

# Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling (WCLAC)

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Heading towards achieving hope



Annual Report 2009

## Contents

Executive Summary .....	3
Political context.....	8
Progress Summary.....	10
PART II: Detailed Activity Report.....	18
First Strategic Objective: Contribute to the development of legislation and institutional policies which support women and their rights.....	18
Second Strategic Objective: Develop local cultural and moral resources in order to eradicate negative social attitudes and practices against women.....	28
Third Strategic Objective: Build the capacity of relevant official and grassroots organizations that have direct impact on women’s issues.....	34
Fourth Strategic Objective: Expose, locally and internationally, the practices of the Israeli occupation violations against women’s rights.....	47
Fifth Strategic Objective: Develop WCLAC’s own capacity, performance and sustainability .....	51

Annual Report: 1 Jan 2009 – 31 Dec 2009  
Submitted: March 2010  
Date of Last Report: Sept 2009

## Executive Summary

This report covers the fifth and final annual period of WCLAC's 5 year strategy: "Heading towards achieving hope" (2005 – 2009). The plan outlines five strategic objectives, under each of which notable successes were achieved this year as can be seen below. WCLAC has initiated the process of an external evaluation of its work in all areas. It will also be submitting a five-year report, record, reviewing and evaluating the implementation of the strategy begun in 2005.

During 2009, WCLAC its next strategic plan: "Consolidating the Past, Growing the Future." This three year plan (2010-2012) builds on the experience and successes of the past five years, and looks to enhance and expand work in areas such as protection, in linking documentation to advocacy outputs and in working with community-based partners to increase service provision for women in remote areas.

Notable achievements of the past year under each strategic objective as follows:

**1. Contribute to the development of legislation and institutional policies which support women and their rights.**

- Continued to participate in 9 coalitions:
  - Personal Status Law Coalition,
  - Criminal Law Coalition,
  - Family Protection from Violence Law Coalition,
  - Coalition against Violence Against Women (Al-Muntada),
  - Media Forum (Media Forum to support women's rights (OMQ),
  - Coalition for monitoring human rights' violations under the current conditions (Council of Palestinian Human Rights Organisations),
  - Coalition against Capital Punishment,
  - Palestinian Forum for Safe Abortion, and
  - Palestinian Forum to Combat violence against children.
- Maintained a database of over 500 influential persons and decision-makers in contact with WCLAC.

- Continued work on 6 major research portfolios, completing a Study on the Palestinian Constitution, and advancing significantly on:
  - A Study on the Personal Status Law;
  - A Report on Femicide (this has included the documentation of 11 cases of femicide (7 in West Bank and 4 in Gaza) and a further 2 reported suicides);
  - Research on Women’s Needs;
  - Study on the Model Parliament; and
  - Study on the concept of protection, violence against women/The relation of the occupation’s violence to domestic violence.
- Launched 1 media campaign sharing the findings in the Study of Women’s Needs, through 5 workshops (in Nablus, Hebron, Jerusalem, Jenin and Gaza) with around 100 participants, among them journalists to report on the event ensuring media profile.

**2. Develop local cultural and moral resources in order to eradicate negative social attitudes/practices against women.**

- Implemented 83 awareness-raising activities throughout the West Bank for 1930 participants, including 123 males.
- Maintained media profile, with WCLAC making, on average, at least one radio or television appearance per month.
- In addition to media appearances and participation in demonstrations marking International Women’s Day, WCLAC held several workshops with around 200 participants in all.
- Marked the International Week Combating Violence Against Women, not least with a particularly popular event of a moot court, held in association with Al Muntada and under the auspices of the Ministry of Women’s Affairs.
- Trained 35 media students at Al Najdah University, Nablus, (22 female, 13 male) on reporting on women’s issues and on national and international legal texts regarding the rights of women.
- Trained 120 volunteers on women’s rights issues (71 women, 41 men).
- Supported 94 voluntary activities in 5 locations (Hebron region, Salfit region, Bethlehem , Tulkarem and Jericho) number of participants was 1709 , 255 males and 1274 females.
- Held a 50-hour training of trainers for 25 volunteers, covering topics such as CEDAW, Personal Status Law and other issues affecting women’s rights in Palestine.

- Trained 5 Jericho Shelter staff and 11 volunteers, through numerous meetings, 8 supervision sessions, and 3 training sessions, each of which was 4 days long.

**3. Build the capacity of relevant official and grassroots organizations that have direct impact on women's issues.**

- Provided emergency protection to 27 women and 5 children in WCLAC's emergency shelter.
- Supported 2 grassroots associations helping them in turn to provide services to women and to raise awareness of women's rights in their communities:
  - In partnership with WCLAC, Women for Life provided services to 77 women, and held 57 workshops on issues of women's rights with 255 participants;
  - In partnerships with WCLAC, Al Najdah Society, Tulkarem, provided services to 73 women and organized 69 workshops on women's rights, with 184 participants, and a further 3 workshops on women's health issues, and 3 workshops on women's participation in the political process, with 97 and 54 participants respectively.
- Given further training to 24 social work graduates (12 from the West Bank and 12 from Gaza) who were first trained by WCLAC last year. Training comprised 30 hours of training as trainers, followed by 50-hour placements in local organizations.
- Recruited and trained new cohort of 36 graduates, (15 in Gaza, 21 in Nablus area); of these, 24 graduates (12 from each group) were selected after a workshop, to be involved in the second phase of training, being placed in with local organizations and also supporting school counsellors.
- Brought together Heads of School Counselling Units, in Gaza and the West Bank, to share experience and best practices in their work.
- Provided social and legal services for 283 women (Ramallah 100, Jerusalem 41 and 142 in Hebron and Bethlehem).
- Worked on 303 legal cases, taking 140 cases to court, and assisting women to take 147 cases to court by themselves.
- Processed 19 cases that were resolved through mediation without going to court.
- Provided one-time counselling sessions for 252 women; of these cases 77 were seeking advice on social issues, 153 sought legal advice, and 50 sought a combination of both legal and social.

- Conducted a community awareness campaign of 136 sessions led by WCLAC's Service Unit. Of the 607 participants in these workshops, 110 subsequently sought legal consultations with WCLAC.
- Conducted a series workshops in Abu Dis University, Hebron University and Bir Zeit University, reaching 89 participants, and resulting in a further 95 students seeking either to volunteer with or be trained by WCLAC subsequently.
- Trained 12 female police officers in Hebron.
- Distributed 510 legal self-help guides on child maintenance rights for wives and children.

**4. Expose, locally and internationally, the practices of the Israeli occupation violations against women's rights.**

- Provided training workshop for 14 fieldworkers on practical skills in interviewing, documenting and writing affidavits.
- Documented 80 cases of Israeli human rights violations against women.
- Completed an 80 page study for use in international human rights advocacy work using analysis and quotation of the affidavits recorded by the fieldworkers. (This study is in addition to the 6 research portfolios mention previously).
- Attended the 11<sup>th</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva.
- Prepared and submitted an Alternative Report for consideration regarding Israel's Third Periodic Report to the United Nations Human Rights Committee which will meet in August 2010.
- Gave evidence including a written report to the UN Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories.

**5. Develop WCLAC's own capacity, performance, and sustainability.**

- Developed and finalized the Three Years Strategic Plan 2010-2012: "Consolidating the Past, Growing the Future."
- Maintained links with 27 past, current and potential donors.
- Trained and developed the capacity of the Centre's staff through 16 local workshop and training events and in 14 regional and international visits, workshops , conferences and training events.
- Developed a Media and Communications Strategy.

- Provided library resources for WCLAC staff on 107 occasions, and welcomed 76 external visitors, with 92 visitors to the WCLAC library resource in Hebron.

## Political context

The political landscape throughout the year has been marked by the suspension of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) and by schism between Hamas and Fatah, evidenced by the failure to hold Presidential elections in January or to reconcile and reunite the leadership of Gaza and leadership of the West Bank. Gaza suffered under blockade throughout the year as well as the continued death, destruction and humanitarian impact caused by the military operation launched by Israeli forces in late 2008. The Peace Process made little progress in 2009 and the government of Israel has not implemented a settlement freeze.

The impact of the Gaza War of 2008-09 has been widely researched with many reports confirming the state of deprivation and humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip.<sup>1</sup> Commenting on the particular impact on women and children, the Goldstone Report noted that 116 women were killed (according to WHO figures) while a further 300 were widowed by the war. The researchers heard that “the blockade and the military operations had aggravated poverty, which particularly affected women, who must find food and other essentials for their families. Women were often the sole breadwinners (for instance, if male family members had died or been injured as a result of conflict or violence, or were imprisoned) but jobs were hard to come by.”<sup>2</sup> UNIFEM highlight also the plight of women suffering domestic violence: “Respondents express a similar high level of concern over domestic violence as they do towards Israeli military violence. The highest perceived rise in domestic violence against women is among households displaced by the war and in the southern Gaza strip, where there is also the highest level of perception of an increase of domestic violence against children.”<sup>3</sup>

The siege on Gaza continued through 2009, undermining economic activity and hindering recovery from Operation Cast Lead. Creating immeasurable socio-economic instability, as well as issues of shelter, as many as 100,000 people were displaced in Gaza at the height of the Israeli offensive, and estimates suggest that 20,000 of those were still displaced near the end of the year.<sup>4</sup> In light of the context in Gaza, a major factor affecting WCLAC’s work has been the limited

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<sup>1</sup> Human Rights Watch, “Deprived and Endangered: Humanitarian Crisis in the Gaza Strip”, January 2009, [http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/related\\_material/2009\\_OPT\\_MENA.PDF](http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/related_material/2009_OPT_MENA.PDF) (accessed 16 Feb 2010); United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict, “Human Rights in Palestine and Other Occupied Arab Territory: Report of the Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict”, 25 September 2009, <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/12session/A-HRC-12-48.pdf> (accessed 16 Feb 2010)

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict, “Human Rights in Palestine and Other Occupied Arab Territory: Report of the Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict”, 25 September 2009, <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/12session/A-HRC-12-48.pdf> (accessed 16 Feb 2010), Paragraph 1276

<sup>3</sup> UNIFEM, “Voicing the needs of Women and Men in Gaza”, 2009, [http://www.unifem.org/attachments/products/UN\\_Gender\\_Needs\\_Survey\\_for\\_the\\_Gaza\\_Strip.pdf](http://www.unifem.org/attachments/products/UN_Gender_Needs_Survey_for_the_Gaza_Strip.pdf) (accessed 16 Feb 2010)

<sup>4</sup> Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre “Gaza Offensive Adds to the Scale of Displacement”, December 2009, <http://www.internal->

ease of travel between Gaza and the West Bank, at a time at which maintaining communication, cooperation between women, and representation of women's rights, needs and opinions is critical.

Elsewhere in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Israeli occupation continues to limit access to justice due to limited Palestinian jurisdiction over Areas B and C and over crimes perpetrated by Israelis. Humanitarian concerns are profound in the West Bank as well as in Gaza, with water shortages forcing economic and social change.<sup>5</sup> The social security provided by the Palestinian Authority is insufficient to reintegrate destitute families into self-supporting subsistence or economic activity. Under the policies of demographic engineering, a number of Palestinians are being reduced to stateless people, having identity papers made void, (for example, after four years spent overseas – particularly affecting students), or are being denied access to Jerusalem, as children of mixed East Jerusalem/West Bank parentage are issued West Bank identity papers. This has led to an increase in the number of people seeking WCLAC's services in East Jerusalem. Other policies and practices of occupation, such as military incursions, movement restriction, separation from land or work by checkpoints or the Separation Wall, land expropriations, settler violence, demographic engineering and the denial of family reunification increase economic and human insecurity, adding to the stresses of family life and creating conditions for rife domestic violence.

Political division within Palestine between Fatah and Hamas has been a defining feature of a year, also marked by stagnation within the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC). In August 2009, Fatah held its Sixth General Conference, giving new dynamism to the leadership of President Mahmoud Abbas. President Abbas signalled his intention to hold elections for the PLC in January 2010, however, preparations were not in place for these to occur in January 2010, not least with Hamas prioritising the demand for an agreement on national unity before elections take place.<sup>6</sup> In view of political stasis within the PLC for much of the year, WCLAC has developed advocacy strategies accordingly which prioritise education and awareness-raising at grassroots level and working at a regional level, over direct lobbying of PLC members.

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[displacement.org/8025708F004BE3B1/\(httpInfoFiles\)/CFB20A80C060A20EC125769C003BD617/\\$file/OPT\\_Overview\\_Dec09.pdf](http://displacement.org/8025708F004BE3B1/(httpInfoFiles)/CFB20A80C060A20EC125769C003BD617/$file/OPT_Overview_Dec09.pdf) (accessed 27 Feb 2010)

<sup>5</sup> Amnesty International, "Thirsting for Justice: Palestinian Access to Water Restricted", 27 October 2009, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/MDE15/028/2009/en/634f6762-d603-4efb-98ba-42a02acd3f46/mde150282009en.pdf> (accessed 16 Feb 2010)

<sup>6</sup> International Crisis Group, "Palestine: Salvaging Fatah", 12 November 2009, [http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/middle\\_east\\_north\\_africa/arab\\_israeli\\_conflict/91\\_palestine\\_salvaging\\_fatah.pdf](http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/middle_east_north_africa/arab_israeli_conflict/91_palestine_salvaging_fatah.pdf) (accessed 15 February 2010)

## Progress Summary

### Introduction

In 2009, the Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling (WCLAC) implemented the activities for the final year of its five years strategic plan: "Working Towards Achieving Hope". A report evaluating the achievements of the strategy over the five years will be produced separately. In late 2009, WCLAC worked to develop a new strategy to orient its work over the next 3 years. WCLAC aims to build on the successes of the past, continuing service provision, capacity building and support for community-based partner organizations, documentation, advocacy and awareness-raising, and to deepen and spread the impact of work in these areas. Accordingly, the plan for 2010-2012 is titled: "Consolidating the Past; Growing the Future".

As in previous years of the 2005-2009 strategy, "Working Towards Achieving Hope", WCLAC activities were structured around five strategic objectives:

- Contribute to the development of legislation and institutional policies which support women and their rights.
- Develop Local Cultural and Moral Resources in Order to Eradicate Negative Social Attitudes/Practices Against Women.
- Build the capacity of relevant official and grassroots organizations that have direct impact on women's issues.
- Expose, locally and internationally, the practices of the Israeli occupation violations against women's rights.
- Develop WCLAC's own capacity, performance, and sustainability.

This progress summary deals with each of these, in turn, to highlight some of the many successes of the year. Activities conducted during this year were in line with the expected results for each specific objective as per the strategic plan. To a large extent, the planned activities have been implemented successfully and in accordance with the action plan set for the year 2009, however, WCLAC has also faced several major challenges throughout the year which demand being noted.

One of the biggest challenges has been the resignation of two members of staff from the Research Unit without completing final drafts of the studies with which they were tasked. A further blow came with the reduction in availability of a key research advisor/consultant. This, and other factors, have led to a reappraisal of how WCLAC undertakes research, with a strategic shift now taking place favouring commissioning research instead of directly undertaking it (notwithstanding the ongoing and successful IHL project). Based on evaluation, WCLAC's position is that a National Research Committee needs to be established, with broad-based civil society support and with key participation and validation by the academic community. The purpose of such a group would be to ensure close cooperation between the NGO community the academic community, in an effort to increase the quality of research, drawing on the expertise in both sectors. A different challenge was created by the delays in the strategic planning process;

the planning was due to be completed by mid-2009, to gain timely approval from the WCLAC Board. However, it was not complete until the latter half of 2009.

A further challenge, and a concern to all Palestinian human rights defenders, was the law suit filed against WCLAC Director, Maha Abu-Dayyeh Shamas by the Palestinian police. The case centred on the offence caused to the Palestinian police force by the statements made by a participant in a WCLAC-organised public event, claiming she had experienced harassment at a certain police centre when reporting an incident of violence she had suffered. Against this, and against the WCLAC Director's comments saying that WCLAC had heard other such testimonies from women using WCLAC services, the police filed a case with the Public Prosecutor for defamation and contempt. With activity and pressure around the case peaking in mid-2009 and still dragging on, understandably a certain amount of WCLAC's effort and attention has been diverted by it. The case mobilized the human rights defender community in support of WCLAC, but is a negative indicator as a clear threat to the freedom of activists, professionals and victims to speak freely in defense of human rights and to process complaints against the police.

**First Strategic Objective: Contribute to the development of legislation and institutional policies which support women and their rights.**

**Specific objectives:**

1. Establish coalitions and set up coordination coalitions and committees with influential organizations and individuals to rally support for the Centre's proposals for law reform.
2. Influence political and professional decision-makers.

WCLAC works in partnership with other Palestinian organizations through membership of nine coalitions/forums/working groups. Through these groupings, WCLAC maintains and maximizes the effectiveness of its position as a leading Palestinian human rights organization. In recent years, WCLAC has worked to found coalitions, using the rationale that a civil society which can host a national or regional dialogue on sensitive issues of social and legal change becomes a stronger civil society. Several successes developing or culminating in 2009, point to the accuracy of this theory of change, and validate WCLAC's strategy of establishing and supporting coalitions.

Attempts to influence policy decisions through lobbying and quiet diplomacy with political and professional decision-makers have been shaped by political context: the on-going suspension of the Palestinian Legislative Counsel, political division between Hamas and Fatah, and administrative division between West Bank and Gaza.

**A debate: accept change by decree or wait for the PLC**

Voices within Palestinian civil society have debated the sensitive issue of whether to strive for legislative change in the current environment by campaigning for the issuance of presidential decrees, or whether to uphold the separation of executive and legislative power, and wait for legislative change to take place following the re-activation of PLC, whenever that may be. WCLAC supports the re-activation of the PLC and the continued civil society efforts to work towards change through the legislature, rather than through decree; however, on matters such as femicide in which women's lives are threatened every day by the status quo, WCLAC has

taken the position that women cannot wait. Therefore, on such issues, WCLAC is currently pressing for legislative change through Presidential Decree.

WCLAC continues to maintain a strong media profile, with frequent appearances on TV and radio, as a voice calling for greater defense of women's rights, for improved service provision (speaking as a service provider) and a voice bringing to light new issues, and new findings based on our studies and documentation.

#### WCLAC's unique position

WCLAC continues to ground its policy positions and strategic direction in the lived experience of Palestinian women. Inputs come from across the organization's units: figures and case studies from the service unit, accounts of Israeli infringements on human rights from the documentation team, and surveys and analysis from research for several ground-breaking studies which give WCLAC a unique position to channel the voices of Palestinian women. Through membership of coalitions, of national bodies such as the Divorce and Child-maintenance Advisory Board (sometimes known as the alimony fund), and with a media platform and a network of influential contacts, WCLAC is able carry its voice to the highest levels.

Proposals for structural changes within WCLACs Research and Documentation Unit were discussed in the Annual Report of 2008. The proposal has been accepted by the WCLAC board to the effect that the Research and Documentation Unit has now been fused with the Advocacy and Lobbying Unit, with a Unit Head duly appointed (after the departure of the previous Unit Head in 2008). Part of the rationale for this fusion is to reduce the WCLAC staff hours being spent on direct research, in order to focus more effectively on commissioning research and continuing to document case studies, both of which create the basis for policy positions and publications which underpin Advocacy and Lobbying work.

#### Building momentum: Personal Status Law (PSL) Coalition

In 2008, WCLAC reported in detail on its successes leading the PSL Coalition to initiate a re-drafting of the Law, headed by the Chief Justice at the request of the Office of the President. WCLAC is pleased to report, in 2009, the sustained momentum – volunteer action, media profile, high-level attention – that surrounds the issue of PSL revision. WCLAC remains at the heart of the PSL Coalition and now that the debate is public, WCLAC aims to provide analytical material (position papers, responses in debates, proposing unified civil society positions) which now find much more receptive audiences as a result of having built the capacity of the movement.

#### Pressure beginning to pay off: The Criminal Law Coalition

WCLAC has been very active this year with the Criminal Law Coalition and has seen major breakthroughs. The coalition successfully pressed for a meeting with the Minister of Justice to propose changes to the laws on femicide, urging the Minister to end lenient sentences for the woman-killers. WCLAC and the coalition have also been applying pressure within the Ministry of Women's affairs, for the adoption of a similar position. Coalition endeavours are now bearing fruit: the Ministry of Justice has formed a new drafting committee with WCLAC as a member. WCLAC is seeking, with the drafting committee, and through talks across the gamut of civil

society leaders, to develop a unified position to present to the Ministry, a position which enshrines and strengthens women's rights, not least, the right to life.

WCLAC bridging coalitions: Criminal Law Coalition and Palestinian Forum for Safe Abortion.

Testimony to the value of WCLAC's membership of a variety of national groupings emerged in one clear way this year, as abortion rights became subject for discussion in two of the groups. As the Ministry of Justice considers changes to the Criminal Law, WCLAC has served as a vessel for information sharing between the Criminal Law Coalition – whose mandate is wide-ranging – and the Palestinian Forum for Safe Abortion (of which WCLAC is also a member), whose concerns in light of the redrafting of the Criminal Law are to see greater recognition of women's right to safe abortion enshrined in a redrafted Criminal Law. Being a member of both groups, and being in the Criminal Law redrafting group, WCLAC is uniquely well placed to champion the opinions of the Forum for Safe Abortion, and to share feedback from the Criminal Law Coalition, and the Ministry of Justice-led drafting committee.

A combined approach to breaking the silence: femicide and private sphere violence

When WCLAC began documenting femicide, it had actively to search for cases to investigate; such was the silence around the murder of women. Next, when WCLAC's network of thousands of volunteers, activists, supporters and beneficiaries learnt that WCLAC was working to document cases, news of unreported or low-profile deaths came by word of mouth, allowing for more cases to be documented in detail. WCLAC has documented the killing of 11 women, (7 in West Bank, 4 in Gaza) and a further two deaths reported as suicide. At first these files were used by WCLAC alone to raise the profile of the issue. Now journalists, researchers and institutional partners are able to see them on request. WCLAC is no longer documenting new cases of femicide, but its work has made a lasting impact. Whereas, when the work began, the cases had to be sought out by researchers, now, little by little, but increasingly, when a woman is murdered, it is reported as a crime by the police and as a news story by journalists. Much remains to be done to break the silence of violence in the private sphere; another step forward will come from WCLAC by making its femicide case studies widely available as soon as the texts are ready for publication.

**Second Strategic Objective: develop local cultural and moral resources in order to eradicate negative social attitudes/practices against women.**

**Specific objectives:**

- 1. Develop knowledge and dialogue mechanisms in the local community to empower women.**
- 2. Develop effective local and voluntary community activists to promote positive cultural attitudes about women**

WCLAC's base of grassroots allies continues to grow in number and in capacity through work on our second strategic objective. Successes this year include: a huge number of awareness raising workshops, empowering women and men through informing them of their rights; seeing volunteers increasingly self-mobilise and take on leadership and trainer roles themselves.

Moot Court: an event worth repeating

One of the highlights of the year came in December with a moot (simulated) court activity in Bethlehem held under the auspices of the Ministry of Women's Affairs. Acting as coordinator for Al Muntada (The Forum to Combat Violence Against Women), and with the help of some of its network of volunteers, WCLAC led the organization of the moot court. The simulated trial dealt with a case of femicide and helped to highlight what WCLAC sees as shortcomings in current legislation. The event drew high profile spectators including members of the PLC, and representatives from several key ministries. Also attracting significant media coverage, this successful event will have sent a message on the need for reform to more than just the 120 (approx.) people in attendance, but also to those people who heard about it later. It exemplifies the impact of working through al Muntada and making use of capacities of the WCLAC volunteers, empowering volunteers to organize an event of national significance to promote more positive cultural attitudes about women and increase pressure for legislative change in favour of women. WCLAC plans to build on this success with similar events in the future.

#### Developing capacity and a repertoire of awareness raising tools

WCLAC has continued its excellent track record of wide-spread awareness raising directly reaching thousands of people attending workshops organized by WCLAC, by WCLAC volunteers, or by WCLAC grassroots partners. One of the successes of 2008 was the creation of the film *Mina wi Fina*, which tackles issues of violence against women with particular reference to incest. The film is now being used by WCLAC and partners in events such as the 8 March celebration of International Women's Day. In 2009, WCLAC trained a cadre of 120 volunteers in women's rights issues, and gave on average 50 hours training-of-trainers to 35 volunteers. Films like *Mina wi Fina*, and materials produced by the WCLAC's Capacity Building Unit drawing on current research and documentation, equip volunteers with easy-to-use tools to introduce information and open discussions around a complex social and legal issues.

#### Integrated volunteer activities

Volunteer activities, grassroots development and awareness raising are one of the mainstays of WCLAC's approach to changing the attitudes and behavior of and towards women in Palestine. In this work, WCLAC reaches out to all people, but targets those it identifies as the key to social change – social workers, media professionals and, especially, youths (as a group that is receptive to change and destined to become the change-makers of the future). The actions of building a cadre of activists, a network of partners and a movement of supporters at least informed and supportive of women's rights all, in turn, link intrinsically to other strategic objectives: increasing the number of natural allies supporting and mobilizing during campaigns; increasing the number of referrals to our Service Unit, and increasing awareness of and access to services for people in remote areas; and increasing WCLAC's network and information base giving greater scope for information and popular opinion to flow through WCLAC between a broad-based grassroots movement and influential policy-makers.

### **Third Strategic Objective: Build the capacity of relevant official and grassroots organizations that have direct impact on women's issues**

#### Specific objectives:

1. Provide support to the Ministry of Social Affairs in developing shelter services in Palestine.

- 2. Build capacity of grassroots women's organizations in governorates to provide services to women victims of violence.**
- 3. Support referral institutions, such as police, dealing with women victims of violence.**
- 4. Provide legal representation and mediation services for women victims of violence whose problems are not addressed by social support programmes**

#### Threefold increase in Shelter uptake

Service provision remains integral to WCLAC's work. The increasing uptake of legal services and one-time counseling sessions has been maintained from 2008's successes. Meanwhile, a great indicator of progress has been the increased use of WCLAC's emergency shelter to protect women at risk of violence or femicide. The figures tell a powerful story: The number of people receiving protection in WCLAC's Emergency Shelter increased threefold from 11 in 2008 to 32 (27 women, 5 children) in 2009.

#### Grassroots partners sharing and spreading WCLAC's vision and growing into new partnerships

Work with grassroots societies is another key aspect of WCLAC's work, which helps to empower women through organizational capacity building, and to extend the penetration of WCLAC's message deeper into marginalized areas, reaching communities away from the biggest urban centres. One of the medium-term aims of this project, already partially achieved, is to enable the grassroots partners to build lasting relationships with international donors, such as Unifem and the Drosos Foundation. For this reason, close partnership with Al-Najdah has, for example, included staff training, reviewing financial and administrative systems, supporting the recruitment of a new administrative staff member, and assisting in planning, implementing and reporting. Overall, we have seen Al-Najdah's capacity grow and with it their position in local civil society. Women for Life Society, meanwhile, have maintained relations with a base of donors and continue to thrive. WCLAC continues to work in partnership and to assist with external relations to increase the diversity of its donor portfolio.

#### Positive relations with MOSA

WCLAC's relation with referral services and the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA) also developed in very positive directions. Talks with MOSA regarding the renewal of the license for the Shelter continued throughout the year culminating with Ministry planning to make WCLAC's emergency shelter a state sanctioned provider of emergency protection, and the first choice for referrals from state services. [Agreement to this effect was duly signed in January 2010]. Progress in developing formal relations with the Ministry represents a significant and pragmatic success for WCLAC. It should pave the way for concrete relations between WCLAC and the Ministry as well as consolidated relations between the Ministry and the NGO community at large. Moreover, the MOU contains an expressed view by the Ministry of the proactive role and the commitment of the PA to protect women, and to improve protection services for women.

#### Increase in number of people benefitting from WCLAC legal and social services

The number of people benefitting from WCLAC's service unit grew on last year's already high figures. In response to increasing demand, with more referrals anticipated from the state-services and due to greater awareness of women's rights and WCLACs work among communities

touched by WCLAC campaigns and volunteer activities, the unit is reviewing staff workloads and looking for opportunities to expand.

Key data read as follows:

- Increased provision of legal services to 283 people assisted (compared to 268 last year), and worked on 303 cases as some women brought more than one case.
- Of these cases, the number taken to court remained high at 140 (compared to 158 last year), with others being treated out of court.
- Increased provision of one-time counseling sessions to 252 (compared to 213 last year).
- Continued last year's campaign delivering self-help guides on alimony, a further 510 manuals were distributed this year.

**Fourth Strategic Objective: Expose, locally and internationally, the practices of the Israeli occupation violations against women's rights**

**Specific objective 1: To monitor and expose the Israeli violations against the International Humanitarian Law.**

The International Humanitarian Law project progressed steadily in 2009, increasing the number of affidavits obtained from 50 in 2008 to 80 in 2009. The increased number of affidavits in part reflects a strengthening relationship with the field-workers and their increased capacity for interviewing and documenting, following training on law and on documentation techniques. WCLAC has seen the quality of the testimonies increase through training workshops, accompaniment and evaluation from WCLAC staff members.

The most salient testimonies have been drawn together with analysis to form a 80 page report tailored for use in international advocacy. The special value of this report is that it gathers documentary evidence on the impact of the occupation with a gender-specific focus; information and analysis which is not available elsewhere.

**Invitation to 11<sup>th</sup> Session of UN Human Rights Council, Geneva.**

During 2009, WCLAC continued its practice of international advocacy work through direct representation in international forums. WCLAC Director, Maha Abu-Dayyeh Shamas, attended the 11<sup>th</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council (June 2009) in Geneva, Switzerland. Participation in such internationally significant events creates ideal circumstances to use our well-presented documentation of Israeli violations as an accompaniment to a powerfully expressed verbal message, either within the forum itself or through side-meetings.

**Fifth Strategic Objective: Develop WCLAC's own capacity, performance, and sustainability.**

1. **Develop planning, evaluation, and monitoring system.**
2. **Build capacity of WCLAC staff.**
3. **Develop partnership relations with donor organizations.**

WCLAC's own capacity, performance and sustainability continues to go from strength to strength.

A strategy for 2010-2012: "Consolidating the Past; Growing the Future"

In late 2009, WCLAC worked to develop a new strategy to orient its work over the next 3 years. WCLAC aims to build on the successes of the past, continuing service provision, capacity building and support for community-based partner organizations, documentation, advocacy and awareness-raising, and to deepen and spread the impact of work in these areas. Accordingly, the plan for 2010-2012 is titled: "Consolidating the Past; Growing the Future". A training needs assessment for WCLAC staff began in late 2009, the results of which will be integrated into the strategy.

External reviews and external relations

An external review of the implementation of the five year strategy of 2005-2009 was initiated in 2009. A separate external review of the Service Unit has also taken place. WCLAC's internal reports have been duly submitted to separate project donors while new and continued funds have also been successfully sought. While WCLAC retains the desire and capacity to grow, it finds itself in a very strong position with regards funding to implement its core mission over the short- and medium- term future.

With a view to increasing its external relations, particularly for advocacy purposes, WCLAC hired a consultant to review WCLAC's current media use and to propose a Media and Communications Strategy. The strategy is being considered for integration into the overall three year strategy.

## PART II: Detailed Activity Report

### First Strategic Objective: Contribute to the development of legislation and institutional policies which support women and their rights.

#### Expected long-term results:

1. Existence of gender sensitive laws that do not discriminate against women and conform to international human rights standards.
2. Development of a culture of activism and civic responsibility in Palestinian society.
3. The Palestinian community considers gender sensitive laws more legitimate and necessary.

#### Specific objectives:

1. Establish coalitions and set up coordination coalitions and committees with influential organizations and individuals to rally support for the Centre's proposals for law reform.
2. Influence political and professional decision-makers.

#### Specific Objective 1

**Result 1-1: Continue to support and participate in 9 bodies to rally support on proposals for reform/endorsement of: Criminal Law, Personal Status Law, and Family Protection Law.**

Time Frame: Jan-Dec 2009

Progress: 100%

WCLAC continued its support and participation in nine coalitions: As a founders and/or coordinator:

- Personal Status Law Coalition (Founder & Coordinator)
- Criminal Law Coalition (Founder Member)
- Family Protection from Violence Law Coalition (Founder & Coordinator)
- Coalition against Violence Against Women (Al-Muntada) (Coordinator)
- Media Forum (Media Forum to support women's rights (OMQ), (Founder & Coordinator)

And as members:

- Coalition for monitoring human rights' violations under the current conditions (The Council of Palestinian Human Rights Organisations) (Member)
- Coalition against Capital Punishment (Member)
- Palestinian Forum for Safe Abortion (Member)
- Palestinian Forum to Combat violence against children (Member)

#### **1. Personal Status Law Coalition:**

WCLAC is the coordinator of this coalition and has a clear interest in the Personal Status Law (PSL) both as a service provider working within the framework of the current law and as a group advocating gender sensitive legal reforms which empower women.

Since 1998 the coalition has worked to promote changed legislation in six key areas of the law affecting the role of women include provisions on marriage age, commonwealth, polygamy, divorce, custody and equal legal status (for example as witnesses in marital disputes). In light of the deteriorated political situation of 2009, the coalition has reappraised its advocacy aims and is now lobbying for PSL reform rather than for an entirely new law.

The extension of the Coalition's activities into the regional level, which began in 2008, continued through 2009, with a view to sharing learning and reinforcing advocacy positions. Such international engagement includes work in partnership with the Union of Jordanian Women, and WCLAC's role a Palestinian representative within a regional PSL group comprising Palestine, Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon.

Key activities during 2009 were:

- Chaired monthly meetings for coalition members from the West Bank and Gaza, to discuss progress, review activities, share workload, coordinate planning, and prepare and approve budgets.
- Conducted four video conference meetings to discuss and review any developments. These meetings were valuable to continuing collaboration between West Bank- and Gaza-based organisations. In addition, a further meeting bridging the divide between Gaza and West Bank was held in the West Bank in March with visiting representation from Gaza; the meeting included on its agenda the need to develop a strategic response to the Gaza war.
- Attended a regional workshop in Lebanon in March to share experiences and best practices in work on the PSL. Differences between legislation across the four countries were identified and relative merits discussed. Attention was also drawn to contradictions between rights of equality and laws enabling discrimination, and best practices shared on finding and justifying rights-based arguments which are in line with constitutional and religious law.
- Attended a regional workshop in Jordan in July, to draft a memorandum of principles common to all Coalition members. Discussion focused on key matters in need of reform in the PSL, on the common and different experiences of each member country, and of the attitudes towards the rights and principles underpinning legislation. A single, unified position was not found for all four coalitions, particularly on the primacy of Shari'a (with Egypt and Jordan giving greater weight to Sharia). Accordingly Principles were drafted for each National coalition, identifying large areas of intra-regional common ground and increasing regional understanding and scope for successful cooperation.
- Trained Palestinian Human Rights activists, during June and July, on how to explain and justify amendments proposed by the national PSL Coalition. Participants were women activists, lawyers, and media professionals drawn from all members of the coalition. Over six days, the training covered the coalition's six key areas of reform.

- Attended a four-day training course in Alexandria in October, with participants from all members of the regional coalition. The training helped prepare justifications for proposed reforms to the PSL and components on advocacy skills and the application of law to non-Muslims.

## **2. Criminal Law Coalition:**

WCLAC has been very active this year with the Criminal Law Coalition and has seen major breakthroughs. The coalition successfully pressed for a meeting with the Minister of Justice to propose changes to the laws on femicide, urging the Minister to end lenient sentences for the woman-killers. WCLAC and the coalition have also been applying pressure within the Ministry of Women's affairs, for the adoption of a similar position. Coalition endeavours are now bearing fruit: the Ministry of Justice has formed a new drafting committee, and WCLAC is one of three civil society organizations drawn from the coalition to present coalition views in the committee (with government and non-government members) which meets weekly to work on the draft.

WCLAC is seeking, with the drafting committee, and through talks across the gamut of civil society leaders, to develop a unified position to present to the Ministry, a position which enshrines and strengthens women's rights, not least, the right to life.

## **3. Family Protection from Violence Law Coalition**

This grouping is a specific interest subgroup of Al Muntada which comprises member organisations who are part of a regional project (Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt) supported by the Heinrich Boell Foundation. The aim of the project is to raise the number of people aware of the drafting process of the Family Protection from Violence Law, and increase civil society input. In Palestine, WCLAC held discussions of a draft law with various experts before presenting the draft to a wider number of people at a series of workshops.

The group organised presentation 39 workshops in 7 governorates across the West Bank (Jenin, Jerusalem, Ramallah, Nablus, Toulkarem, Qalqilia and Bidia) which were attended by 77 males and 523 females representing civil society organizations, such as grass-roots organizations, women unions and associations, political parties, former PLC members, and members of the public prosecution and police agencies. A further 12 meetings were held with a total of 359 housewives in refugee camps and villages in order to present and discuss the family protection law with them.

The workshops provided a wealth of feedback on the report which, overall, met with a positive reception, including from juridical experts. The feedback received from the workshops will form the basis of a new draft. When formed, WCLAC has identified the presence of a tripartite structure for the committee responsible for redrafting, which will comprise lawyers, psychologists and social workers, in order to create a solid legal text, which sets out workable policies to minimise risk of negative effect to children and families.

## **4. NGO Forum to combat violence against women (Al Muntada)**

Having taken on the Coordinator position of Al Muntada in 2008, in 2009, WCLAC led the preparation of a three year strategic plan, which has five strategic objectives:

- Build the necessary legal infrastructure for rendering justice and equity to women and prevent violence against them;
- The society undertakes its responsibility towards the issue of violence against women;
- Provide protection and support for women vulnerable to violence;
- Build the capabilities of the Forum and the member organizations to empower it to fulfil its assigned tasks as a network;
- Monitor, document, publish and disseminate information regarding cases of femicide and violence against women.

Activities in 2009 include meeting in March to discuss terms of reference for the forum. The discussion was not completed during this meeting, however, a foundation was set and a committee was formed tasked with receiving and incorporating further comments. Under WCLACs leadership, the Forum drafted an operational plan, including many activities to be executed in collaboration.

One such collaborative activity – a major success for Al Muntada, for WCLAC and for WCLACs volunteers supporters involved in the planning and implementation – was the moot court event held in December 2009 in Bethlehem. The event was organised under the auspices of the Ministry of Women’s Affairs (MOWA) and formed part of a series of activities marking the International Week Combating Violence Against Women. The simulated trial dealt with a case of femicide and helped to highlight what WCLAC sees as shortcomings in current legislation (that it is insufficiently able to protect women at risk, or to prosecute a woman’s killer).

More than 110 people attended including those from MOWA , MOSA, the Ministry of Interior, Police, NGOs, members of the Legislative Council, Human Rights organizations, Palestinian Women’s Union and Al Muntada members, with more than one third of the participants being men. It exemplifies the impact of working through al Muntada and making use of the capacities of WCLAC volunteers, empowering volunteers to organize an event of national significance to promote more positive cultural attitudes about women and increase pressure for legislative change in favour of women.

#### **5. Media Forum Advocating Women’s Rights (OMQ):**

The Media Forum was established by WCLAC in 2005, and works to increase journalists’ awareness of violence against women and to promote media coverage of women’s issues and women’s perspectives.

During 2009, there were six Executive Committee meetings appraising the current status of the Forum, evaluating past work and planning for the future, and also a general meeting taking as its discussion theme: improving communications and interaction within the changing political context, looking particularly at making use of technology. One result from these meetings was to revive the Forum’s membership of the Arab Network for Media Monitoring, opening opportunities for action at a regional level in the future. The executive committee has also identified the need for the Forum to increase its online profile with a fitting website.

The Forum held a training-of-trainers workshops providing close to 60 hours of training on gender-sensitive reporting for media professionals and Forum members. A report on women in the media in Gaza was initiated, at the time of writing the Forum is still awaiting the report.

#### **6. Coalition for monitoring human rights violations under the current conditions (The Council of Palestinian Human Rights Organisations)**

This Coalition was formed in 2008 with WCLAC, Al Haq, Centre for Rehabilitation of Tortured Victims, DCI, Mandela and the Jerusalem Centre for Legal Aid. Its mission is to identify human rights violations and to monitor and report them to the relevant authorities; to visit Palestinian prisons; to issue reports of violations and to receive complaints from citizens. To that end, this year, the Council issued a public statement to explain its role and objectives and provide contact information for filing complaints in both West Bank and Gaza.

During a series of nine meetings, ending in April, the Council drafted, agreed upon and signed terms of reference for the Council of Palestinian Human Rights Organizations. There followed the election of a three member Coordinating Commission formed of two organizations from the West Bank (Al Haq, as host, and the Jerusalem Centre for Legal Aid) and one from Gaza (Al Mezan Centre). The Coordinating Commission is tasked with formulating a plan of action and establishing mechanisms to regulate the relation between the Council and the hosting organizations, both financially and administratively. WCLAC's role within the coalition is to contribute support, funding and active participation to all activities planned by the Coordinating Committee and endorsed by the Council.

Activities so far include the issuing of a public statement warning of the dangerous situation in Qalqilia district following events between members of Hamas party and the Palestinian Police. The statement stressed the importance of the rule of law and called for the Palestinian Authority to respect the Human Rights of all. The statement was reinforced by meetings with political personalities, legislators and religious personalities to discuss the importance of their intervention.

The council worked also to lobby and press the Palestinian Authority to change its position concerning the Goldstone report on the Gaza War. Meetings were held with different political parties, Human Rights organizations, foreign representatives to the Palestinian Authority, councils and ambassadors.

Furthermore, in cooperation with the Palestinian Independent Commission for Human Rights and the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Council held a press conference on the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to talk about the present situation of the human rights in the Palestinian Territory. In the last part of the year the Council issued several joint statements, promoting Human Rights under Israeli occupation and in support of human rights defenders.

#### **7. Coalition against Death Penalty.**

WCLAC works to end the use of the death penalty, in coalition with Al-Haq, Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (in the Gaza Strip), DCI, Addameer, Working Women Association and ICHR. The Coalition was founded in 2008 and developed a joint work plan for the year in February 2009. In March and April, two workshops were organised with the Law Faculties of Al Quds and Birzeit Universities examining the case against the death penalty. The Coalition submitted memoranda to the President concerning verdicts issued by Palestinian military courts, calling for the President to make the powerful and legal gesture of not endorsing these verdicts. A further activity organised by the Coalition was a conference on 16 December – the International Day Against the Death Penalty.

#### **8. Palestinian Forum for Safe Abortion**

This coalition was formed by an initiative of the Family Planning Association aiming to develop a consensus on the issue of abortion in Palestine, to advocate for change to abortion laws and to raise awareness of the dangers of unsafe abortion. Its membership includes social, legal, and health NGOs and universities such as Bethlehem University, Al Quds University, Ibn Sina College, and MOH. Early in the year it formulated and agreed upon its mission, vision and goals.

An early Coalition action in 2009, was to hold a national conference to discuss proposing amendments to the Penal Code. Following the conference, and several further discussion meetings in March, the Coalition endorsed materials about abortion in the penal code. WCLAC, as a member of both this Coalition and of the Criminal Law Coalition, fulfilled a valuable bridging role enabling information sharing.

The Coalition completed the preparation of a document suggesting reforms on the issue of abortion within the Criminal Law; these received consideration and were taken into account in the present revised draft for the Law.

#### **9. Palestinian Forum to Combat violence against children**

WCLAC is a member in this newly formed forum whose membership includes human rights and women's rights organisations as well as legal service organisations working on child rights cases. During 2009, initial steps have been taken to formulate strategic objectives, to identify specific areas of work and to agree upon institutional membership. The general area of concern for the forum is of lobbying and advocacy for the enactment of laws to protect children against all forms of maltreatment and negligence, as well as a component of awareness-raising over cases of violence and child abuse.

#### **Specific Objective 2**

**Result 2-1: Strengthen relationships with 800 influential personalities**

Timeframe: Jan-Dec 2009

Result: 65%

Relationships have been strengthened throughout the year through quiet diplomacy, consultation, the involvement of key contacts in numerous events and through WCLAC's tireless work raising issues of women's rights within various communities in different locations and seeking popular feedback on proposed legislative amendments.

The process of developing and refining a live database of allies and warm key contacts is one that WCLAC has continued in 2009, to support Lobbying and Advocacy work. The total number of entries on the database now stands at 517. Although this falls short of the targeted 800, it should be noted that during the process of refining the list, contacts no longer in positions of influence, or no longer in contact with WCLAC, were removed from the list, thereby keeping it a live and useable resource.

### **Specific Objective 2**

#### **Result 2-2: Complete analytical studies on law reforms**

Timeframe: Jan-Dec 2009

Result: 75%

During 2009 the responsibility for finalising and publishing reports moved from the Unit Head of Research and Documentation, to the Head of a newly formed unit, the result of a merger between Research and Documentation with Advocacy and Lobbying. This merger represents a shift in WCLAC's focus from direct research to a focus on initiating and coordinating research to underpin Lobbying and Advocacy work. The unit has experienced the loss of several research staff leaving research and analysis complete, but with the finalisation of text, format or of English and Arabic translations outstanding. Two positives should be stressed: firstly, that the commitment of former staff to their work is such that they continue to provide support, pro bono, in the process of finalising texts; and secondly, that although some reports are not yet published, the information is already in use within WCLAC's policy work, training and awareness-raising work, and shared among WCLAC's partner organisations and allies.

#### Study on the Personal Status Law:

The theoretical framework, literature review and methodology are ready. The quantitative and qualitative material on women's knowledge, demands and expectations of the Personal Status Law have been analyzed. The final draft of the report is still to be handed in by the former WCLAC staff member tasked with this study. In a testament to WCLAC staff's loyalty to their work, she has committed herself to completing it and it is now 90% complete. The importance of this study lies in the fact that it provides rich information about the women's views on the law, which can be used for lobbying and advocacy. The Centre has already presented a summary of some of the preliminary results of the study in a meeting with the Chief Justice, in which he was presenting a draft of the PSL. The information had a powerful effect and was accompanied

by the demand that the views of Palestinian women should be taken into account in proposed changes to the Law.

Report on Femicide:

During the year 2009 a total of 11 cases of femicide have been documented, four cases in Gaza strip and seven cases in the West Bank; this was in addition to the documentation of a further two deaths recorded as suicide. During the documentation process the official authorities such as the Chief Prosecutors at governorate level have been contacted in order to allow the field researcher to collect the information related to the killing. It is important to point out that the cases of femicide that are being documented do not reflect the real figures as we believe there are cases that go undetected or unreported. In order to improve the quality of the reporting of femicide, WCLAC has developed links with the Institute of Forensic Medicine at Al-Najah University where women's bodies are examined. WCLAC does not plan to publish a report on the cases of 2009, however, the findings are being used to help shape WCLAC policy and underpin WCLAC's advocacy work. Furthermore, the documentation prepared by WCLAC has been widely used by governmental offices and non-governmental researchers, journalists and the like. WCLAC's documentation work will continue in 2010 with further reports planned which will draw on past and present documentation.

Research on Women's needs:

This report is based on extensive field research looking primarily at how Palestinian women view their needs, but also enquiring into how Palestinian men view women's needs. The work has been prepared with support from a social research expert whose comments on the current draft require incorporation into the finalised text.

Study on the Palestinian Constitution:

The editing of the finalised study was completed, and an introduction prepared by professor Adrienne Wing was finalized. A summary of the study has been prepared in English and all material was translated into Arabic. But for verifying the accuracy of the translation and enhancing the quality of the prose in Arabic, the study is complete. The material will be used for a series of workshops in 2010 which will be held with political parties, decision makers, and civil society organizations.

Study on the Model Parliament:

This study is a multi-authored document recalling, appraising and drawing pertinent lessons from the Model Parliament event held in Palestine in 1998. It was an event in which WCLAC took a prominent role. Several chapters are either ready or in an advanced draft phase. One section will contain testimonies from three civil society leaders who took part in the event, although finding the time to capture these recollections has been challenging with all three contributors now at Director level in their organisations. A writers' retreat has been proposed to allow the space and a dedicated time to record recollections of and reflections on this successful event.

Study on the concept of Protection, Violence Against Women/The relation of the occupation's violence to domestic violence:

The first draft of the study has been prepared. Progress on this report was affected by staff losses but, on a cost-benefit analysis, WCLAC decided against hiring a consultant to complete the study. As with other studies, key findings and materials are already available for use. A leaflet presenting the main findings of the study has been prepared; the findings of the study will be used by WCLAC through 2010 as a component of the awareness-raising programme and elsewhere in WCLAC's work.

**Specific Objective 2**

**Result 2-3: Participate into the Alimony Fund Committee**

Timeframe: Jan-Dec 2009

Result: 100%

WCLAC continued its participation with the Divorce and Child-maintenance Advisory Board (the Alimony Fund Committee). Indeed, close personal ties now exist between WCLAC and the Director of the Committee as the latter is a former member of WCLAC's Research and Documentation Unit. The WCLAC representative on the Advisory Board is the Head of the Service Unit. With this choice of representative, WCLAC seeks to ensure that the voices, needs and concerns of active practitioners are represented in the relevant national bodies. The purpose of our participation is to ensure that women's interests are taken in consideration according to WCLAC's vision but also to observe and document the processes and operations of the fund in order to prepare a paper on how the fund was established and what kind of impact it has on women's lives.

WCLAC also works to raise popular awareness of and engagement with the Fund Committee. On 26 October 2009, we hosted a workshop introducing other NGOs and GOs to the alimony fund, its bylaws, how it works and the ways in which women can benefit from it.

**Specific Objective 2**

**Result 2-4: Launch/complete two media campaigns (Campaign on the study of women's attitudes and knowledge of the Personal Status Law, Campaign on the study of women's needs.)**

Timeframe: Jan-Dec 2009

Result: 50%

**Campaign on the study of Women's needs:**

Five workshops were conducted in Nablus, Hebron, Jerusalem, Jenin and Gaza during the months of March, April, and May and June. Approximately 100 people attended the workshops. The participants at these workshops were representatives of various organizations and ministries working in the field of women issues. The purpose of the study, the methodology, the finding of the focus groups and the results of the individual in-depth interviews were presented during these workshops. The aim of these workshops was to introduce key people to the findings of the report but, also, by inviting journalists, to ensure that the event and the report's findings received widespread media coverage. In this regard, the event was successful.

**Campaign on the Personal Status Law**

A media campaign on launching the report on the Personal Status Law was not implemented as the report was not ready for publication.

**Second Strategic Objective: Develop local cultural and moral resources in order to eradicate negative social attitudes and practices against women.**

**Long-term expected results:**

1. Palestinian community is more aware of women's rights and the position of women in the Palestinian society.
2. Development of a culture of activism and civic responsibility in the Palestinian society in all regional areas, especially among the future generations of Palestinians.

**Specific objectives:**

1. Develop knowledge and dialogue mechanisms in the local community to empower women.
2. Develop effective local and voluntary community activists to promote positive cultural attitudes about women

**Specific Objective 1**

**Result 1-1: Follow-up on all awareness raising activities in 100 locations through same activities and based on results of evaluation**

Timeframe: Jan-Dec 2009

Result: 136%

During 2009, awareness-raising activities took place in an around the following locations: Jenin, Ramallah, Jerusalem, Hebron, Nablus and Tulkarem. WCLAC organised 115 awareness sessions as follows:

- Modules on "Women's rights are human rights", consisting of awareness-raising sessions around women's rights from social, legal, and health aspects.
- 3 sessions of 8 meetings were held in 3 locations in the areas of Ramallah, Jerusalem and Tulkarem.
- Modules on legal awareness-raising, tackling issues such as informal marriage, sexual harassment, the right to education, CEDAW, public freedoms and human rights, child support, alimony, children custody and all matters related to the Personal Status Law and the draft family protection from violence law.

The indicators show WCLACs impressive capacity to organize events bringing in a large number of beneficiaries to hear about rights. The important presence of men at some of the workshops suggests that some Palestinian men are interested in identifying and providing for women's needs and upholding their legal rights. An external evaluation of WCLAC's work is currently underway; this should allow WCLAC to appraise its impact not just in terms of numbers, but also in terms of the effect awareness-raising has on the groups targeted.

Following is a brief description of the main methods of intervention in implementing the group activities, main topics addressed and target groups. Detailed description of activities per location can be provided upon request.

**Overall Indicators for all awareness activities:**

Number of activities: 83

Number of beneficiaries: 1930, including 123 men.

Methods of Intervention in Main Locations:

Lectures and debates, workshops/meetings, courses, legal awareness courses, TV and Radio programmes as well as national marches.

Topics addressed in the sessions:

Women's rights as human rights, laws related to women such as the penal code, Personal Status Law code and family protection from violence law.

Target Groups:

University students, members of local councils, members of women organizations, housewives, members of administrative committees and general assemblies of women institutions, women activists and PLC members.

Special Activities and Interventions:

1. Participation in TV and Radio programmes.
  - Palestine Satellite channel, with MOWA, roundtable discussion about women and law.
  - Ma'an network/local TV stations on live regarding the President's ratification of CEDAW.
  - Asharq radio Station on live with Dr. Nader Said regarding the role of women in local councils.
  - Ajjial Radio station on live on women's rights and legislation.
  - 4 radio sessions raising the issues of Personal Status Law especially about guardianship, divorce, Criminal Law and VAW, and Cedaw and Palestinian legislations.
  - Palestinian Satellite channel, two hours meeting about Personal Status Law.
  - An interview at Al Arabia Satellite channel about the moot court that took place on the 29 December 2009, the Criminal Law and materials about VAW.
  - An interview at Watan T.V about the moot court that took place on the 29 December 2009, the Criminal Law and materials about VAW.
  - A session on Watan T.V to discuss the role of Family Protection Unit in the Police.
  
2. International Women's Day
  - A workshop was conducted for the International Women's Day on women's rights at Burj Al Laqlaq in Jerusalem and was attended by 33 female participants.
  - A workshop was conducted at Saraya center regarding sexual assaults inside the family and was attended by 29 women.
  - A workshop held by the with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights at Al Qasr hotel in Nablus regarding women's rights and the International Women's Day.
  - A workshop was conducted on violence against women which included the showing of the film " Minna wa Feena" at Nidal Center and was attended by 27 women.
  - A workshop was conducted, in coordination with Women For Life Society in Bedyá, on the occasion of the International Women's Day titled "Open encounter" with PLC Members Khaleda Jarrar and Rabiha Diab. The workshop was attended by the Governor of Salfit and more than a hundred women and seven men.
  
3. National Marches:

- Participation in several Marches in January to protest against the Israeli war in the Gaza strip.
- In coordination with a number of Jerusalem-based organizations, WCLAC participated in the March and sit-in at Damascus Gate on 8 March 2009 with the participation of a large number of women. The same day, WCLAC also participated in a march in Ramallah.

#### 4. The International Week Combating Violence Against Women

The major WCLAC event of the International Week Combating Violence Against Women was the moot court, in Bethlehem. The event was organised by WCLAC and WCLACs volunteer supporters in association with Al Muntada and under the auspices of the Ministry of Women’s Affairs (MOWA). The simulated trial dealt with a case of femicide and helped to highlight what WCLAC sees as shortcomings in current legislation (that it is insufficiently able to protect women at risk, or to prosecute a woman’s killer).

More than 110 people attended including those from MOSA , MOWA, the Ministry of Interior, Police, NGOs, members of the legislative council, Human Rights organizations, Palestinian Women Union, and Al Muntada members, with more than one third of the participants being men.

#### 5. Media Students trained at Al Najah University

Trained 35 Media Students (13 male, 22 female) from Al Najah University, Nablus. This training targeted students from Nablus, where a needs assessment found that comparatively little work was being done to enhance positive views of women’s role and capacity within society. Media students were chosen as, once they become media professionals, they will be key to the public portrayal of women and of supporting and publicizing stories affecting women’s rights and needs.

Topics covered in the training were Human Rights, women’s rights, gender, violence against women, criminal law, personal status law and CEDAW. During the training, discussion was rich and those benefiting from the training did not all agree with WCLAC’s vision for women’s rights and roles in Palestine. The success of the training was to ensure that each participant was empowered with greater knowledge of international obligations relating to CEDAW and of current developments and debates regarding Palestinian laws such as the Personal Status Law and the Criminal Law.

#### **Specific Objective 2**

**Result 2-1: Training of 120 male and female volunteers in women’s rights issues.**

Timeframe: Jan-Dec 2009

Result: 100%

During the year 2009, WCLAC worked with 120 male and female volunteers, 71 women and 49 men as follows:

- 41 preparatory meetings with the volunteers to assess their training needs and introduce the groups to the objectives, vision, and programmes of WCLAC, the volunteer's manual and the future programme activities. In addition, an evaluation process took place during those meetings. The number of meetings more than doubled the target, attesting to the appetite among volunteers to gain skills and implement activities in line with WCLACs vision.
- 14 internal meetings were held with WCLAC staff to maximize collaboration and skill-sharing by integrating volunteer events and interests into the framework of WCLAC's work, for example, inviting certain volunteers working on the Personal Status Law to learn from WCLAC legal experts and participate in trainings with WCLAC, or using WCLAC contacts to secure special training opportunities for volunteers.
- A TOT training was given to 25 volunteers at an average of 50 training hours each, implemented by the Capacity Building Unit with active support from other units.
- 18 workshops were organized to deliver training in service provision, lobbying & advocacy and research techniques. Furthermore, some volunteers received training courses given by WCLAC's Units on certain specific issues such as documentation and the concept of protection of women and on the Personal Status Law related to activities with lawyers and with the Media Forum.

Further details reporting on content of training courses, locations and content of meetings is available in Arabic upon request.

#### **Specific Objective 2**

#### **Result 2-2: Supporting voluntary activities in five areas: Jericho, Bethlehem, Salfit, Tulkarem and Hebron.**

Timeframe: Jan-Dec 2009

Progress: 100%

A strategic shift in volunteer coordination from the WCLAC Capacity Building Unit yielded extremely positive results in 2009. Whereas in past years, targets were set for volunteers in each region to undertake a limited number of activities, based on the proven capacity for self-leadership and initiative among the volunteers, a decision was made this year to give them greater freedom to implement as many activities as could be funded.

The volunteers excelled: both the number of activities and the number of beneficiaries increased. The standing of volunteer groups in the communities in which they work is clearly developing in a positive direction, evidenced by projects now being implemented in collaboration between CBOs and by a number of letters inviting the WCLAC volunteer groups to join local civil society networks.

Increased capacity, local initiative and the use of local collaborations account for the increased number of activities and beneficiaries compared to 2008.

- Number of activities up from 30 to 94;
- Number of direct beneficiaries up from 1338 to 1709.

The figure of 1709, of people who attended the volunteer-led activities, includes 80 representatives of other women's associations, 80 university students and over 250 men.

WCLAC has helped to develop the capacity of volunteers through training workshops and networking, but also through close accompaniment on project implementation. The target number of 12 accompaniments was met in 2009, and activities and future options were evaluated by WCLAC and by volunteers. In feedback, volunteers demonstrated changed attitudes, improved awareness and better knowledge around issues of women's rights. Volunteers expressed an interest in doing more to engage with youth as a target group, both through schools and universities to target teenagers and young adults, particularly to educate them on the legal rights and social impact of early marriage.

Through training workshops, accompaniment and evaluation sessions, WCLAC and the volunteers have begun to develop a volunteer handbook with contents ranging from activity ideas and technical information to tools for planning, budgeting and reporting. This is due to be ready for use in 2010.

The volunteer groups show a tremendous amount of loyalty individually, and have worked on unified campaigns across the five regions. An example of the latter is the success of the National Women's Day campaign titled "Prevention of all Forms of Violence against Women", in which volunteer groups all included the use of WCLAC's film "*Mina wa Fina*" which examines the issue of incest. The activities were implemented under the supervision of volunteers in coordination and cooperation with grassroots organizations, women's organizations and community organizations in each area. This and other activities help to raise the profile of women's rights and awareness that services do exist for women. Four cases and three stand-alone consultations were referred to WCLAC as a direct result of volunteers activities.

A fine indicator of loyalty to the volunteer groups comes in the case of one volunteer who, having gained skills, experience, knowledge and networks through her voluntary work found a new opportunity for paid work. This in itself is a positive result for the programme, as it serves to increase the number of women or men moving into positions of influence in the public sphere, who understand women's rights and who share WCLAC's mission and vision. Proving the extent of solidarity among the volunteer cadre, having found employment did not detract from commitment to the voluntary activities, even where it meant that this volunteer needed to use her days of leave from work in order to participate in and contribute to the activities, she made that sacrifice.

**Specific Objective 2**

**Result 2-3: Implement incentive system for volunteers.**

Timeframe: Jan-Dec 2009

Progress: 100%

A central meeting was held in Jenin in December welcoming all volunteers. 80 were in attendance. Part of the meeting was a workshop to evaluate the voluntary scheme, but there was also entertainment. Incentives were distributed and a field visit was carried out with the

whole group going on a tour of the old city of Nablus. Certificates were also distributed to volunteers at the end of the year.

Third Strategic Objective: Build the capacity of relevant official and grassroots organizations that have direct impact on women's issues

**Long-term expected results:**

1. Palestinian women in all areas of the West Bank have access to professional social services.
2. More coordination and efficiency between institutions dealing with women victims of violence.
3. More women are encouraged to seek help.
4. Better statistics on the needs of women victims of violence, contributing to better coping strategies.

**Specific objectives:**

1. Provide support to the Ministry of Social Affairs in developing shelter services.
2. Build capacity of grassroots women's organizations in governorates to provide services to women victims of violence.
3. Support referral institutions, such as police, dealing with women victims of violence.
4. Provide legal representation and mediation services for women victims of violence whose problems are not addressed by social support programmes
5. Provide support to the Ministry of Social Affairs in developing shelter services in Bethlehem. (This is a specially funded project coordinated and planned with the Italian NGO Differenza Donna which was completed in 2006)

**Specific Objective 1**

**Result 1-1: Continue training 6 staff members including shelter staff proposed to work in the emergency centre, including a social worker, shelter mothers, and a shelter coordinator.**

Timeframe: Jan-Dec 2009

Progress: 100%

During 2009, WCLAC continued the training of emergency shelter's staff as follows:

- 14 meetings took place with the Shelter work team to discuss the work plan for the year, schedules, tasks division, and other related issues such as the evaluation of the previous period of work.
- Eight supervision sessions for the Shelter work team were carried out to discuss intervention mechanisms, support the staff and relieve their stress in order to ensure service provision at a professional level responding to women's needs.
- Seven meetings were held for the volunteer's group to discuss work plans and relevant training schedules.
- Three trainings, four days each, took place for the shelter staff about "Safe homes and mechanisms for dealing with victims of violence".

- The first training session provided volunteers with information about violence against women, skills on how to deal with women victims of violence and how to develop positive attitudes towards women's rights and protection.
- The second training session focused for two days on "psychological problems and intervention mechanisms for cases in the emergency shelter". It gave volunteers and staff information and skills to identify and react appropriately to psychological problems.
- The third training developed participants procedural skills, introducing procedural templates and providing a manual for use by staff and volunteers in the shelter.

**Specific Objective 1**

**Result 1-2: Renew the agreement with the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA) to introduce the services of the emergency shelter**

Timeframe: Jan-Dec 2009

Progress: 95%

At the level of strategic cooperation with MOSA and other relevant governmental actors, six meetings took place between WCLAC's Director with Ministers of MOWA (Ministry of Women Affairs) and MOSA (Ministry of Social Affairs) during the second part of 2009 to discuss topics related to the concept of protection for women in Palestine as well as coordinate action between civil society and government for legislative and policy reform. The Minister called for a meeting of a National Advisory Committee on protection in Palestine composed of members of civil society and relevant government bodies. By the end of 2009 a discussion started between MOSA minister and WCLAC Director to involve more proactively WCLAC staff in supporting the Ministry in providing protection to women. The Minister suggested having the WCLAC emergency shelter become the national shelter in receiving, assessing needs, making emergency interventions and forwarding clients to other shelters. This was done after the Minister had assessed the work of all protection Centres in Palestine and appreciated the high level of professionalism WCLAC staff exhibited in the handling cases of clients in the WCLAC operated shelter.

WCLAC views this progress in relations between MOSA and the Centre on the issue of cooperation as a major achievement. Other external relations are thriving too. Cooperation with the local Governor and police force has developed very well throughout the year. For example, the centre has received support from the local authorities working together to facilitate referrals and ensure protection.

**Specific Objective 1**

**Result 1-3: Receive women at the Shelter**

Timeframe: Jan-Dec 2009

Progress: 110%

The Shelter received 32 cases (27 women and 5 children) during 2009. Details about the women's profiles and outcomes of the cases are documented separately and can be made available upon request. All women welcomed at the Shelter were provided with protection and support in developing their self-confidence and analysing their problems and needs.

The external evaluation of the Service Unit, which oversees the work of the shelter, began towards the end of the year, with the report due to be submitted to WCLAC in 2010. The report should help WCLAC determine the future development of the Shelter.

**Specific Objective 1**

**Result 1-4: Train health professionals qualified to handle cases of violence**

Timeframe: Jan-Dec 2009

Progress: 80%

This training is now planned to take place during 2010 in the frame of the Takamol Project in cooperation with JUZOOR (see result 1-5 here below).

**Specific Objective 1**

**Result 1-5: Work with Health Providers in both areas, Jericho and Arroub in order to set-up a referral system.**

Timeframe: Jan-Dec 2009

Progress: 100%

In 2009, WCLAC has began a major partnership with key governmental partners and the organization JUZOOR. The "Takamol Project" (Takamol means integratedness or complementarity) has three-year funding from the European Commission to build a comprehensive referral system that would include involvement of all levels of health providers and other stakeholders such as police and governmental institutions. The overall objective of the project is to contribute to improving overall delivery of legal, health and social services for women victims of gender-based violence and those at risk of violence. The project's activities will focus on networking and sharing models of best practices with other women's organizations in the Arab world and Euro-Mediterranean region, as well as on developing an integrated referral system for women victims of gender-based violence and those at risk, by engaging decision-makers and direct-service professionals in the legal, health and social services systems (including ministries).

The 2009 phase of this project was primarily given to preparation and consultation: networking among all stakeholders and relevant actors; undertaking a needs assessment; identifying existing gaps through mapping service provision for women victims of violence. A separate detailed report for the project is available upon request.

**Specific Objective 2- Build Capacity of grassroots women's organizations to provide**

**services to women victims of violence.**

Timeframe: Jan-Dec 2009

Progress: 100%

This specific objective is particularly important to WCLAC's aim to empower women and to extend service provision to more remote parts of Palestine. Through mobilisation, short term financial support, training, mentoring and technical support, WCLAC has increased the capacity of two women's organisations: Women for Life (in Sulfit) and Al-Najdah Society (Tulkarem branch).

In addition to channelling WCLAC's message into more remote parts of Palestine, working in partnership with grassroots organisations ensures WCLAC remains in touch with people, in particular women, further from the centres of power, enabling WCLAC to channel the sentiments and concerns of such people into national level debates. The experience of information sharing and knowledge transfer between WCLAC and the two organisations has, therefore, been mutually beneficial, and increasingly as capacity has developed within Women for Life (with whom WCLAC has had a longer-standing institutional partnership), WCLAC is promoting a stronger skill-sharing relationship between Women for Life and Al-Najdah. One indicator of this relationship being cemented, is the signing in 2009, of a Memorandum of Understanding between the two grassroots organisations.

Detailed below, are the achievements arranged by organisation, then by Result.

**A: Women for Life Society**

**Specific Objective 2**

**Result 2-1: Continue supporting and supervising the work of Women For Life Society in their provision of services to women victims of violence.**

Timeframe: Jan-Dec 2009

Progress: 100%

This year, WCLAC's partnership with Women for Life did not involve the direct allocation of funds. Rather, it was dedicated to technical support and supervision. The following shows the extent of Women for Life's work through WCLAC's supervision.

Support on social and legal cases handling

During 2009 Women for Life provided legal and social services to 77 women. WCLAC support for Women for Life's social and legal cases is now given on a consultancy basis; similarly, advice and supervision sessions from WCLAC's Service Unit are given on an as-needed basis.

Workshops

Women for Life held 57 workshops dealing with issues of women's self-empowerment, needs assessment, communication skills, violence, gender, divorce, alimony, joint property and child rights. Workshops targeted different groups: housewives in Kofor Thileth, Bidia and Hares; but also students, young graduates and others. The total number of women coming to these

sessions was 255. In the Salfit area, in workshops targeting students, 14 male students participated too.

#### Meetings with the Society's Board and staff

During the year 2009, WCLAC attended 12 meetings with Women for Life staff. During the meetings, WCLAC gave advice and encouragement. In January 2009, Women for Life held elections for the renewal of a democratically chosen Board. The elections were a success, endorsed by the Ministry of Interior, with 12 candidates running for the nine available positions on the Board. Under the auspices of the new Board, the strategic plan for the society was revised, action plans and reports were drafted. WCLAC will work to ensure the new Board members have the necessary skills to steer the society towards consolidation, growth and the diversification of donors.

#### A rising profile in civil society

A field visit took place to Women for Life with partners and prospective donors. WCLAC attended the official opening ceremonies of the new premises of Women for Life that was also supported by the local municipality. The new premises are old houses which have been renovated by Riwaq, a cultural preservation institution. The support for Women for Life from the municipality and from Riwaq is an indicator of their rising status as a valuable civil society organization, which has proved itself to be effective in dealing with controversial women's issues in excluded communities.

#### Funding gaps

WCLAC is committed to providing technical support to Women for Life for the next three years, recognizing the great potential it has as an ally and a service provider in Salfit, proven by its work so far. WCLAC also recognizes that a major hurdle, yet to be satisfactorily overcome, is for Women for Life to consolidate and diversify its funding portfolio. To that end, WCLAC has strongly encouraged the new Board to work on fundraising, and WCLAC continues to provide support and to find appropriate training opportunities for Board and staff members.

Through the year Women for Life submitted five proposals to different donors which did not yield funding. WCLAC held a two-day working session with Women for Life to develop proposals.

There was also a notable fundraising successes: Unifem, a previous donor, has agreed to fund a new project, to start in 2010. Another existing donor, NDC, which normally invites proposals towards the end of the calendar year for funding packages to start in January, this year delayed its request for proposals until early 2010. Although it is anticipated that NDC will renew their funding, the delay, and the 2010 start date for the Unifem project, have created a funding gap leaving some staff without salaries, for several months either side of December 2009. A positive indicator emerging from this, however, is the clear commitment of staff to the society, as those whose salaries will not be available have continued to work as they value the impact the organization makes and the cause which drives it forwards. This, again, gives credit to WCLAC's view that the organization has status within the community it serves, and is worthy of

investment: in further skill-sharing from the side of WCLAC; in financial support, from prospective donors.

## **B: The “Al-Najdah” Society**

### **Specific Objective 2**

#### **Result 2-1: Train the staff of “Al-Najdah” Society**

Timeframe: Jan-Dec 2009

Progress: 100%

#### Meetings with the Society’s Board and staff:

WCLAC’s Capacity Building Unit held 7 programme meetings with the Board and staff of Al Najdah. These meetings focused on reviewing and evaluating Al Najdah’s work, assisting in developing the annual workplan for awareness campaigns, assigning tasks and sharing workload, and – a long-lasting development – creating a staff manual codifying and explaining procedures for dealing with legal cases, staff recruitment, staff development, funding issues, budget management, procurement and other frequent office and programme management requirements.

#### Training courses:

- A three-day training course on report writing was held, for a total of 15 hours. It was attended by 15 participants from the Board and from the staff.
- Members of the staff joined other WCLAC trainings and workshops during the year.
- Four working sessions were held with the WCLAC finance team.
- Two days training was given on financial procedures after strategic plan was developed.
- A workshop in August brought together both WCLAC’s grassroots partners, Women for Life and Al Najdah which further developed their case referral procedures and initiated a process of shared learning between Women for Life and Al Najdah, with a Memorandum of Understanding signed between the two organisations.

#### Supervision sessions:

A 12 days training for the new legal team (1 full time lawyer, 1 part time) and for the social workers (1 full time, 2 part time), facilitated by the WCLAC Service Unit. Training included:

- Seeing how WCLAC’s procedures and consultations work.
- Accompanying WCLAC Service Unit staff on court visits.
- 3 supervision sessions held in al Najdah (3 hours each session), during which WCLAC could observe and advise on how WCLAC’s best practices were being adopted by Al Najdah.

#### Service Provision

During 2009, 73 legal and social service cases were taken on by Al Najdah lawyers and social workers. 28 cases were successfully closed (of which 8 had been opened in 2008). Demonstrating one of the values of outreach through awareness-raising events, it is worth

noting that at least 12 cases and a further two one-off consultations came as a direct result of Al Najdah's programme of awareness-raising workshops.

#### Awareness-Raising

Al Najdah organised 69 workshops (exceeding the target set by 9), covering subjects such as legal rights, women's rights, marriage and in particular early marriage, domestic violence, problems faced by teenagers, violence against women and gender-based violence. In total 184 people attended these different sessions.

A further three workshops drew 97 people to learn about women's health issues, and again a further three events drew 54 people to learn about women's participation in political processes.

#### Study on women's needs in Tulkarem

A local study was completed on the needs of women and their access to services in the Tulkarem area. A consultant has reviewed the data and contributed to the analysis. The report is now being used to inform Al Najdah's strategic interventions. One of the key findings was a lack of legal services for women in the area. This lack takes the form both of a lack of service providers, and lack of knowledge of women's rights.

#### Indicators of success

The figures above demonstrate hours of committed partnership, learning and grassroots engagement on the part of WCLAC, and moreover, on the part of Al Najdah staff and board members.

Beyond simply the number of people being served, informed and engaged by Al Najdah, there are several further indicators which suggest that the activities outlined above bring about positive effects. A visible result from the hours spent building Al Najdah's financial and administrative capacity is that it now has its own branch bank account. This should help it in its bids to secure funding from other donors. A sign that the administrative procedures developed throughout the year are being adopted and used, is that in procuring print-outs of the information brochure, the case file templates, and in procuring the services of a web-designer, the Al Najdah administrators used the correct procurement procedures as taught in the training, and set out in the manual.

#### **Specific Objective 2**

##### **Result 2-2: Review the financial and administrative system of "Al-Najdah" Society**

Timeframe: Jan-Dec 2009

Progress: 100%

WCLAC and Al Najdah undertook the following actions:

- A 6-day intensive training for a total of 40 hours was held for 15 participants of the working staff and Board of Directors on organizational structure and job descriptions, follow-up systems, evaluation systems, incentives systems and internal rules and regulations.
- An Administrative Assistant was recruited.

- A 4-day training took place in order to help build the strategic plan for Al Najdah Society.
- 8 meetings were held with a WCLAC finance officer, during which budgets, financial sheets and other financial procedures were developed and approved.

**Specific Objective 2**

**Result 2-3: Develop external relations for the “Al-Najdah” Society**

Timeframe: Jan-Dec 2009

Progress: 100%

One step forward in this area is Al Najdah’s decision to develop a website, both to reach out to people who might want to use Al Najdah services and to present Al Najdah to potential donors.

Also, WCLAC has given support in the following areas to help Al Najdah develop:

- Support to the Society in the elaboration of their annual action plan.
- Assistance to the Society in writing their annual report.
- Assistance to the Society in implementing an event for the 8<sup>th</sup> of March day by integrating volunteers’ efforts with those of Al Najdah.
- Assistance in the planning of their relations with other local community organisations and networking.
- Assistance in writing proposals.

**Specific Objective 2**

**Result 2-4: Develop programmes and activities for the “Al-Najdah” Society**

Timeframe: Jan-Dec 2009

Progress: 100%

WCLAC helped Al Najdah’s planning procedures using information from a service-mapping exercise it performed in 2007, which mapped provision of Legal and Social Services in the Tulkarem area, and drawing on the analysis of a 2008 questionnaire used by WCLAC to assess the needs and concerns of women in the area.

WCLAC assisted the Society on issues related to the development of their programmes and activities. An information leaflet has been prepared and is being printed. The case file template (for documenting client and case details) has been revised and prepared for printing. Throughout the year, six supervision sessions took place in order to develop Al Najdah’s strategic plan.

**Specific Objective 3**

**Result 3-1: Train staff of referral institutions.**

Timeframe: Jan-Dec 2009

Progress: 1) 0% and 2) 100%

- 1- Trained 35 health workers to handle cases of violence (Manual of Reproductive Health) see result above.

During 2009, a Second Edition of WCLAC's Manual of Reproductive Health was published due to high demand. No training took place this year, in order to integrate advanced training into WCLAC's new Takamol Project. Good contact was retained between WCLAC and the health workers trained during 2007 and 2008. These WCLAC-trained health workers will form the core group assisting in reviewing new procedures and disseminating further information in WCLAC's Takamol Project.

- 2- Trained 32 Social work graduates and counsellors employed by the Ministry of Education (UNFPA project)

WCLAC continued its engagement targeting graduates in social work in order to build the skills, capacity and employability of young graduates sharing WCLAC's vision while at the same time supporting schools, organisations and local networks. The programme also involves support to the Department of Counselling within the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, as well as their involvement in the training and evaluation activities. The graduates are trained with technical information, for example, on key issues regarding women's rights, and are then placed in organisations and with school counsellors for an internship of several months in which they can develop their professional skills and share their technical knowledge with other staff within referral institutions.

#### Continuing development from 2008

The programme in 2009 retained links with selected graduates of the 2008 cohort. 12 graduates from Gaza and 12 from the West Bank (drawn from Bethlehem and Hebron areas), who were trained last year, received further training (30 hours of training of trainers) this year, being given skills to introduce people to Resolution 1325 and to the Personal Status Law. As is standard for this programme, the theoretical training was followed by practical work. The graduates were placed in local organisations for 50 hours, where they developed skills in workshop planning and implementation, setting up workshops on the two topics (Resolution 1325 and the Personal Status Law) for members of the organisations in which they were placed.

#### Developing a new cohort and expanding the programme into new areas

The programme recruited and trained 36 new graduates, who received 50 hours instruction in women's issues, gender-based violence, sexual and reproductive health (using the manual developed by WCLAC in 2008) and adolescents' health (using a manual developed by WCLAC in 1998 and since adopted by the ministry of health). The graduates were trained in two groups, one in Gaza (15 participants), the other, in Nablus, a new area for this programme (21 participants).

From the 36 trained in the first stage, 12 from each group (24 in total) were selected for a further 50 hours of practical training, which comprised two phases. In the first phase the graduates were placed with local organisations; in the second phase they worked in schools, shadowing and supporting school counsellors.

#### Work with Heads of School Counselling Units

Engagement with heads of school counselling units was delayed until March 2009, the earliest UNFPA were able to approve funding (delayed by preoccupation with the Gaza crisis). From this point on the programme advanced well, gathering the head counsellors from Gaza for the agreed 100 hours and gathering the West Bank counsellors for 60 hours in 2009, with a further 40 hours to be completed in 2010. The debriefing sessions successfully brought counsellors together to share experiences, reflect on lessons learnt, and to establish best practices.

#### Building on long-standing relationships

As well as continuing to work with graduates from the 2008 cohort and, through placing interns with them, continuing to support local community-based organisations and schools, through implementing the programme this year, WCLAC also maintained some of its longer standing relationships, as some of the team involved leading the training on health issues affecting adolescents were among those who had been involved with WCLAC eleven years ago in the initial drafting process for the manual.

#### **Specific Objective 4**

##### **Result 4-1: Provide social and legal services for 260 women**

Timeframe: Jan-Dec 2009

Progress: 105%

During 2009, WCLAC was able to provide social and legal services to 283 women (100 in Ramallah area, 41 in Jerusalem area, 142 in Hebron and Bethlehem areas).

These women had 303 legal cases of which 140 were taken to court, followed-up and represented by WCLAC's lawyers in regular courts, courts of first instance and courts of appeal. In addition, WCLAC prepared 147 cases for women to go to court by themselves. 19 cases were handled through mediation and reconciliation was achieved with the other party to ensure women's rights without going to courts. For the cases that were taken to courts by clients themselves, the technical assistance provided included support in preparing the case files, explanation of step-by-step procedures and regulations of filing claims, and in a few cases accompanying the client for legal representation before courts. This method was implemented as part of empowering women when they face possible relationships with the court system.

A detailed list of the cases can be provided upon request.

Finally, seven of the cases were referred to the Shelter from the Service Unit, as they needed the services of a safe home. (Other referrals to the Shelter came from elsewhere). A social worker and a lawyer were designated to follow up on their cases with the police to ensure that verdicts are enforced.

#### **Specific Objective 4**

**Result 4-2: Provide 70 legal and social counselling (one-time sessions)**

Timeframe: Jan-Dec 2009

Progress: 100%

The number of one-time consultations offered (social and legal consultations) were 280 distributed as follows: (77) beneficiaries from the Hebron region, (178) women from Ramallah, and (25) from Jerusalem.

Of these cases 77 were seeking advice on social issues, 153 sought legal advice, and 50 sought a combination of both legal and social.

The Service Unit also refers cases to WCLAC partners or to other appropriate service providers. In 2009 four cases were transferred to WCLAC's grassroots partners (al-Najda Association in Tulkarem and Women for Life Society in Salfit) and one was transferred to the WCLAC Jerusalem branch. 10 cases were referred to the Centre through the one-off consultations when it was found that they had further need of WCLAC services.

In addition, throughout 2009 WCLAC has responded to queries from organisations and institutions seeking clarity on legal obligations, social service provision and the like. Another inter-institutional service is provided as some institutions request consultations with WCLAC concerning work with cases they are following as they need specialized information and especially concerning emergency issues. These institutions include: The Women's Technical Affairs Committee and the Palestinian Working Women's Society. Many educational counsellors and trainee lawyers also refer to the Centre for consultation and/or support concerning sensitive and specialized issues.

**Specific Objective 4****Result 4-3: Conduct a Community awareness campaign**

Timeframe: Jan-Dec 2009

Progress: 100%

The Service Unit held 136 community awareness sessions.

Exercises used included teambuilding and ice-breaking, concentration exercises and self-awareness (Johari window), while the main topics discussed were: types of marriage, violence, domestic violence, sexual violence, sexual abuse in legal terms, marital relations, rights and duties, customary marriage, family relations, polygamy, intra-marital rape, unacceptable behaviour in family lives, women's demand for their share in inheritance, adolescence, terms of marriage contract, Personal Status Law and the penal code. The meetings were held in the Northern parts of the country (41), in the Middle parts (48) and in the Southern parts (47).

The number of participants were 607 women and men, (92 members of professional groups, 425 housewives, and 90 students in high school and universities). From these 607 participants, WCLAC provided legal consultations to 110 people. Thus, almost one in every five people

attending the awareness-raising sessions was referred to a legal consultation, suggesting the high proportion of women with a need for WCLAC's Service Unit.

In addition, the service unit targeted the student population, in order to increase their awareness and target the change-makers of the future. Women's rights and Human Rights training took place in Abu Dis University (22 students, 25 hours of training) and Hebron University (36 students, 20 hours of training). As a result of these workshops and the visible presence of WCLAC in the universities, WCLAC has since been approached by 95 students interested in volunteering with WCLAC or receiving similar training. This is a very positive indicator of WCLAC's reputation within the universities, of the workshops covering areas of pertinent interest to students and of the impact of the workshops in spreading information through peer groups well beyond the number of direct beneficiaries trained.

In Bir Zeit University, WCLAC service unit held 5 training workshops (amounting to 25 hour training) for 31 students. Again, the same subjects were covered as at Abu Dis and Hebron Universities. In total 89 students were trained on these topics.

#### **Specific Objective 4**

##### **Result 4-4: Work with officials, judges, lawyers and social workers at courts**

Timeframe: Jan-Dec 2009

Progress: 50%

#### Workshop with female judges:

During the year 2009 follow up was done in order to arrange a meeting to discuss the implementation of this workshop. WCLAC has encountered difficulties in undertaking this activity as the Judiciary was not responding to our frequent request on setting up a date for the workshop. Accordingly, the workshop was not done.

#### Workshops with social workers in religious courts:

The training course was planned to fit in with their training schedule. Planned first for May, then rescheduled for October and postponed again, WCLAC continues to try to offer this training opportunity at a date convenient for the social workers.

#### Workshops with Police Department in Hebron:

A training course took place with 12 female police officers in Hebron on topics such as women's rights, the legislation towards women in Palestine, marriage contracts and Personal Status, and international humanitarian law. The training was a success and was so well-received by the security forces that requests have been made to provide similar skills for male officers. Two follow-up meetings have been held with senior officers to assess progress in implementing increased gender-sensitivity and human rights awareness. Although actual change in working practice has been limited so far, WCLAC continues to advocate for further change and the security forces continue to listen to WCLAC's concerns.

#### **Specific Objective 4**

**Result 4-5: Distribute the legal self-help guide on maintenance rights for wives and children**

Timeframe: Jan-Dec 2009

Progress: 100%

During the year, the distribution of the manual was done through workshops and group counselling sessions. In total, 510 women received the manual, as well as adequate training on how to use it. The manual was distributed during awareness raising sessions, to students, housewives, police officers, teachers, and others, and also distributed to clients of the Service Unit requiring information on child and wife maintenance rights.

**Specific Objective 4****Result 4-6: Conduct a media campaign**

Timeframe: Jan-Dec 2009

Progress: 100%

Several achievements can be highlighted for the reporting period regarding the Media Campaign:

- Service Unit staff benefited from training this year in how to write articles, and first put the training to use publishing an article in Al Ayyam Newspaper addressing women's rights and human rights issues. Four further articles were written and published.
- We prepared four TV spots addressed to the public, one per quarter to promote the importance of human rights and women's rights. The four spots were broadcasted.
- We were invited by Palestinian TV and Radio stations to appear on talk shows and news programmes to discuss women's rights, violence against women, and Personal Status Law. We participated in 5 TV shows and 12 radio episodes. WCLAC is considered an authoritative commentator on women's issues and rights, hence WCLAC received invitations to participate in several media outlets to talk on women and the law, discriminatory laws related to violence and personal status, violence against women inside and outside the family and Femicide.
- A record of press reporting on women's issues was done with a student from Birzeit University.
- A session about honour killing for the reasons of what is considered honour was recorded.
- WCLAC was interviewed for a press article on Palestinian women suffering from unjust laws.
- Interview about the "*Khulu'u*" at the National Media Centre.

## Fourth Strategic Objective: Expose, locally and internationally, the practices of the Israeli occupation violations against women's rights

### Long-term expected results

1. UN international and national human rights and women's rights organizations have a reliable source of information on Palestinian women.
2. International community is more aware of the social implications of the occupation on Palestinian women and intervene on their behalf.
3. Dialogue on human rights principles and women's rights is stimulated within the Palestinian community.
4. Networks with international and national organizations allow for sharing of information and experiences which help develop strategies for their work.

### Specific objectives:

1. To monitor and expose the Israeli violations against the International Humanitarian Law.

#### Specific Objective 1

**Result 1-1: Training of 10 women field workers on documenting violations.**

Timeframe: Jan-Dec 2009

Progress: 100%

A training programme was planned and implemented for the field researchers over the year. An initial introductory meeting was held in order to introduce the new staff to the group and to re-connect with the research group. Fourteen out of fifteen field workers participated in the meeting, four were new members. This was followed by a two day training programme which focused on practical training in interviewing, documenting and writing affidavits. The field workers were also trained on the following subjects: basics in international humanitarian law, introduction to international human rights law, introduction to feminist documentation methodology. Following this intensive training, small group meetings were also held with those fieldworkers who were working regularly to improve their interviewing and documenting skills.

A one-day training course on documenting home demolitions was held for 10 field researchers and two staff from Defence for Children International in order to educate the trainees on the issues and the law related to the Israeli policies of home demolitions. Participants were provided with the basic international law framework and an overview of the situation affecting Palestinians in Jerusalem. A lawyer from the Norwegian Refugee Council presented the context of Israeli law and procedural issues and information about referring cases to the NRC.

In addition to these training sessions, regular follow-up, monitoring and support meetings with fieldworkers were organised in order to discuss their work. WCLAC staff are in contact by telephone with the fieldworkers who call to discuss with them cases they have identified, and for other advice. WCLAC staff also meet with fieldworkers in the office to discuss their work,

and carry out field visits with fieldworkers in order to meet the women interviewed, to monitor and evaluate the work of fieldworkers and for staff to gain greater knowledge and awareness of the issues facing the women interviewed.

At the end of the year individual evaluations of the work of the fieldworkers were carried out and an individual plan for their training for 2010 was devised.

The first draft of a directory on basics in International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law is ready. The manual is designed to inform and guide the centre's field researchers and staff on international law. It also helps researchers identify the violations according to each of these laws.

**Specific Objective 1**

**Result 1-2: Publish reports submitted to CEDAW.**

Timeframe: Jan-Dec 2009

Progress: 50%

The last report was finalized in November 2008, however it was not sent to the CEDAW committee as Israel had not submitted its report and therefore the CEDAW committee adjourned their review of Israel's compliance with the Convention. WCLAC will follow up on any developments, ensuring that it is aware of any new date set for Israel to be reviewed and that a report from the NGO perspective is presented in partnership with other Palestinian NGOs.

In the meantime, the Centre is in regular contact with IWRAW which works on building the capacity and training of NGOs on how to write shadow and alternative reports. The networking is aimed at coordinating efforts in order to submit a shadow report. A WCLAC staff member attended a training course in Cyprus organised by IWRAW which provided a useful opportunity to network with other women's organisations in the middle east region and to co-ordinate efforts for the forthcoming review of Israel by CEDAW. A former CEDAW Committee member was present at this training which provided practical and constructive advice on engaging with the Committee.

**Specific Objective 1**

**Result 1-3: Document on Palestinian women's experience of suffering under occupation (IHL)**

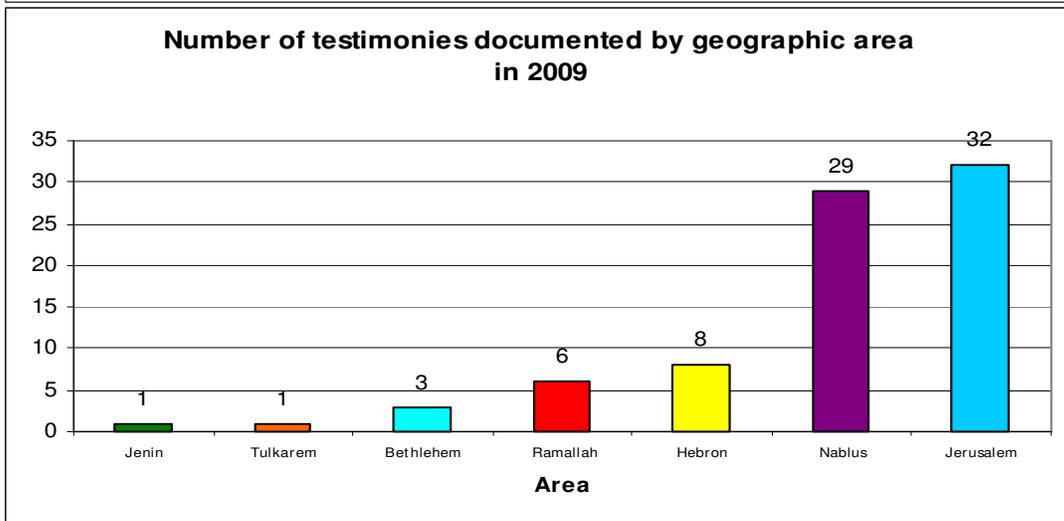
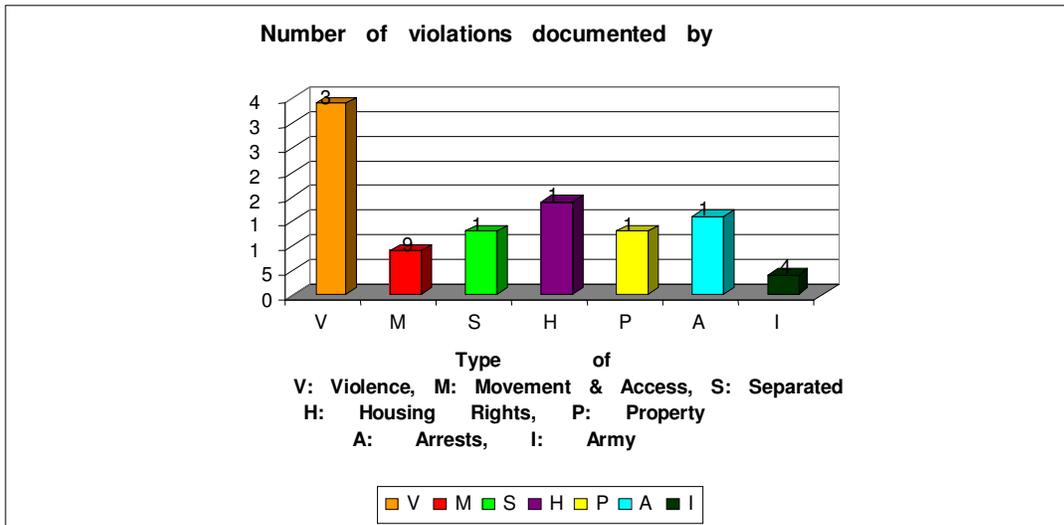
Timeframe: Jan-Dec 2009

Progress: 100%

The IHL project has documented 80 cases during the reporting period. They have covered issues affecting Palestinian women such as home demolitions; settler violence; separated families; arrest and detention and restrictions on freedom of movement. These are the result of interviews by the WCLAC staff and by the fieldworkers with women around the West Bank which are then documented in the form of comprehensive affidavits. Many of these affidavits have

been used during 2009 as case studies in reports to illustrate human rights violations against women and the impact of the occupation on women.

The following diagrams illustrate the type of violation documented and the locations in which they have been documented:



A report for the Human Rights Committee which monitors Israeli’s compliance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights was submitted to highlight how Palestinian women are affected by Israel’s violations of the Covenant. This shadow report has been posted on the website of the Human Rights Committee on the site of the UN high Commissioner for Human Rights; it will be considered by the Committee when Israel is reviewed in July 2010.

WCLAC was represented at the UN Special Committee in their session collecting evidence in Amman-Jordan. The committee heard evidence from WCLAC on women and the gender specific impact of the occupation. This was the second time that WCLAC had attended and was an important exercise to ensure that the gender dimension of the occupation was highlighted for

the Committee and for the development of the individual staff members as well as the development of the IHL project itself.

The IHL and IHRL Project report for 2009 about the impact of the Israeli violations on women based on documented cases, will be distributed in early 2010. The report will be made available in hard copy and will also be available on WCLAC's website.

Meetings took place with other human rights organizations such as: DCI-Palestine, the Centre for Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE) and Al Haq, and with journalists, students, researchers and other interested people. These meetings have been an opportunity to discuss the work of WCLAC and work of IHL project and to provide information to them on the gender specific impact of the occupation. We have also been accompanied on field visits by interested people, including an officer from UNOHCHR and have assisted others including journalists in setting up meetings with affected Palestinian women.

**Specific Objective 1**

**Result 1-4: Attend one international conference on women issues**

Timeframe: Jan-Dec 2009

Progress: 100%

During 2009, WCLAC continued its practice of international advocacy work through direct representation in international fora. WCLAC Director, Maha Abu-Dayyeh Shamas, attended the 11<sup>th</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council (June 2009) in Geneva, Switzerland.

WCLAC also presented an Alternative Report for consideration regarding Israel's Third Periodic Report to the United Nations Human Rights Committee in August, and presented a written submission and gave oral evidence to the Field Mission of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories.

Participation in such internationally significant events creates ideal circumstances to use published documents from our documentation unit, such as the Report on Israeli Human Rights Violations, to accompany a powerfully expressed verbal message, either within the forum itself or through side-meetings.

## Fifth Strategic Objective: Develop WCLAC's own capacity, performance and sustainability

### Long-term expected results:

1. WCLAC's operations are more efficient and effective.
2. The staff is more involved in the planning process and directing the future activities of WCLAC, thus leading to less turn over and greater employee satisfaction.
3. The donors receive standardized reports which allow for better communication and understanding between WCLAC and donors

### Specific objectives:

1. Develop planning, evaluation, and monitoring system.
2. Build capacity of WCLAC staff.
3. Develop partnership relations with donor organizations.

#### Specific Objective 1

**Result 1-1: Revise and develop a strategic plan, annual activity plan, budgets, and annual reports.**

Timeframe: Jan-Dec 2009

Progress: 100%

During the year 2009, WCLAC revised and refined the annual activity plans through meetings with Unit Heads. The annual narrative and financial reports for 2008 were prepared by the administrative unit and approved by the Board of Trustees. Semi-annual and 9-month narrative and financial reports were prepared and duly submitted during the year; these can be made available upon request.

The process of reporting on the overall implementation and results of the 5 year strategic plan (2005-2009) has started. Focal points for each strategic objective were identified in order to draft the report in 2010. [Recruited in early 2010, the new WCLAC Programme Director will also contribute to evaluating the completed five year programme.]

The regular holding of monthly board meetings was upheld through the year, and one General Assembly meeting took place in which elections for a new administrative committee took place.

WCLAC conducted a strategic planning workshop in June, followed by other intensive workshops and individual meetings in order to complete the preparation of a new strategic plan for the period 2010-2012. The workshops included analysis of the political, economic and the legislative environment, and examined the impact of these on our programme implementation. By September, WCLAC had developed its strategy: "Consolidating the Past, Growing the Future 2010-2012". The new strategic plan was prepared for three years instead of five; within the ever-changing Palestinian political context, our analysis and experience suggests that strategic planning over three years strikes a better balance of long-term thinking with well-targeted interventions.

**Specific Objective 1**

**Result 1-2: Hold an external evaluation on the impact of our 5-year programme (2005-2009)**

Timeframe: Sept-Dec 2009

Progress: 80%

WCLAC started the process of the External evaluation to review WCLACs programmes, particularly in light of the completion of the five year strategy. The report is due to be completed and considered by WCLAC in 2010.

A separate evaluation of WCLACs Legal Aid and Service unit has been undertaken by the EU, and will be shared with WCLAC in early 2010.

**Specific Objective 1**

**Result 1-3: Prepare and develop financial and administrative manuals**

Timeframe: Jan-Dec 2009

Progress: 80%

The contents of the manual will be as listed below. However, certain processes are yet to be finalised.

- Employee's bylaws: has been prepared and waiting for the Board's approval.
- Financial and management procedures: needs to be updated for the Board's approval, given the restructuring process that the Centre went through in 2009.
- Incentive procedures: is still being developed to be submitted for the Board's approval.
- The employee's contract: an ongoing process of development in employee contracts is still going on. WCLAC has yet to settle on a final form of contracts.

**Specific Objective 1**

**Result 1-4: Develop the electronic database (MIS)**

Timeframe: Jan-Dec 2009

Progress: 50%

The MIS was launched at the beginning of last year and all necessary data was progressively inserted into the system. This represented a tremendous amount of technical work. The data of the plan of the Centre should have been inserted into the system by July but due to the changes made over the budget and strategic planning process the insertion of data was postponed. During 2010 all the staff will receive appropriate training in how to use the system and integrate it into their daily work procedures.

**Specific Objective 2**

**Result 2-1: Conduct training needs assessment.**

Timeframe: Sept-Dec 2009

Progress: 80%

During the first part of the year, the capacity-building unit carried out a training needs assessment for WCLAC staff, aiming to develop a comprehensive training plan for Centre staff, based on their needs. A questionnaire was developed, distributed and filled by the staff. The capacity building unit is now in the process analyzing the results of the questionnaire.

A methodology was set in order to conduct the peer evaluation for the staff, which will be used as an ongoing tool to evaluate staff professional performance. Three meetings took place and we are in process of introducing the peer evaluation scheme.

**Specific Objective 2**

**Result 2-2: Train and develop the capacity of the Centre's staff**

Timeframe: Jan-Dec 2009

Progress: 100%

During 2009, WCLAC staff members were able to participate in many international and local workshops. 17 people participated in: 16 local workshops and training events; and in 14 regional and international visits, workshops, conferences and training events.

**Specific Objective 3**

**Result 3-1: Evaluate WCLAC programmes and partnership agreements.**

Timeframe: Jan-Dec 2009

Progress: 80%

An evaluation for the centre programmes started and will be completed and addressed in 2010.

WCLAC held a consortium meeting in May 2009 in order to discuss our partnership agreements as well as to listen to input from our donors on our programmes and activities. WCLAC views the consortium meetings as a great opportunity not only to update its donors on the progress of the work, but also as an important venue for the exchange of ideas and for providing a different insight into our programmes – in other words, for cementing a real partnership.

In addition, WCLAC conducted individual meetings with the following partners:

- OXFAM-NOVIB
- Dutch Representative Office
- Norwegian Representative Office
- Dan Church Aid
- UNFPA
- Heinrich Boell Foundation
- EED
- Open Society Institute (OSI Mena)
- ACSUR
- Irish Representative Office
- NDC
- International Legal Aid Assistance (ILAC Sweden)

- Caritas
- Acsur
- Drosos
- Belgium Representative office
- UNDP
- French Consulate
- Danish Representative office
- European Union
- Ford Foundation
- Swiss cooperation
- UNIFEM
- Kvinna Til Kvinna

It has to be noted that not all of the above listed donor organizations are presently supporting financially WCLAC, but all have done so at one point or the other. Donors continuously change their support strategies either based on theme or region or sometimes for their own fiscal considerations. However, WCLAC remains a good contact for information for their own policy development, and WCLAC continue to remain interested in fostering these relationships.

As WCLAC is highly regarded by other local NGOs, we have also been approached by other NGOs for joint projects. One such partnership is with Juzoor for the Takamol Project, funded by the EU, introducing an integrated referral system. We have also been approached by institutions from Israel such as the Kayan Feminist organization and Sidra (The Bedouin women in the Negev). WCLAC sees the two organizations as strategic allies in terms of vision, but is giving deep consideration to the how an effective partnership could be implemented with Israeli organizations given that most available donors exclude Israeli organizations from categories to be supported as Israel is considered a developed country.

Since WCLAC is totally dependent on donor funding, serious thinking has to be invested in ensuring the financial sustainability of the organization. One approach is to generate local income. In that context WCLAC has also developed stronger ties with the Centre for Cultural Heritage Reservation in Bethlehem, signing an agreement with them initiating the renovation of an old house in Beit Jala to be used as a premises for the WCLAC in that area to help extend WCLAC's service provision and to have an income source (training facilities and rooms for hire) which will aid the financial sustainability of WCLAC. These kinds of projects are developed between local families, NGOs and the Cultural Rehabilitation Centre, whereby the families offer their property to use for ten years free of rent in return for the renovation that is carried out by the rehabilitation centre. It has to be noted that such an arrangement was made by Women of Life with a family from Bidya and Riwaq, an organization with a similar mission as the Centre for Cultural Heritage Reservation, as mentioned above.

**Specific Objective 3**

**Result 3-2: Develop written and electronic media materials**

Timeframe: Jan-Dec 2009

Progress: 100%

#### The website

The Arabic and English versions of the website were regularly updated.

#### Preparation of materials for publication

- Issued a greeting card for the occasion of International Women's Day.
- Printed files related to the Centre.
- Produced a newsletter for 2008 which was uploaded on WCLAC's website.
- WCLAC news of major events are updated on website on regular basis.

#### **Specific Objective 3**

##### **Result 3-3: Develop a strategy for communication and outreach**

Timeframe: Apr-Dec 2009

Progress: 100%

WCLAC has given time and effort to streamlining its public profile and media output. During 2009, a consultant was hired to lead the process of developing a Media and Communications Strategy (available on request), which is now in the process of being integrated into WCLAC's work.

In order to promote networking between governmental and non governmental sectors WCLAC conducted a reception for Palestine's female ministers in July 2009. They were the Minister of Social Affairs, the Minister of Women's Affairs, the Minister of Education and Higher Education, the Minister of Culture and the Minister of Tourism and Antiquities.

#### **Specific Objective 3**

##### **Result 3-4: Develop WCLAC's Library assets.**

Timeframe: Jan-Dec 2009

Progress: 80%

The library has gone through a process of organization since we moved to our new premises in Batn el-Hawa in Ramallah. The books are being categorized according to subject. The library is open to staff and outside visitors to use the materials on site. However, WCLAC does not offer a lending service.

During 2009 there were 107 visitors from the Centre's staff and 76 external visitors. The library in Hebron was visited by 92 students and researchers. A research assistant is available to help students and help them find references for their research. The subjects that are mostly researched are: Women and development, Misyar marriage (marriage of convenience for a short period of time mostly practices in the Gulf countries), violence against women, Beijing

declaration, CEDAW, criminal law, personal status law, femicide, the Centre's vision and fields of work and other related issues.