



Annual Report 2019



“Empowering Women and Youth for Equality, Freedom and Justice in Palestine”

Table of Content

Forward by National General Secretary, Mira Rizeq	(2)
Our Program Highlight: The Y Youth Clubs/Little Citizen Project	(3)
Economic Empowerment Programs - Giving Hope, Changing Lives!	(5)
Youth Leadership and Civic Engagement	(9)
Advocacy on the National Level	(11)
Our Children	(13)
Beyond borders: International Advocacy and Representation	(14)
Our Donors	(24)
Gratitude Messages to Mira Rizeq	(26)



Forward by National General Secretary Mira Rizeq: Moving on and Beyond

The year 2019 was another year full of accomplishments and engagement on the local and international levels. We are finally witnessing the fruits of years of inclusive, participatory and rights-based development processes as we see youth, especially young women, becoming active citizens and taking their right place at the tables of different national forums and networks. Not only have we enabled them to access new skills, markets and financial resources to improve their livelihoods, but we have facilitated their participation in making decisions that affect their lives and shape their future.

This year was heavily focused on advocating for the Family Protection Bill to be adopted by the Palestinian Authority. Having hosted Al Muntada - the NGO Forum for Combating Violence against Women for the last two years allowed us to be instrumental in managing the 16 Days of Activism Campaign in coordination with all the active women institutions. Peace, security and protection of women continue to be high on our agenda and we have tackled it in our international advocacy efforts

at the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) held in New York in March, the Human Rights Council held in Geneva in June and the 29th World Council meeting held in Johannesburg, South Africa in November 2019.

While advancing our regular women and youth empowerment programs, we have also focused on building and improving our internal systems; mainly the MEAL and the Administration and Human Resources. We also started active preparations for the merge that we are hoping to complete in 2020, for more efficiency and effectiveness. We continue to be committed to our partners, donors and stakeholders, and hold ourselves to a high standard of professionalism and accountability.

With this Annual report, I am closing an important chapter in my life at the YWCA of Palestine. The year 2019 was very special for the organization and exceptionally special for me as the General Secretary since I was elected as World YWCA President at World YWCA Council meeting. It could not have ended better for me or the organization. I was honored and privileged to be recognized globally, and I am so blessed to be able to continue to serve this exceptional inclusive movement of women and young women around the world.



Mira Rizeq

Our Program Highlight: The Y Youth Clubs/Little Citizen Project”

Young women and youth are the leaders of tomorrow. If we do not invest in them today and empower them to make the decisions that will affect their lives, we will not be able to create a better future. Their safety, engagement, and rights are at the core of everything we do.

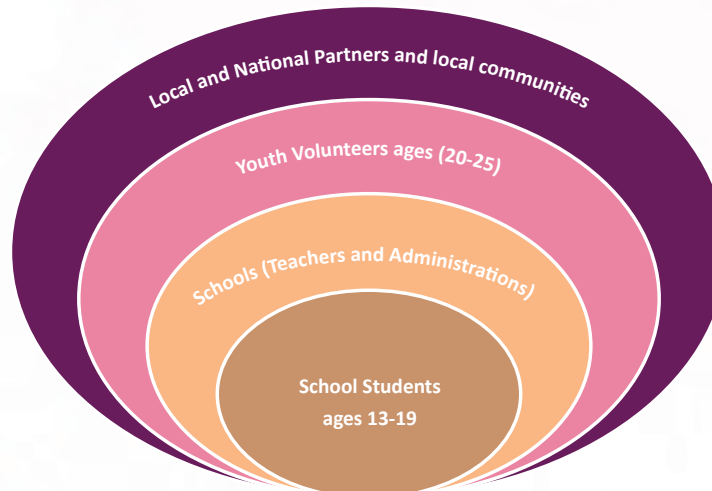
One of our special projects that we are very proud of is the “Y Youth Clubs” or as we call it in Arabic “The Little Citizen”. It is the project we have embarked on through the funding we received from the Operation Day’s Work (ODW) Campaign through our partnership with Y Global Norway. Operation Day’s Work (ODW) is the largest youth solidarity campaign in Norway funded entirely by school students across the country.

Through the project, we are working with school students between the ages of 13 and 19, empowering them to be active citizens and leaders of change in their communities and to take part in achieving sustainable peace in Palestine. The project activities include advocacy campaigns, community initiatives, non-formal learning training workshops, interactive educational workshops, awareness sessions, summer camps, and participation in student councils and committees.

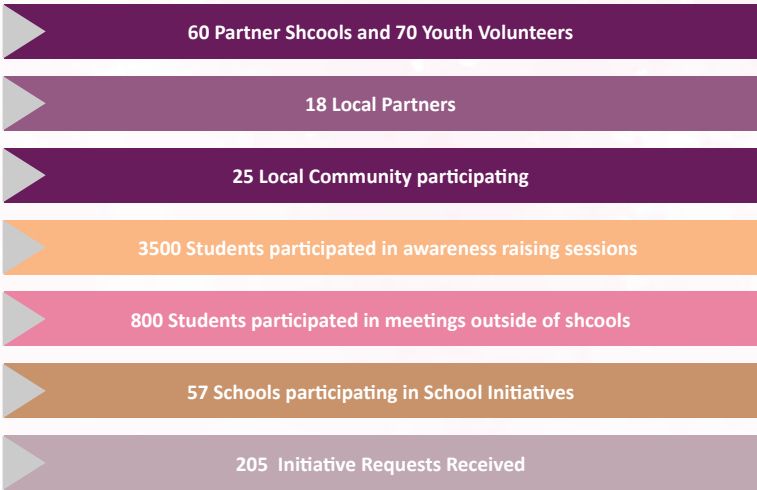


Project youth volunteers in a training workshop

Project youth volunteers in a training workshop



Our aim is to reach as many school students and youth as possible and offer the local organizations in the targeted communities the opportunity to join efforts and take part in the planning and development of the project activities with and for youth and children. For this purpose, we have partnered with 18 local organizations, including NGOs, CBOs, municipalities, and youth groups and centers, in addition to the Palestinian Ministry of Education and UNRWA/Education Department. These partnerships have allowed us to cooperate with 60 schools across the West Bank including private, public and 10 UNRWA schools in refugee camps.



Participating students indicated that they enjoyed teamwork and getting out of school routine during the sessions. They described the atmosphere of sessions as “Very Cheerful”.

“Self-confidence is the first step for me to become a good active little citizen”.

Said one of the students participating in the Y Youth Clubs.



A participant in one of the school activities carries a balloon with the word “Awareness” written on it

Economic Empowerment Programs - Giving Hope, Changing Lives!

Programs under this thematic area are intended to empower women, especially young women, with the needed skills and knowledge to facilitate their employment and income generating opportunities. At the same time, these programs educate women about their rights, guide them in advocating for them and collectively promote pro-women and gender sensitized economic policies. Over the years, we have proven that once economically empowered, women will be socially and politically empowered.

Vocational Training Centers

The YWCA continues to provide market-driven vocational training programs mainly for marginalized young women at its two vocational training centers in Jerusalem and Ramallah. This program of the YWCA continues to be mainly supported by Bread for the World in Germany.

VTCs Graduates and Enrolled Students

In 2019, a total of 33 students graduated from the VTC in Jerusalem with a Diploma in either Office Management or Photography and Filmmaking and another 33 students graduated from the VTC in Ramallah with a Diploma in either Office Management, Information Technology (IT) or Management Information Systems (MIS).



YWCA of Jerusalem VTC staff cut graduation cake

Graduates 2019				
	Specialization	Males	Females	Total
YWCA Jerusalem	Office Management	1	25	26
	Photography and Filmmaking	2	5	7
YWCA Ramallah	Office Management	6	17	23
	IT	4	1	5
	MIS	1	4	5
Total	YWCA Jerusalem	3	30	33
	YWCA Ramallah	11	22	33

In September 2019, the new scholastic year started with 35 students enrolled in one of two specializations offered at our Jerusalem VTC; Office Management and Modern Kitchen, and another 25 students enrolled in the Office Management specialization available at our Ramallah VTC.

Enrolled Students 2019				
	Specialization	Males	Females	Total
YWCA Jerusalem	Office Management	0	20	20
	Modern Kitchen	3	12	15
YWCA Ramallah	Office Management	5	20	25
Total	YWCA Jerusalem	3	32	35
	YWCA Ramallah	5	20	25

The Story of One of Our Graduates

Mahfouz, a young man from Ramallah, graduated from our Ramallah VTC in 2019 with a diploma in Office Management.

Since high school, Mahfouz had been keen to work in an office setting, due to his disability. Upon graduation, he was able to land his first paid dream job at Bank of Palestine, with the help of the YWCA in Ramallah. He had been placed at the bank for an internship as part of the partnership between the YWCA and Bank of Palestine, where he practiced some of his newly acquired skills as an Office Manager. He has done really well that the bank decided to offer him a job.



Mahfouz receives his certificate

The training at the Vocational Training Center in Ramallah has helped Mahfouz to develop personally and professionally. He feels his job is challenging, but also rewarding as he gets to take on new tasks and develop his skills some more. **“It means a lot to me that I have a job I love, and to be surrounded by amazing co-workers in a great work environment”, said Mahfouz.** His parents are also very pleased with the direction his career has taken. They are grateful to the YWCA and Bank of Palestine for helping Mahfouz build more self-confidence and improve his self-esteem. They are proud that he has become a productive and valued member of society.

Livelihood Trainings

In 2019, the YWCA of Jerusalem was able to reach around 300 women and youth through its outreach livelihood trainings in marginalized areas around Jerusalem. Those livelihood trainings, organized in partnership with Community-based Organizations (CBOs) at those locations, make it easier for women in those areas to participate in our trainings and activities that they otherwise don't have access to due to mobility restrictions and social limitations.

Trainings were organized in the old city of Jerusalem, Silwan, al-Issawiya, Shufat Refugee Camp, and the Northern West Villages of Jerusalem, which are 16 villages with fertile lands that are now separated from their owners by the Separation Wall and surrounding illegal settlements that have been erected on those lands. Trainings offered are based on a needs assessment study that is carried in each location to ensure that we are addressing the real need of the target group and community. Training topics included Nails Care and Art, Makeup, Dressmaking, Henna and Digital Marketing.

Similarly, the YWCA of Ramallah organized several livelihood trainings and outreach programs in villages and refugee camps in the Ramallah area, reaching out to over 100 women. The training topics included Food Production and Culinary Arts, and Fashion Design and Quilting.

The YWCA of Jericho continues to offer a six-month Hairdressing and Beauty course. 16 young women are currently enrolled in this course that started in October of 2019.

Over 50% of participants in the skills and Livelihood trainings reported increased income due to the trainings that they received.



A participant from Silwan receives a Makeup Start Up Kit upon completion of training



Supporting Women-led Businesses to Become more Profitable

Women's Economic Empowerment Project in Bethlehem and Hebron

The National YWCA of Palestine launched this project in 2018, which is funded by Christian Aid and Bread for the World and implemented by the YWCA of Bethlehem. The project targets nine women-led businesses in Bethlehem and North of Hebron and is aimed at helping them become more profitable.

In 2019, a Market Study was conducted to identify the gaps in the market and guide those groups to increase their profitability through improved efficiency, product diversity and more innovative marketing.

The YWCA contracted a specialist to develop a special accounting software to help those groups with their Financial Management. Representatives of those businesses were trained in Management and Financial Management and in using this computer program that makes it easier for them to manage their finances.

Moreover, the YWCA raised the awareness of over 120 women in those communities of their economic and social rights; and further selected and trained 21 of those women in advocating for those rights. A committee was formed to organize and manage advocacy campaigns related mainly to facilitating the registration process for cooperatives by official bodies and allocating a permanent space for them in Bethlehem to promote and sell their products on a weekly basis.

The targeted groups were invited to submit proposals for small grants to improve their businesses and five of them were selected and provided with the needed equipment including laptops for the accounting program.

It is worth mentioning that a group of our Young Business Coaches (YBCs) continue to work closely with these cooperatives and provide them with the necessary guidance and support.

"Mustaqbaluna" Project in Jericho

This project, aimed at increasing employment opportunities for the most vulnerable by supporting inclusive business initiatives implemented by people with disabilities, women and low-income artisans, is being implemented by the YWCA in Jericho, targeting women in Jericho City, Aqbat Jaber and Ein el-Sultan Refugee Camps as well as in al-Nwei'meh and al-Auja villages.

In 2019, the project targeted 13 cooperative and charitable societies and individual groups, offering them training and capacity building on issues related to Marketing, Sales, Costing, Bookkeeping, Quality Control, Product Registration Procedures and Facebook Page Management to better promote their products. They also received guidance on packaging and labeling, as well as small sub-grants to improve the efficiency and quality of their production.

Moreover, in September 2019, the YWCA of Jericho rented a room at the Orthodox Club in Ramallah as a permanent exhibition to promote and sell the products of those enterprises.

This project is funded by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) and implemented by AVSI Foundation in partnership with several organizations including the YWCA of Jericho.

Jericho Food Production Unit

The YWCA of Jericho's Food Production Unit was initiated in 2001 to create job opportunities for women right after the second Intifada. Since then, the YWCA has managed to run and develop this project, which has been empowering women both on the economic and social levels, as with economic independence comes the power of decision-making and more community engagement.

The products produced are made of natural ingredients and are free of any chemical additives or preservatives, making them healthy and delicious!

In 2019, the unit provided employment opportunities for 16 women and three men, who are mainly the sole breadwinners of their families.

The YWCA continues to explore new marketing channels and points of sale, while participating in local and national exhibitions to further promote its products.



Food Production in Jericho

Youth Leadership and Civic Engagement

As a youth centered organization, the YWCA of Palestine offers safe spaces for young people, especially young women, to grow, learn and engage in an environment free of violence. It also strives to build the knowledge and capacity of young people around their rights, especially their participation and engagement in decision-making in their local communities, and on the national level as well.

Youth Document Cases of GBV

In 2019, the youth, mainly young women, in Ramallah rural areas who have been trained to identify and document cases of gender-based violence, have documented five cases with the intention of raising awareness and combating violence against women in their communities. Those cases have been reflected in a short film that was shared as one of the advocacy tools during the 16 Days of Activism Campaign against Gender-Based violence in November 2019.

Youth Implement Local Initiatives in their Communities

In 2019, the youth implemented two community initiatives; one in the village of Saffa village and another in Bani Zaid village. Both initiatives were aimed at protecting farmers' lands from confiscation and creating safe spaces for the local communities in those natural areas.



Youth volunteers clean a farmland that is under the threat of confiscation

Youth as Experts and Trainers on UNSCR2250

In 2019, the YWCA of Palestine decided to take a different approach to improve the sustainability potential for its long-term work on empowering youth and women on the issues of rights; mainly within the framework of UNSCR1325 and UNSCR2250. This was done through an intensive Training of Trainers for the youth on these topics, so they can become trainers and experts on those issues and conduct trainings for other young people in their communities. Twenty youth (nine females and eleven males) participated in this intensive six-day training and have themselves reached eight other youth before the end of 2019 with trainings on those issues.



Youth work in small groups during one of the training workshops on UNSCR 2250

Youth advocate for Increased Participation in Decision-Making

This year too, the youth continued to work on lobbying for increasing their representation, and put their focus on the local level of CBOs and clubs in their communities. Three successes have been witnessed in the elections of new boards of those local CBOs, where more than 50% of the elected board members were youth. What was also remarkable was that young women have nominated themselves for those boards and some of them did succeed which is a huge progress in the management of such local structures and an indication of the real change that is taking place within those communities in support of women and youth and their increased participation in the political and social life.

Nehal Barghouthi was the first young woman to be elected on the board of Aboud Youth Club, which was a real accomplishment. **“As a 25 year old woman from the village to become the Secretary of the board of the local club, I feel like a very effective and influential member in my society and even on the level of the political parties in my area. I am very grateful for the YWCA for the trainings that built my capacity and boosted my confidence to be able to reach this position”** says Nehal.

A National Plan for Youth Participation

Around 200 youth continue to be engaged in advocating for their rights under UNSCR2250. In the summer of 2019, a core youth group was formed on the national level that is actively working on a draft National Plan for Youth Participation, which focuses on increased youth participation and a more activate role of the youth to advocate for their rights as stated in UNSCR1325 and 2250.



A youth training workshop

The group facilitated workshops with other young people and civil society organizations across the West Bank to consult them and amend the draft document making it more inclusive. Around 100 participants attended the workshops who expressed their interest in adopting the document and contributing to its improvement in 2020.

All our youth programs are made possible through funding from the Swedish Mission Council (SMC) through YMCA/YWCA Sweden, NORAD through Y Global in Norway, and Horyzon.

Advocacy on the National Level

The YWCA's Membership in National Forums

The YWCA of Palestine continued to mobilize relevant stakeholders both nationally and internationally to engage in the promotion of Just Peace, mainly through its membership and leadership role in the following five national forums:

- The Higher Commission of UNSCR1325;
- The National Coalition of UNSCR1325;
- The NGOs Forum to Combat Violence against Women (Al Muntada);
- Women's Coalition for the Implementation of CEDAW;
- The Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum (PIEF) in relation to the World Council of Churches;
- The National Christian Committee of Palestine (NCCOP).

The YWCA of Palestine as the host for Al Muntada

In 2019, the YWCA of Palestine continued to be the hosting member of Al Muntada. As such, the YWCA continued to provide support for Al Muntada in developing its strategic plan and organizing the campaigns.

This year, the YWCA extended its support to Al Muntada through organizing a training for its members on Presentation and Advocacy skills. Twenty participants attended this training, which has increased their capacity to present and share the situation in Palestine with international audience. Such trainings have proved to be crucial in preparing those members who represent the Palestinian NGOs and Al Muntada in international forums.



Mira Rizeq presents Al Muntada Coordinator Sabah Salameh with two of our dolls in appreciation of her dedicated service

A Position Paper was issued by Al Muntada in December on the Family Protection Bill, ensuring that it includes all items recommended by the Civil Society. This Position Paper will be circulated with a petition as an advocacy tool to push the government to adopt the Family Protection Law.

16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence Campaign

As the host association of Al Muntada, the YWCA of Palestine led the national campaign during the global 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, from November 25 – December 10. In 2019, the campaign's slogan was "Protection is a Right and Accountability is a Duty".

Highlights of the campaign were:

- The Launching event, which was organized in partnership with the Ministry of Women's Affairs on 23 November 2019 in Ramallah and Gaza, and attended by 750 women and men. It focused on the importance of endorsing the Family Protection Bill by the Palestinian government.
- The formation of a "Human Belt" by 800 women from Al Muntada members and activists in the streets of Ramallah on 2 December 2019. The YWCA made a special contribution by displaying paintings that advocate for the adoption of the Family Protection Bill. The paintings were produced by the YWCA's youth groups;
- The broadcasting of Radio spots on the Family Protection Law by three local radio stations three times a day throughout the campaign period;
- Display of the campaign's slogan on digital billboards in Ramallah and Hebron;
- Launching a wide-range awareness raising initiative in several locations in the West Bank on the Family Protection Bill and the urgency of its adoption;
- In addition to that, the YWCA of Palestine launched its own social media campaign focusing on women's right to protection and the importance of the Family Protection Bill. The campaign included the following:
- Designing a Facebook and Twitter cover and a Facebook profile picture frame for people to use throughout the 16 days;
- Sharing different messages from youth addressing Gender-Based Violence;
- Sharing two interviews conducted with Al Muntada Coordinator Sabah Salameh and a YWCA youth volunteer Taghreed Zeidan around Gender-Based Violence issues in the Palestinian society.



Part of the "Human Belt" in Ramallah

Our Children

KGs in Refugee Camps

The two YWCA centres in Jalazone and Aqabat Jaber Refugee Camps continue to offer a space for creative learning, healthy growing and confidence building for children.

In 2019, 70 children were enrolled in our KG in the Jalazone Refugee Camp, while 50 children were enrolled in our KG in Aqabat Jaber Refugee Camp. The teachers and caregivers at the KGs continuously attend trainings to improve their skills in supporting the development of the children, so they can grow into healthy, active and motivated adults.



Two children at our KG in Aqabat Jaber Refugee Camp

Meet Saed

Saed is a four-year old child from Jalazone Refugee Camp who is diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) and had some learning difficulties. During his time at the YWCA KG, he received special attention from the teachers to try and help him overcome his challenges. They used various learning methods to keep him engaged and interested, and jointly with the support of his family, he started improving. Saed is now able to engage with his classmates and work within groups. He is a happy boy who continues to develop and enjoy playing and learning with his classmates.



Saed

Children Cognitive Learning Programs at the YWCA of Jerusalem

• Nursery and Kindergarten

The YWCA of Jerusalem continues to offer children a safe and creative space to learn and grow. In 2019, the nursery and kindergarten welcomed 60 children aged between four months and three years.

• Summer Camps

The YWCA of Jerusalem organized a number of summer camps in 2019 that attracted more than 100 children aged three to 12 years old:

- The first Martial Arts training camp including Parkour and Karate;
- The fourth Dance camp including Gymnastics, Ballet, Modern Dance, Rhythm and Fitness;
- Art-based camps including music, cooking and art;
- The KG camp targeting children between the ages of three and five years during the month of July.



Our little ballerinas at YWCA of Jerusalem



Karate class for kids at YWCA Jerusalem

• Annual Skill Trainings for Children

The YWCA of Jerusalem is committed to sustaining and expanding its skill trainings for children between the ages of four and 15 years. In 2019, the YWCA attracted 141 children who participated in the different skill trainings the organization offers including Gymnastics, Ballet and Karate.

Beyond borders: International Advocacy and Representation

Visitors and Delegations

Throughout 2019, several YWCA and church delegations and many of our partners visited our offices to develop a deeper understanding of our programs and context, especially issues facing women and youth.

We welcomed visitors from YWCA Sweden, Y Care International, Christian Aid, Pal Craftaid, United Church of Christ (UCC). We also received a delegation from Denmark who visited the displaced Village of Iqrit and Akko in addition to the JAI Olive Picking Group.



YWCA of Palestine celebrates the end of a very fruitful partnership with Pal Craftaid — Presbyterian Church USA

Representation in Regional and Global Events

What	Who	When and Where
UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW63)	Mayadah Tarazi	New York, March 2019
Y Global Program Implementation Team Meeting and Training (YPIT)	Ruba Odeh Shadi Zatara	Nairobi, April 2019
Tunis Forum for Gender Equality	Ruba Odeh	Tunis, April 2019
CEIRPP: International Conference on the Question of Jerusalem: “Preserving the Cultural and Religious Character of Jerusalem”	Mira Rizeq	Geneva, June 2019
Human Rights Council (HRC)	Mira Rizeq	Geneva, June 2019
Wonderful Days Youth Festival	Humam Musleh Juliana Majrouh	Denmark, July 2019
Global Week	Osama Abu Arafeh	Oslo, August 2019
EVS Exchange Program (Youth)	Taghreed Zeidan	Oslo, May – August 2019
	Mohammad Rabae	Oslo, August – October 2019
	Katy Shalian	Haugesund, August – October 2019
	Heba Hamarsheh	Oslo, November 2019 – January 2020
YMCA 175 - Global Youth Event	Ruba Odeh Samar Rishmawi Shadi Zatara	London, August 2019
29th World Council	Amany Abu Awad Arda Aghazarian Haifa Baramki Haneen Abu Sada Jane Majrouh Mayadah Tarazi Mira Rizeq Noor Bimbashi Queen Masoud Rana Stephan Ruba Odeh Selina Salameh Yara Abedrabbo	Johannesburg, November 2019

YWCA of Palestine at CSW63

For the past eight years, the YWCA has actively participated in the sessions of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), which is convened in New York in March of every year.

CSW is a great opportunity for the YWCA of Palestine to meet and engage with YWCA delegates from around the world, network with international organizations, and showcase our work.

The YWCA of Palestine has been striving to build young women's capacities in advocating for their rights and Just Peace in Palestine by offering them the opportunity to engage in international forums, especially CSW.

In 2019, Senior Operations Officer, Mayadah Tarazi, represented the YWCA of Palestine at CSW63 under the priority theme "Social Protection Systems, Access to Public Services and Sustainable Infrastructure for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls", as part of the unified Palestinian delegation.



Mayadah Tarazi at the UN during her participation in CSW63

The General Secretary Attends "The International Conference on the Question of Jerusalem: "Preserving the Cultural and Religious Character of Jerusalem"

The YWCA of Palestine's National General Secretary Mira Rizeq was invited to attend the International Conference on the Question of Jerusalem: "Preserving the Cultural and Religious Character of Jerusalem". The conference was convened in Geneva from 27 – 28 June 2019 by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP) with the support of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

The conference featured several speakers including UN officials and experts in the field of cultural preservation, and offered the opportunity to discuss the challenges of safeguarding the cultural heritage of Jerusalem under Israeli occupation. It also exposed the Israeli violations and continued expansion of illegal settlements, especially in the Old City of Jerusalem, with the intention of creating irreversible facts and realities on the ground that scrutinize the special historic and religious character of Jerusalem. The conference also demonstrated how the denial of free access to holy sites, the continued demolitions and expropriations threaten any potential for a possible and sustainable peace process.



Mira Rizeq with H. E. Ambassador of Palestine to the United Nations Riyadh Mansour, Tamara Tamimi and Manal Hazzan, Kairos Representative

The plenary session raised the concern that Israel continues its practices due to the fact that the UN and international community continue to fail to hold the Israeli government accountable.

In conclusion, the plenary session focused on “Alternative Responsible and Ethical Tourism” as a strategy for building global awareness about the religious history of Jerusalem and preserving its culture. It also highlighted the importance of preserving the city through education and community projects. On the political level, it affirmed that there can be no sustainable and lasting peace without resolving the issue of Jerusalem. The international community should explore options, such as making Jerusalem an international city accessible to all religions, and institute mechanisms for the protection of its sites as well as for holding perpetrators of violence accountable.

The General Secretary Attends the 41st Session of the Human Rights Council

In addition to the UN conference on Jerusalem, the General Secretary managed to attend few sessions of the Human Rights Council. Several sessions/side events were organized by NGOs, researchers, and scholars around human rights violations against Palestinians committed by the Israeli occupation.

EVS Exchange Program: Promoting Youth Volunteerism

In partnership with Y Global Norway, the National YWCA of Palestine hosted four volunteers over the period of two years, 2018 - 2019, for three months through the European Volunteer Service (EVS) program.

The program aims at promoting solidarity between young people across nationalities and cultures and offers youth the opportunity to express their support in meaningful ways. Program participants have the chance to explore new cultures, learn about the realities of people in other countries, and receive high quality training to develop their skills and competences.



Idunn and Hedvig at our Ramallah office

In 2019, two amazing young women, Idunn Lystad Johnsen and Hedvig Guren, joined our team. They learned a lot and contributed to our work and engaged in different activities, especially within the Y Youth Clubs project, including workshops, awareness sessions and field visits.

They both loved living in Palestine and having the opportunity to learn about the culture, connect with young people from different parts of Palestine, and experience the food and music in addition to taking part in cultural events such as traditional weddings. Most importantly, they deepened their knowledge and understanding of the realities of people, especially youth, under occupation.

As this is an exchange program, Y Global Norway hosted four Palestinian youth in 2019, namely Taghreed Zeidan, Mohamad Rabaae, Katy Shalian, and Heba Hamarshi.

Reflection from Taghreed Zeidan

Taghreed is one of our active youth volunteers. She joined the YWCA in 2017 after taking part in one of our training workshops around UNSCR1325 on Women, Peace and Security. Ever since, she has joined several activities and workshops including a Training of Trainers workshops on UNSCR 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security. She attended the International Youth Conference “Youth Participate and Youth Decide: Towards Freedom and Justice”, organized by the YWCA in October 2018 within the framework of UNSCR2250.

Taghreed volunteered with Y Global Norway from May – August 2019 through EVS. This was a great experience that allowed her to **“look at life from a different perspective”**. She was able to gain new knowledge of global issues by participating in several training workshops and events. She also met new people, made new friends, and explored new places and cultures. **She “loved the equality prevalent in the Norwegian society regardless of race, gender, colour and religion”, as she stated.**

We are fortunate to have active and passionate young people like Taghreed who strive to be leaders of change in the Palestinian society. It is through our youth that we are able to move forward towards Just Peace and a better future for all.



Taghreed with a colleague in Oslo

The YWCA of Palestine at YMCA 175

In August 2019, around 3000 people from YMCAs around the world gathered in London to celebrate the 175th anniversary of the YMCA. Three staff members participated in this event, including our Program and MEAL Officer Samar Rishmawi, who had the opportunity to share about the work of the YWCA of Palestine in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals **and Agenda 2030 in a workshop organized by YWCA/YMCA Sweden titled “Be part of a sustainable change! A workshop on Youth and Agenda 2030”**.

She also participated in a workshop organized by YWCA/YMCA Norway together with YMCA Finland under the title “Youth4Peace: YMCA taking the lead on Youth, Peace and Security” where she spoke about our International Youth Conference “Youth Participate and Youth Decide: Towards Freedom and Justice” convened in 2018 within the framework of UNSCR 2250.



Samar presenting at the workshop

A Workshop on UNSCR 2250 in London

The YWCA of Palestine received an invitation from our partner organization YWCA/YMCA Sweden to take part in a workshop in London to contribute to developing a practice guide on UNSCR 2250 for young people. The workshop took place from 4 – 8 August 2019 coinciding with YMCA 175 event. Our Youth Program -Team Leader Shadi Zatar, and National Coordinator of Gender, Peace and Security Ruba Odeh joined participants from several YMCAs and YWCAs around the world. They had the opportunity to share our experience on working within the UNSCR 2250 and learn about the best practices of other YMCAs and YWCAs within this framework.



Shadi and Ruba with workshop participants

The 29th World YWCA Council in Johannesburg November 2019

The 29th World YWCA Council Meeting was convened from 17 – 22 November 2019 in Johannesburg, South Africa under the theme “Young Women Transforming Power Structures for Gender Equality”.

Participants from the YWCA of Palestine were 13 in total (exceeding the number of delegations that had ever represented Palestine at World Council before). In addition to Haifa Baramki in her capacity as World Board Member from 2011-2019, the delegation was comprised of six delegates and six observers. The delegation included staff, board members, and observers from different associations, including Mira Rizeq (nominated to serve as President of the World YWCA), and Selina Salameh (also nominated for the Middle East, as a young member for the World YWCA Board). The other delegates were Rana Habayeb, Yara AbedRabbo, Amany Abu Awad, Noor Bimbashi as young members. The six observers were Mayadah Tarazi, Ruba Odeh, Queen Masoud, Haneen Abu Saada (representing the JAI), Arda Aghazarian, and Jane Majrouh.

All of the participants from the YWCA of Palestine had a visible role at the World Council through their participation in sessions, workshops, business meetings, and relevant events. Filled with positive energy and a friendly spirit, they were open to introduce themselves to members from the movement, connect with good friends, and build new partnerships.

The 29th World Council in South Africa reaffirmed the sense of solidarity and sisterhood between women; reinforcing the mission of young women to transform power structures for gender equality. The Council had representation from 80 countries, with an attendance of 256 delegates from 80 countries, with hundreds of observers and special guests, including sponsor and partner representatives.

World Council brought light to the importance of openness and understanding between cultures while highlighting the importance of women standing together in their united call for justice and equality. In addition to its being a General Assembly business meeting where crucial decisions were made on behalf of all associations, World Council offered a space for mutual learning and the sharing of stories. As expressed by the world movement, the aim of such spaces is to “to build community, nurture friendships, and develop new leaders.” The host association of the YWCA of South Africa did a wonderful job in welcoming participants to the beautiful part of the world which exemplifies the vigor for freedom and equality in the face of injustice and oppression. In this respect, the place had



Some of our delegates with another World Council participant



Rana Stephan presents Neslon Mandela's granddaughter with a Palestinian scarf



Some of our delegates with another World Council participant

particular significance for the Palestinian delegation. The spirit of the events, including the morning worships, afternoon markets, and evening dinners solidified partnerships and manifested the deep connections among attendees, who also had room for reflection, conversation, and dance.

The theme of the meeting, Young Women Transforming Power Structures for Gender Equality, has been rooted in Goal 2035 that was adopted in 2015 in Bangkok. This goal states that: **“By 2035, 100 million young women and girls transform power structures to create justice, gender equality and a world without violence and war; leading a sustainable YWCA movement, inclusive of all women.”**

Much like their sisters within the movement, the participants from the YWCA of Palestine have dedicated their commitment and devoted efforts toward working on this goal.

“Participating at the huge conference of World Council gave me the opportunity to listen to women from different regions and countries who are brave and speak out with confidence. This experience was motivational for women and especially for young women like me, who will have their turn of speaking with the same confidence some day.”

Jane Majrouh - Young Woman Delegate from YWCA Jericho/Palestine.



Jane Majrouh and Yara Abed Rabbo in Palestinian traditional dress during council opening ceremony

Active Participation of the Delegation

The YWCA of Palestine participated in two joint workshops; “Goal 2035: Bold Transformative Steps to the Future” and “Building a YWCA Peace with Justice Coalition within the YWCA Movement”. Noor Bimbashi co-facilitated the first workshop with World YWCA Lead of Global Engagement and Strategic Communications Dr. Suchi Gaur, where they shared new resources to reach Goal 2035 and techniques to engage more young women even beyond the YWCA movement. Noor spoke about the work of the YWCA of Palestine within UNSCR 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security, especially the international youth conference, and our efforts in promoting youth leadership and civic engagement.



Noor Bimbashi leads the first workshop

Selina Salameh co-facilitated the second workshop with World YWCA Lead of Global Programming and Impact Aida Rehouma and YWCA South Sudan Program Coordinator Mary Fatiya Joseph. During the workshop, the participants discussed the next steps in forming a coalition and ways to engage with each other on Peace with Justice and the realization of UNSCR 1325 and 2250.



Selina Salameh leads the second workshop

In addition to the joint workshops, the YWCA of Palestine led a power session with Y Global and YMCA South Africa around efforts towards achieving peace with justice in Palestine. As the National Media and Communications Officer, Amany AbuAwad co-facilitated a workshop with World YWCA Communications Assistant Talisa Avanthay titled “How to Start a Revolution: Social Media Engagement”. The workshop focused on using social media as a tool for social change.



Amany Abu Awad presents at the workshop

Mira Rizeq, President of the World YWCA: A Historical Win for Palestine!



Mira Rizeq receives her Presidential pin from former World YWCA President Deborah Thomas



Minister of Women's Affairs Dr. Amal Hamad honors Mira for being elected as President of the World YWCA

One of the great accomplishments during this World Council meeting was the election of Mira Rizeq, the YWCA of Palestine's General Secretary, as the new World President. Mira, who is a Palestinian Christian from Jerusalem, is the first Arab woman to assume this leadership position of the YWCA movement, which is a recognition of her leadership skills, prophetic vision and commitment to justice and a privilege and honour for the YWCA of Palestine .The YWCA of Palestine was thrilled to celebrate this moment with partners and friends from around the world.



Al Muntada honors Mira for being elected as President of the World YWCA



YWCA of Jerusalem staff honor Mira for being elected as President of the World YWCA

Mira Rizeq was also congratulated by several Palestinian and Arab entities including Her Royal Highness (HRH) Princess Basma Bint Talal.

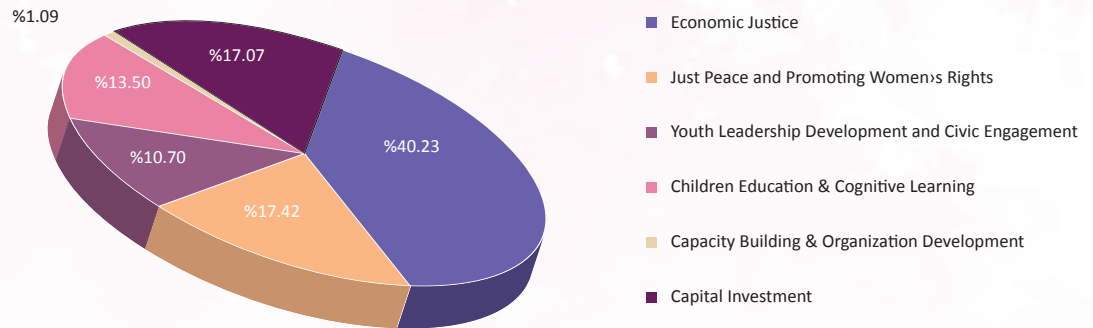


Her Royal Highness (HRH) Princess Basma Bint Tala congratulates Mira for being elected as President of the World YWCA

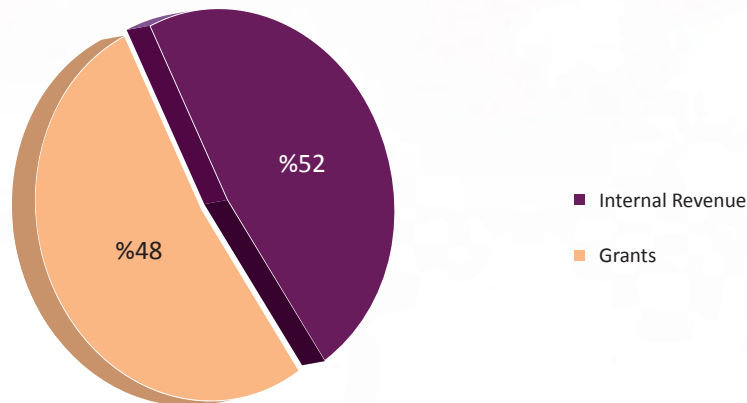
Our Donors

In 2019, the YWCA of Palestine received donations from KFUK-KFUM Y-Global Norway, UNDP, Welfare Association, Bread for the World (BFTW), YMCA/YWCA Sweden, Global Ministries / UCC Church, COOPI, Christian Aid, Horyzon, Global Fund for Women, UN Women, Oxfam Quebec, JAI (Olive Tree Campaign), Miftah, and Y-Care International.

We express our sincere gratitude to our donors and partners for their continued support of our mission and work. Your commitment and solidarity Keep our Hope Alive for Just Peace in Palestine and a brighter future for all. It is through your generosity that we are able to continue to serve the people of Palestine, especially women, young women and youth. We want you to know that your contributions are making positive changes in people's lives in Palestine, Thank You!



YWCA of Palestine 2019 Expenditures by Sector



YWCA External Versus Internal Funding



Donors/Partners

KFUK-KFUM Y-Global Norway

UNDP

Welfare Association

Bread for the World (BFTW)

YM/YW Sweden

Global Ministries / UCC Church

COOPI

Christian Aid

Horyzon

Global Fund for Women

UN Women

Oxfam Quebec

JAI (Olive Tree Campaign)

Miftah

Y-Care International

A Special THANK YOU to Mira Rizeq for 14 years of dedicated service as the General Secretary of the YWCA of Palestine!

"Your journey with YWCA Palestine and specifically YWCA Jerusalem has been so long: your commitment and determination brought remarkable successes, innovation, partnerships, opportunities and committed colleagues." **Sandrine Amer, Executive Director/ YWCA of Jerusalem**

"We should not be sad, we should celebrate fourteen years of amazing and inspiring leadership! Cheers to many more on a much higher level!" **Rana Qumsiyeh, Fundraising, Communications and Advocacy Specialist/National YWCA of Palestine**

"We congratulate you on your new position as President-elect of World YWCA. We are certain that you qualify to lead this mission despite all the challenges it entails" **Rose Shomali, Board President/YWCA of Bethlehem [Translated from Arabic]**

"We at YWCA of Jerusalem have full confidence in your great ability to advance the global movement of the YWCA and to raise women's voices, protect them against injustice and oppression, and support them to grow and succeed." **Lana Rabadi, Board President/ YWCA of Jerusalem [Translated from Arabic]**

"You have been a power of ideas and actions, and I am sure this will continue as you serve the global YW in the years ahead." **Ian Alexander, Secretary, World Mission Council—Church of Scotland**

"I wish you much success in your new mission. We are very proud that you have been elected to fulfill such an important role in a global fair election process. And we know that you will raise Palestine's name so high as you have done throughout your career." **Randa Siniora, General Director/Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counseling, member of Al Muntada [Translated from Arabic]**

"For me, you manifest the combination of professionalism and effectiveness with warmth and friendship that I have experienced in working with YWCA of Palestine." **Martin Hedberg, International Secretary/ YWCA-YMCA Sweden**

"You have been an inspiration and it's clear that you'll continue doing amazing things wherever you go." **Julie Mehigan, Country Manager: Egypt, Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory/ Christian Aid**

"You have built a strong team, and like many partners will do all we can to make sure YWCA Palestine can continue the great work you have established." **Kristin Bjora, International Program Manager/Y-Global Norway**

"You are a warm, vibrant and brave leader. We need more people like you, visionary and dynamic, and also very analytical and smart leader" **Fredrik Glad Gjernes: International Director/Y-Global Norway**

"As National General Secretary of YWCA Palestine, you made great effort globally and regionally to demonstrate the association's distinction and progressiveness and promote justice for the Palestinian people on an international level!" **Nazar Halteh, Executive Director/YWCA of Jericho [Translated from Arabic]**

"The organization will not be the same without you! As sad as I am to see you leave the YWCA of Palestine, I am thrilled to witness the advancement of our global movement thanks to your leadership and expertise."

Amany Abu Awad, Media and Communications Officer/National YWCA of Palestine

"You have provided me with consistent opportunities to grow and learn as a professional, and I can't thank you enough for the time you've invested in me." **Mayadah Tara-zi, Senior Operations Officer/National YWCA of Palestine**

"I/we am/are grateful to you for your ministry and commitments, and are proud of the ways that our partnership has deepened over these years. I want to take this opportunity to wish you courage and strength in your new position." **Peter Makari, Area Executive for Middle East and Europe/ Global Ministries**

Wishing you a very successful and fruitful term as the World YWCA President!





The YWCA of Palestine

Ein Sam'an st.37 - P.O.Box 50 Ramallah

Tel: +970 (2) 2981613/2981627

www.ywca-palestine.org

