



***Moving Forward despite a Precarious
Existence
A Strategy for 2013 – 2015***

Semi-Annual Report 2014

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Table of Contents

Part I – Narrative Report.....	3
General Information.....	3
Political Brief.....	3
Progress towards strategic goals.....	8
Highlights of the year, by strategic goal.....	8
Some Challenges and lessons learnt.....	10
Part II – Detailed Activity Report.....	11
Strategic Goal 1: Contribute to the protection and empowerment of women suffering discrimination and violence.....	11
Strategic goal 2: Promote women's rights and combat negative practices against women.....	25
Strategic goal 3: Develop institutional and human capacity in order to ensure the sustainability, effectiveness and efficiency of WCLAC.....	35

Part I – Summary Report

General Information:

Name of NGO: Women’s Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling (WCLAC)

Reporting period: 1 January 2014 – 30 June 2014

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Political Brief

Introduction

The collapse of the peace process, the unification between Hamas and Fatah and the ensuing crackdown on the West Bank has marked 2014 out as a critical year for the Palestinian people. Frustration with the international community and its coverage of the continuing occupation is high, however, on the level of civil society, support for the BDS movement has continued to spread significantly in the US and elsewhere. The UN General Assembly previously named 2014 as the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, however, the occupation has continued unabated with sharp increases in settlement construction, forced evictions, violence from settlers and soldiers and administrative detentions. Israel continues to suppress resistance in the West Bank and Israel, targeting civil society in order to obtain land and continue to undermine the economic stability, the growth and the development of Palestinian society. Coupled with the enduring issues associated with patriarchal society, these factors are having an enormously debilitating impact on the lives of Palestinian women.

Settlement Expansion and Displacement

355 structures have been demolished since January 2014 and 671 people have been displaced¹. On the 5th June Israel announced plans for 3,200 new settlement homes; an open response to the PA’s reconciliation with Hamas in what Israel is calling the ‘Palestinian Terror Cabinet’. 172 units have also been announced in Jabal Abu Ghneim, East Jerusalem, where there has been a sharp increase in construction and displacement in the last few months. Ateret Cohanim, the radical Israeli settler group, is behind a lot of property purchases in East Jerusalem and these most recent settlement plans add to the 6,200 planned since the start of the negotiations in July 2013². Rapid settlement expansion is mostly accompanied by increased military presence and specifically night raids, which are both frightening and disruptive, especially to the lives of women. In the last six months night raids have increased significantly, some families going through them on a daily basis³. For women this can mean

¹ http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_protection_of_civilians_weekly_report_2014_7_04_english.pdf

² <http://mondoweiss.net/2014/01/how-many-settlement-units-has-israel-announced-since-resumption-of-talks-last-year-6200.html>

³ <http://www.wclac.org/english/etemplate.php?id=1327>

violence from soldiers and collective punishment for whole towns⁴. In its documentation of night raids WCLAC has found that they cause stress, lack of sleep, loss of permits and arrests of men and children, all of which have a significantly terrorising effect on the lives of women.

Of great concern, alongside the current escalation, is the E1 settlement plan around East Jerusalem which consistently uproots the lives of the Bedouins and destroys villages in the surrounding area. This region is key to Palestinian hopes for a comprehensive state in the West Bank and completion of the plan would effectively separate the North and South of what is left of Palestine. This has led to construction being continuously halted due to international pressure; nevertheless, Netanyahu claims that he will implement the plan. Not only have hundreds of Israeli structures already been built in this area since the beginning of the negotiations, another section of the wall is planned to surround the Ma'ale Adumim network of settlements, which will expand the area from 50km² to 58km². This will further disrupt the lives of the Bedouins who try to live in the area, and who are displaced repeatedly across Israel and the West Bank⁵. In addition, in response to the revealing of the bodies of three settlers that went missing at the end of June, presumed kidnapped, two outposts of 30-40 people were built in the area without government approval⁶, connecting Jerusalem to the Ma'ale Adumim network.

In a recent move, also prior to the discovery of the settlers, Netanyahu announced a return to the policy of punitive housing demolitions⁷ which was officially stopped in 2005 due to its deterrent ineffectiveness, and which is illegal under international law as a form of collective punishment; this swiftly led to the demolition of the homes of Marwan Qawasmeh and Amer Abu Aysha in Hebron in response to the missing settlers.

Displacement and demolition is particularly damaging to the lives and welfare of women who are expected to look after their families in the face of constant upheaval and are often left to rebuild homes, care for children who suffer from trauma and deal with violence and abuse from husbands who are emasculated and cannot fill the male roles they are pressured to fill, often not being able to earn enough money to care for their family. This is on top of the violence, abuse and trauma they themselves suffer from night raids, demolitions and harassment from Israeli forces.

Violence

The disappearance of three young settlers on the 12th June, and the announcement of the discovery of their bodies on the 30th June, sparked a series of violent acts of retribution and racism. Spurred on by government ministers and the media, racist attacks and protests spread across Israel and the West Bank, leading to online calls for the systematic murder of Arabs and petitions to enact revenge. Such incitement eventually culminated in the

⁴ <http://www.wclac.org/english/etemplate.php?id=1329>

⁵ On the 12th June, Al-Arakib, a Bedouin village in the Northern Negev, was destroyed for the 65th time, despite a demolition freeze being agreed upon and an appeal being in the process. The freeze was lifted by the Israel Lands Authority in a private meeting that did not include the residents of Al-Arakib.

⁶ <http://www.haaretz.com/news/national/1.602368>

⁷ <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/articles/middle-east/12547-the-official-return-of-israels-punitive-house-demolitions>

kidnapping, torture and murder of 16 year old Mohammed Abu Khdeir; a suspected revenge attack sparking protests in and around Shofat and East Jerusalem, leading to extreme violence from Israeli forces and police, some of whom were dressed as Palestinians. The violence spread across Israel and to the outskirts of Ramallah. Dozens were injured and arrested and a video of the brutal beating and arrest of the American cousin of Abu Khdeir by undercover soldiers was released, perpetuating the conflict.

Prior to the discovery of the bodies of the youths and the ensuing wave of violence, UN annual figures on settler violence demonstrated that such incidents had quadrupled within eight years⁸. Since the beginning of the year, and especially since the discovery of the three bodies, settler violence has intensified with daily harassment and attacks on men, women and children. In the vicinity of extremist settlements, East Jerusalem and Hebron specifically, it has become unbearable for residents. The closure of Hebron throughout the search for the bodies and the sharp increase in Israeli forces deployed there effectively meant impunity for violent settlers and extremely high rates of arrest of Palestinian residents, including women and very young children. Instead of receiving protection from the authorities they instead face further harassment and arrest. An internal EU report to Brussels raised concern at the increase in violence from 'extremist settlers' suggesting that they be refused entry into the 27 EU countries⁹.

However, it was not just violence from settlers that accompanied the search 'Operation Brother's Keeper' for the three youths. One boy was killed in Ramallah when Israeli forces entered the city in order to incite violence. The Palestinian Authority have complete civil and military control over Ramallah which is in Area A, however, cooperation between the PA forces and Israeli military is common. The multiple deaths and intensified violence in Nabi Saleh, Bi'lin and Al-Ma'sara, where there are regular peaceful demonstrations against the wall, reflects the continued crackdown on resistance and the Palestinian people's right to protest.

On another level, a number of young Palestinians have been shot and killed, sparking mass demonstrations. Youssef Shawamreh (15) was shot near the wall at Al-Ramadin and Saji Darwish, a Birzeit University student (18) was shot near the Beit El settlement. Nadim Siam Abu Nuwara (17) and Mohammed Mahmoud Odeh Salameh (16) were shot on Nakba Day and the footage of their deaths, showing them walking unarmed, caused international outrage and a media storm.

The large West Bank operation involved violent and distressing house raids, vast amount of arrests and violent clashes alongside the total closure of Hebron meaning that life for Palestinian women became increasingly traumatic. Arrests of children and complete lack of freedom of movement in the Hebron governorate meant that women were suffering total imprisonment in a very volatile area, tasked with looking after the family and the home. Domestic abuse increases rapidly in such a patriarchal society, where the men are ritually

⁸ An increase from 115 incidents in 2006 to 399 in 2013: <http://www.haaretz.com/news/national/1.568700>

⁹ <http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/eu-looks-to-compile-blacklist-barring-entry-to-known-violent-israeli-settlers.premium-1.480497>

emasculated by occupation and financial strains, and until this factor is removed, women in Palestine will have an uphill struggle fighting for equality and protection of their rights.

Detention

The total number of Palestinians in Israeli prisons stands at 5,700¹⁰, as of 21st June, after the largest arrest campaign by Israeli forces since the Second Intifada. There are currently 17 women and 196 children, 27 of who are under 16, in Israeli prisons as of the 1st May 2014¹¹. 192 are currently in administrative detention including some who have been imprisoned without charge or trial for over two years. Up until August last year, the number of administrative detainees was decreasing gradually, but has been on the rise since then throughout the entire peace process.

On the 24th April more than 90 administrative detainees went on hunger strike and were joined by many more in the weeks that followed. The strike was the longest ever mass hunger strike by Palestinian prisoners and many remain in hospital in critical condition. On the 24th June 63 prisoners accepted the terms of an agreement with the Israel Prison Service to end their strike¹². The details are still unknown; however, the remaining hunger strikers remain at risk from the possible implementation of Netanyahu's force-feeding law.

The World Medical Association (WMA) stated in a letter to Netanyahu that force-feeding was 'tantamount to torture' and urged him to reconsider. The WMA also pointed out that 'it is the most unsuitable approach to save lives'¹³ begging the question what purpose it will serve for Israel. The bill is still awaiting its second reading and has been delayed due to threats to leave from Yair Lapid, in order to force a discussion of all objections.

Not only did Israel turn back on its promise to release four batches of prisoners throughout the peace process, it has also re-arrested approximately 50 prisoners who were released as an exchange in the Shalit deal with Hamas in 2011. In one week, 330 Palestinians were being detained in connection with the settlers and 750 houses were raided in Hebron alone.

Diplomacy

The refusal of Israel to concede on any issue regarding the rights or needs of occupied Palestinians, the dwindling of land that could realistically be formed into a state of Palestine and a collage of political motives, have caused many in the international community to publicly blame the collapse of the negotiations on Israel. Israel's refusal to honour the last batch of prisoner releases and the ensuing collapse of the negotiations pushed Fatah and Hamas to create a unity government, unifying the West Bank and Gaza: an interim government was sworn in under Abbas on the 2nd June while preparations for elections this year get underway. There has been a very positive reception at the Palestinian grassroots level and the unification is likely to achieve more positive change internationally, however,

¹⁰ <http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=706487>

¹¹ <http://www.addameer.org/etemplate.php?id=688>

¹² <http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=708196>

¹³ <http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/1.600049>

there could be a serious regression in women's rights if Hamas were to impose their ideologies regarding women in the workplace, for example. The number of women in the current cabinet is still only three out of 17, with Haifa Al-Agha as Minister for Women's Affairs, highlighting the patriarchal norms that still govern women's accessibility to the political sphere. This figure could be further reduced if Hamas were to gain power. The elections, however, will bring about the eventual reformation of the PLC, which will in turn make way for the long awaited reformation of the Personal Status Law and the Criminal Law, giving women's rights groups a target for lobbying and advocacy and speeding up the evolution of mechanisms for the protection of women's rights and the development of social equality between men and women, starting with the law.

The unification has, however, provoked Israel to react against the PA and Hamas, and with the unification and the flare up in tensions, it is difficult to say where such developments will lead. Crucially, both Israel and the new government are responsible for the protection of the Palestinian people; one as the recognized government, and the other as occupier, but more and more sanctions are being imposed on Abbas' government. However, the unification has gained overwhelming international support, including acceptance from the US and EU, and could bring about the long-awaited end to the siege on Gaza, where life has become totally intolerable since the ousting of Mohammad Morsi from Egypt and the subsequent destruction of tunnels and closure of the Rafah crossing which has meant that import/export has become virtually impossible.

Prior to the end of US brokered negotiations which was scheduled for the 29th April, Netanyahu's refusal to release the agreed last batch of prisoners led to a slight cooling of the public relationship between Israel and the US. Netanyahu's defiance in halting or even reducing settlement construction made it impossible for Barack Obama to continue publicly defending all of Israel's actions. It also gave Abbas a green light to approach the UN with applications to international treaties and conventions. Twenty conventions, treaties and protocols, including CEDAW, were originally signed and many more are planned in the coming months, however, it is unclear whether these will include The Rome Statute. Palestine must not hold back any longer in claiming its right to prosecute war crimes committed by Israel, however, although Abbas seems to be making moves away from prolonged and ineffective negotiations with Israel, many see his delayed response as a commitment to continued cooperation. In addition, there could be fear that ICC recognition would risk the indictment of ex-Hamas officials, which could seriously de-stable the new unification.

The growing tensions and increase in night raids and restrictions on movement mean that Palestinian women still face increasing suffering without justice, making it even more difficult to fight for equality within their own communities.

Progress towards strategic goals

The year 2014 is the second year in WCLAC's three year strategy "Moving forward despite a precarious existence". The three main strategic goals of this programme are as follows:

- **Strategic goal 1:** Contribute to the protection and empowerment of women suffering discrimination and violence.
- **Strategic goal 2:** Promote women's rights and combat negative practices against women.
- **Strategic goal 3:** Develop institutional and human capacity in order to ensure the sustainability, effectiveness and efficiency of WCLAC.

This narrative summary deals with each of these, in turn, to highlight some of the progress made during the reporting period. This is followed by a summary evaluation of progress and lessons learnt. More detailed analysis is contained within the detailed activity report, in Part II.

Highlights of the year

Service Provision and Emergency Shelter

WCLAC's service unit reached during the reporting period 548 women (145 women received legal and social counselling, 127 women only social counselling and 243 women only legal counselling and an additional 33 women received emergency protection services). The unit attempted to overcome the obstacles and challenges faced in providing services for women victims of violence on different levels and platforms. WCLAC extended this provision of services by promoting and activating the free helpline, where women can call the free number 1800-807060 and receive legal and social counselling. Women victims of violence living in underserved communities and cannot access legal and social services are able to receive them via this service. Our trained social workers provide immediate social advice and refer women with more complicated cases to the appropriate service provider by means of the National Referral System for Women Victims of Violence (TAKAMOL)¹⁴. Additionally, other women are referred to legal counselors and grassroots service providers, as appropriate. The helpline was launched at the end of 2013 and provided legal and social counselling, during the reporting period, to a total of 97 women.

WCLAC attempted last year to install a help desk for women at the Shari'a court to give them legal advice. This request was eventually refused by the Supreme Judge Department, due to issues regarding lack of space and a perceived conflict between Shari'a court lawyers and

¹⁴ Takamol is a comprehensive national referral system that consists of referral procedures for women victims of violence in the police, health and social affairs sector. The system seeks to provide standardized procedures in providing services for women victims of violence in all locations. It was adopted by the cabinet in session 16/10 on 10th/December/2013. Relevant ministries started following the protocols of the system.

WCLAC lawyers offering free counseling. WCLAC managed to overcome this obstacle by contracting 3 trainee lawyers who would provide legal consultations to women in Shari'a and civil courts. During the reporting period, WCLAC provided legal consultations to 107 women in both Shari'a and civil courts, such that 93 women received legal consultations in Shari'a courts on personal status issues, most prominently alimony, custody, divorce, marriage and dowry. Additionally, 14 women received legal consultations in the civil court and procedures department on implementation of verdicts in various cases.

State service providers that provide services to women victims of violence did not meet the standards of the protocols of the TAKAMOL system, following its adoption by the cabinet in December 2013. WCLAC responded by the preparation of a training programme to build the capacities of the service providers in the health, social services and police departments by conducting 3 ToT courses, targeting 67 participants in northern WB governorates, southern WB governorates and central WB governorates in addition to and providing support to the trainees in the subsequent conducted trainings in the different institutions.

WCLAC perceived that its shelter is running under full capacity, to the extent that WCLAC had to transfer other emergency cases to the protection shelters in Nablus and Bethlehem. This took place in coordination with the governorate, health, police and social affairs directorate in accordance with the TAKAMOL protocols. During the reporting period, WCLAC received and provided protection for 33 women from different governorates in the WB.

Legislative Reform:

WCLAC believes that legislative reform, particularly laws affecting women, is one of the components that affect women's lives and wellbeing. During the reporting period WCLAC documented 17 cases of femicide. Public awareness and mobilization, coupled with the continuous Palestinian civil society efforts to put an end to this phenomenon, demanded the adoption of the Palestinian Criminal Law that was submitted to the President in 2013 by the Palestinian National Coalition for the Criminal Law to replace the certainly outdated Jordanian Criminal Law #16 of 1960 that applies in the West Bank courts. The increased pressure on the Presidential Office encouraged the President to issue a Presidential Decree amending article 98 of the Criminal Law, thereby prohibiting judges to give reduced sentences to perpetrators of so-called "honour killing" crimes. Although this is a step forward, further consolidated efforts are still needed, as judges can still use articles 99 and 100 to give reduced sentences to perpetrators of such crimes. WCLAC, a member of the NGO Forum on Violence Against Women, pushed for sending a letter to the President, highlighting these concerns and demanding further amendments to be introduced to the current Criminal Law, at least until the PLC convenes in order to adopt the draft Palestinian Criminal Law.

The collapse of bilateral negotiations in April 2014 led the PA to sign and ratify 18 international conventions and 2 protocols, including the Convention of Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). This poses as a significant opportunity for human rights organizations in general and women's rights organizations in particular in terms of advancing women's rights. In light of WCLAC's work, the ratification of CEDAW without reservations allows for the enactment of contemporary laws and guarantee full citizenship rights for women, on equal basis with men. This would entail reforming the applied Personal Status Law and Criminal Law, in addition to adopting new laws that

positively discriminate with women to accelerate access to their rights. WCLAC will approach this opportunity by continuing work on the International Advocacy level to hold Israel accountable for human rights violations in general and women's rights violations in particular over 1967 borders; this will take the form of monitoring and documenting human rights violations committed by the occupation in order to draft the shadow report. Additionally, WCLAC will mobilize civil society organizations and actors and will together monitor the PA's commitment in taking the necessary steps to achieve legal reform, and finally WCLAC will assist the PA in the preparation of its official report by seeking to become members in the committee that will draft the report. Nevertheless, WCLAC will utilize the opportunity of being members in the committee to lobby the PA to enact laws that are in line with the principles and content of CEDAW.

Transfer Capacities to Grassroots:

WCLAC realizes that provision of social and legal counselling services to all women victims of violence all over the West Bank shouldn't be centralized in the major and big cities. In this sense, WCLAC commenced in developing partnerships with well-established grassroots organizations in the Northern governorates of the West Bank in 2005. Currently, WCLAC supports Tubas Charitable Society, Al-Najdeh and Women for Life Society by conducting intensive capacity building in management, campaigning, advocacy and finance.

These grassroots organizations provide legal and social counselling to women victims of violence in their constituencies. Additionally, following the adoption of the TAKAMOL system by the Cabinet in December 2013, WCLAC built the capacities of the grassroots organizations and conducted ongoing supervision sessions to implement the system. Currently, the grassroots organizations form a focal point for the governorate, police and social affairs in the provision of services in accordance with the system.

Challenges and Lessons Learnt

WCLAC faced a set of challenges during the reporting period. The Palestinian Legislative Council did not convene since political division took place in June 2007. This has led to halting the enactment of new and necessary laws and the reform of existing laws that lack prescriptions for full citizenship rights of different societal sectors, most particularly women and youth. Additionally, this situation limits the enactment of new laws by means of presidential decrees; this impacts WCLAC's work on legal reform in that WCLAC leads the efforts for the enactment of the Palestinian Criminal Law. Alternatively, the Palestinian President introduced changes into article 98 by means of a presidential decree; despite the importance of this step because this particular article provides reduced sentences to perpetrators of so called "honour-killing" crimes, it is not enough as there are still numerous articles that allow for giving reduced sentences.

The increasing violence at the hands of the occupation forces and settlers is having severe impact on women's lives and wellbeing. This impact is two-fold; firstly, women are becoming increasingly traumatized after witnessing destruction of their property, detainment of their children and night raids. Furthermore, these traumatized women have limited access to

service providers, be it civil or governmental, in light of restricted freedom of movement due to the increase number of checkpoints, road blocks, settler violence on bypass roads and women behind the Wall. Additionally, WCLAC staff is unable to reach these women in remote and marginalized areas to raise their awareness and provide the needed legal and social services. To overcome this, WCLAC continuously works on building the capacities of grassroots organizations in remote areas to provide the needed services to women victims of violence; additionally, the help line service was introduced and promoted to minimize the impact of many factors that affect women's access to legal and social services.

Another obstacle is the continuous change in Cabinet Ministers. This forms a challenge to WCLAC's work in that every new Minister brings different beliefs, policies and procedures. This hinders the receipt of ministerial comments and approvals in terms of modifying laws and introducing new modern laws. This has grave consequences in light of the lack of functioning of the PLC.

Although the TAKAMOL system was adopted in December 2013, provision of health, legal and social services to women victims of violence have not met the standards of the protocols of the system. WCLAC learnt from this experience the ongoing need to develop the capacities of service providers to meet the minimum standards.

Part II – Detailed Activity Report

Strategic goal 1: Contribute to the protection and empowerment of women suffering discrimination and violence

1.1 Provide professional legal and social services to women who are victims of violence, abuse and gender-based discrimination

1.1.1 Extend thorough legal and social services to women in the West Bank

Direct Provision of Services:

During the first 6 months of 2014, WCLAC continued to provide legal and social services through a team of lawyers and social workers based in East Jerusalem, Ramallah and the south of the West Bank. During the reporting period, WCLAC provided legal and social services to a total of 328 women (264 new women and 64 follow-up women), including representation in courts; also, WCLAC obtained favorable judgments for 82 women in the different cases, including alimony, divorce, custody, dowry, financial rights and compensation for divorce. The majority of the new women received both legal and social counselling, and the numbers stand as follows: 121 women received both legal and social services, 117 received only legal services and 26 women received only social services. From the total number of cases, only 11 women were referred in accordance with the protocols of the National Referral System (TAKAMOL); this low number can be attributed to that WCLAC provides the majority of services needed for women victims of violence and hence seldom needs to refer women to other service providers.

234 one-time legal and social services were offered to women (4 in Jerusalem, 95 in the South West Bank and 135 in Ramallah); women normally approach WCLAC and seek this service after an awareness-raising activity. WCLAC announced the provision of electronic counselling using posters and stickers in April; additionally, announcement via Rab'a Radio in Hebron and Raya FM in Ramallah commenced in 24/6/2014 and will continue until the end of the year. This service complements a set of services provided by WCLAC, including one-time consultations and long term consultations; since numerous women are unable to reach major cities due to restrictions on movement by the occupation and traditions, women victims of violence may receive consultations via the means of a helpline and e-counselling by sending an email to WCLAC, where WCLAC's social workers and lawyer respond timely. Also, WCLAC noticed that women seeking e-counselling reside in the Diaspora. Following a number of sessions, WCLAC's lawyers were able to develop concrete legal cases to be submitted in courts. During the reporting period, 4 e-counselling sessions were offered to women since the service was launched. Due to delay in announcing the e-counselling service on the radio and television, WCLAC expects that during the second half of the year to witness an increase in the number of e-counselling sessions held.

Legal and social services provided by WCLAC include representing women in court, giving legal advice in one-off advice sessions and mediating discussions between family members.

Table 1: Type of Service Provided

Type of Service		Ramallah	South WB	Jerusalem	Total
	Legal and Social		28	71	22
Legal		49	38	30	117
Social		21	5	0	26
Total		98	114	52	264

Table 2: Social Indicators and Experience of the Women Aided by WCLAC:

Level of Education		Ramallah	South WB	Jerusalem	Total
	Higher Degree		27	31	16
Secondary		38	49	22	109
Preparatory		30	33	14	77
Literate		0	4	0	4
Unknown		0	0	0	0
Age		Ramallah	South WB	Jerusalem	Total
	Over 37	22	27	17	66
18-36		69	84	35	188
Under 18		4	6	0	10
Unknown		0	0	0	0
Personal Status		Ramallah	South WB	Jerusalem	Total
	Abandoned	7	6	4	17
Widowed		2	2	0	4
Divorced		22	13	10	45
Separated		1	2	1	4

	Married	17	11	22	50
	In dispute	30	72	12	114
	Fiancé	2	1	1	4
	Single	10	1	1	12
	Legally Married	4	9	1	14
Perpetrator		Ramallah	South WB	Jerusalem	Total
	Fiancé	3	6	1	10
	Friends and Neighbors	0	1	0	1
	Work Colleagues	0	0	1	1
	Relatives	3	3	0	6
	Family Member	16	3	3	22
	Ex-Husband	8	4	7	19
	Husband's Family	3	3	2	8
	Husband	58	95	35	188
	Other	4	2	3	9
	Total	95	117	52	264
Source of Referral		Ramallah	South WB	Jerusalem	Total
	Lawyers	5	4	28	37
	Health Sector	0	2	0	2
	Police	3	1	1	5
	Governorates	3	3	1	7
	Courts	14	38	4	56
	Organizations/ Centers	8	17	5	30
	Social Services	25	5	2	32
	Other	37	48	10	95

Origin of Client	Number of Cases
South	120
Central	134
North	10

Type of Work	Number of Cases
Housewife	164
Employed in Governmental Sector, Private Sector or NGO Sector	27
Student	16
Unemployed	37
Unknown	2
Irregular Work	18
Total	264

Table 3: legal cases by theme and location

		Ramallah	South WB	Jerusalem	Total
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Help from Lawyer	Marital Obedience	3	1	0	4
	Custody Visitations	2	14	7	23
	Alimony	28	87	6	121
	Dowry	9	7	1	17
	Divorce	14	24	9	47
	Legal Cases	1	7	6	14
	Divorce following Abuse	1	4	1	6
	House rent	3	2	0	5
	Total	53	114	17	237

Analysis of Cases:

Compared with the same reporting period for 2013, WCLAC perceived a 16.8% increase in the number of women seeking legal and social services. Additionally, there is a 21.8% increase, compared with 2013, in the number of women seeking legal services in the form of individual services or combined with social services. This emphasizes that WCLAC's primary function is as a service-provider for women seeking legal services.

This indicates the significant need for services among women and that more women across the WB are familiar with the services WCLAC provides and are able to access these services.

An interesting point to note is that the majority of the women who seek legal and/or social services come from disadvantaged backgrounds. For example, 71.2% (188/264 women) of the women are between 18-36 years, 72.0% (190/264) did not receive higher education and 83.0% (219/264 women) are housewives, unemployed or work irregularly. With regards to age, this suggests that the clients were married early in their lives or have been recently married, thereby the couple is still in the establishment phases for an already rocky life in light of the overall situation, where opportunities are scarce and competition is high; additionally, the status of youth is continuously deteriorating in light of the impact of the political situation in Palestine on economic opportunities, including increasing rates of unemployment and lack of work opportunities among youth.

WCLAC also perceived that this group of women also suffers from compound violence that takes many different forms, including psychological, physical, economic, verbal and sexual violence. In terms of education and work opportunities, the lack of higher education among 72% of the clients suggests a direct correlation between women's ability to defend themselves and receipt of higher education; this is also directly related to that 83% of the clients do not enjoy financial independence, suggesting that economic empowerment is also a factor.

Special project: *Protect the Rights and Improve the Resilience of Vulnerable Communities in East Jerusalem*

In the year 2012, WCLAC embarked on a multi-partner project focusing on revitalizing Palestinian civil society organizations in East Jerusalem and mobilizing communities in five neighborhoods to actively participate in improving access to and protection of their social, political and economic rights. Funded by the European Union and Oxfam Novib, the project is implemented in partnership with the Palestinian Medical Relief Society, the Agriculture Development Association, Juzoor for Health and Social Development and the Palestinian Counselling Center. WCLAC seeks to improve the resilience of women in vulnerable

communities in Jerusalem, particularly in Silwan, Isawiya, Old City, Wadi Al Joz and Sur Baher, mainly by providing legal and social counselling, conducting awareness-raising activities, conducting capacity building activities, mobilizing youth, conducting advocacy activities and documenting testimonies of 23 Palestinian women whose rights have been violated at the hands of the occupation.

WCLAC provided 28 women with long-term legal and social support (3 legal services, 24 joint legal and social services and 1 social service). Cases included divorce, alimony, dowry disputes, sexual abuse, economic deprivation, physical and psychological violence, cases of disputed parentage and custody.

WCLAC believes that the first step in advancing women's rights and improving their livelihood entails raising the awareness of marginalized and vulnerable women in their social, political and economic rights, such that more women have access to provided services and are able to protect their rights. In this sense, WCLAC commenced in the implementation of awareness-raising workshops in 2013 in partnership with two community based organizations: the Community House for Social Health and the Community Action Center, focusing on numerous topics. During the reporting period, WCLAC conducted 7 workshops for 49 women on good parenting, outdoor trips, gender, economic empowerment, first aid, health and the environment and the legal situation of women in Jerusalem.

Similarly, WCLAC conducted 12 group counselling sessions, targeting 14 women from various communities, including Silwan, the Old City, Wadi Al Joz and Shofat. Following a needs assessment, the sessions focused on improving life skills such as communication skills, teamwork and addressing conflicts; self-confidence; violence; economic empowerment; social relationships; behaviours and attitudes; laws in Jerusalem and protection mechanisms for women from violence; support mechanisms in difficult situations; and psychological wellbeing of the participants.

Proceeding from the principle that youth are the key to change, WCLAC conducted a 4-day training course for 26 students from Al-Quds University. The training focused on gender based discrimination; gender-based violence; provision of social and legal services for women victims of violence; specificity of the courts; and laws that protect women from violence in Jerusalem.

On a similar level, WCLAC mobilizes volunteers to become advocates for women's rights. This was carried out by raising the awareness of 17 volunteers mainly from the targeted communities in social change; public speaking; CV and cover letter writing; self-expression with a focus on women's self-expression in a patriarchal conservative society and social media such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter. Following building their capacities, the volunteers conducted 11 awareness-raising sessions reaching 177 women. The 11 sessions focused on gender-based violence, services covered by the national insurance, the wellbeing of women, sexual harassment and protection and early marriage and its negative social and legal impact. Following the completion of a capacity building training in women's rights in 2013, WCLAC conducted a 3-day capacity building training in advocacy for 11 volunteers (10 females and 1 male). The topics covered in the training were: concept of advocacy, lobbying, goals of advocacy, mechanisms and strategies of advocacy, designing campaigns and the context of women's rights in Palestine.

On another level, due to WCLAC's reputation in providing accurate and concise work, numerous organizations approach WCLAC to conduct awareness-raising workshops for targeted communities and participate in organized activities. In this sense, WCLAC conducted an awareness-raising workshop for 25 participants with Al-Waha organization on the legal rights of women and presented a paper on the legal situation and protection laws for women victims of violence in a conference organized by The Association for Women Committees for Social Work, in addition to presenting WCLAC's work in Jerusalem in an activity organized by Hind Hussein College/ Al-Quds University.

A report titled "Jerusalem: A City Divided" was completed in June of 2014. The report gives an overview of the history of the city with references to quotes from women from Jerusalem. The report is expected to be printed in early July 2014.

Women Legal Empowerment

Additionally, WCLAC seeks to empower women with information and guidance on taking cases to court, particularly in alimony and custody. A total of 42 women were assisted in filling out the court paper work and 93 copies of the manual on custody and alimony were distributed for who received the aforementioned service and during the various implemented activities.

During 2013 WCLAC attempted to install a help desk of women at the Shari'a courts; however, the Supreme Judge Department refused the addition of three help desks for women due to lack of space and a perceived conflict between court lawyers and WCLAC's lawyers who would be providing free service. In light of this setback, WCLAC responded by contracting 3 trainee lawyers who would provide legal consultations to women in courts and in locations and would conduct sessions to provide legal consultations to women in Shari'a and civil courts at their request. During the reporting period, 93 women received legal consultations in Shari'a courts on numerous personal status issues, most prominently alimony, custody, divorce, marriage and dowry. Additionally, 14 women received legal consultations in the civil court and procedures department on implementation of verdicts in various cases.

The trainee lawyers, available in the public spaces of the court provide the women seeking consultations appropriate advice in one-off sessions that last between 5-15 minutes depending on the case. This service enables women who are not familiar with their legal rights and WCLAC's work, and suffer from limited financial abilities that prevent them from receiving consultations from other lawyers, to receive the necessary consultations free of charge. This contributes to empowering women legally and in attaining their rights, particularly the most marginalized and vulnerable women, regardless of their financial background and abilities.

Helpline: A Means to Reach Women in Remote Areas

On a different level and to keep pace with the needs of women victims of violence that are affected by the conservative environment and other social factors, which has limited women's access to justice, demand their rights and voice their opinions, WCLAC re-established a free helpline for women seeking social and emergency counselling services to provide legal and social consultations, particularly for women whose circumstances do not

allow them to reach WCLAC. WCLAC determined the 4 volunteers (2 in Hebron and 2 in Ramallah) who will be working via the helpline (3 days/week each) according to specific selection criteria that included testing and interviewing young women. Due to the nature of work, the volunteers participate in a group supervision session conducted by WCLAC social workers once a month, in addition to individual supervision sessions once every two weeks. During the reporting period, 6 group supervision sessions and 12 individual supervision sessions/volunteer were conducted.

WCLAC conducted a capacity building training for 21 social workers (10 in Ramallah, 11 in Hebron) on the method of using the program, skills for the provision of consultations, intervention mechanism and crisis management

WCLAC announced the availability of this service 1) during awareness-raising activities that target housewives, 2) during trainings that target university students, 3) via the distribution of stickers and pamphlets that introduce the service and WCLAC and 4) via distributing the pamphlet with all of WCLAC's publications. Additionally, WCLAC promoted the line publicly via Rab'a Radio and Raya FM, to announce the availability of this service and the e-counselling service to extend the provision of legal and social counselling to women victims of violence all over the West Bank. During the reporting period, WCLAC provided consultations to 97 women on all types of gender-based violence, particularly sexual violence; deprivation of social rights, including right to marriage and establishment of family and sexual rights; and some consultations on legal rights. To fully integrate and harmonize WCLAC's work, the volunteers encourage the women to continue following-up the cases with WCLAC when needed, in addition to informing them of the availability of a protection shelter, particularly in the cases that suffer from sexual violence at the hands of family members.

Restrictions on the right to freedom of movement due to the policies of the occupation and traditions limit the access of women victims of violence to necessary services by commuting to the major cities. WCLAC's helpline provides these women in marginalized and remote area with an outlet to receive counselling and consultations, in addition to protection in WCLAC's shelter, when needed and desired.

Family Counselling: A Collective Approach

Stemming from WCLAC's belief that domestic violence not only affects the perpetrator and the victim, but also impacts the entire family, coupled with the situation where some cases are socially conservative and require the mediation of a third party to solve the case, WCLAC decided to establish and provide a family counselling service. In April, WCLAC trained 10 counsellors over the period of 4 days (6 hours/day) on intervention mechanisms, rehabilitation or perpetrator, skills to determine participatory solutions for the benefit of the family and development of therapeutic plans.

WCLAC announced the availability of the service in Palestinian media, including Rab'a Radio in Hebron, Raya FM in Ramallah and stickers and pamphlets that are distributed in the different activities.

Following the training, one family received counselling in the village of Samou', Hebron. Two girl's in this family were brutally assaulted and raped, leading to the death of the older sister, while the younger sister sustained severe injuries and trauma; WCLAC's team was the first to offer support and guidance to the family as they lost confidence and ceased to trust

the society . This manifested in their refusal to receive services from the police, society and organizations; two of the sister's dropped out of college and high school, even though they were exemplary students; while the family almost completely disintegrated.

The counselling sessions conducted by WCLAC slowly and gradually rehabilitated the family , contributed to building the confidence of the family and redevelop trust with the society. The two sisters who dropped out of college and high school changed their minds and returned and the family is facing the society as a united unit and moving on. The case of the two girls is followed-up by WCLAC's lawyers in court and the counsellors attend court sessions with the family, which strengthens their determination and patience.

1.1.2 Maintain and develop the capacity of WCLAC's Service Unit to respond to the needs of Palestinian women

WCLAC believes that building the capacities of their lawyers and social workers to be integral part of work due to the continuous changes and developments that take place, in order to excel in service provision for women. During the reporting period, 5 collective 4-hours supervision sessions for 15 lawyers and social workers were conducted with a professional supervisor. Additionally, 12 individual 1 hour supervision sessions for 5 service providers with a professional supervisor were conducted. Also, 5 advanced supervision sessions for the 4 senior social workers were conducted with a professional supervisor. The supervision sessions focused on intervention mechanisms, crisis management and counselling tools for women victims of violence.

On another level, WCLAC recognizes the importance of sharing knowledge and learning from other organizations. In this sense, 3 service unit employees attended 3 local and international trainings, including 21-day training with the American Consulate in the USA, and 1-day trainings with the department of public prosecution and Lead International. The trainings focused on the experience of the USA in human rights; the role of and obstacles faced by the public prosecution in promoting women's access to justice; and principles of change and its relation with development. Additionally, the service unit conducted 12 internal meetings to discuss specific cases, work progress, annual action plan and other administrative matters.

WCLAC utilized the continuously updated database of client files to maintain writing and publishing analysis papers identifying and analysing trends. During the reporting period WCLAC wrote and published 2 papers on femicide and discrimination against women in legal cases. These papers can be found on WCLAC's website: <http://www.wclac.org/ainside.php?id=36>.

Liaising Relations for WCLAC's Shelter:

WCLAC seeks to cooperate and exchange best practices with other civil society organizations and official institutions that provide protection services to women victims of violence. For example, WCLAC held 12 meetings with the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA), family protection unit within the police force, representatives of safe houses, Jericho governorate, legal advisor to Jericho governor, Independent Commission for Human Rights and the General Union of Palestinian Women.

Additionally, 7 ad hoc meetings were conducted with the police, MoSA and Ministry of Health (MoH) to discuss joint cooperation, specific cases of women victims of violence and referral mechanisms, in addition to improving the situation in WCLAC's emergency shelter.

1.1.3 Offer protection services to women survivors and those who are at risk of violence

WCLAC seeks to provide emergency protection for women at risk of violence or femicide through managing the referring women and their children to WCLAC's emergency shelter. This takes place in coordination with the police and MoSA. During the reporting period, WCLAC provided protection to (33) women and conducted 30 case conferences with the MoSA, police and governorate to develop an intervention plan for each women. WCLAC's shelter has the capacity to receive 8 women at a time; during the reporting period many women approached the shelter when it was completely full and WCLAC had to liaise with the police and MoSA to refer the women to the shelters in Bethlehem and Nablus, because it did not have the capacity to receive them.

Capacity Building of Shelter Staff:

To maximize the quality of provided services to the shelter clients, WCLAC continuously conducts activities to build the capacity of the shelter staff and support volunteers. In this sense, 8 meetings were held for the staff to discuss determine work mechanisms, protection mechanisms, exchange of work mechanisms, development of a procedures guide, among other administrative matters. Additionally, 3 meetings were held with the shelter volunteer assistants to build their capacities in healthy nutrition and solving daily predicaments, in addition to discussing action plan of shelter, monthly plans and monthly reports. On a similar level, 4-hours supervision sessions for 6 house mothers are held; during the reporting period 2 sessions were held, focusing on the role of the house mothers in the work of the shelter and the work mechanisms with the clients of the shelter. Additionally, a capacity building training for 14 house mothers and volunteers focused on facilitating the acquisition of the necessary skills to deal with women victims of violence; debriefing mechanisms; effective and professional communication among the staff and between the staff and clients. Also, the director of the shelter and 2 of the house mothers visited a protection shelter in Amman, Jordan for a period of 3 days. This visit focused on exchange of experience, discussion of professional and administrative procedures, target groups and building the capacities of the working staff.

1.2 Raise awareness of women's legal and social rights amongst Palestinians communities in the West Bank

1.2.1 Raise awareness amongst Palestinian women so that they can identify and condemn negative practices against women and can access resources for help

WCLAC established a women's group in Deir Jarir village in Ramallah governorate, consisting of 17 women, with the aim of introducing WCLAC, its work and programs and the services WCLAC provides, in addition to raising the awareness of working women and housewives in women's rights, legal reform, sexual assault and harassment, gender-based violence and sexual assaults/harassment, among other topics. During the reporting period, WCLAC

conducted 6 awareness-raising workshops and distributed 52 manuals on alimony, custody, divorce, right to life and marriage.

In Southern West Bank governorates, WCLAC established 4 women's groups in partnership with local organizations in Husan (Bethlehem), Al-Khader (Bethlehem), Yatta (Hebron) and Samou' (Hebron), comprising a total of 81 women (15 in Husan, 24 in Al-Khader, 24 in Yatta and 18 in Samou'). WCLAC conducted a total of 27 workshops that introduced the center and shed light on numerous topics, including gender-based violence, domestic violence, violence against children, early marriage, marriage contract, family disintegration, femicide, sexual violence, custody, alimony and divorce (for a complete list of the conducted workshops please refer to Appendix A).

WCLAC believes that maintaining pace with new developments and shedding light on details pertaining to women's welfare in the laws applied in Palestine is an important component of raising women's awareness with regards to their rights. WCLAC produced a newsletter during the reporting period on breast-feeding, housing, custody and receipt of alimony for child health and medication. Additionally, WCLAC redeveloped 5 awareness-raising materials in light of new legal developments on inheritance rights, implementation of verdicts, divorce, ecclesiastical divorce and civil courts in the West Bank governorates.

Women in the Seam Zone: Compound Suffering

Women living in the most marginalized, remote and targeted areas by the Israeli occupation, particularly in specific areas in Hebron are the ones most affected by the policies and actions of the occupation. WCLAC believes that one of the means to support these women is by raising their awareness about their rights. During the reporting period, WCLAC conducted 18 sessions in the following three areas in Hebron: the Old City, Tal Rumaida and Al-Sheikh Neighborhood, reaching a total of 61 women. The sessions introduced WCLAC and focused on femicide, International Women's Day, inter-family relationships, social empowerment, legal empowerment, solidarity among women, needs of women, domestic violence and gender-based violence. Additionally, a workshop with 25 social workers and women in the Old City was conducted on the status of women in local laws and particularly the Personal Status Law and Criminal Law was conducted, with the aim of raising the awareness of women on the shortcomings of these laws in articles pertaining to women.

Empowerment of Activists:

WCLAC also perceives that empowering local women who are politically and socially active on the need to reform laws applied in Palestine to be among the strategies to improve the status of women. For this purpose, WCLAC conducted a 2-day workshop in cooperation with the Union of Palestinian Women Committees. The workshop, attended by 22 women and 6 men, focused on the Personal Status Law and the violations that impact Palestinian women, the Criminal Law and its shortcomings in protecting women from the increasing rates of gender-based violence, including femicide, in addition to presenting the Family Protection from Violence Law and the need to adopt the law, not only to hold the perpetrators accountable but also to contribute to their rehabilitation and integration in the society by focusing on the acquisition of good citizenship skills, including equality, accountability and respect (for more details on the workshop, please refer to Appendix B).

1.2.2 Raise awareness within key target groups who can support a positive attitude toward women's rights

Targeting Youth and University Students:

WCLAC seeks to work with Palestinian youth familiarize them with women's rights and increase their sensitization towards women's issues as one of the utilized mechanisms to ensure sustainable impact in improving the status of women. WCLAC conducted three training workshops, targeting 65 students at Birzeit University, Hebron University and Al-Quds University, 20 of which were males and 45 were females. The workshops addressed many topics, such as introduction to gender, Palestinian women and the Criminal Law, Palestinian women and the Personal Status Law, Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women and protection mechanisms (for more details, please refer to Appendix C). Numerous participants expressed their desire to continue working with WCLAC; this reflected in their mobilization of more youth to participate in the demonstration on the occasion of the International Women's Day.

Increasing the sensitization of young men towards women's issues and enhancing their understanding of women's rights as human rights would support the promotion of women's rights. WCLAC targeted 20 young men via a 4-day winter camp in Jericho. To contribute to the achievement of the aforementioned objective, the plan and schedule of the camp was designed to allow for deep understanding of the status of Palestinian women and mechanisms to improve women's situation. The camp focused on familiarizing the youth with a theory of change that would diagnose the current situation and the mechanisms to impact social policies and mobilize youth to demand gender-sensitive legislation. Additionally, focus was on utilizing the theory of change to allow for a more comprehensive understanding of women's issues from a gender perspective and the role of youth in impacting policies and legislations led. The status and action of the Palestinian Women's Movement to promote women's status in terms of political participation in decision-making levels was diagnosed, in addition to highlighting the role of the political regime and legislative council and the need to issue gender-sensitive legislation, separation of power and advocacy mechanisms that would promote the participation and mobilization of youth to improve the status of Palestinian women.

Another group that can support positive attitudes toward women's rights includes students majoring in social work at local universities. The majority of the universities require the finalization of practical training at a relevant organization, be it official or civil, as a prerequisite for graduation. Raising the awareness of these students and increasing their sensitization towards women's issues, WCLAC perceives, would improve the situation of women in terms of future provision of services and impacting national policies in the long-term. WCLAC hosted 2 students for, each for 1 day/week for a period of 2 months. The training focused on enhancing their reception of cases, development of intervention plans, communication and professional skills and integrated them in WCLAC's work, as they followed-up with helpline cases and awareness-raising groups.

With the aim of raising the awareness of institutions and grassroots organizations on women's rights and increasing their sensitization towards women's issues, WCLAC conducted 14 awareness-raising workshops in cooperation with various partners, targeting prosecutors, housewives, law students, social workers, governmental employees, feminist organizations, media professionals and human rights organizations. The workshops were

attended by 221 individuals and focused on various topics, including violence against women, protection mechanisms, Personal Status Law and Shari'a courts, sexual abuse, gender stereotypes and Takamol referral system (for complete details on the workshops, please refer to Appendix D).

On a different level and with the aim of mobilizing students to take a role in combating violence and discrimination against women in light of the applied laws in Palestine, WCLAC conducted a workshop with 15 media, law and sociology Birzeit University students and presented the discriminatory aspects of the Personal Status Law and Criminal Law, highlighting femicide cases, in addition to the advantages of enacting the Family Protection from Violence Law. Additionally, the workshop focused on the role of the media in combating legal discrimination against women and supporting and advancing women's issues.

Additionally, WCLAC organized two activities on the occasion of the International Women's Day to honour a group of women that faced challenges and were able to accomplish breakthroughs not only on the personal level but also on the family and community level; the other activity highlighted the legal rights of women with disability and presented a study conducted by WCLAC on women with disability, including success stories, recommendations and discussions. Additionally, WCLAC participated in 13 activities, organized by civil society and international organizations, on the occasion of the International Women's Day, including the march organized by the General Union of Palestinian Women (for a complete list of activities, please refer to Appendix E).

As per WCLAC's strategy, the center participated in 7 activities organized by civil society organizations, including NGO Forum on Violence against Women, Center for Defense of Liberties and Civil Right and the General Union of Palestinian Women. These came within the context of numerous events, including solidarity with Palestinian refugees in Yarmouk refugee camp, solidarity with Palestinian political prisoners, inheritance day and femicide (for a complete list of activities, please refer to Appendix F).

Special project: 'AMAL' Supporting Women's Transformative Leadership in Changing Times and Democratic Transitions in Middle East and North Africa:

WCLAC's special projects come in line with the overall strategic plan and promote partnerships and networking among leading non-governmental organizations. In September 2012, WCLAC commenced work in a multi-partner, multi-country project that seeks to promote women's political participation by developing women's capacities to assume leadership at all levels, including household, community and nationally. Implemented also in Tunisia, Morocco and Yemen, the project is funded by the Swedish Agency for International Development (SIDA), is administrated regionally by Oxfam Great Britain and locally by Oxfam Novib.

Covering completely all governorates in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the Palestinian project partners are the Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy (MIFTAH), the Women's Affairs Center (WAC) and the Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development (PWWSD). WCLAC's work consists of awareness-raising, capacity building and advocacy components, covering southern and northern West Bank governorates (Hebron, Bethlehem, Tubas, Qalqilya, Tulkarem and Jenin).

During the reporting period, WCLAC built the capacities of 46 women, young women and young men in civil and political rights; monitoring and documentation; advocacy and lobbying; communications and life skills; and engaging with the media.

In line with WCLAC's belief in the need for the Palestinian political and civil leadership to impart its experience on and expose members of the younger generation that demonstrate leadership capabilities to daily political and social experiences, WCLAC provided 5 young women with the opportunity to shadow well-established leaders, including a member of the legislative council, mayor, prominent journalists and a political and feminist activist. Additionally, in light of accelerated development in both the civil and official work fields and the urgent need for qualified working staff, WCLAC provided 3 young women with secondment training opportunities at partner organizations offices and WCLAC's offices. These opportunities aim at contributing to the acquisition of necessary knowledge; and enhance the young women's skills and refine preexisting skills in civil and community work.

1.3 Build the capacity of service professionals and grassroots women's organizations to provide protection to women

1.3.1 Extend women's service provision to underserved parts of Palestine through partnering and building the capacity of selected grassroots organizations

Extending Provision of Services:

WCLAC commenced in developing partnerships with well-established grassroots organizations in the Northern governorates of the West Bank in 2005. This included intensive capacity building in management, campaigning, advocacy and finance, in order to integrate the provision of legal and social counselling services in these organizations. WCLAC continues to build the capacity of the service provision staff at Tubas Charitable Society (TCS), as needed, by supervising the legal and social services team, supporting the provision of legal and social services, supporting the conduction of awareness-raising sessions and supporting the preparation and dissemination of a leaflet on women's rights. During the reporting period, WCLAC's social worker conducted 5 supervision meetings (3 hours each) with 7 lawyers and social workers in Women for Life, Al-Najdeh and TCS, 3 of which brought the organizations together, thereby promoting exchange ideas and learning; and another 2 meetings with TCS and Al-Najdeh. The meetings focused on discussion of different cases and the development of individual intervention plans. The supervision meetings facilitated the provision of social and legal counselling services to 63 women in Tubas and Jenin and the conduction of 32 awareness-raising sessions in Tubas, Jenin, Atouf village, Far'a camp and Zababde village with a total of 308 participants; the sessions focused on domestic violence, marriage contract and dowry, familial relationships, inheritance, divorce, psychological pressure, women's rights and femicide. Alongside the awareness-raising sessions and with the aim of raising the awareness of TCS's target groups, WCLAC supported the working staff in the preparation of a first draft for a manual on GBV. Further support, as needed and requested, will be provided.

On a different level and to provide other forms of support to TCS, WCLAC conducted 4 general supervision meetings that focused on providing programmatic, financial and administrative advice and guidance with regards to planning, capacity building and funding.

In terms of developing the capacity of TCS to fundraise with donors, WCLAC supported TCS in the revision of 5 funding proposals, two of which were accepted; the first proposal, approved by the AMAL Innovations Funds that is administered by Oxfam Novib, would allow for the expansion of TCS's work in the provision of legal and social counselling in the Jordan Valley. The second proposal, approved by Riwaq provides TCS with the financial capacity to renovate an old house and use it as premises for another 10 years. Furthermore, WCLAC provided TCS with a list of donors that might be interested in TCS's objectives and work.

On a different level, and to promote networking with the local community, WCLAC supported TCS in the preparation and organization of a large scale event on the occasion of the International Women's Day; the event, attended by 120 participants, came within the context of supporting the steadfastness of Palestinian women in 3 villages in the Jordan Valley, where living conditions are miserable due to the policies and practices of the occupation. Additionally, WCLAC contributed to the moderation of a workshop, attended by 45 participants and organized by TCS on right of inheritance, focusing on social and legal challenges that limit women's access to their right of inheritance.

WCLAC continuously provides support and guidance to the different grassroots partners, via phone, emails and personal meetings, as needed. WCLAC facilitated the clarification of roles and responsibilities of the staff and board of directors at Women for Life. Alternatively, WCLAC supported Al Najdeh in Tulkarem in the preparation for and conduction of an educational day, where the working staff were exposed to different experiences and the social workers were given the opportunity to deepen their understanding of the role of safe houses in the protection of GBV victims, course of action, mechanisms and criteria of accepting cases and provision of services while at the safe house.

1.3.2 Train state and non-state service providers in order to develop best practices in dealing with women victims of violence

Capacity Building of Service Providers:

For many years, WCLAC monitored the level of services women victims of violence receive in the health, social services and police departments. Due to the inadequacy in the level of service, WCLAC in partnership with Juzoor for Health and Social Development developed the National Referral System for Women Victims of Violence (Takamol). Although the system was adopted by the ministerial cabinet in December 2013, provision of health, legal and social services to women victims of violence have not met the standards of the protocols of the system. To overcome this, WCLAC commenced in the preparation of a training programme; conducted 3 ToT courses for the health, social services and police sectors in the north, central and southern governorates of the WB; and provided support to trainees in the subsequent conducted trainings. The ToT, focusing on the mechanisms of provision of services in accordance with the protocols of the Takamol system, targeted 67 participants (25 in the northern WB governorates, 17 in southern WB governorates and 25 in the central WB governorates) from the Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Health, Palestinian Red Crescent Society, Centre for the Protection and Empowerment of Women and Families (Mehwar) and Family Protection Units in the police force. Thereafter, WCLAC supported the 67 trainees in the conduction of 3-day training workshops in the aforementioned organizations to mainstream the mechanisms of provision of services for women victims of violence.

Strategic goal 2: Promote women's rights and combat negative practices against women.

2.1 Contribute to the development of gender-sensitive legislation and institutional policies that support, protect and empower women in the public and private spheres

2.1.1 Identify inadequacies within the judicial system related to cases of femicide and incest

The year 2014 witnessed a significant and alarming number of femicide cases in both the WB and Gaza Strip (GS); during the reporting period in 2014 the number of femicide cases documented reached 17 (6 in the GS and 11 in the WB). WCLAC's commitment to excellence and high standards has, in this particular case, made it a national reference for other civil society organizations and most importantly the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS). PCBS publishes an annual factsheet on the occasion of the International Women's Day that reflects the status of women. In the part concerning gender-based violence and femicide PCBS referenced WCLAC's documentation and data. To view the factsheet in Arabic please follow this link: http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/portals/_pcbs/PressRelease/WomensDay2014a.pdf

2.1.2 Propose reforms based on an analysis of existing legislation and institutional policies which have a specific impact on women's rights

In order to expand areas of work and in accordance with the new strategy, WCLAC carried out intensive research in 2013 that aimed to highlight the violations that women are subjected to in the pension law; this was carried out via reviewing the applied pension law in Palestine and determining the status of women in the applied pension law in Arab countries. The findings of the completed report, methodology of work and recommendations were presented in two meetings, conducted in Qalqilya and Hebron and attended by 40 participants (36 women and 4 men), including retired women, feminist activists, legal organizations, feminist organizations, the General Union of Palestinian Women and women's unions, and the recommendations of the attendants were recorded.

2.1.3 Advocate for the passage of draft legislation that protects women's rights

Following the completion of the draft of the Family Protection from Violence Law in 2013 and based on the outputs of the meeting organized by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) with a number of official institutions and non-governmental organizations, a subcommittee was formed to put final comments on the law, convening in January 2014 in the presence of the NGO Forum on Violence Against Women, Public Prosecution, EUPOL COPPS, Ministry of Women's Affairs and Ministry of Social Affairs. During the reporting period 6 meetings were held, in which 50 of the 70 articles were discussed, modified (when needed) and finalized. The Coalition on the Criminal Law, led by WCLAC, held a meeting to determine the status of adopting the Palestinian Criminal Law, where the current approaches of Civil Society Organizations and the required strategies were discussed in light of the increasing femicide cases. The coalition drafted and sent a letter to President Mahmoud Abbas demanding the

modification of articles 98, 99 and 100 of the applied Criminal Law in the WB, which allows giving perpetrators of femicide crimes reduced sentences, in addition to demanding the adoption of the Palestinian Criminal Law. A breakthrough on this front was a presidential decree that modified article 98 of the applied Criminal Law, via the addition of a sentence that excludes perpetrators of femicide crimes from receiving reduced sentences.

Special project: *Inheritance Denied: Promoting Palestinian Women Social and Economic Rights through Access to Inheritance*

WCLAC's work encompasses many different fields, including the access of Palestinian women to their social and economic rights, including right to inheritance. This necessitates advanced awareness of social and economic rights, particularly among marginalized and vulnerable women, in addition to a legal and political environment in which women's access to inheritance is protected.

In May 2013, WCLAC embarked on an ambitious multi-partner project that seeks to promote women's access to their inheritance rights. The project is funded by the European Union (EU) and is implemented by Dan Church Aid (DCA), in partnership with Women's Affairs Center (WAC) and the Young Men Christian Association (YMCA). Working in partnership, WCLAC's work focuses on the advocacy component to develop a legal and political environment that protects and encourages women's right to inheritance, while WAC and YMCA are responsible for the awareness raising component in the West Bank (YMCA) and Gaza Strip (WAC).

Following the formation of the National Committee to Ensure Inheritance Rights (NCEIR), comprising official and private sector institutions concerned with the right of inheritance, the committee met four times with the aim of working as an advocacy body for improving the status of women with regards to access to inheritance; this may include the formation of a special department in the government for inheritance, embedding the inheritance issue within gender units in all ministries and the enforcement of laws that regulate the inheritance process. A guidebook on inheritance was produced, providing women with step-by-step instructions on how to take an inheritance case to court; additionally, the first draft of research study on women's status in accessing their inheritance, focusing on the obstacles women face legally and socially, is complete. The guidebook was reviewed and adopted by the NCEIR and the first draft of the study was submitted to receive the committee's comments.

WCLAC realizes that working on such issues takes many different forms and at many different levels; WCLAC established a coalition comprising 13 civil society organizations; this coalition will act as a mobilizer for change, advocating for women's rights in the different West Bank governorates.

2.2 Advocate for Palestinian women's rights in cooperation with local and international networks and mobilize support for a culture of respect for women's rights

2.2.1 Engage with active networks and coalitions to support women's rights

WCLAC is a member in numerous local and international coalitions and networks and ensures effective participation in the meetings and activities of these coalitions and

networks. WCLAC participated in 4 meetings with the Palestinian Council of Human Rights Organizations and during the 1st meeting WCLAC was elected the council in UN Women; additionally, the council issued numerous letters and statements, to condemn the attack on the BDS movement; support President Mahmoud Abbas in joining Human Rights conventions and treaties; send a letter to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon demanding immediate action on the issue of Palestinian political prisoners on hunger strike; encourage President Abbas to join the International Criminal Court; and send a letter to EU High Representative of Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton demanding immediate intervention to terminate Israel's "Brother's Keeper" operation.

WCLAC is also a participant in numerous coalitions and networks that seek to improve women's economic, social and political status by ensuring the minimum fulfillment of internationally recognized rights and impacting national policies on one hand, and promote democratic and legal reform efforts on the national level, at another hand. WCLAC actively participates in the meetings, activities and plans of these coalitions and networks, including the National Committee for Women's Labour, NGO Forum on Violence Against Women, SALMA and AISHA Network, Arab Network for Monitoring and Changing the Image of Women in the Media, Musawa Coalition, Alimony Fund, Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network and the Gender Working Group, Hemaya Forum, Palestinian National Coalition on UN Resolution 1325 and Psychosocial Support Team.

Regionally, WCLAC participated in a two days conference organized by the SALMA AND AISHA Network in Jordan where both WCLAC's Director General and Head of Programs attended. The conference was about Syrian Women Refugees and attended by members of the Network from Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Tunisia, Morocco and Yemen in addition to Palestine. A research on Syrian Women Refugees and Sexual Violence discussed violations against refugee Syrian women that are based on gender, identify services that are provided for survivors of violence and effectiveness of these services to combat different types of violence that Syrian women are exposed to, challenges that service providers are facing and present recommendations to better develop a program to combat GBV.

WCLAC is proud of its contribution to the group discussion to identify effective interventions and development of the recommendations to find better and effective methods to combat violence against Syrian women.

2.2.2 Increase coverage of women's rights issues in mainstream and social media

Increase Sensitization of Media Professionals:

WCLAC continues to target media professionals to support women's rights; WCLAC, during 2013, took the initiative and developed a social media network, consisting currently of 306 members, where continuous updates on events that impact Palestinian women, both negatively and positively, were published throughout 2014 with the aim of exchange of information and opinions.

Additionally, WCLAC targeted 26 media students from Al-Najah National University in a 3-day training course, with the aim of increasing the awareness of media persons in legal issues pertaining to women's rights, clarifying the prevalent societal stereotypes on women and emphasize the role of media in changing these stereotypes. The training focused on concepts of gender, legal discrimination against women, particularly in the Personal Status Law and Criminal Law and the efforts of Palestinian civil society organizations for legal

reform. WCLAC received positive feedback from the participants, who emphasized the quantity of acquired knowledge and skills in the training; many recommended the repetition of such trainings to enrich their academic studies and highlight social issues.

On another level, WCLAC conducted a 1-day workshop targeting 20 media professionals (16 women and 4 men), with the aim of exchange and discussion of experience among organizations and media professionals. This is of crucial importance in light of the recent events that indicate severe social deterioration, particularly in light of the increasing rates of gender-based violence, which are culminating in femicide. During the workshop, WCLAC's analytical report on the 2012 media archive was presented, focusing on the improvements in media coverage of women's issues, but also highlighting the shortcomings on the media and future areas of work to develop a gender-sensitive coverage of social issues in general and women's issues in particular. The recommendations from the workshop included the need to continue the documentation of media coverage of women's issues, institutionalization of the documentation process and continuous analysis of issues from a gender perspective.

Also, WCLAC responded to requests from local media outlets for interviews on women's issues, such that WCLAC participated in 25 television and radio interviews that focused on gender-based violence, femicide, women's right to inheritance, Personal Status Law and its implications on Palestinian women, divorce and women's image in the media (for a complete list of media interviews, please refer to Appendix H).

As per WCLAC's plan to increase coverage of women's issues in mainstream and social media in order to increase the sensitization of the public to women's issues, WCLAC wrote and published 3 articles on femicide cases and related developments; the articles received critical acclaim, vast distribution and positive feedback, such that one of the articles published on social media was read by 850+ individuals (for a complete list of written articles, please refer to Appendix I).

Additionally, during the reporting period WCLAC published its annual newsletter for 2013, which focused on WCLAC's activities, events, conferences, projects, partnerships, volunteers and publications, shedding light on gender-based violence, femicide, legal reform, political participation and national advocacy. The newsletter was distributed during conducted activities, in meetings and to WCLAC's visitors.

WCLAC's Electronic Media Tools:

WCLAC continuously updates the website, social media tools including facebook page, twitter account and YouTube channel. Updates include press releases and videos on conducted activities, job vacancies, articles, national issues and statements on landmark occasions. The number of readers for every new update varies from item to item, but always exceeds 100 readers on and on some occasions exceeds 300+ readers

In order to build advocacy initiatives and lobby local and international authorities, WCLAC monitors media coverage of human rights violations by the community and the occupation in three local newspapers (Al-Quds, Al Ayyam and Al Hayat) and three news agencies (Ma'an, Wafa and Wattan). During the reporting period, WCLAC documented 64 press

releases in the three news agencies; 21 of which on WCLAC's activities, 29 on women's rights violations by the community and 14 on women's rights violations by the occupation.

2.3 Empower youth volunteer networks to publicise women's rights issues within their communities

2.3.1 Form and develop a network of volunteers that advocate for women's rights within Palestinian communities

WCLAC believes that one of the keys to advance the status of women is increasing the awareness of youth in women's rights and equipping them with the tools to become mobilizers for change. In this sense, WCLAC targets 119 young men and women in Hebron, Bethlehem, Jericho and Tulkarem, and provided support for these groups by conducting 12 supervision and monitoring meetings to determine the 2014 action plan and integration of new activities.

WCLAC targets news volunteers in capacity building activities that focus on the acquisition of the necessary knowledge and skills to conduct the community activities, workshops and projects. During the reporting period, WCLAC conducted a 6-day training for 19 volunteers (6 males and 13 females) in communication, needs assessment and prioritization, monitoring and documentation of human rights violations, facilitation of workshops and development of community activities. To evaluate the success of the training, WCLAC utilized a pre/post questionnaire to determine the efficacy of acquisition of knowledge and the assessment reflect positive results.

On a different level, WCLAC nominates volunteers to participate in capacity building activities, as per specific criteria; during the reporting period volunteers participated in a monitoring and documentation mechanisms for United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 course and a training in legal frameworks for the protection of women in the Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women and UNSRC 1325.

As mentioned earlier, WCLAC's special projects come in line with the overall strategy and seek to promote partnerships with other civil society actors. In this case, WCLAC partnered with the Women's Affairs Center (WAC) in a generously funded 1-year project by Oxfam Novib, with the aim of utilizing creative means in combating gender-based violence by directing the volunteers to target university students, raise their awareness towards women's rights and develop their capacities to become agents of change.

WCLAC's community work adopts a research and needs assessment oriented-approach in order to address priority issues pertaining to women's rights. Following the capacity building of WCLAC's volunteers in conducting needs assessments, each group of volunteers collected data via conducting focus groups and interviews with students in Hebron University in Hebron, Al-Ahliye University in Bethlehem, Quds Open University in Jericho and Al-Khaduri University in Tulkarem; the collected data aimed to determine the perceptions of the students from the aforementioned universities on gender-based discrimination, including violence, for a needs assessment in order to later develop the community projects that they will be implementing.

On a different level, and to promote networking between the volunteers and other organizations, both official and civil, WCLAC facilitated communication between the groups of volunteers and the Youth Men Christian Association (YMCA) in Tulkarem, women's

department in the Jericho governorate, the governor and director of public relations of Tulkarem governorate and TAM organization in Bethlehem.

WCLAC believes that consolidating efforts in working towards the promotion of women's rights brings faster and better results; WCLAC facilitated and contributed to the creation of networks comprising local community organisations. For example, in Bethlehem WCLAC volunteers are partnering with TAM organization and Ibda'a organization in Dheisheh refugee camp; while in Tulkarem the volunteers are partnering with the Social Work Committees. The volunteers also participated in and organized activities and events on the occasion of the International Women's Day; for example, in Hebron the volunteers organized a ceremony to honour women that bear financial responsibilities, while in Tulkarem and Jericho the volunteers participated in the events organized by the governorate, and in Bethlehem in an activity organized by Ibda'a organization.

WCLAC enjoys opportunities of utilizing numerous available resources to extend its capacity building and awareness-raising work in the promotion of women's rights and combating gender-based violence; WCLAC utilized the Oxfam Novib and Womanity-produced *Listener's Club CDs*, where celebrities use comedy and pop-culture to increase the awareness of a specific case, this time to combat gender-based violence. Following the completion of the needs assessment study, WCLAC trained 24 volunteers on utilizing the listener's clubs in management of awareness-raising activities, who in turn will train 45 new volunteers and 15 feminist leaders in community-based organizations.

2.4 Advocate for Palestinian women living under the Israeli occupation

2.4.1 Highlight the impact of Israel's human rights violations on Palestinian women

Impact of Occupation on Palestinian Women

WCLAC develops and works through special projects that are in line with the organization's overall strategy. Since WCLAC believes that women's rights oppression takes place not only at the community level but also at the hands of the occupation forces and settlers, the international advocacy unit monitors human rights violations in general and women's rights violations in particular, which take different forms, including home demolitions; night raids and arrest of family members, especially minors; denial of residency rights; settler and soldier violence; and poverty and poor living conditions as a result of the siege on Gaza; in addition to the effects of military attacks on Gaza. WCLAC's international advocacy special projects seek to promote solidarity with the Palestinian people among members of parliament, members of congress, international policy makers, academics, students, faith leaders, journalists and activists; in addition to lobby international organizations to condemn human rights violations by the occupation. WCLAC documented 73 women's testimonies during the reporting period (50 in the West Bank and 23 in Jerusalem), translated 63 testimonies to English and archived 73 photos to go with each of the testimonies. Additionally, WCLAC documents and archives these testimonies as it enjoys the ability of accompanying women to the Human Rights Council in Geneva, Switzerland to give account of human rights violations they were subjected to at the hands of the occupation.

Innovation in Advocacy

WCLAC conducts various advocacy activities pertaining to women's rights violations at the hands of the occupation. For example, WCLAC produces a representative sample of the

documented testimonies electronically; during the reporting period, 33 electronic stories **Women's Voices** were produced and posted on WCLAC's website, facebook and twitter. This form makes the statement more appealing to the reader, is shorter than the full statement and includes useful background information. Additionally, 6 public statements and 6 bulletins were produced and distributed, highlighting key issues affecting women's rights domestically and regionally (Women's voices electronic stories, bulletins and public statements are available on WCLAC's website: www.wclac.org/english).

Additionally, WCLAC participated in an advocacy campaign that included meetings with the Dutch Ministry of Justice, Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, an event with the Young Democrats in Utrecht and meetings with members of parliament from CDA, PvdA and Christen Unie. The main aim was to highlight the impact of night raids conducted by the Israel military in the West Bank have on women, children and whole communities. Subsequently, the standing Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs in the Dutch Parliament held a wide ranging debate on relations with Israel and Palestine. During the debate Foreign Minister Frans Timmermans acknowledged that night raids conducted by the Israeli military on Palestinian communities remain a problem.

WCLAC also participated in the 58th session of the Commission on the Status of Women held at the United Nations headquarters in New York titled "Challenges and Achievements in the Implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for Women and Girls". WCLAC met privately with Ms Rashida Manjoo, the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, its causes and consequences and updated her on the situation facing Palestinian women under occupation. Ms Manjoo publicly declared her upcoming visit to Palestine is scheduled for January 2015.

WCLAC also approaches advocacy via participation on conferences, preparation of papers, production of film projects and conduct interviews and research on a specific issue, pertaining to women's rights and the impact of the occupation on Palestinian women. A paper jointly written with a prominent American psychoanalyst was presented at the Annual American Association of Psychologists and will be published during 2014. The paper, titled "Crows on the Cradle: Palestinian Mothers at a Frontline Vortex: Reflections on the Psychology of Occupation" is based on field work and preliminary interviews with mothers in four areas: Silwan, Rasel-Amoud, Beit Ummar and Nabi Saleh.

A research abstract "Life Behind the Wall: Voices of Women from the Seam Zone" was submitted, in collaboration with the Institute of Community and Public Health at Birzeit University. The abstract was accepted for a poster presentation at the Lancet Palestinian Health Alliance held in Amman, Jordan in March 2014 and was based on an initial qualitative investigation which included interviews with 15 women.

WCLAC was approached by numerous media outlets to conduct interviews, including Australian women's on-line magazine (Aquila). The interview included questions about the work of WCLAC with a particular focus on advocacy. Another interview was in a documentary film produced by the mainstream Australian television programme 4 Corners and broadcast in February 2014 on Australia's ABC television. An estimated one million viewers watched the programme live and another 100,000 viewers watched it online. Two mothers from the village of An Nabi Saleh and the village of Halhoul were also interviewed. The mothers talked about the arrest of their children in the middle of the night. The

documentary is entitled “Stone Cold Justice” and focused on the issue of Palestinian child detainees and the treatment they receive in the Israeli military court system.

WCLAC also conducts field visits with foreigners in Palestine, including politicians, academics, students, faith leaders, journalists and activists with the aim of promoting solidarity with the Palestinian people by highlighting human rights violations in general and women’s rights violations in particular that take place at the hands of the Israeli occupation. This form of advocacy proved to be the most effective by far, with long-lasting effects and an impact that will not easily fade away. Nothing can beat the combination of a human story and a human face. Palestinian women, especially mothers, are outspoken advocates on behalf of all Palestinians. Their modesty, combined with precision and lack of exaggeration together with their genuine belief that telling their stories will make a difference, made field visits the best way to influence the views of every possible type of person. Thirty such field visits were implemented during the first six months of 2014 with dozens of Palestinian women having the opportunity to tell their stories, in their own environment. Politicians, students and community leaders were brought to tears by these humble and genuine human stories.

Visiting delegations included diplomats, film makers, journalists (including BBC, Der Spiegel, The Daily Telegraph and the Australian), students, philanthropists, parliamentarians, lawyers, psychologists, doctors, headmasters, rabbis and Jewish leaders, fact finding missions (The European Parliament Fact Finding Mission on Prisoners), ex-ministers, young politicians and theologians.

Visiting delegations were accompanied to Ofer Military Court where they attended court hearings of husbands and sons some of whom were as young as 13-years-old. The delegations spoke to the families in the waiting room and were shocked by the level of injustice. Military court visits proved to be a very effective and innovative form of advocacy. Others were given briefings and presentations either in WCLAC’s office or at their hotels.

2.4.2 Build the capacity of local human rights activists to advocate on behalf of Palestinian women

Peer-to-peer Empowerment:

WCLAC works on empowering women whose rights have been violated by the occupation to advocate for their own rights by providing ongoing support and training to field workers on best practices in documentation and coaching the affected women to monitor and advocate for their rights.

WCLAC was in continuous contact with the field workers to steer and guide their work and to help them identify cases, and received feedback from the field regularly. Meetings were held in the office with field workers both on a one-to-one basis and in small groups to discuss developments, agree on short-term objectives and to ensure the highest possible standard is adopted and implemented.

Statements produced by the fieldworkers were reviewed in the meetings, which were also used to improve some of the fieldworkers’ writing skills and to improve their ability to write the details of the incidents in a chronological order and in an attractive reader-friendly style. Tangible improvement was evident as time went by. Meetings were also used to discuss potential cases and/or specific issues or areas that needed more attention. Meetings deepened the collegial relationship and improved the team spirit with and among the

fieldworkers, improved their self-confidence and made them feel proud of their critical work. The fieldworkers were also shown the reports and advocacy tools developed using the materials they produced, which gave them a sense as to the importance of the work they do and encouraged them to continue doing their work, which often is carried out under strenuous and physically-demanding conditions.

On a different level and to build the capacities of the fieldworkers, several on-the job trainings during field trips were conducted, resulting in a dramatic improvement in the level of proficiency of the core fieldworkers. Conducting interviews is a skill that is best acquired through practical mentoring rather than through lecturing and workshops. The fieldworkers picked up the necessary skills by observing WCLAC staff conduct interviews and by carefully monitoring the right dynamics that develop with the women who were being interviewed. The fieldworkers were gradually given more responsibility over the interview as their skills developed. Since many of the fieldworkers were already quite experienced, statements collected by them were factually accurate, concise and deeply compelling.

Empowering affected women and equipping them with the skills and tools needed to help them advocate for themselves came side by side along efforts to document their stories. In fact, this component was at the heart of success. Women who never felt comfortable speaking to strangers have become “spokespersons” for their families and communities. Husbands, sons, brothers and uncles sat and listened attentively as women in their families articulated their stories and successfully communicated their thoughts, feelings, fears, hopes and aspirations. There couldn’t have been a better way to empower women (and educate men) than by giving them the space they needed to express and interact. The result was a powerful combination of effective advocacy alongside education and empowerment.

About 20 women took part in a workshop held at WCLAC offices focusing on UNSCR 1325. The workshop addressed the importance of accurately documenting human rights violations against women by women. Lively discussions took place as women from all over the West Bank shared experiences and highlighted concerns and obstacles.

Regionally, a three-day workshop was organized by WCLAC in collaboration with the Jordanian Women’s Union targeting Jordanian women activists, fieldworkers and Syrian women from the refugee camps in Jordan. The workshop focused on UNSCR 1325 and 1820 and CEDAW with special focus on documentation and reporting skill. This workshop was part of WCLAC’s focus on providing training and building the skills of women with the aim of empowering them to provide protection for women in situations in armed conflict and basing it on the long experience that WCLAC has in this field domestically.

Strategic goal 3: Develop Institutional and Human Capacity in order to Ensure the Sustainability, Effectiveness and Efficiency of WCLAC.

3.1 Enhance the Efficiency of WCLAC's internal operations

3.1.1 Improve WCLAC's internal policies, procedures and practices

WCLAC’s General Director, Director of Finance and Administration and Human Resources Coordinator reviewed the center’s incentives policy. Due to the complexity of this process and to ensure the development of an applicable policy that satisfies the needs and

aspirations of the staff, the programmes staff will be integrated in the process. Hence, the policy shall be developed via a participatory approach before the end of 2014.

3.1.2 Enhance WCLAC's programme and information management systems

WCLAC's monitoring, evaluation and documentation strategy utilises the means of a Management Information System (MIS) to keep track of provided services, implemented activities and participations. During the reporting period, the service unit has inserted all related information to social and legal cases on the MIS, thus creating more institutionalized information for all clients, facilitating monitoring and reporting procedures. Working with the new system allowed for the determination of which parts are needed and which parts need to be developed; in this sense, WCLAC will develop the MIS to best serve analysis of cases and data. Also, the system needs more updates to make it more users friendly and ensure review of missing information that can help us in developing our interventions and monitoring systems.

WCLAC is still in the process of developing documentation, archiving and removal methods of old and sensitive hard copy files of clients from previous years who benefitted from social and legal counselling. The unit will design a manual of procedures on how to deal with these issues to be approved and distributed to the team for testing and then final approval.

On another level, and to maintain commitment to excellence, WCLAC prepared and finalized the 2013 annual narrative report and financial statement and distributed them among donors and other stakeholders in April 2014, which were discussed and adopted by WCLAC's General Assembly in May 2014; the meeting was attended by 19 members and included a presentation of a paper on the rights of Palestinian women within EU, Israel and PA relations; presentation of 2014 operational plan and budget; and external relations strategy. Also, 4 Board of Directors meetings were held to discuss strategies and provide support for WCLAC. Additionally, upon the donor's request, WCLAC prepared 9 financial reports, 7 special projects reports and 2 semi-annual and annual reports.

WCLAC's Library

WCLAC's library facilities are being improved, with media reports on women's rights violations and GBV at the hands of the occupation and community systematically archived, in addition to using the Libsys library cataloguing system to archive available books. During the reporting period, WCLAC employees archived 81 books on the Libsys system and another 50 books manually. Additionally, the libraries in Ramallah and Hebron were visited by 97 individuals (84 in Ramallah and 13 in Hebron), including researchers, attorneys, social workers, media professionals, feminist activists and university students. The visitors utilise WCLAC's various resources, with special focus was on legal empowerment of working women, domestic violence, femicide, political participation, Personal Status Law, social and economic rights, women's rights violations at the hands of the occupation, incest, social security and the Palestinian Criminal Law.

WCLAC's library staff participated in 5 external activities and occasions and showcased WCLAC's publications, in exhibitions in Al-Quds University and Birzeit University, the memorial service of feminist activist Issam Abdul Hadi, International Book exhibition and Europe Day.

3.2 Empower WCLAC staff to excel personally and professionally

3.2.1 Implement training for staff and develop working practices which meet staff needs

WCLAC believes in the need for periodic staff performance evaluations to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the employees, with the aim of building upon the strengths and addressing the weaknesses via constructive discussion sessions. The majority of WCLAC's senior and junior staff was evaluated and the remainder will be evaluated shortly.

3.2.2 Promote critical thinking about women's rights discourse amongst WCLAC staff

Conceptual Capacity Building

The first six months of 2014 witnessed a dramatic increase in the number of femicide cases, such that during the first six months of 2013 the number of cases was 13, while this year it has reached 17. This required several meetings and discussion with WCLAC's team to develop better ways to advocate for law reform and approval of the Palestinian Criminal Law that was submitted to the President by human rights and women organizations, in order to replace the outdated Jordanian Law of 1960 that is applied in West Bank courts. The team defined the need for extensive lobbying activity; especially with the PLC to change the law.

The team also met to discuss the family protection law: the Ministry of Justice called for a discussion of the draft law to introduce some articles from the Criminal Law, thereby decreasing the changes of maintaining gender-sensitivity and positive discrimination with women. The team thoroughly went through these changes and developed a response, to be used by WCLAC's representative in the committee to respond in accordance with our mission and vision.

3.2.3 Contribute to WCLAC's positive working environment

WCLAC believes in the ongoing development and capacity building of its staff to contribute to develop our interventions and impact. A three days team building training and retreat was conducted in Amman, Jordan to contribute to improving mutual understanding between employees that joined WCLAC recently and relatively old one with WCLAC mission and vision. This also included revising methods of building WCLAC team to effectively participate in achieving the vision and mission. The team has defined three themes to be thoroughly discussed beyond the course of the training, they are: mutual trust within the team, providing feedback as a means of coaching and mentoring and decision-making principles at WCLAC.

Two staff meetings were conducted on Feb 1st and June 14th, 2014 aimed to contribute to creating a more positive working environment at WCLAC. The first meeting was a one day retreat conducted at the house of the Director General in Jericho where the team discussed future plans and progress in a very employee friendly environment. The second staff meeting aimed to contribute to preparing the media and advocacy strategy where the team managed to select topics and themes that WCLAC need to focus on in order to carry out its advocacy plan. A team was selected to further follow-up analysis around these themes through analysis of the audience and decision-makers, in addition to defining a preliminary action plan to be shared and discussed with the team.

The Director of Programs paid close attention to the dire need of the staff to discuss issues and ideas, therefore following the open door open policy since she joined WCLAC. The Director of Programs also attended units meetings to better understand specific progress, obstacles and plans related to each unit and to better contribute to creating mutual understanding of our work in line with WCLAC mission and vision.

3.3 Improve WCLAC's financial sustainability

3.3.1 Maintain a diversity of funding resources

WCLAC has maintained close relations with the following financial supporters and international project partners – some of which have involved on-going funding partnerships, others smaller joint project work or simply discussions of prospective partnerships:

- Open Society Institute
- Caritas Switzerland
- Dan Church Aid
- The Representative Office of Norway
- Bread for the World
- German Representative Office
- Oxfam Novib
- HR/IHL Secretariat
- Broederlijk Delen
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs Iceland
- EU/Oxfam Novib: East Jerusalem Project
- Government of Canada (CIDA)
- Women's World Day of Prayer
- OSI MENA: IHL Documentation Project
- Oxfam Novib/ SIDA: Transformative Leadership Project
- DCA – EU: Inheritance Rights

WCLAC seeks to diversify its sources of funding on the local, regional and international levels to address the various challenges faced. These challenges include but are not limited to that more competition among civil society organizations, less core funding available and a shift in donor policies towards funding projects instead of programmes.

This is a significant challenge for WCLAC as difficulties arise in obtaining the core funding needed. WCLAC responded to this via the development of special projects that seek to accomplish the aspired outcomes of WCLAC's overall strategy. This gives rise to another serious challenge in the form of maintaining all of WCLAC's working staff. In an attempt to minimize the impact of this challenge WCLAC submitted proposals that include core and administrative costs.

WCLAC submitted 5 new funding proposals, including 2 Palestinian private sector companies. Additionally, WCLAC is planning to develop a new fundraising strategy and will seek to open new funding relations with donors in the Arab region.

Despite all of the mentioned challenges, WCLAC has been successful in developing new funding opportunities. WCLAC now receives funding from the IHL HR Secretariat and

Women's World Day of Prayer. WCLAC is happy to receive continuously highly positive feedback on its proposals.

Additionally, WCLAC rents out the facilities of its resource center in Beit Jala, Dar Makhlof, including the conference hall and rooms. These facilities can be used for the conduction of workshops, exhibitions, films screenings and regular meetings. WCLAC generated more than 3000\$ in revenues from renting out these facilities to civil society organizations and community groups.