres, the young people will continue to be marginalized.

The YWCA will start implementing this strategy in 2013. We will make sure that we continue to create learning environments which allow us to refine, adapt and respond to youth needs and the changing local, regional and global contexts as needed.

3.3 Middle East Youth Regional Meeting.

"It was great to meet and work together with young women from the Middle East Region! The meeting emphasized the need for us to realize our own personal rights, and raise awareness on justice and equality in order to make a positive change in the communities we live in." - Hanya Abdallah

"This meeting showcased that trainings do not necessarily have to be delivered as lectures, but that discussions, meditations, drawings, games and other interactive ways are also a great way in learning and connecting together." - Mays Abu Leil

In 2012, the YWCA of Palestine took the lead in fundraising and preparing for the YWCA Middle East youth Regional Meeting that took place in Jordan from June 14 to June 18 (more than 23 young women from the Middle East attended this training.) A lot of advocacy work was done during this training which set forth the region's action plan for 2013-2015- focusing on the Elimination of Violence against Women, working on Peace with Justice, and on Young Women's Leadership.

Six young women from the YWCA of Palestine took the lead in presenting their issues at this YWCA Middle East Regional Meeting called Young Women as Agents of Change. They worked together with the young women from the YWCAs of Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon on putting together their action plan for 2013-2015-, mostly focused on advocacy and lobbying.



3.4 Event to Launch the Study: "Birthing in Occupied East Jerusalem"

On December 20, 2012 the YWCA of Jerusalem sponsored an event with the Ministry of Women Affairs, Ministry of Jerusalem Affairs, and Ministry of Social Affairs in celebration of the study Birthing in Occupied East Jerusalem: Palestinian Women's Experiences of Pregnancy and Delivery by Dr. Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian.

The study sheds light on the dark reality that women have to face during pregnancy and delivery in occupied East Jerusalem. The event was well attended. Our hope is that the study can be used to push the Palestinian Authority to pay more attention to the lives of its pregnant and vulnerable women.



4. Program Updates 2012

4.1 Program in Transition

4.1.1 Building Community Resilience in Jericho

The YWCA of Jericho is continuing to implement the Community Resilience Program which started in partnership and through support from Christian Aid in 2011. This initiative has been made in response to the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015- which aims at building the resilience of nations and communities during disasters. The Hyogo Framework is endorsed by the UN to mitigate the effects of disasters including financial and human losses. Community resilience then is about communities using local resources and knowledge to help themselves during an emergency in a way that complements the local emergency services.

The YWCA of Jericho targeted three communities: Aqbet Jaber Refugee Camp, Al Nweimeh and Al Dyook Villages in the Jordan Valley. It coordinated with the local organizations and CBOs in these three localities and requested that organizations find volunteers to be trained and qualified in conducting PVCA (Participatory Vulnerabilities and Capabilities Assessment) with their communities.

The volunteers, local organizations and numerous community members were consulted in order to identify families and the social structures present in the neighborhoods. Information sharing happened in a variety of ways including banners, leaflets, personal invitations, home visits, facebook, and Mosque announcements.

During the final sessions of the PVCA trainings, community members identified their vulnerabilities and resources as a community and then produced a detailed action plan that describes the prioritized vulnerabilities and the recourses available within the community to address these vulnerabilities.

The YWCA played and still plays the role of facilitating these community meetings. A local steering committee was formed in Aqbet Jaber Refugee Camp in order to take the lead in implementing the interventions in the camp. The committee decided to address the risk of internal flooding in the valley due to illegal digging by contractors. The committee members advocated that the specialized governmental parties enforce existing

laws and regulations and do a better monitoring and control over the valley. .

Finally, with the support of the YWCA, and through funding from this project, the steering committee of Aqbet Jaber Refugee Camp supervised the production of a documentary film to highlight the risks that the community faces, especially children, with the unprotected border of the camp that goes steeply into the Wadi Qilt valley. This documentary will be used as an advocacy tool. The committee members identified the major threats and who was most affected, and will use this documentary as a lobbying and negotiations tool with the relevant Palestinian Ministries to try to find appropriate solutions

Finally, in addition to working in the camp, the YWCA in cooperation with the Palestinian Civil Defense (PCD) provided volunteers from the three targeted communities with training in identifying vulnerabilities, outreach to the community, and even first aid training.

One of the most prominent risks in our target communities is the deteriorating economic situation and the low family income. Therefore during 2012, the YWCA agreed to shift the focus of this project to support sustainable livelihoods, and thus provided groups of women with much needed technical training and financial management skills. The focus for the third year of the project will be to strengthen the livelihoods of the targeted communities by supporting economic ventures, facilitating access to the market and supporting advocacy work.



4.2 New Direction

4.2.1 The Food Production Project: From a Project to a Sustainable Social Enterprise

In 2001, in the aftermath of the Second Intifada, the YWCA of Palestine established a food production project as an income-generating initiative targeting unemployment and marginalized women living in remote areas and refugee camps. In Jericho, women were trained in food processing techniques and then employed on a full-time basis in a production unit. The production was then marketed in a YWCA-owned outlet, as well as in some supermarkets in the West Bank.

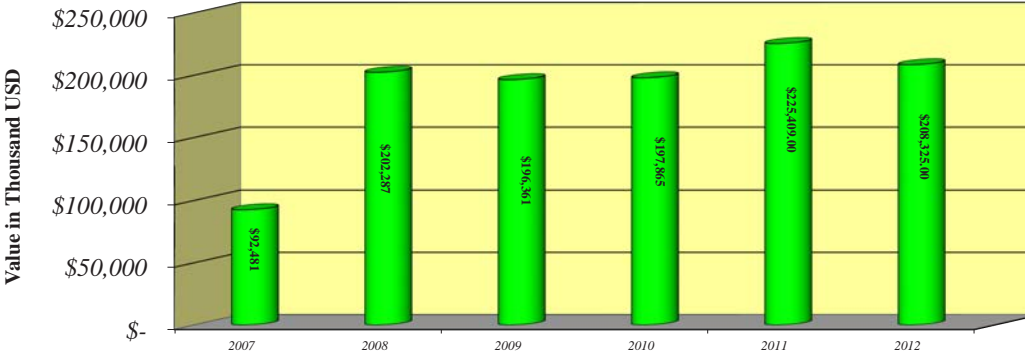
Throughout the years, the food production project in Jericho has shown a great potential in improving women’s livelihoods and more generally, the social and economic environment in the Jordan Valley. In Jericho, the food production project presently employs 13 women and 2 men full-time, representing around a hundred people when their family members and relatives are taken into account. In 2010, the sales reached the break-even point for the very first time since the establishment of the project. The production unit ran without external funding and total sales were large enough to cover all production costs – women’s wages and the purchase of raw materials.

However, costs per unit were still relatively high and total sales were limited despite the potential for expansion and thus, the economic and social impact of the food production project was narrowed to a small number of women only. A recent evaluation of the food production project in Jericho pointed out that, in order to make the project

economically sustainable in the long run, the food production should be expanded and better organized. Moreover, if a sound marketing strategy and effective logistic infrastructure could open up the possibility to ship and sell products in areas outside Jericho, the production process in Jericho would achieve “economies of scale” which means that it would substantially decrease (per unit) production costs, raise the opportunity to hire and train more women and ultimately, increase the total profits. These profits then could be re-invested in the YWCA’s social programs which target local communities such as the YWCA’s kindergarten in the Aqbet Jaber refugee camp.

Thus, in 2012, the YWCA started a process aiming to transform the food production project into a sustainable social enterprise, pursuing both a social goal – providing women with employment opportunities – and a purely economic goal – ensuring a sustainable source of revenue to support the YWCA and its community-based programs. The plan is for this transformation process to be led by a project manager. Recruitment is now underway. Moreover, some of the YWCA’s international partners have already secured funding to support the acquisition of all the needed equipment, systems and marketing tools to improve the production chain, as well as the marketing strategy, of the food production unit in Jericho. We are very excited about these developments in both vision and strategy.

Sales of Jericho Production



4.3 Ongoing Programs

4.3.1 Events Management Specialization

A major accomplishment during the year of 2012 was the launching of the new Events Management specialization in September which was identified by the market study carried out in late 2009. The curricula and training manuals for this new specialization which lasts 6 months were designed and developed by senior experts from PUM Netherlands, with inputs from the Advisory Committee which was established in 2011.

The Event Management specialization targets a new group of women. For example, 4 out of the 10 registered students are employees already in the private sector. They are BA holders with sufficient work experience and professional background but need more training and education in this area. This shift in our target group has promoted the YWCA to be seen as a center for continuing education and professional development rather than only a vocational training center.

Furthermore, the YWCA initiated contacts with the Palestinian Ministry of Labor to explore accreditation requirements for the newly launched Events Management diploma and prepared all accreditation requirements for this purpose. The hope is that this shift in developing a new specialization and targeting a new group of women will open up new channels for the YWCA and increase in the number of beneficiaries who are expected to grow during the next diploma cycle.

It is worth mentioning that the newly developed specialization in Events Management is the first professional Diploma of its kind in Palestine and was able to attract a lot of attention from the Private Sector who is currently recruiting employees to organize



the various events that promote their organizations and their work. They showed willingness to invest in building the capacity of relevant staff in event organization and management and therefore supported the training of their staff at the YWCA.

Lastly, we have identified a new specialization called Customer Relations Management (CRM) which will be developed and launch in 2013. We will work with PUM on the development and design of the curriculum, training materials and the software program.

In addition to these new accomplishments and directions, the YWCA of Jerusalem and Ramallah are the pioneers in establishing employment units within their VTC programs. These units work on linking graduates with employers for employment opportunities. As a result of these units, employment rate of VTC graduates in Jerusalem increased from 25 % in the year 2010 to about 64 % in the year 2012 and in Ramallah from 40% in 2010 to 60% in 2012.

4.3.2 Office Management Specialization

The year 2012 witnessed the implementation of a new specialization, namely Office Management, in response to the market studies, conducted earlier in 2009 / 2010.

The old secretarial diploma was thus upgraded to office management. In addition, we developed new curriculum based on the newly identified required competencies needed for this new specialization.

Moreover, the YWCA also decided to expand its outreach to attract new target groups (other than high school students) to join the VTC programs such as university graduates and employees who want to enrich their skills for work advancement purposes and or to find better job opportunities.

Number of VTC applicants	Number of VTC graduates
VTC Ramallah	
Academic Year 2011 - 2012: 57	57
Academic Year 2012 - 2013: 81	Still enrolled
VTC Jerusalem	
Academic Year 2011 - 2012: 98	76
Academic Year 2012 - 2013: 75	Still enrolled

To accommodate this new shift in the VTC program, the structure of the VTC was changed from a traditional fixed term course to a module based system that offers VTC students a variety of short courses which correspond to the new specialization. This allows students to take short courses in different fields any time during the year. The basic stage of the VTC program consists of 3 phases and lasts for 11 months (starting September and ending August). There are a total of 27 modules offered to VTC students. Their successful completion leads to a degree in Office Management. Both VTCs

in Ramallah and Jerusalem now offer the Office Management specialization that provides VTC students a wide variety of modules such as office maintenance, life skills, English language skills, petty cash, PR, Microsoft applications, and others

The table below shows the number of applicants and graduates in each VTC.

Success Story

Vida Hinn, a 42 year old mother of four from Ramallah, left school at the age of 18 and was married shortly thereafter. Over the course of the years, as her children went off to school and with her husband being at work all day, Vida began to play with the idea of finding a job but realized she lacked qualifications and confidence. Then suddenly Vida’s family was rocked by the news of her youngest son having leukemia. This turn of events placed an enormous strain on her family both emotionally and financially and in order to be able to assist her husband with the high cost of her son’s medical expenses, Vida decided she would have to find work. However the requirements of the marketplace meant she would have to first improve her skills and acquire some form of certification to compete with other jobseekers.

Vida chose to up-skill at YWCA-Ramallah Vocational Training center and joined the 2011/2012- Office Management Specialization group. She enjoyed great success and finished the year fourth of her class. After graduating in the summer of 2012, Vida applied for the position of librarian at the Greek Catholic school in Ramallah and happily her dream came true and she was offered the job. The school administration has since acknowledged that Vida has been a wonderful addition to their staff, and is also an active member in society. Vida attributes her success to the program and staff of the YWCA Ramallah without which she would not have achieved her goal.

4.3.3 Office Multi-media Specialization



Based on a gap analysis (market study) that the YWCA carried out in November 2011 to test market supply and demand for a multimedia specialization, it was concluded that the market is in need of this kind of specialization and thus, the YWCA began to design a long term training course for this specialization for the 2012 / 2013 scholastic year.

the YWCA in coordination with GIZ and PUM designed the multimedia course which compromises 330 hours (100 hours in graphic design, 80 in still photography, 120 hours in video photography and 30 hours in montage). In 2012 the YWCA of Jerusalem succeeded in hiring professional trainers for this new specialization.

Following a media campaign about this new specialization, matching funds from the Welfare Association and COOPI (an Italian NGO) were secured for the full establishment and refurbishment of a lab/class. The result was the enrollment of 14 students in a pilot course which started in November 2012. The first batch will graduate in June 2013

4.3.4 Project Management and Accounting Specializations



During the year 2012, the VTC in Jerusalem offered two new short courses which were open to the public, namely the Project Management and Accounting. The Accounting specialization includes background about the Israeli taxation system and accounting applications and policies, both of which are highly demanded in the Jerusalem market. The Project Management specialization is accredited by Cambridge International College in the UK which offered students a certified certificate.

The two specializations were made available to students starting Sept 2011. Eight candidates joined the Project Management specialization in the academic year 2011 / 2012 and 8 candidates in the academic year 2012 / 2013. This is in addition to the 8 females who joined the Accounting specialization in 2012.

Success Story

Lina Odeh, a 47 year old recent VTC of Ramallah graduate and a mother of four kids, reports, “I was encouraged to join the YWCA training center after hearing about its good reputation and quality training. I undertook this training course in order to gain skills needed for employment in the modern business market”.

“I would like to mention that I am not a junior student or a new graduate. I happen to be a wife and mother of four children. I hold a B.A. degree in radiology and I had worked as an x-ray technician at the Augusta Victoria Hospital for many years” she continues.

“I would like to add that I have been unemployed for the past fifteen years. I was content for many years to raise my kids and do my reproductive duties, but see my needs now changing. I can say that the YWCA was a new way to change my life for a better future. I had to gain this new opportunity not only to study and train but also to re-schedule my life and gain self-confidence and strength. It is the place where I have new hopes and expectations with ambition and motivation to see them fulfilled. I am honored and glad to be a member of this honorable institution and only hope to be able to find an employment opportunity to suit my skills and trainings which I am now ready to undergo” says Lina.

4.3.5 Promoting Palestinian Women's Rights and Economic Participation Through the Fokus Project

This project, which is a partnership project with YWCA Sudan and Sri Lanka, and supported by Y-Global (Norway) and the World YWCA has started in 2010. The first phase of the project focused on building the capacity of the YWCA as a women's rights organization. In 2012, the focus was shifted to training communities in women's rights, advocacy, lobbying and developing a common understanding of the UNSR 1325.

Five trainings were carried out by the YWCA of Palestine under the FOKUS project. Two of those trainings were carried out for community members in rural areas of Ramallah as well as Jalazoune Refugee Camp, Jericho, Nwei'meh, Ein Dyook and Aqbet Jaber Refugee Camp. The trainings offered a good overview of UNSCR1325 in relation to the Palestinian society. The trainings focused on raising awareness on women's rights and gender issues, and showcased how being active and taking part in creating change in communities can have direct impacts on women. In total, around 130 women, the majority being young women received the training, using drama (arts, sketches, theater and other artistic and creative platforms) to advocate for women's and gender rights.

The last training showcased the process for women to take part in elections, with success stories and examples on advocacy, lobbying and campaigning.

The trainer who led the first all-female independent list in the Palestinian municipal elections shared how lobbying tools could be used as tools for civic engagement for Palestinian women. The trainer hence shared her experience on how challenging it was to run for elections, and how people in the community (including women) discouraged the participation of women in politics due to social constraints. However, her perseverance and insistence on the need to have women raise their issues and work for making



changes has been inspiring for Palestinian women generally, and for the women attending our trainings specifically.

Some of the women who attended the YWCA of Palestine's sessions on advocacy and lobbying at the end of 2012 are living in refugee camps and aspire to bring forth their issues to the city council by campaigning to bring attention to their issues. Other participants have been encouraged to take on an active role in their councils and are being encouraged to take part in the leadership.

4.3.6 Update on Youth Projects

During the year 2012, the YWCA focused its efforts in designing and conducting a participatory needs assessment and identification of the target areas and target groups for the new program interventions.

The existing youth groups of two local associations of the YWCA--Ramallah and Jerusalem were heavily involved in this process. During this year of transition, The YWCA limited its youth interventions to membership activities until the youth strategy was formulated and the strategic direction defined at the end of 2012.

Ramallah and Jericho

With a grant from the Swedish Mission Council (SMC), both Ramallah and Jericho evaluated their youth programs. This was a lengthy and participatory process involving many interviews and focus group sessions with our youth members and staff. Through

this fund we were also able to hire a youth coordinator for the YWCA of Ramallah who supported this process.

The findings of the evaluation were taken into consideration in the development of the youth sector strategy

Jerusalem

During 2012, the youth program of the YWCA of Jerusalem was supported by Y-Global which allowed them to establish a sustainable and committed youth platform composed of 50 young men and women. They participated in the YWCA's various activities and events on a regular basis.

In addition, the YWCA offered these youth a variety of activities which aimed at raising their awareness on topics related to nationality and identity issues, gender equality, time management and leadership. Furthermore, more participatory training methods were developed to increase their engagement like exploring gender roles and issues through drama or leadership through coaching. Finally, a number of youth produced 4 animated advocacy short movies that were posted on YouTube in 2012.

In addition to these activities, youth participated in the WeyLaLa dance group which had its first performance in April 2012. Over 350 attended this performance. They were also approached to perform in numerous local festivals such as the Ramallah Dance festival and a Beit Sahour festival. The Weillah dance group members volunteered to provide Dabkeh classes to the VTC students and children at the YWCA kids Club during 2012.



4.4 Advancing Children's Cognitive Skills and Abilities

4.4.1 Jalazoune Refugee Camp Center Kindergarten

As part of the KG program development, the YWCA team at the Jalazoune Refugee Camp Center designed a new methodology for teaching, namely “learning through play” which builds on the concept of cognitive learning for kids. This is a methodology which is distinctive to YWCA KGs in Palestine.

The implementation of this new methodology involved an intense 35 hours of training for the Jalazoune KG teachers and the reorganization of the kindergarten classrooms into learning centers. Each classroom had 3 main centers:

- A center of imagination made up of various ‘corners’ where kids to role play shopping, cooking, or going to the doctor’s clinic.
- A center of concentration for special focus on language skills (Arabic and English) and learning mathematics. The children develop concepts of space, shapes, and size within a real life context which allows them to bridge the gap between the concrete and the abstract. For example, children need many experiences of investigating the idea that three blocks and two more blocks make five blocks before they will understand that $2 + 3 = 5$.
- A center of art where kids can explore their emotions through art, painting, and craftwork.

Finally, renovations were made to the outdoor play area including a new equipment and sand area. All of these changes support the cognitive, expressive, and creative development of our children. 75 kids from the Jalazoune Refugee Camp benefitted from our kindergarten program in 2012. This program is mainly supported by United Church of Christ/Global Ministries and other churches

Success Story:

One of the captured success stories is the positive change that was made to a little girl called May from the Jalazoune Refugee Camp, ages four years old. At the beginning of the school year, May used to stay alone, timid and unwilling to participate in any activity. During the course of the school year, the creative and cognitive learning methods encouraged this shy girl to socialize and play with her other peer kids. She also took the lead to sing in the classroom and to participate in all activities with no exception.

The mother of May realized the tremendous improvements in her daughter’s behaviors and abilities to socialize with others. She came to the KG to specially thank the YWCA for the efforts they invested in her daughter.



4.4.2 Aqbet Jaber Refugee Camp Kindergarten

During 2012, 64 children (34 boys and 30 girls) from Aqbet Jaber Refugee Camp joined the KG program. Teachers received training this year in topics related to autism, dropping out, and The Right to Play. The children participated in a variety of programs including competitions with other KGs in the area and in programs that included their parents like open days on special occasions like Mother's Day or baking bread together. In addition, the program received sports uniforms from the Board Secretary. All in all it was a successful year for the KG.



Success Story:

Abed El Fatah Saed is a 6 years old kid from Aqbet Jab Refugee Camp in Jericho. He joined our KG last scholastic year 2010 – 2011 and is still enrolled. Upon joining our KG, the teachers discovered that the kid has aggressive behaviors, difficulties in learning and speech.

The teachers called upon the parents, who were understanding and cooperative, to discuss with them their kid's learning and behavior difficulties. Consequently the kid was taken to a specialized counselor and medical doctor and was diagnosed with having excessive electrical discharges which made him behave aggressively, and needed proper medical and counseling follow up. The doctor also recommended that the kid should mingle with other ordinary kids in the KG to learn from them and to overcome those difficulties.

Abed El Fatah was given special attention and treatment by the specialized teacher at the KG and was given the opportunity to participate in all daily class activities which positively enhanced his participation and learning skills. The teacher said that whenever he behaved positively those behaviors were rewarded and we followed up his development closely with his parents.

As a result, the kid has lately, this scholastic year, shown great improvement in his behaviors and learning skills, he plays and communicates with his classmates in a normal manner. In addition his articulation difficulties were enhanced. He also showed great improvement in doing the daily activities by himself and without the help of teachers. He showed great attachment to the KG and kids, his mom says "he wakes up every day early in the morning telling us to send him to the KG that he loves".

The parents are very thankful for the great support the KG teachers and specialists offered for their kid. They say "we could have not learned about our kid's learning and behavior difficulties if we did not send him to this great KG".

4.4.3 The Children's Center at the YWCA of Jerusalem

In 2012 the YWCA of Jerusalem team embarked on adopting a new approach for the Children's Center by designing diverse and ongoing programs for attracting higher numbers of participants. For example, during the summer of 2012 two short summer camps and two long ones were organized to cover the whole summer vacation from June until August 2012.

The summer camps included providing healthy hot lunch boxes for the kids and extended hours for children as a support service for working mothers who work from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. This resulted in the attraction of a total of 210 kids, thus increasing the number of children from previous summer camps which targeted about 30 kids per camp. The 2012 summer camps were also unique in mixing recreational and educational art based activities such as cooking classes, art and drawing classes, photography classes, Dabkeh dance and flamenco. In addition, the staff also organized trips to historic and recreational places in Palestine. Based on the feedback we received from the parents of the kids, the 2012 summer camp was considered one of the finest camps in East-Jerusalem.

Moreover, the YWCA started in 2012 the designing of various children courses. Some of these were Taekwondo, ballet, art, dabkeh and a chess course. Flyers were printed to promote for these courses which were planned to take place early 2013.

Additionally, the YWCA formed a partnership with the Tamer Institute for community education and established jointly a children's library at the Children Center so they could provide storytelling and other library related activities twice a week for the neighborhood children.

Finally, the YWCA established a painting club called "Farashat" which attracted 50 kids who learned professional painting skills and techniques. Some were also given the chance to exhibit their paintings for the public through a YWCA organized exhibitions.



5. Our Representation and Welcoming International Visitors

During 2012 we had a number of visitors to the YWCA of Palestine. Most of our visitors have been our partners/donors. We thank them for believing in our work and their ongoing support.

In February we welcomed Vincent Gainey from Christian Aid. In April we welcomed the YWCA and YMCA of the Netherlands and the Dutch Olive Tree Campaign Steering Committee. This was a joint effort with the YMCA and the JAI. In May We welcomed Dylan Mathews from YCare and Lott Tornngren from YW/YM Sweden. In June we welcomed a delegation from the Karibu Foundation in Norway. We also welcomed a delegation from Global Ministries from the US. They also visited the Jalazoun Camp. In July we welcomed Bruno Essig from Horyzon. In October we hosted our good friends Liz Knott and Connie DePond from Presbyterian Women and Pal Craft Aid. In November we welcomed Peter Makari and James Moos from Global Ministries who visited our Jericho association and work in the Jordan Valley. We also welcomed a Presbyterian delegation from the U.S. In December we welcomed John Veron and from ICCO.

Travels and Missions during 2012

As usual our staff and members travel and represent us at meetings across the globe. In February Arda Aghazarian and Queen Massoud, from the YWCA of Palestine attended the CSW 56th session at the United Nations in New York. In March Mira Rizeq traveled to Jordan to lead a strategic planning workshop for the YWCA of Jordan. She also met in London with Y Global and Partners for the partnership meeting. In April she attended the Global Ministries Board meeting in the United States. In June. Mayadah Tarazi, Maya Sahlieh, Hanya Abdallah, Mais Abu Lail, Marina Neweiser, and Minerva Halteh and Mira attended the Middle East Regional Meeting in Amman, Jordan. In July Dana Awwad from the Ramallah board attended a conference on AIDS in Washington, D.C. In August a team from Palestine attended the YWCA/YMCA of Sweden's Educational Week of Training. Those attending included: Raghad Abu Shamsiyeh and Mohammad Abu Fannouneh from the YWCA of Ramallah; Christine Darwish from the YWCA of Jericho; Naheel Bazbazat from the YWCA of Jerusalem and Mayadah Tarazi from the YWCA Palestine National Office. In November Mira visited Sri Lanka YWCA with Juli Dugdale from the World Office in Geneva, to provide strategic support for the sister organization within the FOKUS partnership project. .



6. Revisioning Our Advocacy Work

The YWCA and its local associations made a commitment in 2012 to implement a rights-based approach in all its work including its advocacy work. Efforts were begun to evaluate our programs to see if we were already doing this or ways we could improve or strengthen our commitment to human rights. In addition, we recognize that some of the laws, rules, and regulations governing women need to change so that women can have equal access to education and employment. For this reason many of our programs have begun to include advocacy and/or civic engagement as a core component.

On the international level we continue to work with our partners to address critical issues like violence against women in forums like the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). We remain committed to creating safe spaces for young women's education as well as peace building and implementation of UN SCR 1325. One important difference in this year's conference was the change in status for Palestine as an observer state. This is relevant to the work that Palestinian women can do at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women because prior to this vote it has been challenging for Palestinians to "see themselves as being taken seriously by the UN." This status change may hence have some positive implications on Palestinian women who can work more cooperatively towards implementing UNSCR1325 through advocacy and lobbying.

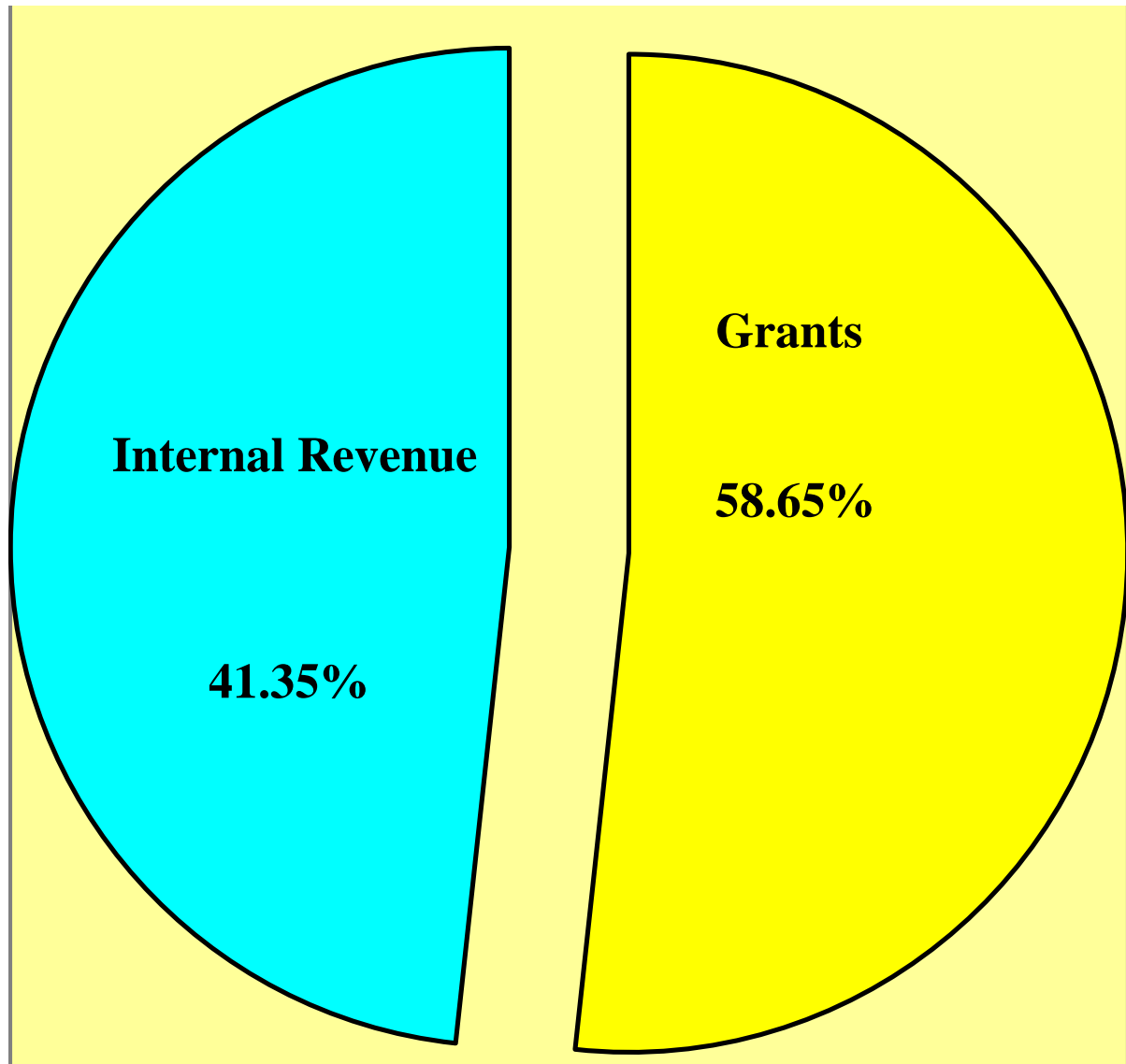
A rights based approach, however also demands that we face the way Israel continues to violate international law and disregard UN resolutions related to being an occupying force. As the Joint Advocacy Initiative (JAI), our advocacy arm for working for peace with justice put it recently in their 2012 annual report, "Blatant injustices are taking place on a daily basis, whilst Israel enjoys impunity... consistent lack of external pressure permits Israel's ongoing disregard of international law and illegal occupation of Palestine... For all of these reasons we were proud to work with JAI again this year on the Olive Tree Campaign and the Journey to Justice Program. We are grateful for representing us in their ongoing collaborative work with Kairos of Palestine and support the call for nonviolent actions like the Boycott Divestment Sanctions Movement (BDS) mentioned in the Kairos document.

Throughout the year the YWCA of Palestine issues statements or action alerts. The statement for the 29th of November, the Day of Solidarity with the Palestinians, was supported by the World Office and a coalition of NGOs in Geneva. The statement was presented at the UN, and was a deliberate expression of women's voices and aspirations for Peace with Justice.

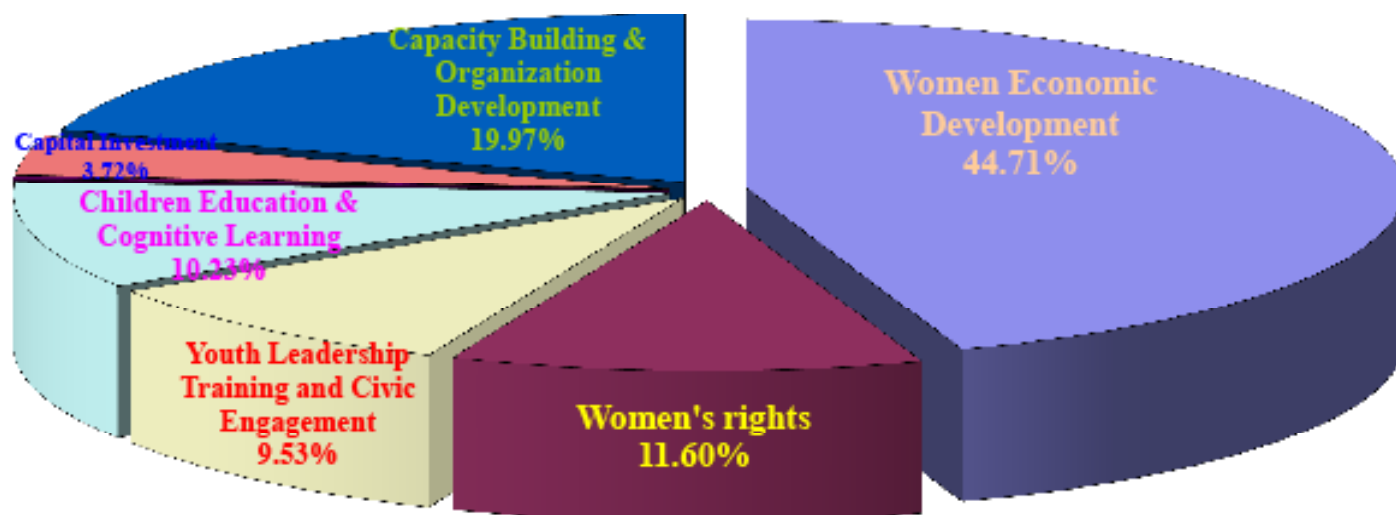
To follow through on these new directions, the YWCA of Palestine decided to move forward with one of its global partners, Global Ministries of the United Church of Christ and Disciples of Christ, to bring a Global mission personnel to work on communication, fundraising, and advocacy. This person would also work on developing relationships with the YWCA's growing church network especially those in the United States. This is a three year contract and required much coordination and preparation.

7. Financial Analysis

YWCA External Versus Internal Funding



YWCA of Palestine 2012 Expenditures by Sector

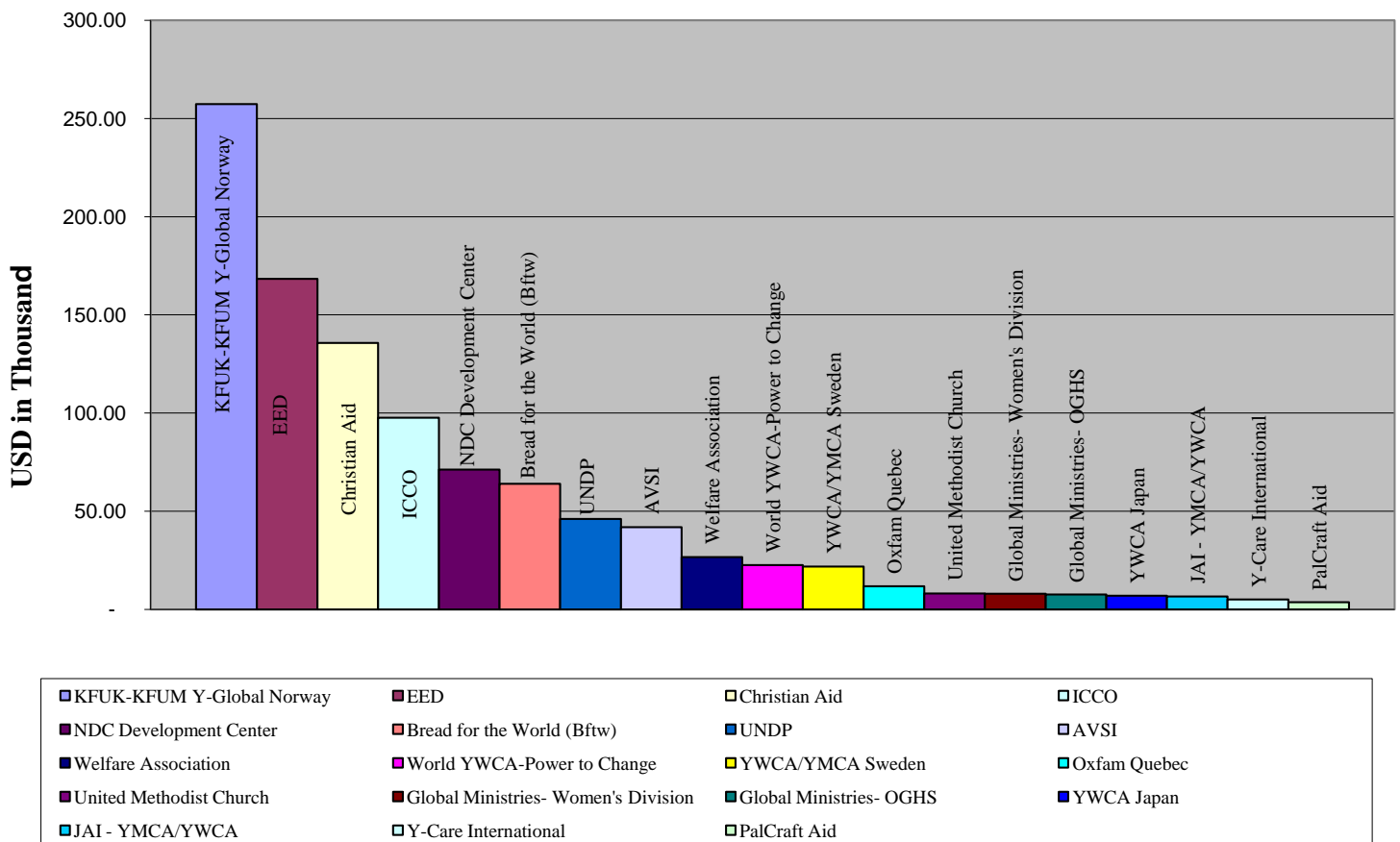


■ Women Economic Development
■ Youth Leadership Training and Civic Engagement
■ Advocacy
■ Organization Development

■ Women's rights
■ Children Education & Cognitive Learning
■ Capital Investment

Donor Funds Received During 2012

Donor Funds Received During 2012



العمل نحو التغيير

Working Towards Change

