

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

Heading towards achieving hope



Annual Report 2008

- **Summary Report**
- **Progress of Implementation**

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1. General Information:

Name of NGO: Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling (WCLAC)
Reporting period: January 1-December 31, 2008
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2. Director's Message for 2009:

Yes—we too—can!

Change— whether positive or negative— is destabilizing. Change forces movement from one state of being to another, one form to another. Often, neither the new state nor the new form is clearly felt or exactly formed. Change requires moving from the familiar to the unfamiliar, from a taken-for-granted position, the status quo, to another that requires adjustments. For most of us, facing change frightens us so we resist, at least initially. At the same time, however, we embrace the challenge, knowing deep down inside that the transformation will bring forth new life. Moreover, even during times of the greatest of changes, some things remain unchanged. We live with the paradox. One significant change at WCLAC during 2008 was the long planned and much anticipated consolidation of staff into one building. We are now housed in Batn el-Hawa in Ramallah. This required significant fund-raising alongside staff being required literally and metaphorically to change their desks. This takes getting used to.

One thing remains clearly unchanged: working under Israeli occupation that insists on denying us our right for self determination and our right to live in peace and security in an independent state. Occupation, militarism and patriarchy work together on disempowering Palestinian women and violating their human rights.

The year 2008 was promised as one of hope for Palestinian people owing to the much-heralded Annapolis Peace Conference at the end of 2007 advanced by the Bush administration. In my Director's Message last year, I predicted that, if this process did not meet its objectives, it would cause further disappointment, pain, and suffering. As feared, it was just a media event, nothing was followed up, and the situation, especially in Gaza worsened resulting in severe humanitarian crisis. Hence, 2008 year ended with the Israeli war on Gaza—using the threadbare pretext of "retaliation against rockets propelled out of Gaza" resulting in the illegal and unforgivable destruction of civilian life and infrastructure. The final death toll: over 1,300 Palestinian casualties, most of them civilians with hundreds among those women and children. We feared and predicted violence and human suffering. What actually happened in Gaza was beyond our wildest imagination! Once again, according to many credible accounts, Israel has committed war crimes, with impunity, with support from western governments, the bystanders, the passive supporters. We know Israel waged war on the civilians without having to account to any one or any existing judicial body.

The year 2009 begins with the deeper, profoundly disturbing and painful realization that we Palestinian people, are expendable and that our human rights and entitlement

to live in dignity can be, indeed will be, sacrificed by the existing powers for the sake of the wider geo-political interests. The world prefers to see us as “terrorists,” thus justifying the unjustifiable, or to relegate us to the status of poor and helpless victims needing charity. As a people we refuse both characterizations.

We will continue to struggle for our collective right to live in dignity and with self-determination. We are not passive recipients of charity. The international community sends humanitarian assistance as an ethical and moral responsibility for their role in perpetuating the Israeli-led atrocities against the Palestinian nation. It is the trade-off for not having the political will to exert their political and economic influence to hold Israel accountable for every violation of international law that Israel has committed since its establishment.

As a Palestinian women’s human rights organization, we challenge ourselves and all Palestinian women to struggle for the survival of the Palestinian nation and ourselves, both as Palestinian and as women. We also will gather our strength to move beyond survival in order that our nation and our people will thrive in a unified, just, and truly secure and sustainable state.

And the struggle will go on. The Gaza child innocently smiling at the camera while sitting among the rubble of what used to be his family home and mostly women and children walking through rubble salvaging whatever belongings they could from all that was destroyed are the images that keep us going. Like a phoenix rising out of the ashes, we will bring forth new life. Our challenge is to stay together and support each other so we can continue to struggle for our life not only as individuals but as a people with a rich heritage and culture. We need to keep struggling for our lives, and keep resisting those who want to disconnect us from our past and deny us and our children a future. Our struggle is to keep connecting our past with our present and keep the hope for a peaceful future.

During these times, working with women is essential. They are the ones who must continue functioning to keep the families together. They are the ones who manage to keep a smile on the faces of children, working to erase, at least partially, the horror they experienced. Women must stay strong and steadfast, and Palestinian women have proven, time and time again, that we have the capacity. As the late African-American poet June Jordan wrote for the South African women’s Movement during their anti-apartheid struggle: “We are the ones we have been waiting for.” We hold the keys to our destiny.

Maha Abu-Dayyeh Shamas
Executive Director

3. Political Landscape

During 2008, there were no significant changes in the Palestinian political context until the devastating war on Gaza.

The status quo was maintained, meaning there was no progress in the peace negotiations while the Israeli siege on Gaza intensified. The blockade led to a severe humanitarian crisis in the Gaza strip that worsened as result of the war, dramatically affecting women and children: *“The Israeli military forces launched a 23-days military offensive on the Gaza Strip. As a result, some areas were completely flattened to the ground, leaving many people displaced including women and children. As per a report by OCHA issued on the 19th of January 2009, 50,896 persons were displaced. The war also has left many civilian casualties. According to a report by the Palestinian Center for Human Rights issued on the 23rd of January 2009, 8.6% of people killed (111) and 17% of the injured (735) were women.”*¹

The findings of another UNFPA report on the impact of the war on reproductive health speaks for itself: *“With around 100,000 people being displaced into 58 UNRWA shelters as well as being absorbed by families mostly consisting of women and children, it is expected that around 25,000 women of reproductive age were subjected to the physical and mental distress associated with the conflict, further aggravated by the inability to satisfy their basic human needs and care within such shelters. Pregnant women in these shelters were especially vulnerable to physical and mental distress. In one of the shelters, 8 women from one family had miscarriages following an attack at Khuza`a village.”*²

The situation remains critical for all Palestinians, in both the West Bank and Gaza as the economic and political situation is in deep crisis, the ongoing military occupation dramatically affects the population, particularly women and children as a result of policies including military incursions, movement restrictions, check-points, the separation Wall, house demolitions, land expropriations and denial of family reunification.

The impact of all this on WCLAC’s work is evident. Due to the internal political divisions since Hamas took power over the Gaza strip, the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) has not convened. This has affected WCLAC’s lobbying and advocacy activities in our 2005-2009 current strategic plan. However, we have developed strategies to overcome the obstacles, more precisely continuing our advocacy line to enhance activities on a more grassroots level aimed at education and awareness, rather than direct lobbying of PLC members. We also have strengthened our national and regional networking activities through many Coalitions in order to ensure that when the PLC and relevant officials start re-functioning the civil society will be prepared for active lobbying campaigns and advocacy activities. This strategy is reflecting a future opportunity to build stronger ties with civil society through educational and awareness campaigns, participation in research projects, capacity-building of organizations and individuals, and the ongoing direct social and legal services to address the women most vulnerable in our society.

¹ In *“Gaza Crisis: Psycho-Social Consequences for Women”*, Executive Summary, 8 February 2009, prepared by Culture and Free Thought Association (CFTA) and UNFPA.

² In *“Gaza Crisis: Impact on Reproductive Health, especially maternal and newborn health, and obstetric care”*, Executive Summary, 9 February 2009, UNFPA.

We were able to implement most of our activities as planned. It is our long-term relationships with our donors, grass-root organizations, members of coalitions created and activated by WCLAC, with volunteers, civil society organizations, women organizations, and professional syndicates that allowed us to continue our work.

4. Executive Summary

During 2008, WCLAC has achieved the following:

- 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 (International Humanitarian Law Forum), Coalition against Capital Punishment, Palestinian Forum for Safe Abortion and the Palestinian Forum to Combat violence against children.
- Maintained a database of 600 influential persons and decision-makers.
- Initiated/continued/put the final touches on 5 analytical studies.
- Launched 1 media campaign on the Family Protection Law.
- Implemented 139 awareness-raising activities throughout the West Bank for 1417 participants, including 325 males.
- Produced and presented a film on Femicide.
- Trained 122 volunteers in women's rights issues.
- Supported 30 voluntary activities in 14 locations (Hebron region, Salfit region, Bethlehem, Tulkarem and Jericho)
- Trained 35 health professionals qualified to handle cases with women in distress.
- Provided practice training to 104 graduates (educational counsellors/social workers in the West Bank and Gaza).
- Trained 6 Jericho Shelter's staff.
- Provided services to 11 women in Jericho's Shelter.
- Provided social and legal services for 268 women (136 from the central areas, 29 from Jerusalem and 102 from the southern areas)
- Provided one-time counselling sessions for 213 women
- Took 158 cases on behalf of women to court
- 6 of the 268 women were referred to the Shelter as they needed the services of a safe home.
- Handled 15 emergency cases during the reporting period.
- Built the capacity of two grassroots organisations (Women for Life, Al-Najdah Society)
- Conducted a community awareness campaign of 121 sessions in three main areas of Palestine (north, middle and south) and in two universities (Hebron and Abu Dis) for 667 participants.
- Distributed 690 legal self-help manual on alimony for wives and children, 570 to several stakeholders providing services to women, 120 to beneficiaries together with an introductory workshop on how to make use of the manual.

- Conducted a media campaign (including the preparation of 4 press articles, the preparation of 4 TV episodes, and the participation into 4 TV shows and 12 radio programs).
- Provided introductory training to 14 field researchers on documenting violations.
- Attended 2 international conferences on issues related to women's human rights and international human rights law.
- Launched a Management Information System (MIS) for the Centre.
- Trained and developed the capacity of the Centre's staff through 23 local and regional meetings/workshops.
- Developed written and electronic media materials such as updates for the website, greeting cards for the 8th of March and files related to the Centre.

5. Progress Summary:

The Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling accomplished throughout 2008 the fourth year of implementation of its five-year strategic program "Building Hope". The five main strategic objectives of this program are to:

- 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 a direct impact on women's issues.
- Expose, locally and internationally, the impact of the practices of the Israeli occupation and its violations on women's rights.
- Develop WCLAC's own capacity, performance, and sustainability.

All activities conducted during this year are 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 2008.

As was the case in previous years, the progress related to outputs involving political leaders and Members of the Legislature were fewer than hoped, while activities at the level of NGOs and grass-roots organizations, research activities, advocacy and networking, social and legal services, went farther than originally planned.

We maintained the regularity of our work during 2008 despite the problems with internal Palestinian divisions and infighting. Unfortunately, it further seems that these problems are exacerbated and encouraged by external bodies that find that Palestinian division in the political and economic sphere serves their regional and global interests. The Palestinian people have been sacrificed on the altar of these interests.

This vertical division has affected all Palestinian institutions and structures, particularly the source of Palestinian legitimacy and legislation – the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC). The PLC has been in a state of paralysis throughout the past year as a result of Israeli policies that included the arrest and imprisonment of

about one third of the members of the PLC. This is in addition to the state of Palestinian internal division. This situation has constrained the entire legislative process, and thus the work of WCLAC, as a major component of our work is to work towards equality by lobbying for change through the legislative process.

The brutal aggression against the Gaza Strip, that killed so many people and injured many more Palestinian people regardless of age or gender, and inflicted immense destruction on vital infrastructure, including homes, schools and hospitals, has had a big impact on us individually and as a Centre. The Palestinians who were killed, injured and displaced in the Gaza Strip are an integral part of us. The recent attacks are a vivid and tragic illustration of the brutality of the Israeli occupation and the inevitable outcome of Israeli policies, which deny Palestinian's their right to self-determination and violate their human rights. These policies are the main obstacle to Palestinian independent statehood that can ensure the human security essential for our mission.

Under these conditions, a discourse was raised within the Palestinian women's movement as to the feminist agenda under such a complex political situation, particularly in relation to legislative reform. All the institutions in Palestinian society, including the legislative bodies, have been affected in one way or another by the state of division and fragmentation with significant effects on their functioning and priorities. Two viewpoints prevailed within the Palestinian women movement. The first – WCLAC being a major part thereof – sees the current situation as a stumbling block, making it difficult to effect radical changes in the legislation and laws to move towards equality, particularly under the personal status law. The belief of this group in the movement is that under the prevailing conditions, all that can be done is to make certain amendments and improvements to these laws and legislations. While limited, this would be, we believe an important achievement in the interest of women, whose cases are being processed at Shari'a courts.

The second viewpoint insisted on the need to submit a new draft personal status law based on complete equality. The holders of this viewpoint expressed their position that while they would not reject any amendments in the current law, they would not offer their blessing to this step. Furthermore, that they would not be part of the bodies submitting them in order to prevent anybody from holding them accountable for any points scored against the Palestinian women movement at a later stage. We believe that there is a logic behind each of these viewpoints and it is premature to judge which is more correct. We recognize that the answer will be recorded in the history notes.

In spite of all these difficulties, we still see that at this stage and through our role in Palestinian civil society, we have the duty to contribute to preserving the Palestinian identity and the human dignity of the Palestinian people, while maintaining our strategic vision towards achieving our mission of building a Palestinian society based on equity and equality within a Palestinian independent and sovereign state, with Jerusalem as its capital.

Hereafter are detailed the main challenges encountered in 2008 and the main achievements for every one of WCLAC's strategic objectives.

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.**

Personal Status Law Revision

During 2008, the progress related to outputs involving political leaders and members of the legislature was influenced by the **Personal Status Law revision** by the presidential office. On 28 May, the Legal Department of the Presidential office called for a workshop to discuss a new draft of the existing Personal Status Law, the objective being to issue a presidential decree concerning the reformed piece of legislation. People were invited in their personal capacities and no women's institutions or organizations were invited in their institutional capacity. The Personal Status Law Coalition decided not to attend the workshop as they were not invited as institutions, and those who did attend the workshop did so in their personal capacity. At the workshop a committee was established to draft a new Personal Status law. This committee was composed of religious court representatives and judges, legal professionals in their personal capacities, and academics. It did not include any civil society organizations nor any women's organizations. Therefore, the Personal Status Law Coalition asked for a meeting with President Mahmoud Abbas to discuss the mechanism of work on any amendment of the Personal Status Law. This meeting took place on 4 June 2008, and the Coalition made it clear that the exclusion of civil society and women organizations from any work on the Personal Status Law was not acceptable. It was clarified that the legislative capacity should incur on the Legislative Council and not on the executive authority. It was further agreed at this meeting that there will be no draft law adopted by the President unless there was an agreement on it by all relevant parties, including civil society and women organizations.

The drafting Committee was headed by the Chief Justice, it worked for three weeks and their final draft was handed to the Legal Department of the Presidential office. The head of the Legal Department at the Presidential office, Dr. Adnan Amer, sent this draft to WCLAC for comments. WCLAC distributed this draft to the Personal Status Law Coalition for review and further comments. It was agreed to develop another draft by the Coalition and to propose it to the President and the executive authority.

However the differences within the Coalition that were highlighted earlier in this report were brought out by this process. Some supported the initiative arguing that this was an opportunity for reform and improvement of the legislation even if it did not result in the desired outcome of full gender equality claims, realizing that the political context in Palestine will not allow any time soon the wished legislative council ruling, and being aware that such decree would not take into account full gender equality claims. This is WCLAC's official position, despite the fact that in the past we have been reluctant to support legislative reform through presidential decree, as it expresses the trend within a certain government and could be revoked by any

future government. The majority in the Coalition held a different position, claiming that there is no way for negotiation of a Personal Status law that will not guarantee full gender equality. The draft is now in hands of the Coalition for review, and we will inform during the next reporting period of any updates on the issue.

Advocacy and Lobbying Activities

On another note, the work with the Coalitions continued successfully, focusing on the three key pieces of legislation that greatly impact the condition of Palestinian women, namely the Personal Status Law, the Criminal Law and the proposed Family Protection against Violence Law. WCLAC continued its participation in 9 coalitions and forums to change public perceptions of women and their rights. The impact of such involvement is reflected in the level of engagement of civil society groups and other relevant parties working towards change and reform in the legal environment in Palestine to be more supportive of women's rights. In the long-term, the work on proposed amendments if ratified by the Palestinian Legislative Council could positively impact on the lives of all Palestinian women granting them more protection and equality.

WCLAC continued its effort in the development of legislation and institutional policies which support women and their rights. However, and without downplaying the importance of our extensive work with the coalitions and all our networking activities, it remains quite difficult to talk about impact in terms of actual legislative reforms due to the on-going crisis of the Legislative Council. No major changes are expected in the near future. This status quo reinforces our belief that new strategies need to be put in place before and during the next strategic planning for the Centre (2010-2013). Innovative approaches should be explored and introduced to our next planning process in order to ensure that we are well positioned and prepared for when the PLC resumes its operations.

Another challenge in 2008 for the Advocacy and Lobbying Unit was the departure of the Unit Head. The management at WCLAC has now appointed an acting Unit Head, however it has been submitted to the Board the idea of presenting a plan to fuse the Advocacy and Lobbying Unit with the Research and Documentation Unit, as their activities are closely linked: the Research and Documentation Unit producing information (studies and documentation) that serves all lobbying and advocacy activities. The proposal is currently being prepared and should be submitted to WCLAC's Board of Directors during the first quarter of 2009.

In terms of achievements, a two days conference on the Family Protection Law was organized by WCLAC in December 2008, under the auspices of the Ministry of Women's Affairs "*Towards a Family Protection Law: Protecting the family from domestic violence*". The conference was attended by 150 participants from civil society organizations, women's organizations, and governmental institutions such as Police Departments, Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA), Ministry of Health (MOH), Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Women's affairs (MOWA). The purpose was to discuss the Personal Status Law as well as the possible cooperation between all relevant stakeholders in protecting the family from violence, most particularly women and children. Many of the stake-holders activities were presented, such as the police Domestic Violence Units in Nablus and Bethlehem, and WCLAC's film on the theme

of incest. The necessity of cooperation and coordination between the various governmental bodies and the civil society was highlighted, as well as was identified the need to regulate the cooperation through laws and procedures. The Conference was a major milestone for the ongoing work that took place regarding this matter the last ten years.

Finally, WCLAC produced in 2008 a film on the theme of incest, supported by Heinrich Boell in the frame of the work with the Family Protection Law Coalition. The first version of the film was presented to WCLAC's staff, media professionals, civil society organisations and other stakeholders for review and discussion. Their feed-back suggested that as the film highlights a sensitive matter and a taboo in the Palestinian society, it should be shown within a specific frame of discussion and with guidance. Those recommendations were taken into account and the first version was presented on 22 November 2008 to a public attendance of 280 persons. The inauguration was covered by local television and Ma'an network. The film was then shown with the required introduction and guidance in 7 occasions to Ministries officials (Ministry of Education, Health, Social Affairs and Information), Women's organisations and other civil society organisations, media professionals as well as police officials, health professionals and universities.

Studies and Advocacy tools

The Research Unit continued towards the completion of several studies that should serve WCLAC's advocacy activities within the next two years. Those studies being: the study on the Personal Status Law, the research on Women's Needs, the study on the Palestinian Constitution, the study on the Model Parliament and the study on the concept of Protection from women's perspective. That research process allowed essential information to be expressed by women through their life experience and specific conditions. Those findings can: (1) support our position regarding specific demands towards women's rights, (2) identify the direction of our programs and work, and (3) provide a rationale for amending the laws in accordance with women's demands. All those studies should be finished in 2009 in order to provide tools for lobbying and advocacy activities, and support WCLAC's work towards legal reform.

Towards the end of 2008, the documentation study on femicide was finalized, providing demographic information on the documented cases, as well as revealing controversial positions and attitudes towards femicide within the society. The document was distributed in the frame of The NGO Forum against Violence against Women (Al Muntada) and will serve for advocacy purposes in the Forum's activism being one of the only recent sources of information on femicide available in Palestine today.

Media activities

WCLAC focuses part of its advocacy work on media activities, aiming to enhance awareness activities, release information more proactively, with the aim of improving the visibility, locally and internationally, of the Centre's work. The objective is to use media vehicles to influence organizations and individuals to rally support for the Centre's proposals for law reforms and promote positive attitudes towards gender equality. During 2008, we implemented our usual media campaign, through several

channels: the activities related to the Media Forum, our work on the campaign for the Personal Status Law funded by Heinrich Boell Foundation and implemented through SALMA network, as well as producing several articles and television shows addressing women's rights and human rights issues. WCLAC participated in 4 television shows and 12 radio episodes on national broadcasting stations. Many media institutions refer constantly to the Centre in preparing for programs and events that address women's issues. Among the media institutions that have expressed interest are Al Quds Educational TV, Palestine radio and TV stations. The Centre attracts a high level of interest and coverage by media professionals, particularly those members of the Media Forum, through audio, visual, and written media outlets. The Centre has been receiving an increasing number of invitations to appear on TV or be interviewed on radio programs or even nominate guests for different programs to talk about the laws and the legislative reforms.

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

Awareness activities campaign

The Centre continued in 2008 the community awareness activities campaign. The awareness activities campaign was implemented successfully both by the Advocacy and Lobbying Unit and the Services Unit. In total 257 activities were held, reaching more than 24 areas through the West Bank for a total of 2074 beneficiaries. This program is essential of WCLAC's lobbying and advocacy strategy to raise awareness on women's rights within various sectors of the Palestinian society. WCLAC's strategy for this result is a two-pronged approach:

- Empowering women by providing them with the social, rights-based, and legal information.
- Convey specific messages that expose the existing discrimination and the need to change social or legal behaviours to ensure equity and fair treatment for women.

The special focus this year was to target the Women's Committees³ in addition of the usual other beneficiary groups. The program was addressed to local women leaders in official institutions or civil society organizations to build up their skills and also to attract more support for law reforms proposed by the Centre. The subjects discussed were violence against women, the concept of gender, women's rights within the UN conventions and treaties, with special focus on CEDAW. In addition, the current laws were presented to the participants, such as the Personal Status Law and the penal code

³ By women's committees are the political branches of the women's movement. These structures existed long before the women's organizations, and they are a main component of the Palestinian Women's Movement.

to discuss how the law addresses women's rights. Also was presented the proposed Family Protection Law, which deals with domestic violence issues.

Another component of the awareness programs is related to the enhancement of the culture of **“women's rights are human rights”** that is conducted with university students. Again this year, the evaluation of this component was very positive because it has generated discussions and debates among the students and allowed them to express their opinions. Despite the diversity of the students' political affiliations the awareness program was able to create consensus around the social rights-based agenda, particularly in terms of women's rights.

As indicated above, WCLAC addresses its activities at various social sectors to achieve its interim objectives of developing mechanisms of knowledge and the law for women empowerment and developing an active and responsible culture to support positive cultural practices towards women. Again this year, we have documented several cases of young women that included in their marriage contract conditions related to their right to education and employment after marriage in result of their participation to the awareness sessions. Another example is the case of 2 mothers that convinced their daughters to include such clauses in their marriage contract. These indicators are being monitored systematically as they reflect a direct impact of the awareness programs. The awareness program will be evaluated during 2009 and this documentation will serve to assess the impact of the program as a whole.

Volunteer's program

In addition to the community awareness campaign, and as part of the achievements that contribute towards our second strategic objective, WCLAC continued its volunteer training program on women's rights issues. This program has a positive influence on two levels:

- Promotes voluntarism within the Palestinian community, a spirit which has started to decline in the last few years.
- Provides local communities with trained social actors who can spread awareness among the people of women's rights and legal issues so that they become real actors in their own lives.

The volunteer program was carried out successfully, as 122 volunteers were trained and the different geographic groups consolidated. The training and follow up continued to result in positive trends among the volunteers with regards to women's rights issues and the awareness of the existence of unjust laws against women which need to be amended. It also provided the volunteers with useful skills that were recognized for example by some institutions in hiring processes. It was the case this year for two of our volunteers.

One focus this year was to consolidate the groups and reinforce their capacity, always aiming at reaching marginalized areas and providing additional training to dedicated volunteers to empower them with skills that allow them at a later stage to participate in lobbying campaigns. A good indicator of the success of our project can be illustrated by the commitment of the volunteers in WCLAC's activities. For example, in volunteers' support in disseminating our studies and publications in all areas, and their great effort in coordinating with local community organisations that WCLAC

was then able to reach. WCLAC integrated as much as possible the experienced volunteers in diverse WCLAC's awareness activities, allowing us to reach remote areas, to receive valuable support in conveying messages, publications (for example our last book "If I were given the Choice" on Palestinian Women's experiences), and in the preparation and implementation of meetings.

Another achievement is the success in building a strong relationship between WCLAC's volunteers and grass-root organisations in order to promote and support community work, for example assisting volunteers to carry out awareness sessions themselves in their communities. We tried this year to work on developing these relations in order to reach a wider sector of the community and foment voluntary work. More than 30 activities implemented by the volunteers with WCLAC's support took place, for about 1338 beneficiaries. An indicator of the success of this strategy is the great commitment of the partner organisations, the good feed-back received as well as the increasing demand to implement more activities in the future.

Again this year, the volunteers' activities were covered extensively by the local media (newspapers, radio, and news agencies) in four areas: Jericho, Bethlehem, Hebron and Jericho, which demonstrates the interest in the concept of voluntary and community work in the Palestinian society and its potential to convey WCLAC's messages on gender equality.

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

WCLAC's activities towards the completion of our third objective are organized on several levels of capacity building efforts: the grassroots organisations level, the governmental and institutional level, as well as the level of the individuals, in this case women in need of social and legal counselling.

Work with governmental institutions and other stakeholders

The Service Unit has continued its close collaboration with the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA) in relation to WCLAC's emergency Shelter in Jericho. The work was conducted in accordance with the general objective of the program which is to build the capacity of the shelter in order to enable it to provide high quality and professional services in coordination with the ministry of social affairs, the police and the health organizations. It is all about integrating within the governmental institutions the

concept of protection and mechanisms of protection for women victims of violence. WCLAC's strategy is to develop an interdisciplinary approach to providing services to women and girls in crisis, working around referral procedures and encouraging good practices on issues related to service-provision to victims. This ensures a greater likelihood that beneficiaries will receive quality services, from a highly qualified team of professionals, during all phases of the experience as survivors of violence—from crisis intervention to follow-up during recovery. Moreover, this approach will have a better chance of the assumption of legal and professional responsibility and accountability of those parties who deal with victims of violence. A meeting took place between WCLAC's Deputy Director and the Head of the Capacity-Building Unit with MOSA representatives discussing the Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) (need to spell this out) renewal and the modification and approval of the bylaws of the Shelter. During the meeting, it was evident that there were different views within MOSA ranging from support to objection to the renewal of the agreement. The rationale for the objection was that there is no need to renew the agreement as long as MOSA runs its own center.

Nevertheless, the meeting discussed the mechanisms and provisions of the previous agreement on the reception of cases, the availability of a social worker and follow up by MOSA district office with the centre. Despite the fact that no written agreement has been signed, WCLAC and MOSA agreed to continue cooperating at a more informal level. Two meetings were held with MOSA district Director in Jericho to emphasize continuing cooperation. MOSA's office was officially informed about the clients received by WCLAC according to the agreed upon procedures in the centre's policy manual. In addition, many follow up contacts were made with the district office to communicate about the status of the clients, particularly when the district director was out of office. Several telephone calls were made by the WCLAC's Director to the police representative in the district in regard to clients received by the centre, in addition to official correspondence with the Head's of Jericho Police Department. As per the recommendations made in the 2007 annual report on the renewal of the agreement with MOSA and follow up with MOSA district office in Jericho, it is believed that this link with MOSA is important to ensure legitimacy, as MOSA is the official competent body in this regard. Thus, coordination and contact with the district office is important to ensure their involvement and strengthen the partnership, although there are no written agreements at this stage. Cooperation on the part of the district office is an indication of their willingness to cooperate and coordinate efforts in regard to women's protection. Continuing cooperation with the police department in Jericho as a supportive governmental body has been the fruit of sustained efforts and good quality communication and cooperation with them. In the past for example a female police officer was assigned to follow up with cases related to violence in cooperation with the Centre, and we will be training in 2009 female police officers in our offices in cooperation with Birzeit University. This relationship is an indicator of success in achieving the centre's goal and vision in terms of developing safe shelters and protection mechanisms.

At the level of health professionals, WCLAC's Capacity-building Unit concentrated this year on stimulating a referral system among all health providers and relevant officials: Ministry of Health (MOH), UNRWA clinics in Aqabat, Arroub and Bethlehem, Red Crescent Society, Palestinian Medical Relief, Health Working Committee, Family Planning Association, Bethlehem Health Directorate and Jericho

Health Directorate. Several meetings and field visits took place to discuss the set-up of a referral system. The meetings aimed at presenting and discussing the proposed work plan for the reproductive health project, aiming to develop a vision for cooperation among institutions in the field of Reproductive Health. The project focuses on creating systems, policies and procedures for intervention, referral of women victims of violence and effective follow up of the cases. In parallel, adequate training courses for health personnel in clinics and health centers should be provided to all stakeholders, continuing the training that WCLAC has been providing to health professionals and graduates in previous years, serving directly WCLAC's objective to liaise with all referral institutions dealing with victims of violence and promoting good practices among major stakeholders. In addition, these meetings and field visits served to document policies and regulations in place (or lack of regulations) regarding protocols related to women victims of violence. The findings of this process demonstrated the lack of official procedures to deal with women victims of violence and ensure their protection. All stakeholders affirmed the importance of developing such procedures with the support from WCLAC and MOH.

There is a new development for 2009 regarding the work with governmental officials and all stakeholders regarding the referral system, as WCLAC in partnership with JUZOOR have been granted funds from the European Commission to implement an innovative three-year project on building a comprehensive referral system that would include all levels of involvement: health providers but as well as 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 centre on networking and sharing models of best practices with other women's organizations in the Arab world and Euro-Mediterranean region, as well as to develop a model of 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).

WCLAC continued its participation into the Alimony Fund Committee. The Fund implements courts decisions and rulings in favour of women's right to receive alimony funds when their husband does not pay. The fund then provides the women with the Alimony and the husband owes the alimony to the Fund. 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's participation in the management committee of the Fund serves the aim of developing legislations in favour of women.

This was evident in the following achievement resulting from WCLAC's influence: The publication of Article No. 6 of the regulations of the alimony fund law, which states: "*Applicable provisions of these regulations on the verdicts for the benefit of citizens and residents of the PNA territories to sundry residing inside Jerusalem and the Green Line after: 1. Provide all papers and documents required by the law. 2. Provide a certificate from the competent authorities in the region where the convicted person resides after executing the judgment. 3. The beneficiary is authorized ratification of the judgment of the Palestinian courts from competent courts within the Green Line.*" The Committee circulated the legal text of the rule No. 6 of the

regulations of the alimony fund of Jerusalem religious Court to the executive departments in the governorates of the West Bank. This allows women holding a Jerusalem ID to collect their due alimony from their husbands holding a West Bank ID.

However an obstacle was highlighted in the legal procedures regarding cases of divorce, where a woman having been entitled alimony by the Fund loses her right to file a divorce. The issue is the following: women in Palestine are allowed to file a divorce if their husbands do not pay the due alimony. However, the court will consider as if the husband had paid the alimony in the cases where the Fund provides it for the woman, losing so her right to divorce. WCLAC is now actively working with the Sharia Court in order to highlight this obstacle and influence the court officials to find a mechanism to avoid this situation. We will inform within the next reporting period on the outcome of this issue.

Work with grassroots organisations

During 2008, the activities at the level of grass-roots organizations, such as capacity-building activities, advocacy and networking, technical and legal services, went farther than originally planned, but were not without obstacles.

An important challenge this year has been the case of our partner “Women For Life Society”, for which WCLAC has been building capacity since 2005. “Women for Life” was the victim at the beginning of the year of oral and written public attacks from a fundamentalist group in their village, Bedyā. The Director of Women for Life immediately filed an official complaint with the Police and was willing to take the case to court. The perpetrators were arrested for 48 hours and tried to negotiate with the Director for her to drop the case. The Director stated she was ready to negotiate as long as the perpetrators would apologize publicly towards the organization, but it seems they were reluctant to apologize and clear the reputation of an organization carrying out activities that are against their beliefs.

WCLAC supported the organization in all possible ways, and joined on May 7 2008 the Society in the meeting held in Bidya hall. The purpose of the meeting was to support Women for Life and counter the campaign provoked by the Liberation fundamentalist group. The meeting was attended by a large number of prominent national figures, governmental organizations, and NGOs under the patronage of Salfit Governor and Salfit Mayor. Speeches were made by many of the participants, including the Governor, the Mayor, the Society director, a representative of the President's Office, the advisor to the Governor, the Deputy Minister of Culture, WCLAC's Director, and a representative of the Ministry of Local Government. All speeches focused on the importance of supporting the Society against the attack. There was an exceptionally large attendance at the meeting by governmental and nongovernmental organizations and a large number of men and women from Salfit district. The level of attendance is an indicator of the support the Society has in the area. In addition, speeches made by participants underscored the important work the Society is doing. The participants were introduced to the Society's vision, mission, goals and activities, which increased its visibility. Numerous participating institutions expressed willingness to support and cooperate with the Society.

Regarding the capacity-building of grassroots organisations, WCLAC has continued the work with Women for Life Society and Al-Najdah Society. This is an essential part of our work as grass-roots organisations are empowered and trained to provide services to women victims of violence. As the Centre's resources are limited, meaning services cannot be provided to all women in all places, the work with grassroots organisations is of particular importance. Additionally, this has helped WCLAC remain in touch with the popular bases through the people-centred capacity-building programs, the transfer of knowledge, and the mutual learning experience. Furthermore, the work conducted has helped promote good practices, and a higher level of awareness among larger sectors of the community.

The work with the Women For Life Society continued its path, with WCLAC supporting the Society mainly through supervision activities related to the provision of services. We worked towards strengthening the services unit that provides legal and social services to women in the area with a rights-based feminist approach. During 2008, particular support was given to the Society in forming and consolidating networks with all relevant stakeholders such as governmental institutions and civil society organizations at the local and national level, including YMCA (Young Men Christian Association), Ma'an Center, Vanguard for Change, in addition to the relationship with the police department, the Governor and the Ministry of Social Affairs in Salfit. This network of relations guarantees the continuity and sustainability of Women for Life's activities and provides credibility and legitimacy to the Society in their area. At the same time, WCLAC ensures that the work with women in those marginalized areas is strengthened and developed.

WCLAC submitted as success story the work and collaboration with Women for Life to OXFAM NOVIB, as they were gathering success stories for a documentation project on Women's Leadership. Our proposal was selected and presented during a workshop as a capacity-building experience fomenting women leadership among grass-roots organizations.

Regarding the work with Al-Najda Society, it was centered this past year around supervision and empowering staff and building the capabilities of the organization particularly in community work within the vision, mission, and overall objectives of the organization, and ensuring that appropriate gender-related training was given to all staff. We also helped the development and strengthening of the services unit that provides legal and social services to women in the area. Finally, we coordinated cooperation between Al-Najdah Society and Women for Life in the field of social and legal counseling, ensuring that experiences were shared.

Social and legal services to women

The services provided to women increased again this year, amounting to a total of 268 women that received social and legal counselling, and 213 women that received one-time consultations. The total number of legal cases handled by the Service Unit was 313, focusing on the legal aspect and court demands, and 187 cases were taken to court where women were represented by WCLAC's lawyers. The rest of the cases were addressed through mediation and reconciliation with the other party to ensure women's rights without going to court. These activities, together with the distribution of a self-help manual on alimony for wives and children, contribute to the

empowerment of women at a social and legal level. For instance, the self-help manual has been designed and conceived for the women to use to go to court and obtain her alimony rights without having to hire a lawyer. This manual is an innovation in Palestine and has been widely distributed during 2008. One success story this year was the case of a woman from the North of Palestine that was introduced to the manual, and decided to pursue all by herself all the procedures. She obtained her alimony successfully, as she was entitled to a monthly alimony of ILS 1500.- , exceeding the usual maximum amount.

WCLAC's lawyers have close cooperation with court officials in order to ensure that women's rights are defended properly and we are able to point to achievements this year in terms of social and legal assistance. One sensitive case referred to us involved a woman that ran away from her family and sought protection from the police as she was subjected to sexual abuse by her brother. The police filed a complaint for incest with the court, as it is provided by Palestinian law that where the victim is an adult at the time of the prosecution, regardless of when the incest started, she is considered to have consented and prosecuted as well. Under such charges, the victim was at risk of imprisonment as she was 22 years old at the time of the charge, despite the fact that she had been abused since her childhood. This charge may also have put her at risk of being killed by her family if the incest had been unveiled publicly. WCLAC worked relentlessly with the general attorney the governor and the police in order to change the charge from one of incest to one of abuse and thus help protect the victim. The process was successful, as all charges against the woman were dropped. The woman then was secured in a safe shelter and the brother was imprisoned after being convicted of incest.

Another major achievement in 2008 regarding the work on social and legal services for women is the nomination as a Sharia Court Judge of one of WCLAC's female lawyers. She participated in the competition to become a Shari'a judge. Among the 45 applicants, there were only two women, including WCLAC's lawyer, who both succeeded, along with four men. The other female candidate has received several training from WCLAC in the past on gender issues and women's rights. They will become the first female Shari'a judges at the regional level and in the entire Arab World. WCLAC's positive relationship with the Chief Judge has helped to change the perception about women's ability to be a judge in a religious court. We consider this development as an historical milestone in the Palestinian women's struggle for equality. At the same time, having female Judges in the religious courts, particularly adhering to WCLAC's vision on women's rights, will definitely develop in a positive way the outcomes of certain cases, as the Sharia Court deliberates on all private issues in the Palestinian society. The present legislation discriminating women, the presence of such allies as Judges in the Shari'a Court is a valuable asset.

Finally, WCLAC has worked last year on a special project with the United Nations Information & Communication Technologies for Development in the Arab Region-ICTDAR. The project was implemented by UNDP/ICTDAR in collaboration with national organizations in Egypt, Lebanon and Tunisia, and is being implemented in Morocco and Jordan. The project aims to empower women to address and resolve issues related to labor law and family law, including child support payments, marriage, divorce, adoption and custody, and inheritance, by producing user-friendly, easily understandable legal information in textual and audio-visual format in local

language, and training community workers to use this material effectively. To achieve its objectives, the project focused on compiling all pertinent legal content, and on producing answers in simplified language to hundreds of frequently asked questions. This to facilitate the access of women, social workers, judges, lawyers, Ministries of Justice and Social Affairs to all topics related to women's rights. In addition, CDs and a website including all the data about women legal rights concerning family laws, violence, and labor issues is being created and should be launched the first quarter of 2009.

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.

During 2008, the Research and Documentation Unit carried out its work towards WCLAC's fourth strategic objective, aiming to expose nationally and internationally the practices of the Israeli occupation violations against women's rights.

The IHL project was consolidated. An international law training and research coordinator joined the Unit in October 2008, working on developing the International Human Rights Law (IHRL) and International Humanitarian Law (IHL) program. The Unit already has a number of years of experience of documenting violations of IHL and IHRL in Palestine and has a collated an extensive database of information about violations against women. The international law training and research coordinator is working with the Unit to develop effective strategies to use this information in the international legal arena through the international legal mechanisms and advocacy work. The development of a database on the documentation of the impact of Israeli occupation's violations was completed. The material collected during 2006-2008 is being now computerized, which will facilitate retrieval of information and categorisation as required for reporting purposes. Hence a large amount of materials collected during the past years will be analyzed in the next year.

In addition to the documentation activities, the international law training and research coordinator with other members of the unit will be developing staff capacity and knowledge on foundational aspects of IHL and IHRL as they apply to women in Palestine by running a series of training sessions in 2009. These training sessions will reflect the needs of staff and will use practical methods to assist staff in understanding the concepts and ensure that they will be able to use and apply them in their work for WCLAC. Other training sessions will be held within the Research and Documentation Unit itself to build the capacity of the staff on documenting violations effectively for use in international legal mechanisms. The Unit will also continue to work to develop the skills and capacity of their field workers. This training will encompass both theoretical and practical training on specific issues of IHL and IHRL as well as more intensive monitoring and assessment of the quality of the documentation.

Our strategy for the next two years will be to focus on documentation activities and capacity-building on documentation processes, as documentation is the basis for future reporting, position papers and other advocacy briefs.

On another note, WCLAC led the report writing for the alternative UN CEDAW report in 2005 and attended the UN CEDAW committee to speak on the report. Again this year, we have been the lead writers of the NGO report for Israel's forthcoming review by the CEDAW committee. The report was finalized in November, however it was not sent to CEDAW committee as Israel did not submit a report to CEDAW and the CEDAW committee' adjourned their review of Israel's compliance with the Convention. WCLAC will follow up on any developments and ensure that it is aware of any new date for Israel to be reviewed, and will ensure a report from the NGO perspective is presented as soon as Israel presents its own.

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

Specific objectives:

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

Fundraising and Financial situation

The Administration and Finance Unit faced a busy start to 2008, and had to overcome a number of obstacles, particularly in terms of fundraising issues.

Our sources of funding until now have been diverse, coming from partners such as International NGO's, European Commission projects, as well as governmental funding provided by the representative offices in Palestine of dedicated governments. At the beginning of 2008, the Secretariat Mu'assassat that gathers and manages, the governmental funding of the Royal Danish Representative Office, the Consulate General of Sweden and the Swiss Development Cooperation has stopped their funding for 2008 due to the bankruptcy of the Danish company hired to run the Secretariat. That created an unexpected gap in our projected funds for 2008.

In addition, part of our governmental funding has been affected by the new political decision that was taken during Paris Conference in December 2007, which was to shift the governmental funding dedicated to Palestinian NGOs in the past directly to the Palestinian Authority. This had an important negative impact on our budget as some expected governmental funding has been cancelled after this event. It has also created a overload on the governments that still do provide those funds to NGOs as most of the NGOs of Palestine are going through the same process as WCLAC, trying to identify those few governments and trying to carry out fundraising strategies to cope with this new situation. Finally, the devaluation of the US Dollar as well as the high cost of living played also a role in WCLAC's financial situation.

Following these events, WCLAC started immediately an intense **fundraising action** to cope with these changes and these new conditions. New and diverse prospects were identified and contacted, and several new relationships were created with potential future donors through proposal submissions, presentation meetings and field visits.

At the same time, a **budget revision** took place in order to reduce the running costs of the organisation while preserving as much as possible the quality of our work and ensuring the implementation of the planned activities.

As a result of our efforts, the revised budget for 2008 was fortunately fully covered. WCLAC secured the necessary funds for 2009, as well as almost a third of our 2010 budget. In addition, new partnerships and funding relations were created and we have now a list of potential contacts that have expressed their strong interest in collaborating with WCLAC in the near future. However WCLAC's financial management is aware that the recent world financial crisis may also tremendously impact on the budgets of our funders, which will require us to take extreme caution in our financial planning and in fundraising in the future.

Monitoring and evaluation

WCLAC continued the process of internal monitoring during 2008. The two evaluations carried out in 2007 by our Director on the Services Unit and the Capacity Building Unit were submitted to the Board of Directors. This exercise aimed to verify internal processes and procedures, as well as to identify the goals, achievements and progress of the units. The evaluation was the beginning of an internal monitoring process that continued with other units of WCLAC throughout 2008. The Board performed the monitoring process through questionnaires, interviews and evaluations of the senior management, Board members and Heads of units. The final report and recommendation will be presented to the staff at the beginning of 2009.

In addition to this internal monitoring process, WCLAC will carry out during 2009 an external evaluation of the 5 last years as we are finishing the Strategic Plan's implementation. A planning process for the next phase will follow the evaluation, more likely to be a strategic plan for the next three years (2010-2012). All findings and recommendations from the monitoring and evaluation processes will be taken into consideration for our future strategic planning and reviews.

Relations with partners

WCLAC continued to develop its relationships with the donors in order to maintain the quality of our existing relationships as well as to develop new partnerships for the future. Many consultation meetings, workshops and field visits took place as well as the annual Consortium meeting where all partners were able to exchange ideas, suggestions and recommendations with us. Feed-back on our financial and narrative reporting was received and taken into consideration in our reporting procedures. It was noted by the Management through this process that our staff is in need of intense training on reporting and evaluation skills.

Management Information System (MIS)

The management Information System (MIS) was launched at the beginning of the 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 has now been inserted into the system, and in 2009 all the staff will receive

appropriate training in how to use the system and integrate it into their daily work procedures.

New Premises

Following the move to the new premises of WCLAC in Batn-Elhawa, WCLAC obtained from NDC (NGO Development Centre) the necessary funds for the renovation of the ground floor of the building. This allowed our two offices in Ramallah to be consolidated in one, which now facilitates workflow and physical communication between the different Units. WCLAC has now an office in Jerusalem, one in Hebron and one in Ramallah.

Media and Communication activities

Over the past years, the Administration and Finance Unit identified the need to use media tools to enhance awareness activities. In 2003, a Media and Communication Team was established to release information more proactively, with the aim of improving the visibility, locally and internationally, of the Centre's work. In addition, the team was committed to answering queries from journalists, activists, academics, and others about our various programs and activities. The Media and Communication Team has since then been promoting the work of the Centre by strengthening relationships with donors and partners, maintaining a media list and website, and preparing and releasing current information and materials in English and Arabic about WCLAC activities and issues of pressing importance for Palestinian women.

Today the needs have evolved, i.e. the creation of our Arabic and English website has demonstrated the importance of constantly updating and publishing information that conceptualizes the news and events of the Palestinian political context into WCLAC's gender-oriented work, and that brings an added-value to the existing Palestinian civil society websites publishing news, press releases and other position papers on current general topics. It has now become essential for WCLAC to develop a professional and adequate **Media and Communication Strategy** that could respond to those new trends and needs. For that purpose, WCLAC will hire a consultant during 2009 who will assist the Media and Communication Team in the design and implementation of such Media and Communication Strategy.

6. Cooperation Partners

Our partners and stakeholders have continued to play an active role in the planning process of activities through regular meetings and discussions.

During 2008, our donors and partners have helped us through their commitment and support to the mission and objectives in a completely voluntary manner. They have strongly supported capacity-building activities for WCLAC's staff, providing technical assistance and trainings, workshops as well as supporting meetings on several issues such as:

- Advocacy and lobbying at the international level

- Reporting processes, planning and monitoring
- Fundraising strategies
- Training on European Commission funding and contracts

In addition, our long-term partners have shown special support to WCLAC during the 2008 financial crisis, providing our Administration and Financial Unit not only with assistance on fundraising strategies but also prospecting possibilities for future partnerships with their own networks and relations.

The cooperation was also very fruitful with our Partners from civil society and from governmental institutions, as well as the coalitions that WCLAC has created, activated, or participated in. Together we have identified coping mechanisms and alternative strategies thus allowing the activities to be carried out at a healthy pace. This help also came in the form of hosting and coordinating activities, providing logistical support, sharing in the implementation of activities in remote areas, advocating WCLAC's mission and objectives, support of WCLAC's activities, media coverage, and others.

A strong partnership was maintained during 2008, and we would like to truly thank all our partners for their engagement and strong support towards WCLAC's objectives throughout the years.

7. Sustainability

WCLAC's 5-year project is the logical extension and application of a largely successful overall strategy for women's empowerment developed by WCLAC over its 15-year history. The strategy and its related activities have yielded groundbreaking work related to legal and social rights of Palestinian women specifically and women in the Arab world and in armed conflict situations more generally. Sustainability will be ensured through several strategies:

First, through the adoption on the national level of responsibility over women's issues, and its continued monitoring by the responsible governmental and/or institutional and/or non-governmental bodies. For this purpose, WCLAC's effects intensive work with networks, coalitions, committees and with all relevant actors will ensure cultural and political sustainability. The coalitions that WCLAC has created and joined provide a more solid foundation for the sustainability of the positive effects and impact of its programs and activities, as its feminist vision is shared by an increasing number of governmental and non-governmental organizations.

Second, WCLAC's Action Plan is intended, in part, to influence attitudes and behaviours among community based organisations (CBOs), and eventually, change the beliefs of those Palestinians who are not yet convinced of women's rights and the importance of comprehensively addressing the issue of violence against women. Given that these are rooted in long-held traditional cultural and religious traditions and values, there will be need for both sensitive and strategic training and awareness workshop methods, materials, and on-going follow-up to sustain any effective influence. The ability of WCLAC to continue its work under the current difficult

political conditions can be viewed as a result of its socio-cultural sustainability, which is manifested in the acceptance and endorsement by the local community of its programs, mission, and activities. WCLAC conducted awareness activities and focus groups in villages, towns and cities all over the West Bank and Gaza Strip, many of these in extremely conservative areas. The participation and commitment of participants in these activities and their willingness to share their ideas and be present at these activities was possible due to the excellent reputation of WCLAC as professional, transparent, and as a development oriented organization. Over the years, we have continuously worked on improving the conditions for women in Palestine.

Third, WCLAC builds the capacity of other women's organisations in remote areas, which involves both administrative and programmatic support. WCLAC transfers its own accumulated management and technical experience to those organisations ensuring another level of sustainability. Work with grassroots organizations in remote areas ensures we stay in touch with the people and serves as our compass, keeping us on track and in sync with our target groups' needs and priorities. This is essential for our sustainability as we keep our feet rooted on the ground while our ambitions and goals keep us focused on the social change that we hope will contribute to the building of a democratic Palestinian society based on principles of equality and social justice between men and women.

To conclude, financial sustainability is evidenced by the existence of a donors' consortium that is financially committed to WCLAC's mission and objectives. Furthermore, the participation of new donors in the consortium is proof that our demonstrated financial transparency, our accountability, integrity, and achievements are a guarantee of financial sustainability. During 2008 and despite the financial crisis that we have explained earlier, WCLAC was able to create more than ten new relationships that should be strongly developed during the second half of the year, and that involve support towards WCLAC's activities for the three coming years.

Progress of Implementation 2008

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

Progress: 100%

During 2008, WCLAC continued its support and participation in 9 coalitions:

1. Personal Status Law Coalition
2. Criminal Law Coalition
3. Family Protection from Violence Law Coalition
4. Coalition against Violence Against Women (Al-Muntada)
5. Media Forum (Media Forum to support women's rights (OMQ),
6. Coalition for monitoring human right's violations under the current conditions (International Humanitarian Law Forum)
7. Coalition against Capital Punishment
8. Palestinian Forum for Safe Abortion
9. Palestinian Forum to Combat violence against children

1. Personal Status Law Coalition:

The implementation of the regional project to work on this law in partnership with the Union of Jordanian Women started at the beginning of 2008. The regional project is being implemented in four countries (Palestine, Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon). WCLAC is the coordinating body for Palestine, and we have been concentrating on several issues:

- Reinforcing the existing national personal status law coalition in the West Bank and Gaza and all local networks and setting-up a coordinator in Gaza for the regional project coalition

- Reactivating the Preparatory Committee and the Board of Directors at the national level
- Holding meetings of the coalition in the West Bank and Gaza
- National workshops in West Bank and Gaza to analyse the existing law and tackle all discriminatory articles.

As explained earlier in this report, during this semester the progress related to outputs involving political leaders and Members of the Legislature has been influenced by the Personal Status Law revision by the presidential office. The Coalition and WCLAC are taking an active part in the process of the draft law revision by the presidential office and in the process of submitting relevant comments. The development and outcomes on this matter will be reported in the next period.

2. Criminal Law Coalition:

The objective of this coalition is to pursue supporting the Minister's position in attempting to obtain a presidential decree amending some of the articles, including meetings, coordination and sending memos. No work was done on this theme in the first part of the year, as there was an issue supporting the Women's Affairs Minister's position regarding having a presidential decree amending some articles related to femicide: Some organisations/institutions did not agree on this matter whether they wanted a law or not. Calling for a presidential decree supports the prevailing trend that confiscates the authority of the PLC. In the workshops organized on the International Women's Day (March 8th), the Palestinian Minister of Justice, Ali Khashan, showed support in handling this issue. The Coalition met then in July 2008 with the Minister of Women's Affairs, the legal advisor to the presidential office and civil society organisations in order to discuss and comment the articles of the draft. The proposed draft was submitted by the Coalition to the presidential office and we will inform the next reporting period on any further developments.

3. Family Protection from Violence Law Coalition

This project is being implemented at the regional level in four Arabic countries (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine) with the support of Heinrich Boell Foundation. The plan for 2008 was amended following an agreement with Heinrich Boell at the beginning of the year, while reaffirming pursuing the work with the regional Salma Network. Activities and accomplishments can be summarized as follows:

- 8 Workshops and meetings with Civil Society Organisations (human rights and women Ngo's), activists and decision makers were organized to discuss the proposed draft, open public debate and receive any feedback and comments.
- 7 meetings with Media professionals were organized to present the proposed draft law.
- Film on Incest: 13 meetings were organized to discuss the first draft of the film produced by WCLAC and Kalket Production on the theme of "Incest". The participants were WCLAC's staff and Board Members, Media professionals, Civil Society organisations and other stakeholders. Their feed-back suggested that the film should be shown within a specific frame of discussion as the topic is sensitive and it needs to be introduced with guidance. The first version was revised, as well as new scenes were recorded and the film was presented on 22 November 2008 to a public attendance of 280 persons. The film inauguration was covered by the local television and Ma'an network. The film was then shown in 7 occasions to

Ministries officials (Ministry of Education, Health, Social Affairs and Information), Women's organisations and other civil society organisations, media professionals as well as police officials, health professionals and universities.

- A file for decision-makers was finalized and printed, stating a summary of the proposed draft law in addition to some case-studies that highlights its importance. It is now being used for advocacy and lobbying meetings with decision-makers and influential stakeholders to suggest and discuss their role in supporting the draft law.
- Collaboration with the SALMA regional network: Heinrich Boëll Foundation acted in 2008 as network coordinator and completed regional meetings and trainings of the network members. In February, a regional meeting was organized in Egypt to discuss its mission statement and strategic goals and to analyze external and internal environment as well as external and internal stakeholders, strategic issues and an action plan for the next stage. In addition, WCLAC participated in a three day training session under the theme of: "lobbying campaigns and influence in fighting violence against women".
- A two days conference was organized by WCLAC in December 2008 under the auspices of the Ministry of Women's Affairs "Towards a Family Protection Law: Protecting the family from domestic violence". The conference was attended by 150 participants from civil society organizations, women's organizations, and governmental institutions such as Police Departments, Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA), Ministry of Health (MOH), Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Women's affairs (MOWA). The purpose was to discuss the Personal Status Law as well as the possible cooperation between all relevant stakeholders in protecting the family from violence, most particularly women and children. Many of the stakeholders activities were presented, such as the police Domestic Violence Units in Nablus and Bethlehem, and WCLAC's film on the theme of incest. The necessity of cooperation and coordination between the various governmental bodies and the civil society was highlighted, as well as was identified the need to regulate the cooperation through laws and procedures. The Conference was a major milestone for the ongoing work that took place regarding this matter the last ten years. Participants assured that such a law to protect the family from domestic violence will not be viable without the serious work and amendment of the present Criminal Law, which does not protect women from violence. The importance to work harder on the awareness campaigns was also raised, as participants agreed that culture and patriarchal ideology are sometimes stronger than law, so there is the need to work on the law and on changing cultural and patriarchal ideology at the same time.

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

WCLAC became the coordinator for 2008 of the Al-Muntada Forum.

12 Monthly meetings of the Coalition

During 2008, 12 meetings were held. The aim of these meetings was to coordinate the implementation of the plan, discuss relevant documents such as the administrative and financial reports. Also these meetings were used to discuss and comment drafts of a manual on advocacy and lobbying, which was prepared by Al-Muntada. The first part of the year was dedicated to an evaluation. It was expected that the outcome of the evaluation will help upgrade the forum work and learn more about its areas of activities, strengths and weaknesses. It will help in learning of successful experiences in lobbying and advocacy to fight violence against women. One major way of fighting

violence against women is by contributing to the development of legislations that support women and their rights. However some other activities have taken place such as a statement and bulletin were issued by the Coalition regarding the case of the baby that was raped in Ramallah. Psychological support was provided to the family as well as the Coalition showed willingness to support legally the case if it is taken to Court.

Also members of the Coalition participated to workshops such as “Media in support of Women” and an activity organised by “Women For Life”. This is an activity that began during 2007 and was continued throughout 2008, coordinated by SAWA organization. A series of individual and group interviews have been carried out. The main reason was to draw out the outline of a manual on Advocacy by discussing the different practices of the organizations members of al-Muntada, and analyzing the advocacy work done. Therefore, collecting the main material of the manual from real experiences and practical activities that were applied by the organizations, not only the members of al-Muntada. Finally, a meeting was held with a Canadian delegation interested in studying and understanding the present situation of the Judicial System in Palestine. The meeting focused on the position of the Muntada on the role of the judiciary and how Al Muntada is working on the issue of femicide.

Cultural day ” Up to here, no more”

On April 12, Al-Muntada organized a cultural day with the coordination and participation of UNIFEM, UNESCO, WHO, the Ministry of Women’s Affairs, the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Interior. The event was attended by 700 male and female participants, most of which were young, as youth was the main target. One of the slogans was directed to them: “Dear young people, your role is very important and you can save a life.” The participants came from Nablus, Tulkarem, Ramallah, Jenin, Jericho, Bethlehem and Hebron. The program of the event was composed by a film on incest produced by WCLAC, where the topic was discussed.

Press Conference

On November 25, Al-Muntada organized a Press Conference to call the Palestinian Authority, police and all related formal bodies responsible for the safety of women to face their responsibilities in what concerns the killing of women Femicide. A report prepared by Al-Muntada on the issue of Femicide was presented. Additionally, the Independent Commission for Human Rights stated their concern about the issue of Femicide in the Palestinian society and repudiated it. The Ministry of Women’s Affairs also presented their position on which they stated that Femicide is a problem which needs the efforts of all concerned in Human Rights, Women’s Rights at the governmental and non-governmental levels.

Obstacles:

During 2008, some meetings that are not attended by all members. The last three months of the year three organisations were totally absent of the meetings, which does not facilitate communication and overloads the coordinator.

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

The Media Forum was established in 2005 as a response to increased levels of violence against women and the low awareness level of journalists and reporters regarding coverage of women’s issues and perspectives. Having been a completely

unplanned outcome in 2005, the Media Forum has since then been playing a considerable role in the overall increase in media coverage of women-related activities undertaken by both WCLAC and other civil society organizations in Palestine. During 2008, the following was achieved:

Central meetings in West Bank and Gaza: Two central meetings were held in Ramallah and broadcasted in Gaza by video conference. The plan for 2008 was presented in addition to the annual report for last year. Moreover, the Forum's internal bylaws were discussed, which is a constitution that governs the forum's work and membership. The necessary amendments were approved. An executive committee for the forum was elected, aiming to meet twice a month as much as necessary in order to implement work the best way. It was also recommended to elect a deputy from each West Bank area who will then activate activities with the members of his region.

Training: Seven workshops took place in the West Bank and Gaza for more than 197 media professionals and media students on the following themes: Bridging gaps and intensifying cooperation between media and women's organisations, Raise media representatives awareness on women's issues and increase their sensitivity to cases of violence against women, and finally Challenges faced by Palestinian Female media professionals.

Media coverage of women related events: These included several TV and radio broadcasts developed by the coalition with support from the Advocacy Unit. We participated in 4 TV shows, 6 radio programs, and published 6 articles in newspapers, and on the internet.

OMQ "in-depth" newsletter: The Forum issued a first "in-depth" newsletter in commemoration of 8 March containing 12 articles, most of which accomplished by members of the Media Forum. 2000 copies of this newsletter were printed and distributed to media, women and legal organizations as well as to public libraries in Ramallah and other parts of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. It should be noted that we received positive feedback on the newsletter in terms of form and content. Two other issues were published the second part of the year, discussing several themes such as the Personal Status Law, justice and Palestinian women, participation of women in the labour market, verbal and psychological abuse and other related themes.

Public relations and networking: In February, Anis Sweidan, Media Forum member participated in a training session in Sharm El Sheikh on Lobbying and Advocacy Campaigns. He was invited by Salma Coalition as representative of the Media Forum. During the last meeting of the Board of Directors a new coordinator of the networking and coalition committee was elected to activate it further in reason of the busy schedule of all members. In addition, the Gaza Forum networked with the following organizations: Women's Support and Rehabilitation Project, South Media Representatives Forum, Women's Affairs Centre, Community Voice Institution, Working Women Society, Parliamentary Education Society and Tam Training Institute. Finally, two memorandums of understanding were signed between the Forum and The "Arab Women Centre for training and Research "Kawthar", as well as with the Iraqi Women Centre.

Monitoring Report on femicide: A Palestinian monitoring network and committee was established to develop a report monitoring women's killing cited in the three major Palestinian newspapers. The report was prepared during 2008 and should be submitted at the beginning of 2009 to the committee for adoption. It will then be shared with chief editors of newspapers in order to develop a common policy towards these issues.

6. Coalition for monitoring human right's violations under the current conditions

Several institutions joined efforts to address emerging issues, especially human rights violations, following the escalation of internal fighting in Palestine. The coalition was formed in June by Al Haq, WCLAC, Centre for Rehabilitation of Tortured Victims, DCI, Mandela, Al Damir, and Jerusalem Center for Human Rights in order to detect human rights violations and contact the relevant authorities. The coalition visits Palestinian prisons, issues reports on violations, and receives complaints from citizens. A statement was issued to explain its role and objectives and provide contact information for complaints submissions in both West Bank and Gaza. In addition, three meetings took place where discussions addressed the issue of the ministerial Council willing to close some NGO's and Societies, the issue of torture, as well as the idea of designating a coordinator to take charge on some executive tasks for the Coalition and its future activities.

7. Coalition against Death Penalty

There are international and regional efforts to eradicate death penalty. This Coalition is composed of: Al-Haq, WCLAC, Palestinian Centre for Human Rights/ Gaza Strip, DCI, Adameer, Working Women Association, and ICHR.

A meeting was held in April, in preparation of a regional workshop for the regional coalition held later in the year in Alexandria/ Egypt. The workshop was attended by ICHR and Al-Haq. The participation of the Palestinian delegation was one of the best. The Workshop recommended the end of death penalty in Arab countries in Alexandria declaration.

A televised workshop was broadcasted about death penalty in May. Chief of Justice, Human rights organizations, and heads of security bodies attended.

Two memorandums were sent to President Mahmoud Abbas regarding the execution of death penalty against citizens, as decided by two Palestinian courts (in Hebron and in Jenin).

8. Coalition for Safe Abortion

This coalition was formed by an initiative of the Family Planning Association, and currently includes social, legal, and health NGOs and universities such as Bethlehem University, Al Quds University, Ibn Sina College, and MOH. The coalition aims at building consensus on the issue of abortion in Palestine and contributing to the amendments of laws on abortion, as well as raising awareness of the dangers of unsafe abortion. WCLAC is a member of this coalition and supports its activities; we regularly participate in meetings. The coalition is still preparing its internal bylaws to formulate its mission, vision and goals.

9. Palestinian Forum to combat violence against children

WCLAC is a member in this forum which comprises a number of human rights, women's rights and legal organizations working on cases of children. This forum aims to lobby and advocate for the enactment of legislations and laws that protect children against all forms of maltreatment and negligence. It also aims to raise public awareness of cases of violence and abuse and reinforce professional capacities. The forum is newly established and work is still underway to formulate the final objectives and identity the area of work and institutional membership. 11 meetings were held in 2008 during which were discussed the internal bylaws and financial and administrative systems to be adopted by the forum's secretariat. Two General

Assembly meetings were held on 1 July 2008 and 7 August 2008. In addition, the work of the coalition focused on administrative and organisational activities such as prepare an action plan for the future, web page of the forum, developing a code of conduct for professionals, prepare and training course on child protection, and discussion of child protection policies.

Specific Objective 2

Result 2-1: Continue to support relationships with 600 influential personalities and create 200 new.

Time Frame: Jan-Dec

Progress: 40%

Our database of influential personalities that have over the last two years been engaged/involved/supportive of our various activities and coalitions is expanding. A form has been developed by the Advocacy Unit in 2008 in order to update, renew and improve the database. Furthermore, our networks/coalitions/partnerships create an important social leverage for the organization that will definitely help promote our vision and mission and bring us closer to our strategic objective. The advocacy Unit is still gathering the information and will consolidate the database during the first quarter of 2009.

Specific Objective 2

Result 2-2: Complete 3 analytical studies on law reforms (Study on the Personal Status Law and a Research on Women's needs, Book on the Experience of Model Parliament, Production of internal documentation on femicide) and participate into the Alimony Fund Committee.

Time Frame: Jan-Dec

Progress: 85%

During 2008, WCLAC continued working on completing 6 analytical researches, studies and reports:

Study on the Personal Status Law: The research team continued the study according to the plan, codifying the interviews, analyzing them according to main topics/themes prior to preparing conclusions and finalizing the quantitative research tool (application sheet) together with the help of a stacionian. 1563 sheets were filled and were analysed, indicating that women do not have adequate knowledge about the law despite the recent efforts by legal institutions concerned by women's rights issues to raise awareness on this matter, particularly on the personal status law. The literature review has been prepared for the study, and a preliminary theoretical framework was completed, addressing feminist legal theories and legislation mechanisms in the West Bank and Gaza. The study will be written in 2009 based on the results of focal groups, interviews and surveys.

Report on Femicide: The process of documentation of femicide cases is ongoing, however some obstacles persist: the social pressures do not facilitate the access to the required information as people are reluctant to talk on these issues. In some cases we receive information on a femicide case but no documentation can be gathered as we do not hold names, place of residence, etc. The report on femicide was achieved in

2008, and the findings were shared with Al-Muntada's network in order to support their activities with such documentation.

Research on Women's needs: the development of this study is still ongoing. A first draft was produced and changes on the theoretical framework requested. More analysis was conducted and the second draft developed and translated into English. The final version should be ready at the beginning of 2009.

Study on the Palestinian Constitution: This is a study on the Palestinian Constitution from a gender perspective. WCLAC has hired Professor Wing to finalize this study. It should be published at the beginning of 2009.

Study on the Model Parliament: This study is still under preparation. The preparatory meetings and focus groups were conducted, as well as two chapters has been drafted.

Study on the concept of Protection from women's perspective, Violence Against Women/The relation of the occupation's violence to domestic violence: This study tries to discern the definition of the concept of protection (in cases of domestic violence) as understood and seen by the women themselves. The first phase of this project was implemented through internal meetings on methodology, the training of the researchers on conducting focus groups, the conduction of focus groups and their documentation and the beginning of the analysis of the data collected. The second phase of this project took place during 2008, where focus-groups and interviews were conducted. This process was delayed because of the difficulty in finding women accepting to participate into the interviews and disclose their personal experiences. The first draft of the study is now under preparation and should be available in 2009.

In parallel of these studies and researches, WCLAC participates to the Alimony Fund Committee. **The Fund implements courts decisions and rulings in favour of women's right to receive alimony funds.**

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 for the first year in order to prepare a paper on how the fund was established and what kind of impact it has on the lives of women. WCLAC attended 8 meetings regarding the Alimony Fund. The meetings aimed at discussing the general budget of the fund, bids for furnishing the Fund's office, the purchase of electronic devices, the Funds structure and possible mechanisms for implementing the decisions of the Fund in an effective way. Also were discussed internal administrative issues. WCLAC's participation in the management committee of the Fund serves the aim of developing legislations in favour of women. This was evident in the following achievement resulting from WCLAC's influence:

The publication of Article No. 6 of the regulations of the alimony fund law, which states: *"Applicable provisions of these regulations on the verdicts for the benefit of citizens and residents of the PNA territories to sundry residing inside Jerusalem and the Green Line after:*

- 1. Provide all papers and documents required by the law*
- 2. Provide a certificate from the competent authorities in the region where the convicted person resides after executing the judgment.*
- 3. The beneficiary is authorized ratification of the judgment of the Palestinian courts from competent courts within the Green Line. "*

The Committee contributed to circulate the legal text of the rule No. 6 of the regulations of the alimony fund of Jerusalem religious Court to the executive departments in the governorates of the West Bank. As long as women with Jerusalem ID are not able to implement the provisions of alimony issued by the religious court in Jerusalem, and not being able to meet the requirements to benefit from the alimony fund for the rejection made by the executive departments, they worked directly with the Ramallah manager who dealt with those cases and helped allocating their alimony funds. This reflects a positive impact on women with Jerusalem ID to collect alimony from her west Bank husband.

In addition, WCLAC also played a major role in moving the meetings to its premises as an initial step in order to reinforce the separation between the Fund and the Office of the Chief Judge, as separation between the law and the executing agency is important.

Some obstacles can be mentioned regarding the Fund's functioning mechanisms:

- Lack of funding from independent bodies. Shari'a courts remain the main sources of funds.
- The lack of an office separate from the Office of the Chief Judge to disburse maintenance to women increases women's feelings of discomfort and lack of independency. The link between the Fund and the Office of the Chief Judge makes it difficult for other institutions members of the committee to be present in the office to monitor the Fund's implementation of its mechanisms.

All the above barriers together reinforce control over the Fund by the Chief Judge.

WCLAC's recommendation on these issues is to work towards the support of an independent budget for the Fund separate from Shari'a courts to ensure the independency of the fund. As well as urging the Palestinian Authority to assume its responsibility in financing the Fund, since it has not received any financial assistance from the Authority so far.

Another obstacle was highlighted in the legal procedures regarding cases of divorce, where a woman having been entitled alimony by the Fund loses her right to file a divorce. The issue is the following: women in Palestine are allowed to file a divorce if their husbands do not pay the due alimony. However, the court will consider as if the husband had paid the alimony in the cases where the Fund provides it for the woman, losing so her right to divorce. WCLAC is now actively working with the Sharia Court in order to highlight this obstacle and influence the court officials to find a mechanism to avoid this situation. We will inform within the next reporting period on the outcome of this issue.

Specific Objective 2

Result 2-3: Launch/complete two media campaigns (Campaign on the study of mechanisms of protection of women, Campaign on the study of women's needs.)

Time frame: Jan-Dec

Progress: 50%

Campaign on the study of Women's needs:

The campaign was not conducted because the study has not been finalized, hence all of the activities related are postponed until next year. Upon completion of the assessment, the activity plan will be revised.

Family Protection Law Media Campaign: (with support from Heinrich Boll Foundation):

In 2008 the activities related to the Family Protection Law Media Campaign were the film on Femicide as well as the activities described around point 3 (page 20): Family Protection Law and Salma Network.

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

Long-term expected results:

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

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: Organize regular group awareness activities around women's rights in 40 new locations and follow-up in all 60 locations of the previous years.

Time frame: Jan-Dec

Progress: 100%

During 2008, several locations were reached in the areas of Ramallah, Jenin, Jerusalem, Tulkarem, Bedia and Hebron organizing 136 sessions as follows:

- The course on Women's rights are human rights, 12 meetings was held in 8 locations in the areas of Ramallah, Jenin, Jerusalem, Tulkarem, Bedia and Hebron. 136 activities were held.
- The course on Family Protection law, 4 workshops were held in Ramallah, Bethlehem and Hebron.

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: 136

Number of beneficiaries: 1417, including 325 males

Methods of Intervention in Main Locations:

Lectures and debates, workshops/meetings, courses, legal awareness courses, TV and Radio Programs 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 structures, housewives, members of administrative committees and general assemblies of women institutions, women activists, and PLC members.

Special Activities and Interventions:

1. Women's Rights are Human Rights Program:

This program is specifically designed for university students and consists of awareness raising sessions around women's rights from social, legal, and health aspects: no courses have taken place yet, as Birzeit University has not approved our intervention until today. Intensive follow-up is taking place as it is the first time that our proposal is refused by Birzeit. Another training is planned to take place in Jenin Alquds University.

2. International Women's Day

Several events were organized on or around the International Women's Day on March 8th. These included the following:

- A seminar was held with a 35 of women from Betonia, teachers and board members and municipal council members. The meeting tackled issues and legislations affecting women and applicable in Palestine.
- A meeting was organized for second year students in secretarial works (7) and discussed women's rights and laws affecting life of Palestinian women in Palestine. Consultancies were provided during this meeting.
- A festival was organized in Jenin under the slogan of unity of a people is unity of a land. It was attended by 200 women from women's centres. The ceremony was inaugurated by an address of WCLAC director on the situation Palestinian female detainees in Israeli jails.
- An awareness meeting was held in Zaboba on the question of women's human rights. The meeting was attended by members of the board of Zaboba Women Association and members of the village council as well as Sharia mufti of Jenin. The attendants were 6 males and 116 females.
- A festivity was organized in Hebron City on 28th March 2008 and was attended by 60 women and 20 men. During this ceremony the experience of the book "If I had the choice" was discussed with participation of the Research and Capacity Building Departments. The ceremony was broadcasted live on local TV channels (Alamal and Almustaqbal) and the local newspapers reported on it.
- As part of the festivities in Alkhalil on the occasion of March 8th, a work paper was presented on the problems facing women including discrimination against them. Peace and Democracy Centre organized this activity that had 40 participants (20 female and 20 male). Participants were mainly from youth and women's centers in Hebron and neighboring villages.

3. National Marches:

- We participated in the 15 May march in the occasion of the Nakba.
- As part of the events organized to celebrate the International women's day, and with participation of GUPW and some women organizations, a march was organized under the slogan of 'unity of the people, unity of the land.' Large public participated in this march from different parts of the West Bank, during which a

statement on internal killing was read explaining its impact on women in addition to the repercussions of Israeli massacres against Palestinians in Gaza.

- On 22nd March, a march was organized on the occasion of Women's International Day in Hebron. WCLAC presented a statement focusing the difficult conditions lived by our people, mainly women in Gaza condemning the inter-killing and calling upon parties to reunite.

Specific Objective 1

Result 1-2: Production of four awareness and counselling materials

Time frame: Jan-Dec

Progress: 0%

The advocacy Unit has been using materials prepared last year, as well as there was a delay in the preparation of new materials. As the Unit Head resigned and WCLAC's management will submit to the Board a proposal to fusion the Research Unit with the Advocacy Unit, this activity has been postponed until 2009. The existing materials are very good and adequate and they have been used until now in all awareness activities.

Specific Objective 2

Result 2-1: Training of 121 male and female volunteers in women's rights issues.

Time frame: Jan-Dec

Progress: 100%

During 2008, 122 male and female volunteers were trained in women's rights issues.

WCLAC was able to achieve this through the following activities:

- 9 preparatory meetings with the volunteers to assess their training needs and introduce the groups to the objectives, vision, and programs of WCLAC, the volunteer's manual and the future program.
- Training courses: There were two series of courses conducted for volunteers, divided as follows: four day-sessions in the north of West Bank in Tulkarem and Salfit and two day-sessions in Jericho. The courses aimed at promoting positive attitudes among volunteers towards gender issues and women's rights, developing their self-awareness on their community role in gender issues and equipping them with skills in community work.
- 3 evaluation meetings were held in 3 regions to plan the implementation of activities and educate volunteers in women's social and legal issues.

All courses and meetings were documented, and a report is available upon request.

Specific Objective 2

Result 2-2: Supporting voluntary activities in 13 locations with an average of 20 community activities.

Time frame: Jan-Dec

Progress: 150%

In 2008, WCLAC supported 30 voluntary activities in the following areas: Jericho, Salfit, Hebron, Tulkarem and Bethlehem, for an average of 14 locations. The total number of participants was 1338.

A central meeting took place in November for 104 participants (volunteers, members of the graduates program, volunteers from the Shelter). The Incentives were distributed as planned.

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 in Jericho.
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 programs
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 including members of safe shelters proposed to work in the emergency centre, including a social worker, shelter mothers, and a shelter coordinator.

Time frame: Jan-Dec

Progress: 100%

During 2008, WCLAC continued training of Jericho shelter's staff as follows:

- 8 meetings took place with the Shelter work team to set the schedule of work shifts and to integrate the new volunteers with the former group.
- Monthly supervision was carried out as usual 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.

Specific Objective 1

Result 1-2: Renew the agreement with the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA), the Arab Society Project and to introduce the services of the emergency shelter

Time frame: Jan-Dec

Progress: 80%

At the level of strategic cooperation with MOSA, one meeting took place between WCLAC's Deputy Director and the Head of the Capacity-Building Unit with MOSA representatives discussing the MOU renewal and the modification and approval of the bylaws of the Shelter. During the meeting, it was evident that there were different views within MOSA ranging from support and objection for the renewal of the agreement. The rationale for the objection was that there is no need to renew the agreement as long as MOSA runs its own center. Nevertheless, the meeting discussed the previous mechanisms and provisions of the previous agreement on the reception of cases, the availability of a social worker and follow up by MOSA district office with the center.

The following recommendations were made:

- Hold another meeting to complete the discussion with partners
- Suspend the renewal of the agreement until the evaluation is completed

Despite the fact that no written agreement has been signed, WCLAC and MOSA agreed to continue cooperating at a more informal level. Two meetings were held with MOSA district Director in Jericho to emphasize continuing cooperation. MOSA's office was officially informed about the clients received by WCLAC according to the agreed upon procedures in the centre's policy manual. In addition, many follow up contacts were made with the district office to communicate about the status of the clients, particularly when the district director was out of office. Several telephone calls were made by the centre's Director to the police representative in the district in regard to clients received by the Centre, in addition to official correspondence with the Head's of Jericho Police Department.

As per the recommendations made in 2007 annual report on the renewal of the agreement with MOSA and follow up with MOSA district office in Jericho, it is believed that this link with MOSA is important to ensure legitimacy, as MOSA is the official competent body in this regard. Thus, coordination and contact with the district office was important to ensure their involvement and strengthen the partnership, although there are no written agreements made so far. Cooperation on part of the district office is an indication to their willingness to cooperate and coordinate efforts in regard to women protection. Continuing cooperation with the police department in Jericho as a supportive governmental body has been the fruit of efforts and quality of communication and cooperation with them. A female police officer was assigned to follow up with cases in the centre after an experience of having a male police officer. This relation is an indicator for success in achieving the centre's goal and vision in terms of developing safe shelters.

Specific Objective 1

Result 1-3: Receive women at the Shelter

Time frame: Jan-Dec

Progress: 90%

The Shelter received 11 women in 2008. 6 of those cases were referred to MEHWAR Shelter in Bethlehem for further assistance, as WCLAC's shelter serves for emergency cases only, and for short periods (up to one month). Details about the women's profiles and outcomes of the cases are documented in the Shelter's reports and are 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. It was noted in the internal reports the efficiency of the

housemothers as well as the commitment of the staff in the different time shifts. There is no documented failure in providing every woman who entered the Shelter with appropriate support. Was also demonstrated our ability to continue to offer services in the Shelter assuring high quality of services and capacity to receive and assist all cases. The external evaluation that WCLAC will carry out during 2009 should determine the future of the Shelter. The cost is quite high, however it is justified as the cases received at the Shelter are emergency cases, very sensitive, basically those cases that cannot easily be referred to another governmental institution for example. The purpose of WCLAC's shelter is to offer protection to those women that do not know where to turn for assistance. We will inform on the outcome of the evaluation the next reporting period.

Specific Objective 1

Result 1-4: Train 40 health professionals qualified to handle cases of violence

Time frame: Jan-Jun

Progress: 100%

Two training sessions for 35 members of health-related institutions were held in April and May comprising a 4-day, 20-hour programme of courses (Bethlehem and Jericho). The objective was to equip the trainees with skills in client reception, session management, as well as empathy and support to women victims of violence. The training revealed the challenges faced by the different types of health workers in terms of social obstacles (social norms, social authority, lack of privacy and women's right to self-determination), administrative difficulties (workload, lack of standard protocol for intervention in cases of violence against women), professional difficulties (lack of skills in intervening in some cases) and value-related difficulties (attitudes toward certain dilemmas in reproductive health when dealing with women seeking care due to violence and sexual abuse). The institutions that participated were: UNRWA (Health Department), UPMRC, Health Worker Committee, Family Planning Association, Palestinian Red Crescent, and the Ministry of Health.

These workshops targeted essential institutional stakeholders in the health service provision as well as primary health service providers all with the intention of developing institutional and individual capacity of health service providers to give more professional support to women and girls victims of violence.

Specific Objective 1

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

Time frame: Jan-Dec

Progress: 100%

Seventeen meetings took place with Health providers and relevant officials (MOH, UNRWA clinics in Aqabat, Arroub and Bethlehem, Red Crescent Society, Palestinian Medical Relief, Health Working Committee, Family Planning Association, Bethlehem Health Directorate, Jericho Health Directorate) to discuss the set-up of a referral system. The meetings aimed at presenting and discussing the proposed work plan for the reproductive health project, which is focused on developing a vision for joint work among institutions in the field of Reproductive Health with special focus on creating systems, policies and procedures for intervention, follow up and referral of women victims of violence and preparing for training courses for health personnel in clinics

and health centers. All participants in the meetings affirmed the importance of developing such procedures and turning them into reality with support from WCLAC and MOH. Agreement was reached to start the implementation of the training courses for health staff of partner institutions as well as subsequent field follow up and supervision to ensure the procedures for interventions with women victims of violence are in place.

In addition, these meetings and field visits served to document policies and regulations in place (or lack of regulations) regarding protocols related to women victims of violence. The findings of this process demonstrate the lack of official procedures to deal with women victims of violence and ensure their protection. That All documentation is ready for consultation in the frame of the new joint project between WCLAC and JUZOOR, funded by the European Commission and cited earlier in this report.

Specific Objective 2- Build Capacity of grassroots women’s organizations to provide services to women victims of violence.

Time frame: Jan-Dec

Progress: 100%

This specific objective is particularly important as grass-roots organizations are empowered and trained to provide services to women victims of violence. As the Centre's resources are limited, and thus services cannot be provided to all women in all places, the work with grassroots organizations is of particular importance. Additionally, this has helped WCLAC to remain in touch with the popular bases through people's centred capacity building programs, the transfer of knowledge, and the mutual learning experience. Furthermore, the work conducted has helped promote good practices and higher levels of awareness among larger sectors of the community.

Below are detailed our achievements per result, and for each of the organisations that we are training at the moment: “Women for Life Society” and “Al-Najdah” Society.

In 2009, WCLAC will start the work with a new grass-root organisation in Jenin.

A: Women for Life Society

Specific Objective 2

Result 2-1: Train the staff of “Women for Life” Society

Time frame: Jan-Dec

Progress: 100%

Following are the main activities accomplished in 2008 regarding the training of the staff:

Support on social and legal cases handling:

This activity is described to explain the progress achieved in the Society's plan due to WCLAC’s supervision and follow up since the start of work with the Society in 2005 and the resulting impact on quality of services it is offering women in the area and its reputation in the community as a major source of support for clients.

In 2008, 71 cases of women in need of legal and social counselling were handled by

Women for Life. Out of those, 23 cases were referred to the Society through awareness workshops from the project funded by UNIFEM and implemented in Al-Zawyeh, Bidya and Qaraweh villages, 4 were referred from Al-Najdah Society, 2 from Salfit MOSA's office, and 8 referred from former clients or other institutions. Out of these cases, **27 files were closed** after action in court was taken and/or after obtaining the ruling in favor of the clients, and one case was legally closed but still followed up with social counselling sessions. The remaining cases are being followed-up as per the usual procedures. The referral of new clients by other clients or institutions reflects the satisfaction with the service and women's need for such services in this marginalized area, where direct legal and social services are lacking.. Furthermore, women's reporting to the Society in result of community awareness activities implemented by the staff (the social worker and the lawyer) on violence against women, laws and rights reflects women's needs for awareness on their legal and social rights and for empowerment in order to demand their rights. This is corroborated by the decision of a number of women participating in these workshops to seek assistance from the Society. The number of cases indicates the quality of work and the reputation of the Society as a resource and reference for women and institutions in the district. This is a reflection of the improved competence and performance of staff in offering legal and social services. Finally, it also reflects the achievement of the third strategic objective of building the capacity of grassroots women organizations in the provision of legal and social services.

Monthly supervision sessions:

In 2007 annual report, we stated that Women for Life Society had implemented a legal awareness program, in addition to legal services, through a project funded by UNIFEM. In the evaluation conducted by both partners (the Society and UNIFEM), a recommendation was made to renew the contract with the Society based on the same conditions, while adding a new clause to provide professional supervision over the legal services by WCLAC Service Unit. Therefore, it was agreed between the Society and WCLAC's Capacity Building Unit and Service Unit to start this professional supervision with the Service Unit since the beginning of March. A supervision plan for the social worker and the lawyer was developed, according to which they were invited to attend the group supervision sessions of the Service Unit staff biweekly with a total of 8 hours in addition to receiving individual supervision by the Unit's Head and social worker. A supervision session was held with the social worker in March for 2 hours, where cases were discussed and the proper supervision of cases was provided. Focus was also given to a specific emergency case and how to intervene with the client. In addition, the social worker and the lawyer participated in two supervision sessions with Rana Nashashibi (PCC) at WCLAC on 24 April and 28 May for a total of 10 hours.

Meetings with the Society's administrative committee and staff:

Seven meetings were held to support the organization on their work. The objective of the first meeting was to discuss issues related to the personal status law events, review the Society's media visibility strategy, plan the events for the 8th of March, discuss internal issues related to staff, discuss the financial situation of the Society, discuss the role of the Advisory Board. The following meetings aimed mainly to discuss the crisis that the Society encountered with some fundamentalist group in their village. Was addressed the incitement and provocation campaign led by the Liberation

fundamentalist group in Salfit area against Women for Life Society through the Friday Prayer's preach in Bidya Mosque, accusing the Society of corrupting girls, in addition to the request submitted to the police by the fundamentalist group supporters to close down the Society claiming that it functions within foreign and missionary agendas and carries out acts that contradict the norms, traditions and religion, corrupt women and girls and promote obscenity. A flyer was distributed in the area describing the Society as working within a foreign agenda and defaming some staff members and long-standing women beneficiaries. Families of beneficiaries were visited and provoked against the Society in order to ban their women from attending its activities. WCLAC supported Women For Life crisis joining the Society in the meeting held in Bidya hall in the presence of a large public – men and women. Attendance included a large number of prominent national figures, governmental organizations, and NGOs under the patronage of Salfit Governor and Salfit Mayor. Speeches were made by large number of participants, including the Governor, the Mayor, the Society director, a representative of the President's Office, the advisor to the Governor, the Deputy Minister of Culture, WCLAC's director, and a representative of the Ministry of Local Government. All speeches focused on the importance of supporting the Society against the attack, to which it has been subjected. There was a large and exceptional attendance by governmental and nongovernmental organizations and a large number of men and women from Salfit district. This large attendance is an indicator of the support the Society has in the area. In addition, speeches made by participants underscored the important work the Society is doing. The participants were introduced to the Society's vision, mission, goals and activities, which increased its visibility. Numerous participating institutions expressed willingness to support and cooperate with the Society.

Finally, the remaining meetings were dedicated to discuss the programs and activities of the Society, which were reviewed and evaluated. Strategic planning activities were held as well as recommendations were issued to be integrated in their Plan of Action that was finalized for the next three years.

Specific Objective 2
Result 2-2: Develop external relations for “Women for Life” Society
 Time frame: 2006
 Progress: completed

This was completed in 2006. The society was able to initiate the formation of a feminist coalition of 10 women's organisations in Salfit district that will support and endorse activities in favour of the women in the region. The Society's website will be developed through funding from a new donor with help from the Centre.

During 2008, WCLAC presented Women for Life as a Success Story for a documentation project of one partner: Oxfam Novib.

B: The “Al-Najdah” Society

Specific Objective 2
Result 2-1: Train the staff of “Al-Najdah” Society
 Time frame: Jan-Dec
 Progress: 100%

Meetings with the Society’s administrative committee and staff:

9 meetings were conducted between the Capacity Building Unit, the Administrative and staff of the Society. The purpose of the first meeting was to evaluate WCLAC’s work with the Society in 2007 as well as to promote the Society’s independence from any political affiliation in terms of premises, staff, programs and relations with other institutions. Regarding the other meetings, they aimed to monitor the Society’s work in a community awareness project as well as discussing and establishing the Society’s mission and vision and objectives with all staff.

Training courses:

- A 3-day training course on gender issues for the Board and the staff (15 hours) for 20 participants.
- 6 workshops were held for the General Assembly and the Board on laws and women’s rights, violence against women and domestic violence issues.
- 2 workshops were held for the Board and the staff on the preparation of the Vision and mission of the Society, objectives and strategic planning.
- 1 workshop was held on the Alimony Fund procedures and mechanisms for all staff upon the Board’s demand.
- 1 workshop was held for all staff on the provision of legal and social services to women in need and the necessary internal working mechanisms to be in place such as support from the Management to the lawyers and social workers.
- 1 training on proposal writing for all staff
- 1 training on strategic planning for all staff, 15 training hours

Supervision sessions:

- The Society’s lawyer received regular supervision and training, two days a week by the lawyer of Women for Life Society, accompanying her to court and visits to women in the prisons.

Support on social and legal cases handling:

In 2008, 68 cases of women in need of legal and social counselling were handled by An-Najdah Society in Tulkarem Governorate, under the supervision of WCLAC and the support of Women for Life. Out of those, 50 cases were referred to the Society through community awareness activities, civil society organisations, individuals, and the Sharia Court. 8 files were closed and follow-up is being pursued on the remaining cases as necessary.

Specific Objective 2

Result 2-2: Review the financial and administrative system of “Al-Najdah” Society

Time frame: Jan-Dec

Progress: 80%

A two-day workshop was held on the charitable societies laws and regulations for the administrative committee, four staff members and 6 members of the General Assembly. The workshop covered the laws related to the societies, its sources and references and related activities on non-profit organisations, as well as the role of the General Assembly and the Board of Directors. The review of the financial systems

took place during the second part of the year and support on the financial reporting of the Society was provided.

Specific Objective 2

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

Time frame: Jan-Dec

Progress: 100%

This result was achieved through several support activities:

- 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 8th of March day by integrating volunteers’ effort with the Society in the event.

Specific Objective 2

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

Time frame: Jan-Dec

Progress: 100%

WCLAC assisted the Society on issues related to the development of their programs and activities: assistance was provided in the monthly plan for community activities and in monitoring the implementation of the plan. The Society also received assistance in developing their reports on the activities and received training on proposal writing.

During 2008, The Society held 77 awareness raising workshops in 7 areas of Tulkarem, being 4 workshops per month in each village for more than 330 women. WCLAC provided support and capacity-building for the training team responsible for the awareness campaign activities.

Third Specific objective: Support referral institutions, such as police, to deal with women victims of violence.

Specific Objective 3

Result 3-1: Train staff of referral institutions.

Time frame: Jan-Dec

Progress: 100%

WCLAC trained 35 health workers to handle cases of violence in the frame of the work with relevant officials (see result above p. 41).

In addition, we continued the implementation of the Graduates program, having trained 104 new Social work graduates and counsellors (UNFPA project). This project is the result of cooperation between WCLAC and UNFPA, the objective being to influence newly graduated social workers and counsellors early in their careers towards feminist practice and gender related issues. The program involves a series of training workshops and courses with fresh university graduates who are specialized as social workers in Hebron, Jerusalem, Nablus, and Gaza. The program 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 program consists in practical training, the new graduates being able to work in public schools for four months under the supervision of the school counsellors (a total of 12,000 training hours for the graduates). This result is crucial in developing professional skills among staff of referral institutions in handling cases of violence against women, and providing high-quality counselling services. Also as an effective referral tool. Additionally, this would help promote more supportive cultural attitudes towards women's right and issues. A detailed report on this special project is available and can be provided upon request.

Specific Objective 4: Provide Legal representation and mediation services for women victims of violence whose problems are not addressed by social support groups.

Specific Objective 4

Result 4-1: Provide social and legal services for 150 women

Time frame: Jan-Dec

Progress: 150%

The number of women that benefited from legal and social assistance from WCLAC in 2008 was 268, as follows:

- 136 in the Central area (Ramallah)
- 29 in Jerusalem
- 102 in the South (Bethlehem and Hebron)

WCLAC continued to offer legal and social services to women, mostly poor women, in the age range of 16-60 years, who have been subjected to violation of their legal and social rights and/or to domestic violence by the husband or a family member. These women reached to WCLAC for help and to request legal and social service that can empower and enable them to demand their rights in courts, sessions or through mediation processes.

Out of these 268 women, 313 cases were identified and dealt with, including 187 cases that were taken to court. 158 cases (new and carried over from previous years) were sentenced in the court in 2008, but their files were not all closed yet because of two main reasons: some of them need follow up, for example on social issues, before closure. Some cases still need legal execution and the procedures of endorsement in the courts are slow. 145 files out of the 268 new were closed this year, which means that 123 files will be carried over to the next year. Out of 151 files carried over from 2007, 135 were closed this year and 16 remain active and will be carried over to the next year. In addition, WCLAC assisted in drafting the legal action for a total of 114 cases brought to the court.

When appropriate, the women received the self-help manual on Alimony and benefited from follow up by WCLAC lawyers throughout the course of the action.

Finally, seven of the cases were referred to the Shelter as they needed the services of a safe home. A social worker and a lawyer were designated to follow up on their cases in cooperation with the police.

The larger number of women than expected that received legal and social counselling as well as the large number of clients referred by third parties demonstrates not only the increasing need for those services among Palestinian women, but also the positive reputation that WCLAC has obtained throughout the years.

Specific Objective 4

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

Time frame: Jan-Dec

Progress: 300%

The number of one-time consultations offered in 2008 (social and legal consultations) was 213 in the northern and central parts of the country. These consultations were given through the telephone or single interviews. There is an important over achievement regarding this result, as WCLAC has become the reference for many women in need.

Advice was precisely given on legal rights for women including alimony issues, inheritance and divorce and rights of women emanating from marriage contracts. Advice also focused on social related issues such as marital relationships, children relations particularly during adolescence, and issues related to the Israeli ID cards for women from Jerusalem.

80 consultation files were referred to the Service Unit for additional legal and/or social counselling. The fact that 80 consultation files have been transferred to service files is yet another indicator of women's trust in WCLAC and its services.

Among the 213 one-time consultations, 30 cases needed specific economical support and therefore were referred to MOSA (Ministry of Social Affairs) and UNRWA for cash assistance or health care.

During 2008, there were some developments in the type of social and health issues women would seek consultation for: some consultations were related to virginity, extramarital pregnancy, sexual abuse leading to pregnancy and psychological disorders. There were also 6 consultations from institutions or professional staff, including from the Women's Technical Affairs Committee and the Working Women Committee. Finally, 5 consultations from the American Consulate took place regarding issues of American women married to Palestinians.

Specific Objective 4

Result 4-3: Conduct a Community awareness campaign

Time frame: Jan-Dec

Progress: 100%

During 2008 a number of 121 community awareness sessions were conducted by the Services Unit staff. The number of participants was 667 women and men (91% women, 9% men).

In order to incur community change and apply more pressure in decision makers, community awareness-raising sessions that include different society sectors such as

women, men and decision-makers have also been implemented. The meetings were held for several target groups such as women and men, health service providers, counsellors, lawyers, social workers, students, political activists, governmental cadres, women leaders and volunteers who make a strong supporting body for the centre in many parts of the country.

The meetings were held in accordance with the awareness-raising plan as follows:

- **60 meetings were held in the south** with the participation of a lawyer and a social worker from the Centre (in Taqoumia, Doura, Hebron, Beit Ummar, Bethlehem, Al Khader)
- **23 meetings were held in the centre** with the participation of a social worker and a lawyer (Beit Anan, Mazare Al-Nubani, Betunia, Ramallah, Beit Our and several Jerusalem areas)
- **11 meetings in the north** with the participation of a social worker and a lawyer (Sawiyeh, Toulkarem)

The main topics addressed were icebreaking, teambuilding, concentration exercises, knowing oneself (Johari window), types of marriage, violence, domestic violence, sexual violence, sexual abuse in legal terms, marital relations, rights and duties, customary marriage, family relations, polygamy, wife rape, unacceptable behaviour in family lives, women's demand for their share in inheritance, adolescence, terms of marriage contract, personal status law and penal code.

At the legal level, the groups were fed with information on a number of laws particularly parts related to women's issues. The groups then realized the injustices of certain legal texts on women and asked for amendments and even went as far as asking about ways to amend the laws and how they could contribute to these amendments. This took place thanks to the attendance of the lawyer who explained some of these laws. Some groups came out with a number of proposals and recommendations to amend the laws, and WCLAC's centre revealed that such a process was long and that the centre usually strives to draft bills that would be in the interest of women.

Obstacles:

There have been continuous attempts to bring the Jerusalem groups to success in different Jerusalem areas (Jabal Al Mukkaber, Sour Baher, the Old City / Burj Al Laqlaq) but they all failed mainly because of the school principal's refusal to allow WCLAC into the school arguing that the centre carries ideas against religion and against his own convictions. Although we held a number of meetings with the schoolmaster to orient him with WCLAC's activities and programs, he refused us. In Jabal Al Mukkaber, the group cancelled the activities due to political turmoil in the town. In Burj Al Laqlaq, there were mainly clashes in time so it was difficult to hold meetings on a regular basis.

Meetings on raising the awareness of women on their human rights at the university of Hebron and the university of Abu Dis:

The goal of such courses with university students is to train them and to change their attitudes to view women as human beings with equal rights. Since university

education is mostly theoretical and not necessarily reflecting the reality, it was necessary to approach university students to strengthen their perception of women's rights according to local laws and international conventions and to equip them with the skills and mechanisms of working with women, especially in counselling.

Hebron University

The implementation started on 8 June with the participation of 25 female students for 11 sessions of two hours. The students came from social services, counselling, media, education and science. The first session focused on needs assessment, team building, and introduction. Issues discussed included the personal status law, the penal code, international conventions, international humanitarian law, gender and gender discrimination in the laws. The course received media coverage in the local press and radio, as well as in Maan Network, Al-Ayyam newspaper and Freedom Radio.

Although the announcement made in the university was targeted at both males and females, only female students registered. Perhaps this is due to their perception that the organizer is a Women's centre or because male students do not consider these topics a priority.

Abu Dis University

The implementation started only in November due to strikes in the Palestinian universities. Fifteen students registered (10 females and 5 males). 4 sessions of 4 hours were implemented. Issues discussed were women's rights in the international conventions, local laws and the international humanitarian law.

Specific Objective 4

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

Time frame: Jan-Dec

Progress: 70%

Workshop with female judges:

Official correspondence was conducted with the Judiciary regarding the workshops to Female Judges. Intensive follow-up is maintained with the Secretary of the Judicial Council. The Director examined our request but is not convinced about the goal of the objective of any foreseen meeting. The centre suggested meeting another person but until today we are waiting for an answer. We are following up the matter on the phone to assign meeting and we hope to implement the program with the Judiciary and also hope that more pressure is exerted on the Director to convince him into accepting our request. It is difficult to reach out to female judges in order to implement the program because of the rejection of the Director to the idea.

Workshop with social worker in religious courts:

A Training course was organised for 15 participants who operate in the field of family counselling in the religious courts. Topics discussed were communication and women in media, and the draft law for protecting the family against violence. The group of trainees expressed their desire to sustain their contact with the unit and a number of meetings were held to discuss several related topics that would help them to develop their work. The group interacted well when the topic of "women in media" was brought up and the negative impact that is left on the concept of how women are viewed as a result particularly that media is seen as an important outlet that shapes views about women. In the beginning, family law issues triggered some resistance by the participants particularly that most of the participants come from religious backgrounds and operate within the existing laws at the religious courts and they care

that such laws do not contravene Islamic law. However, after presenting the views on the matter, they were attracted and became more involved in the discussions and asked for more elaboration.

Meetings with officials:

Meetings were arranged with organizations such as the police, the Chief Justice office, and the alimony fund office to talk about the alimony fund and its status and contribution in assisting women who carry Israeli ID cards and the possibility of including them in the fund. Four meetings were held with Police Seniors in the various governorates and the Director General of the Police in order to explore ways of cooperation to resolve urgent matters. The need rose after it was found out that many battered women were referred to the centre for protection. These meeting were held as follows:

- 1- the Hebron Police Director
- 2- the Ramallah police investigation Director
- 3- the Police Director in the Jerusalem suburbs
- 4- Major Kamal Asheikh, the Director General of the police in the West Bank. We met with him for more than one time in order to seek ways to consolidate the centre's relationship with the police.

The centre also met with a number of NGOs to explore the best mechanisms of referring social cases and women who need psychological assistance and work with children.

An important achievement in 2008 regarding the work with the Court officials, and as a result of WCLAC involvement with the Sharia Court the last ten years, is the nomination as a Sharia Court Judge of one of WCLAC's female lawyers and another female lawyer that received previous WCLAC training in the past. They participated in the contest to become a Shari'a judge. Among the 45 applicants, there were only two women, they won, along with four men. They will become the first female Shari'a judges at the regional level and in the entire Arab World. WCLAC's relation with the Chief Judge has helped to change the perception about women's ability to be a judge in a religious court. We consider this development as an historical milestone in the Palestinian women's struggle for equality. At the same time, having female Judges in the religious courts, particularly one adhering to WCLAC's vision on women's rights, will definitely develop in a positive way the outcomes of certain cases, as the Sharia Court deliberates on all private issues in the Palestinian society.

Specific Objective 4

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

Time frame: Jan-Dec

Progress: 100%

The distribution of the manual was carried out as follows:

Internal distribution to WCLAC units, including 100 copies to Hebron office. To be distributed to clients and institutions, such as Family Planning Association, Sabaya centers in Beit Ula and Kharas, and Women's Club in Tarqumia, 100 copies to the capacity building unit, which were distributed in a training course with the Red Crescent and health providers, where it was also used as a training material on women's right to maintenance and on how to use the manual with their clients, 10

copies to the Board of Directors, 10 distributed to clients in Bethlehem, 50 copies to Al-Najdeh Society in Tulkarem to be used in helping women to demand for their rights and 50 copies to Women for Life Society to be used in awareness raising activities and to help women filing complaints to courts.

Externally, including: 8 to nursing students in Palestine Technical College, 37 to Chief Judge Sheikh Taysir Tamimi to be used in Shari'a courts, 10 to A member of the Board of Trustees (Ms. Zahira Kamal), 10 to childhood program (Ms. Maha Sabbagh) and 50 copies to women who provided professional support by promoting the manual and how it can be used, 1 to the Independent Commission, 1 to Al-Haq, 1 to Muwaten.

The manual was also distributed to counsellors implementing awareness raising activities in their localities in order to prepare materials to make women aware of their right to maintenance and how to demand for it. In addition, 50 copies were distributed to clients attending WCLAC's offices.

100 copies of the manual were distributed to beauty salons in Ramallah, Hebron and Bethlehem. In addition, 50 copies were sent to Gaza to the Palestinian Centre for Conflict Resolution.

7 meetings were held in the northern, middle and southern parts of the country in order to promote the manual and instruct women how to use it. It was noted that the promotion of the manual triggered the curiosity of a number of men who actually asked to get some copies in order to encourage their family members to file for alimony and find more about alimony. A number of Gaza organizations also asked for a number of copies including the Palestinian Centre for conflict resolution that wanted to make a similar manual. They were informed that the law in Gaza was different but they said they would adapt to their own laws.

After distributing the manual, we obtained individual evaluation from the beneficiaries who used the manual. They explained the usefulness of the manual when they went to court and how they applied the steps indicated in the manual and how they felt stronger with the manual at their disposal, which helped them to move step by step towards their objective. The collective evaluation has not been completed yet but an evaluation session is expected to be held with the organizations that received and used it.

Achievements:

Following the promotion of the manual, it was noticed that some men ask for copies to help relatives in filing a legal action to demand maintenance, as well as to learn about the right to maintenance. Institutions from Gaza asked for copies, such as the Palestinian Centre for Conflict Resolution. We explained that the law in effect in Gaza is different but they asked to look at the manual in order to develop a similar one that corresponds to the law in effect in Gaza.

A woman leader working in the awareness raising field attended to the Centre and asked for a copy of the manual in order to run sessions based on its contents.

Finally, and as mentioned earlier in this report, a success story this year was the case of a woman from the North of Palestine that was introduced to the manual, and decided to pursue all by herself all the procedures. She obtained her alimony successfully, as she was entitled to a monthly alimony of ILS 1500.- , exceeding the usual maximum amount.

Specific Objective 4

Result 4-6: Conduct a media campaign

Time frame: Jan-Dec

Progress: 100%

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

- We participated into the Media Forum on designing a strategy for 2008 to convey messages to decision-makers and the public. A training course was implemented on strategies to fill the gaps and intensify cooperation between media institutions and women's institutions.
- 5 articles were published (local newspapers and Ma'an Network) targeting the public and addressing women's rights and human rights issues.
- 4 TV episodes were aired addressed to the public to promote the importance of human rights and women's rights.
- We were invited by Palestinian TV and Radio stations to appear on talk shows and news programs to discuss women's rights, violence against women, and Personal Status Law. We participated in 4 TV shows and 12 radio episodes. WCLAC is considered a media resource for 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 women's killing.

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

Result 1-1: Training of 10 women on documenting the violations.

Time frame: Jan-Dec

Progress: 140%

Two training courses were conducted for 14 field researchers. The training was held on 15 and 16 April 2008 and attended by 14 researchers from Salfit, Tulkarem, Nablus, Jenin, Qalqilia, Ramallah, Jerusalem, Hebron and Bethlehem. The course tackled the legal status of Jerusalem City with focus on the Israeli occupation's policies regarding unification of Palestinian families, as well as the violation of civil rights of the Jerusalemites by the Israeli occupation, primarily house demolitions. Regarding the capacity building for the researchers' team, two new researchers attended a training course on IHL standards held by Al-Haq. Two other researchers were also required to attend in order to improve their competence in the documentation process. The two newly contracted researchers were chosen from Jerusalem and Jericho areas in order to document violations in these two cities. This is important since each geographic area has its own geopolitical context and characteristics. For example, close to Jericho, lands are being confiscated and farmers are expelled from their lands in order to complete the construction of the Wall. On the other hand, Jerusalem has its own specific legal status, as the local Palestinians are subjected to the Israeli laws but their rights are being violated as Palestinians.

Specific Objective 1

Result 1-2: Publish reports submitted to CEDAW.

Time frame: Jan-Dec

Progress: 100%

WCLAC is developing a database that will constitute a reliable source of information in preparing international reports, particularly related to the CEDAW. To that effect, the Centre contacted research and documentation institutions to coordinate reciprocal acquisition of studies. The publications are compiled by our Centre's librarian. The first part of the year WCLAC cooperated with several organizations to exchange and gather publications and documentation. As there is a lack of local studies on women's condition, we are also collecting data and documentation from local human rights studies. Another obstacle is the lack in Palestine of gender-sensitive statistics. A committee was formed to gather all relevant stakeholders (women's organisations, human rights organisations, etc) in order to review, discuss and prepare the issues to be exposed in the report. The report was finalized in November, however it was not sent to CEDAW committee as Israel did not submit a report to CEDAW. WCLAC is following up on any development and will ensure a report from our end is presented as soon as Israel presents its own.

Specific Objective 1

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

Time frame: Jan-Dec

Progress: 100%

The IHL project was reinforced. An international law training and research coordinator joined the Unit in September 2008, working on developing the International Human Rights Law (IHRL) and International Humanitarian Law (IHL) programme. The Unit already has a number of years of experience of documenting violations of IHL and IHRL in Palestine and has a collated an extensive database of information about violations against women. The international law training and

research coordinator is working with the Unit to develop effective strategies to use this information in the international legal arena through the international legal mechanisms and advocacy work. In addition to the documentation activities, the international law training and research coordinator will be developing staff capacity and knowledge on foundational aspects of IHL and IHRL as they apply to women in Palestine by running a series of training sessions in 2009.

The development of a database on the documentation of the impact of Israeli occupation's violations was completed. The material collected during 2006-2008 is being now computerized, which will facilitate retrieval of information and categorisation as required for reporting purposes. Hence a large amount of materials collected during the past years will be analyzed in the next year.

Specific Objective 1

Result 1-4: Study “The Exclusion of Women from the Protection of International Human Rights Law: Experiences from the Arab World”

Time frame: Jan-Dec

Progress: 0%

This activity has been postponed to 2009 due to workload.

Specific Objective 1

Result 1-5: Attend one international conference on women issues

Time frame: Jan-Dec

Progress: 100%

In an attempt to contextualize the work of WCLAC within the larger global movement addressing the whole issue of women and conflict, and the role of women in peace building and peace making which is a new focus of WCLAC program work, WCLAC’s Director attended the following international conferences:

January 2008, The Hague, gathering of international activists to discuss the theme “Can Global Civil Society Do more?”.

February 2008, invitation by the Foreign minister of Iceland, Mrs Ingiborg Gisladdottir, to discuss “Women, Peace and SCR 1325 in the Israel Palestine conflict”.

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:

4. Develop planning, evaluation, and monitoring system.
5. Build capacity of WCLAC staff.

6. 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.

Time frame: Jan-Dec

Progress: 100%

During the first half of the year, WCLAC revised and refined the annual activity plans through meetings with Unit Heads.

The annual narrative and financial reports for 2007 were prepared by the administrative unit and approved by the Board of Trustees.

A General Assembly took place in November, the next one is planned to take place after March 2009 and will include elections of the Board of Directors for the next period. 8 meetings of the Board of Directors took place in 2008.

Regarding the financial department, a financial adviser consultant was hired to ensure WCLAC's planning for financial sustainability and for specific financial advice on issues related to the USD devaluation, budget review, etc.

Note on the reporting process:

The Administrative Unit has continued to assist the Unit Heads in the reporting process to improve the quality standards of all WCLAC's reports. A one-day workshop was held to train all WCLAC's staff on reporting procedures and techniques. In addition, the Unit Heads have been requested to report to the Administrative Unit on a quarterly basis in order to improve the efficiency of their documentation process as well as to exercise the capacities acquired during the workshop. We will continue assisting the Unit Heads on the reporting process as needed.

Note on the budget review:

Due to the deficit and fundraising issues exposed earlier at the beginning of the year, the planned budget was reviewed at mid-year in order to reduce as much as possible the costs, keeping in mind that the Financial Team aimed to preserve the quality standards of the activities and as many activities planned as possible. The review cut costs on transportation, hospitality, running costs as the telephone and other issues. This has been an emergency process specifically for the second part of 2008.

Specific Objective 1

Result 1-2: Develop and use the monitoring and evaluation matrix

Time frame: Jan-Dec

Progress: 100%

After the submission to the Board of the findings of the two internal evaluations carried out last year on the Service Unit and the Capacity-Building Unit, it was decided that the Board will implement an internal monitoring process on all other WCLAC's Units during 2008. This process was completed and the findings should be reported in the beginning of 2009 and will be used in the strategic planning process for the next phase.

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

Time frame: Jan-Dec

Progress: 90%

Preparation of the employee's manual:

This manual should comprise the documents listed below, and should be distributed in the near future to every employee. The content has been prepared and should receive approval of the Board at the beginning of 2009.

- The bylaws of the Centre were approved by the Board of Trustees, the Director, and Deputy Director as well as being ratified by the Ministry of Interior.
- Employee's bylaws: has been prepared and waiting for the Board's approval.
- Financial and management procedures: has been prepared and waiting for the Board's approval.
- Incentive procedures: has been prepared and waiting for the Board's approval.
- The employee's contract: has been prepared and waiting for the Board's approval.
- The salary scale of full-time and part-time employees was endorsed by the Board and is now applied.

Specific Objective 1**Result 1-4: Develop an electronic database (MIS)**

Time frame: Jan-Dec

Progress: 80%

At the beginning of 2008 the planned launch of the MIS took place. As part of the launching process two main issues had to be worked on:

- The data entry for the questionnaires for the Service Unit and Research unit. The Units were assisted in entering data into the system. The process is now finalized.
- The data entry for the detailed action plans 2009 for the all the Units. The process is now finalized. Some delays have occurred as the system was new and some technical assistance and maintenance was needed.

The next steps to be taken regarding the MIS will be to provide adequate training to all WCLAC's staff in order to use the system and integrate it to their daily work. This is planned for the beginning of 2009 to ensure that the staff will start working with the system during the year.

Specific Objective 2**Result 2-1: Conduct training needs assessment**

Time frame: Jan-Dec

Progress: 60%

No training needs assessment was conducted in the first part of the year due to time shortage. Contacts were made with Continuous Education Department at Birzeit

University but their proposal was beyond WCLAC's budget. It was decided to work on the needs assessment internally, trying to set-up a system including questionnaires and interviews, and evaluations in order to assess the staff's needs and prioritize adequate training. This assessment will be performed in 2009.

Specific Objective 2

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

Time frame: Jan-Dec

Progress: 100%

During 2008, WCLAC's staff was able to participate in the following international and local workshops and training events:

- Workshop on lobbying and advocacy campaigns and influencing the movements against violence against women organised by Heinrich Boell, Egypt, February 2008.
- Workshop on representing national experiences from the Arab World, organised by ACSUR, Barcelona, January 2008.
- Workshop on "Short term intervention in individual cases", organised by Palestine Counseling Centre, Bethlehem, January 2008.
- Training on Humanitarian Law, organised by Al-Haq Institute, Ramallah, February 2008.
- Workshop on Techniques in Lobbying and advocacy, organised by Heinrich Boell, Egypt, February 2008.
- Workshop on the evaluation and planning for the Arab Women Court Coalition, Lebanon, February 2008.
- Workshop on integrating literature to the Information Society, organised by IFLA, Ramallah, March-April 2008.
- Regional coordinators meetings for the Regional Personal Status Law, organised by Jordanian Women Union, Egypt, April 2008.
- TOT training organised by Al-Quds Continuous Education, Jerusalem, March-May 2008.
- Workshop on the political influence on women's work, organised by ACSUR, Spain, May 2008.
- Training on development of advocacy abilities and rehabilitation of trainers, organised by the Palestinian Centre for Advocacy and Judiciary Independence, Bethlehem, May and August 2008.
- Palestinian Books Exhibition 2008, organised by Birzeit University, May 2008.
- Workshop on exchanging experiences on an ICTDAR project, organised by ICTDAR, Jordan, June 2008.
- Training on Women's rights, organised by the Swedish Institute, Morocco, June 2008.
- Training on monitoring and evaluation, organised by Heinrich Boell and Salma Network in Jordan, July 2008.
- Training on Violence against Women, organised by SIDA, Sweden, August 2008.
- Training on Psychological Support, organised by YMCA, Ramallah, August 2008.

- Training on Strategic planning, organised by Jordanian Women’s Union, Jordan, August 2008, and follow-up workshops on same issues in Lebanon, November 2008 and Cairo November 2008.
- Training on IHL, organised by Al-Hak, Cairo, October 2008.
- Training on Gender and Development, Institute of Development Studies, Geneva, October 2008.
- Workshop on Women’s Leadership, organised by Oxfam International, Cairo, November 2008.
- Workshop on Conflict Resolution, organised by WCLAC, Ramallah, November 2008.
- Conference on Personal Status Law, organised by WCLAC and MOWA, Ramallah, December 2008.
- On-going: monthly meetings were held with WCLAC staff on Feminism and Nationalism

Specific Objective 3

Result 3-1: Evaluate WCLAC programs and partnership agreements

Time frame: Jan-Dec

Progress: 100%

WCLAC’s Consortium meeting was held in May 2008 in order to discuss our partnerships agreements as well as receiving input from our donors on our programs 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 to provide a different insight into our programs. In other words, to ensure and maintain a real partnership.

WCLAC conducted also individuals meetings with the following donors:

- OXFAM-NOVIB
- Dutch Representative Office
- Dan Church Aid
- UNFPA
- Ford Foundation
- Heinrich Boell
- ACSUR
- Irish Aid
- European Union- Oxfam-Novib
- ICCO
- UNIFEM

We have received feed-back and comments on the financial and narrative reports from several donors and we have taken into consideration their input and recommendations. Finally, several field visits took place during the year, reaching our Shelter and/or many activities with our direct beneficiaries, meetings with our numerous partners such as Court officials, Ministries, etc.

Specific Objective 3

Result 3-2: Develop written and electronic media materials

Time frame: Jan-Dec

Progress: 100%

1. Update the website.

The Arabic version of the website was redesigned and updated. The English version is now online, and should be progressively upgraded.

2. Preparation of materials for publication

We issued a greeting card for the International Women's Day occasion, as well as we printed files related to the Centre (3 manuals and 3 bulletins for the Media Forum).

Specific Objective 3

Result 3-3: Develop WCLAC's Library assets.

Time frame: Jan-Dec

Progress: 100%

WCLAC's library has become a favourite destination of many researchers and university students, and is evolving into a valuable resource centre within the community. New publications were purchased, the librarian received intense training on technical procedures and classification issues, and a new classification was performed. There is a recommendation to computerize the system in order to make it more effective and facilitate any future activities related to the library. We received 278 visitors and researchers during 2008, which is an indicator that the library has become a reference for any gender advocates and feminist researchers.