



للارشاد القانوني والاجتماعي

مركز المرأة

Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling

**Consolidating the past – shaping the future**

**A strategy for 2010-2012**

**Annual Report 2012**

# Annual Report 2012

## Table of Contents

Part I – Narrative Report.....	3
General Information .....	3
Short Political Brief.....	3
Progress towards strategic goals .....	6
Highlights of the year, by strategic goal.....	6
Some Challenges and lessons learnt.....	6
Part II – Detailed Activity Report.....	9
Strategic Goal 1: To contribute to the development of both a legislative environment and specific institutional policies that support, protect and empower women.....	9
Strategic goal 2: To contribute to raising awareness within Palestinian society regarding gender issues and women's rights, and to combat negative practices against women. ....	15
Strategic goal 3: To extend, improve and provide services to women suffering discrimination or violence. ....	22
Strategic goal 4: To document violations of women’s human rights and to disseminate this information through reports and position papers locally, regionally and internationally. ....	28
Strategic goal 5: To enhance WCLAC's own abilities, performance and sustainability. ....	29

# Part I – Narrative Report

## ***General Information:***

Name of NGO: Women’s Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling (WCLAC)  
Reporting period: 1 January 2012 – 31 December 2012  
Date of last report: 31 July 2012  
Date of this report: 15 February

## ***Short Political Brief***

The past year witnessed numerous significant political events. Regionally, the election of Egyptian president Mohammed Morsi on June 24 has raised hopes of a new era of Egyptian--Palestinian relations. Mr Morsi, whose Muslim Brotherhood is ideologically affiliated with Hamas, began his time in office by holding talks with both Fatah and Hamas leaders and affirmed his support for reconciliation between the two Palestinian factions. Meanwhile in Syria, Palestinian refugees have been pulled into a dark and long-lasting national struggle. On a local level, the year commenced with the open-ended hunger strikes waged by thousands of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails. The now-famous hunger strikes of Khader Adnan and Hana Shalabi against the use of administrative detention garnered local and international attention.

In September, non-violent demonstrations took place in the West Bank due in response to the deteriorating economic situation in Palestine. The Israeli Air force’s targeted airstrike which killed Hama’s military commander Ahmad Al Jabari on November 14 marked the onset of an eight day Israeli military offensive in the Gaza Strip. This resulted in 103 civilian casualties, including at least 13 women and 33 children.<sup>1</sup>

A positive development in 2012 was the UN General Assembly’s overwhelming vote to recognise Palestine as a non-member observer state. The immediate repercussion of this recognition was Israel’s announcement of plans for new settlement construction on land east of Jerusalem in an area known as E1. In contravention of international law, these measures include the construction of 3,000 settlement units, the expulsion of Bedouin communities and an expanded separation between East Jerusalem and the West Bank. WCLAC also notes a worsening trend of other occupation policies and practices—including house demolitions and settler violence—and the specific negative impact this has had upon women.

### Palestinian hunger strikes

On 21 February 2012, Khader Adnan ended a 66-day hunger strike, which he began after being arrested by Israeli authorities at his home in the West Bank. Mr. Adnan’s hunger strike brought attention to the use of administrative detention against Palestinians by the Israeli military authorities, a practice whereby Palestinians are held without charge on the basis of secret evidence that is not shown to the defendant or his/her lawyer.<sup>2</sup> Administrative detention orders can be issued for up to a six-month period, and can be renewed indefinitely.

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<sup>1</sup>[http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ochaopt\\_gaza\\_sitrep\\_05\\_12\\_2012\\_english.pdf](http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ochaopt_gaza_sitrep_05_12_2012_english.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Macintyre, Donald. “Palestinian prisoner Khader Adnan ends hunger strike, “ The Independent. 22 February 2012 <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/palestinian-prisoner-khader-adnan-ends-hunger-strike-7278845.html> (accessed 01 August 2012)

Another hunger striker, Hana Shalabi, was released in October 2011 after two years in administrative detention as part of a deal whereby Palestinian prisoners were released in exchange for captured Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit. She was rearrested at her home on 16 February 2012 and began an open-ended hunger strike the following day.<sup>3</sup> After a 43-day hunger strike, Ms. Shalabi agreed to a deal that would see her released from prison and exiled to Gaza for a period of three years.<sup>4</sup> Ultimately, thousands of Palestinian prisoners joined in an open-ended hunger strike to protest against inhuman prison conditions and the use of administrative detention. Their strike ended when a deal was struck with the Israeli Prison Authority. Not only did the hunger strikes mobilise the Palestinian community against the use of administrative detention by the Israeli military authorities, Ms. Shalabi's prominent role drew attention and support from across the West Bank, Gaza and internationally, thus illustrating the important role women can play in Palestinian political movements.

### The Palestinian Fiscal Crisis

In September, demonstrations took place across the West Bank in response to the Palestinian economic crisis—the result of, among other things, the increase of value added tax (VAT) in Palestine, delayed civil servant salaries and the rising costs of fuel and basic commodities. The protesters emphasised the economically crippling effects of the 1994 Paris Protocol—an annex to the Oslo accords that regulates the economic relationship of Israel and Palestine—and demanded its abolition. According to the Paris Protocol, the Palestinian Authority must attach its VAT and the cost of fuel, for example, to Israel's. When Israel raised its VAT in September, the Palestinian Authority was also forced to raise its tax. This tax increase, along with other economic pressures, sparked wide-spread demonstrations. To address the protestor's concerns, the PA reduced the VAT by 2%, cut public transport spending costs and senior level management salaries, and reduced fuel and food prices. Apprehensive of the risks of continued unrest in the West Bank, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced on 11 September that his government would transfer 225 million shekels in tax monies owed to the Palestinian Authority.<sup>5</sup>

### Hostilities in Gaza

On 14 November, the Israeli Air Force assassinated Hamas military chief Ahmed Al Jabari, triggering hostilities in Gaza. The eight-day long "Operation Pillar of Defence" was marked by uninterrupted waves of airstrikes and indiscriminate rocket fire. Casualties on the Palestinian side soared: 103 civilians were killed, including 13 women and 33 children, and 1,269 injured. In Israel, there were 6 deaths and 224 injuries. According to OCHA, 15,000 people in Gaza were displaced and 450 housing units severely damaged.<sup>6</sup> Protests erupted across the West Bank; in Hebron, Islamist and Nationalist politicians joined forces in calling for a strike—scenes not witnessed since the end of the second intifada.<sup>7</sup> Likewise, following the Egyptian-brokered truce on November 21, some Fatah flags could be spotted in Gaza while Hamas supporters reappeared on the streets of Ramallah. After five years of physical separation, these events are indicative of a de facto unity between the two factions.

Although the truce theoretically includes an easing of movement and access restrictions, the extent of such measures remains unclear. While some farmers and fisherman have been granted greater access to agricultural land and the Mediterranean Sea, the reality is that, on the whole, restrictions continue to choke the movement of people and goods into and out of Gaza. Thus far the ceasefire has held, but WCLAC remains concerned about the 3,000 families in Gaza living in severely damaged, war-torn buildings, and is particularly troubled by the psychosocial and economic impact of these precarious living conditions upon women and their families.

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<sup>3</sup> Adameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association <http://www.addameer.org/etemplate.php?id=161> (accessed 01 August 2012)

<sup>4</sup> "Hana Shalabi arrives in Gaza" Ma'an News Agency 01 April 2012 <http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=473141> (accessed 01 August 2012)

<sup>5</sup> See: <http://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/palestinian-authority%E2%80%99s-financial-crisis-%E2%80%98sobering>

<sup>6</sup> See: [http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha\\_opt\\_sitrep\\_escalation\\_in\\_hostilities\\_gaza\\_southern\\_israel\\_20121122.pdf](http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_sitrep_escalation_in_hostilities_gaza_southern_israel_20121122.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> See <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/nov/21/gaza-uselessness-of-force-editorial>

### Palestinian Status Upgrade at the UN

On November 29, 65 years after the adoption of UN Resolution 181—meant to lead to the creation of an independent Arab state alongside a Jewish one in Palestine—the General Assembly voted to recognise Palestine as a non-member observer state. An overwhelming majority of states voted in favour of the measure: 138 in favour and 9 against, with 41 abstentions. Though largely symbolic, this upgraded status gives Palestine access to UN bodies such as the International Criminal Court, where it can introduce complaints against Israel. Even though the victory was celebrated in the West Bank, it does not change the fact that women and men living in Palestine continue to suffer from international humanitarian and human rights violations as a direct result of the occupation of their land by the state of Israel.

### The E1 Plan, Housing Demolitions and Expanding Settlements in East Jerusalem

Subsequent to the UN General Assembly vote, Israel announced plans to expand settlement development to 12 square kilometres of land east of Jerusalem, in an area known as the E1. The plan involves the construction of 3,000 illegal settlement units. Enforcement of the E1 plan will further isolate the West Bank from East Jerusalem as well as disrupt the contiguity of the West Bank, converting regional roads into local ones that Palestinians can no longer access. Meanwhile the planned expulsion of 1,200 Bedouins residing within the E1 area is a further breach of international humanitarian law, which strictly prohibits the forcible transfer of protected persons. Netanyahu's office has stood firm on the E1 decision, even as the US, UN, and EU voice disapproval of the plan.

Since the beginning of the year, 557 Palestinian structures have been demolished in the West Bank (including East Jerusalem). As a result, 1,006 people were displaced, and the livelihood of 2,500 people adversely affected.<sup>8</sup> In East Jerusalem, 36 structures were demolished in the first six months of 2012, including 9 family homes. These figures represent a 48% increase in displacement incidents and demolition of structures, in comparison with 2011.<sup>9</sup>

WCLAC draws attention to the precarious and vulnerable position in which the expansion of settlements places Palestinian communities, in particular the East Jerusalem neighbourhoods of Beit Hanina, Silwan, Sheikh Jarrah, At-Tur, Wadi Joz, Ras al-'Amud, Jabal Al Mukabbir and the Old City. The establishment of settlements in the heart of Palestinian communities deprives families of their homes, and often results in disruption to livelihoods and a reduced standard of living.<sup>10</sup> WCLAC is particularly concerned about the psychological and economic impact this has on women and their families. The effects of such policies on family life leaves a distinct impact upon the lives of women, dramatically changing their family circumstances, while at the same time social conservatism demands they maintain cultural norms of domesticity and containment within the private sphere.

### Increased settler violence

Israel's facilitation of the settlement of its citizens inside the occupied Palestinian territory has resulted in the annexation of Palestinian land and water resources and is the root cause of settler violence.<sup>11</sup> The Israeli authority's repeated failure to enforce the rule of law in response to settler violence is in violation of its obligation under international law to prevent attacks on civilians and creates a culture of impunity that contributes to continued

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<sup>8</sup> [http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha\\_opt\\_protection\\_of\\_civilians\\_weekly\\_report\\_2012\\_11\\_09\\_english.pdf](http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_protection_of_civilians_weekly_report_2012_11_09_english.pdf)  
<http://www.icahd.org/displacement-trends>

<sup>9</sup> "East Jerusalem Home Demolished, 48% Increase of Displacement Incidents in East Jerusalem", Israeli Committee Against Housing Demolitions (ICAHD) 19 July 2012, <http://www.icahd.org/?p=8466> (accessed 28 July 2012)

<sup>10</sup> "Settlements in Palestinian Residential Areas in East Jerusalem", UN OCHA, April 2012  
<http://www.ochaopt.org/reports.aspx?id=103> (accessed 25 July 2012)

<sup>11</sup> "The Judiazation of Palestine", Israeli Committee Against Housing Demolitions (ICAHD), 25 January 2012  
<http://icahdusa.org/2012/01/icahd-research-shows-2011-record-year-for-palestinian-displacement/> (accessed 6 February 2012)

violence.<sup>12</sup> It is this culture of impunity that has resulted in an escalation of attacks against Palestinians. In fact, in the past two years, the number of settler attacks against Palestinians has increased by over 144%.<sup>13</sup>

### The stalled unity deal

In April 2011, in a deal mediated by Egypt, Fatah and Hamas signed a reconciliation agreement and pledged to form a unified caretaker government ahead of national elections in 2012.<sup>14</sup> Thus far, in 2012, a caretaker government has not been formed and national elections have not been announced. WCLAC notes the conflict between Fatah and Hamas has detrimental repercussions on Palestinian life—including an impact on the lives of Palestinian women. The reconciliation may present opportunities for a democratic legislature to be restored, through which laws can be passed that improves the legislative protection of women's rights. However, the as yet unfulfilled hope of national elections and the recommencement of the Palestinian Legislative Council has given justification for delays to the most urgent legal reforms for which WCLAC is advocating. WCLAC is closely monitoring the process of reconciliation and continuing to ensure that women's issues are addressed, through whichever means best serve the promotion of women's rights in line with WCLAC's mission and vision.

## ***Progress towards strategic goals***

The reporting period comprises months 25-31 of WCLAC's three year strategy "Consolidating the past; shaping the future." The five main goals of this programme are as follows:

- Strategic goal 1: To contribute to the development of both a legislative environment and specific institutional policies that support, protect and empower women.
- Strategic goal 2: To contribute to raising awareness within Palestinian society regarding gender issues and women's rights, and to combat negative practices against women.
- Strategic goal 3: To extend, improve and provide services to women suffering discrimination or violence.
- Strategic goal 4: To document violations of women's human rights and to disseminate this information through reports and position papers locally, regionally and internationally.
- Strategic goal 5: To enhance WCLAC's own abilities, performance and sustainability.

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**

Highlights include WCLAC's essential legal and social work with 382 new cases in 2012, serving a total of 441 women. As the backbone of its work, WCLAC continues to provide services to women through a team of lawyers and social workers based in East Jerusalem, Ramallah, Bethlehem and Hebron.

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<sup>12</sup> "Israeli Settler Violence in the West Bank", UN OCHA, January 2012  
[http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha\\_opt\\_settler\\_violence\\_FactSheet\\_October\\_2011\\_english.pdf](http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_settler_violence_FactSheet_October_2011_english.pdf) (accessed 02 April 2012)

<sup>13</sup> "Israeli Settlers attack Palestinian Shepherd and his Flock near Ramallah", Al Haq, 19 July 2012  
<http://www.alhaq.org/documentation/weekly-focuses/606-israeli-settlers-attack-palestinian-shepherd-and-his-flock-near-ramallah-> (accessed 1 August 2012)

<sup>14</sup> "Palestinian Rivals Hamas and Fatah sign reconciliation deal", The Guardian, 4 May 2011  
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/may/04/palestinian-rivals-hamas-fatah-deal> (accessed 29 January 2012)

Awareness-raising remains a core part of WCLAC's strategy for increasing women's access to services and changing attitudes and behaviour through increasing understanding of gender issues and women's rights. Through direct awareness-raising and volunteer led awareness-raising activities, WCLAC has reached over 3,500 beneficiaries as participants in over 100 workshops varying from technical training to a workshop series entitled "Women's Rights are Human Rights".

WCLAC has worked with a civil society coalition to develop a final draft Law on Family Protection from Violence, which was presented to the minister of social affairs and the minister of women's affairs for formal adoption by the cabinet. WCLAC also submitted the legal framework for an integrated legal-social-health referral system for women victims of violence for full approval by the cabinet.

WCLAC's work on the reforms to the Personal Status Law (PSL) continued in 2012. In collaboration with the General Union of Palestinian Women (GUPW), WCLAC was able to reactivate the national committee for the Personal Status Law (PSL), a coalition of civil society organisations working to promote a gender-equitable PSL for Palestine. In addition to its work with the National Committee, WCLAC published a study on the PSL and distributed the results to representatives of civil society organisations in a series of workshops. The study, using feminist research methodology and based on qualitative and quantitative data gathered from across the West Bank and Gaza, illustrates the need for changes to the PSL that will make it more protective of women's rights. WCLAC also finalised reports on the following: 1) laws and regulations relating to women's banking and finance, 2) the pension system, 3) laws related to the rights of women with disabilities, 4) Shari'a court procedures as they relate to women.

In 2011, WCLAC, in partnership with Juzoor, completed a multi-year European Union funded project to design an integrated legal-social-health service referral system model for women victims of violence. In February 2012, the legal framework for the referral system was submitted to the ministers of social affairs and women's affairs for adoption. The ministers will submit the framework to the full cabinet for approval later in 2012. In addition to the legal framework, WCLAC also designed and submitted an automated central databank system to the Ministry of Social Affairs, the governmental body responsible for maintaining records of all the referred cases. Also in 2012, the police academy committed to including the national referral system as part of its required coursework; curriculum developed during the project was submitted. Lastly, a training manual for service providers in the legal, social and health sectors was completed.

WCLAC understands the importance of including young people as volunteers and advocates for women's rights. WCLAC believes that working with volunteers is a cost-effective way to change negative attitudes and behaviour towards women. In 2012, volunteers held awareness-raising sessions to introduce WCLAC's legal and social counselling services to women in remote and marginalised areas, including Area C and villages in the seam zone. Volunteers conducted workshops to introduce existing Palestinian laws and their impact on women's rights. Workshops were designed to create open discussion in communities about the importance of gender-sensitive legislation that protects women's rights and will lead to equality between men and women. Through awareness-raising activities, volunteers focused attention on gender-based violence that can result from unjust traditional practices in conservative communities. They also used these opportunities to lobby local decision makers with regard to laws that protect women's rights and sought to recruit women's rights advocates from within their communities.

### **Some challenges and lessons learnt**

WCLAC has long been pressing for revisions to be made to the Criminal Law and, accordingly, is a founding member of the Criminal Law coalition. As a member of the Ministry of Justice's national drafting team, WCLAC contributed to the development of the draft Criminal Law and has worked, in conjunction with the coalition, to maintain pressure on the president to ensure passage of the draft Criminal Law. Unfortunately, there is little political will for passing

the law by presidential decree while reconciliation talks between Fatah and Hamas are ongoing. Despite progress made since May 2011, a unity government has yet to be formed and the president remains unwilling to risk harming the process through passage of this law. The new minister of justice (appointed 2012) is also opposed to passage through presidential decree as it has the potential to harm talks and he believes it is an inappropriate step to take without approval from a democratically elected Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC).

In order to promote public understanding of issues of Personal Status Law reform, and to promote young journalist's engagement with the issue, WCLAC planned to hold a media competition targeting young media professionals and students at media colleges, inviting them to submit articles addressing issues of PSL reform. Unfortunately, WCLAC did not receive enough submissions to make the competition worthwhile. After speaking with faculty and students in the university media programmes, it became clear that students felt the PSL was too technical a topic to produce quality submissions. Therefore, WCLAC, in partnership with the Journalists' Syndicate in Palestine, held a 3-day training session for 17 young media professionals. Over the course of the session, WCLAC staff provided training on the PSL, with a particular focus on controversial issues in the law, and representatives from the Journalists' Syndicate provided technical training on writing social topics, particularly women's rights issues. Over the course of the training sessions, and with support and feedback from the trainers, students produced reports, articles and investigations on the subject of women under the PSL; all final submissions were published in a booklet, "Women's Rights in the Eyes of Young Media Professionals."

Beginning in March 2011, WCLAC has struggled against manifest obstruction from local power-holders who insist that WCLAC make structural changes to its emergency protection shelter. This consisted of their advising WCLAC to build a razor-wire-topped wall around the compound and to install security cameras. WCLAC's constructive agenda for ending the standstill included maintaining our strong and supportive relationship with the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA), and pushing the Interior Ministry to resolve the issue. In the first semester of 2012, WCLAC obtained a small grant to build the wall as required by the local authorities. The work for the wall is completed, and WCLAC is now in the process of reopening the shelter.



## Part II – Detailed Activity Report

*Strategic goal 1: To contribute to the development of both a legislative environment and specific institutional policies that support, protect and empower women.*

### **1.1. Change existing laws or articles and seek to introduce new ones which have specific impact on women, through drafting and proposing texts developed in consultation with civil society coalitions and focus groups.**

#### **1.1.1. Build and maintain pressure for approval of a Criminal Law which defends women's rights.**

WCLAC has long been pressing for revisions to be made to the Criminal Law and, accordingly, is a founding member of the Criminal Law Coalition. The coalition brings together civil society organisations to seek to unify and reinforce civil society demands for change in the Criminal Law. WCLAC has contributed to the development of the draft Criminal Law as a member of the Ministry of Justice's national drafting committee. WCLAC will work to keep pressure on the President to ensure the passage of the draft Criminal Law.

In March 2012, the Palestinian Ministry of Justice hosted a delegation of representatives from the British Ministry of Justice. Over the course of a four-day workshop with members of the national drafting team, the British delegation presented strategies currently used in the UK whereby people are sentenced to community service rather than jail. The national drafting team agreed to amend the draft Criminal Law to include these alternative management strategies. In April, the team met to make the proposed amendments and prepare to present the final draft to the Cabinet.

WCLAC continues to face resistance with regards to amending the Criminal Law by presidential decree. The president remains unwilling to issue controversial decrees whilst the reconciliation process with Hamas is ongoing and the new Minister of Justice, previously the head of the Palestinian Bar Association, supports the president's reticence. Without the involvement of the PLC, the Minister sees the adoption of the law through this process as undemocratic and potentially damaging to the reconciliation process.

#### **1.1.2. Reactivate the national committee for the regional Personal Status Law Coalition as a body advocating gender-equitable articles in Palestinian law.**

WCLAC works within a coalition of civil society organisations to promote a unified and gender-equitable Personal Status Law for Palestine, lobbying with a two pronged approach, preferably for an entire new law but otherwise seeking, at least, to address six key issues which render women most vulnerable within the existing legal frameworks. These are: marriage age, common wealth, polygamy, divorce, custody and equal legal status (for example as witnesses in marital disputes).

Because of the sensitive nature of the issues addressed by the Personal Status Law, key civil society representatives felt that changes were best pursued in a coalition led by the General Union of Palestinian Women (GUPW).<sup>15</sup> In 2012, WCLAC worked together with the GUPW to reactivate the National Committee. Three workshops were held in the Gaza Strip with 75 participants to discuss issues related to proposed reforms to the PSL. Four meetings were also

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<sup>15</sup> The GUPW was established in 1965 as a body within the Palestinian Liberation Organisation and is considered to be the official representative body for Palestinian women, both in the Palestinian territories and around the world. The main objectives of the GUPW are to: mobilise women in the struggle for liberation; raise women's political awareness and participation in the political process; integrate women into the workforce and economy; and raise the cultural and health standards of Palestinian women (<http://gupw.net/ar/>; <http://blog.world-citizenship.org/wp-archive/1531>).

held in the West Bank with representatives from political parties, civil society and the Ministry of Justice (MOJ). Participants reached consensus on forming a national drafting team to review and develop the draft of the PSL. WCLAC and GUPW will continue to coordinate the formation of the team and oversee the drafting process. WCLAC's success drafting the Criminal Law as part of a coalition indicates that involving a broad range of civil society and government stakeholders in the drafting process will help to ensure that women's rights under the PSL remain a priority.

After considerable pressure from WCLAC and other members of civil society, meetings were finally held with the minister of justice to seek his support in establishing a PSL national drafting team. The minister agreed to support a national drafting team and conveyed the idea to the President's office. Invitations have been extended to the MOJ, members of civil society, and the Shari'a courts to participate as members of the national drafting team. As a result WCLAC will be nominated by the Palestinian Human Rights Council to participate as a member of the team. The drafting process is expected to begin in 2013.

### **1.1.3. Form and train regional consultation committees in Palestinian Governorates to discuss and support Personal Status Law (PSL) reforms.**

In order to promote public understanding of issues of Personal Status Law reform, and to promote young journalist's engagement with the issue, WCLAC planned to hold a media competition targeting young media professionals and students at media colleges, inviting them to submit articles addressing issues of PSL reform. Unfortunately, WCLAC did not receive enough submissions to make the competition worthwhile. After speaking with faculty and students in university level media programs, it became clear that students felt the PSL was too technical of a topic to produce quality submissions. Therefore, WCLAC held a 3-day training session for 17 young media professionals (9 female; 8 male) that included training on women's rights under the Personal Status Law and coaching from media experts on techniques for covering women's issues in the media. Additionally, during two evening sessions, WCLAC lawyers presented real-life stories from women's experience in the Shari'a and Ecclesiastical Courts. Over the course of the training sessions, and with the support and feedback from the trainers, students produced reports, articles and investigations on the subject of women under the PSL; all final submissions were published in a booklet, "Women's Rights In the Eyes of Young Media Professionals". Subjects included polygamy, divorce and equal legal status. The participants included recent media graduates from universities in the West Bank.

In December, WCLAC held a central conference for the regional sub-committees. The conference was opened by the legal advisor for the President and the Chief Justice of the Shari'a court. The conference focused on the need for a new Palestinian Personal Status Law and the importance of having a national drafting team that includes all stakeholders. In addition to the members of the regional committees, the conference was attended by decision-makers, PLC members, leaders of political parties and representatives from women's and human rights organisations (total participants 114; 87 female and 27 male).

### **1.1.4. Institute and assure dynamic leadership for a committee to monitor and advocate the development of a Law on Family Protection from Violence.**

WCLAC has worked with civil society organisations to develop a final, presentable draft Law on Family Protection from Violence since 2004 – a set of legal provisions which, up to now, have not been set down in Palestinian legislation. WCLAC has also drafted a legal commentary to accompany the text, giving background and the rationale for certain provisions. In February, WCLAC had a joint meeting with representatives from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Ministry of Women's Affairs to present the draft Law on Family Protection from Violence and the draft legal-social-health national referral system. The two ministries offered their support and worked with WCLAC to

finalise a legal memorandum that presents legal justifications for the new law and referral system. By December, WCLAC officially presented the final draft of the law (including legal explanatory memos) and the national referral system—incorporating comments from relevant stakeholders—to the Minister of Social Affairs (MOSA) and the Minister of Women’s Affairs (MOWA) as a formal submission to the Cabinet for adoption.

As a means of engaging the support of civil society, WCLAC presented the draft Law on Family Protection from Violence at a workshop that included members of the NGO Forum to Combat Violence Against Women (Al Muntada)<sup>16</sup> as well as representatives from the Palestinian Legislative Council and other civil society organisations (29 total participants; 26 female, 3 male). At the conclusion of the workshop, members of Al Muntada confirmed that they are ready to advocate for the passage of the draft law and to cooperate with WCLAC in future advocacy efforts.

### **1.1.5. Review and change the laws and regulations relating to women's finance and banking.**

WCLAC began work in this area by trying to map the breadth of discrimination against women in financial matters by looking both at regulations and day-to-day practices. WCLAC is in the process of preparing a report on women’s banking rights in Palestine that will be published in the second half of 2012. In 2011, WCLAC began the initial process of reviewing Palestinian laws concerning banking and financial procedures for women, including the Palestinian Monetary Authority (PMA) Law, the Commercial Law, and the Orphans Fund Law. Then, in 2012, WCLAC completed a literature review of women’s banking procedures and reviewed the internal bylaws and regulations of nine banks operating in Palestine. It also reviewed cases that were documented by WCLAC at workshops in 2011. WCLAC has met with Arab Bank, Cairo-Amman Bank, Bank of Palestine and with the PMA, to discuss regulatory differences between males and females relating to:

- opening accounts (current, savings, commercial)
- managing or accessing the accounts of minors
- witnessing financial actions/transactions
- arranging loans
- transferring/accessing the delayed dowry to a widow before settling other debts or paying inheritance to sons etc.
- how banks deal with veiled women (and identification of them).

At the level of the most basic issue – of setting up a personal account – the authorised regulations from the PMA do not discriminate between men and women; however, for other issues referred to above there is discrimination, reducing women’s empowerment, their status in the family and their self-determination, and potentially increasing their vulnerability at times of crisis.

The final report has been drafted and sent to the Palestinian Monetary Authority (PMA). Once their comments are incorporated, the final report will be issued (expected 2013) alongside a conference.

### **1.1.6. Draft and develop new regulations and procedures to guarantee women's access to inheritance.**

As part of its focus on women’s access to economic rights, WCLAC is turning its attention to inheritance procedures, believing that this is a significant area of discrimination against women, but also an area in which WCLAC could

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<sup>16</sup> The Forum for Combating Violence Against Women was established in 2000 as a result of an initiative of a group of Palestinian NGOs working in areas of women’s empowerment and combating violence against women. The goal of the Forum is to adopt a strategy that is comprehensive, integrated and continuous in nature for coordinating the work of the Forum’s members.

achieve tangible results with long-term positive impacts. The goal for WCLAC in this sector is to see a special state-sanctioned department developed, secular in character, which has a mandate to officiate inheritance proceedings. This department should work to ensure that women know the amount of inheritance available to them and the rights they have to claim them, and should have powers to enforce court orders on behalf of women in claiming inheritance payments. To this end, WCLAC has collaborated with partners to develop an inheritance project that will begin in 2013. In addition, WCLAC includes discussion of the right to inheritance in the context of the PSL and other Palestinian laws, as part of its awareness-raising sessions with Palestinian communities, but most especially with women.

#### **1.1.7. Review the law and regulations of the pension system from a gender perspective.**

WCLAC believes that women experience significant discrimination as a result of regulations within the pension system. In order to identify areas of discrimination, WCLAC completed a review of the laws and regulations governing the pension system in the West Bank and Gaza and compared them with laws in other Arab countries including Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia. WCLAC also met with various stakeholders, including representatives from the Palestinian Pension Authority, Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, and Civil Service Department. WCLAC interviewed and documented the cases of eight retired women (from Hebron, Qalqilya, Tubas, Jenin, Nablus and Ramallah) who had suffered discrimination within the pension system. WCLAC completed a draft report on the pension system and held a meeting with representatives from the Palestinian Pension Authority to discuss its conclusion and recommendations. The report will be published on WCLAC's website in the first semester of 2013.

#### **1.1.8. Review laws and regulations concerning people with disabilities from a gender perspective.**

WCLAC sees women with disabilities doubly suffering from discrimination: both as women living in a patriarchal society and as people with disabilities. WCLAC has also noted that women with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to violence. In April, WCLAC began reviewing existing laws and regulations in the West Bank and Gaza and compared them to international human rights standards and existing laws in Lebanon and Jordan. Seeking feedback from organisations with a particular focus on providing services and support to people with disabilities, WCLAC held meetings with three civil society organisations working in the West Bank, including Disabilities Without Borders, Stars of Hope, and MOSA — the ministry designated to oversee the implementation of the Palestinian Law on People with Disabilities (PLPD). WCLAC also documented cases of women with disabilities who were subject to discrimination at the hands of the community. In July, WCLAC held a focus group for women with disabilities to discuss discrimination and the problems they have encountered within existing laws (18 female participants). WCLAC incorporated the findings from this focus group into its report on the rights of women with disabilities in Palestine. The report includes recommendations for decision-makers on how best to address this discrimination.

In December WCLAC met with the Ministry of Social Affairs (the governmental body which oversees the PLPD) and the representatives from civil society to present the report and receive feedback. The final report will be published on the WCLAC website in the first quarter of 2013. One of the main recommendations of the report suggested that MOSA and human rights organisations need to take a larger role in monitoring the implementation of the PLPD, in addition to providing continuous support for women with disabilities and their families.

### **1.2. Highlight inadequacies in current legislation and mobilise support for proposed reforms.**

#### **1.2.1. Mobilise support for adopting proposed reforms.**

WCLAC formed regional consultation committees spread across OPT, generally centred in each governorate. The purpose of the groups is to mobilise support for the draft of the Personal Status Law and other legal reforms within their communities and to build grassroots understanding of issues concerning legal reform and gender sensitivity. The committee members include academics, decision-makers, students and members of civil society organisations. In the first semester of 2012, the regional committees conducted three workshops in Qalqilia, Salfeet, and Jericho to discuss women's rights under the PSL (75 total participants; 52 female, 23 male). In addition, WCLAC held two meetings (one in the north of the West Bank and one in south) to update the regional committees on the status of the draft Personal Status Law and to discuss the idea of forming a national drafting team (see 1.1.2.).

### **1.2.2. Publish and publicise studies which highlight the need to ensure Palestinian law advances women's rights and meets women's needs.**

Through a shift in focus in WCLAC's strategic plan for 2010-2012, WCLAC is seeking to concentrate to a greater extent on producing publications based on WCLAC's documentation (see Goal 4) addressing femicide and also linking women's testimonies to Israeli violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. However, WCLAC maintains a portfolio of legal and social issues it is seeking to publish based on past research and events which have helped shape WCLAC's feminist vision, or on on-going special projects. On-going publication projects are as follows:

- Study on the Personal Status Law
- Study of women's needs in Palestine
- Gender Analysis of the Third Draft Constitution of Palestine
- Reflections on the experience of the Model Parliament

The PSL study was finalised and the findings presented to 65 representatives (60 female and 5 male) from civil society organizations at a series of 3 workshops (Ramallah, Nablus, Hebron). Copies of the study were distributed to workshop participants, civil society organizations in the West Bank and Gaza and to participants at awareness-raising sessions. Because of the high demand for copies of the study, WCLAC reprinted an additional 500 copies. The study used feminist research methodology and was based on qualitative and quantitative data gathered from across the West Bank and Gaza. During the course of conducting the study, the research team noted that Palestinian women see a need for changes to the law so that it is more protective of women's rights.

The study of women's needs – which draws on social research undertaken by WCLAC questioning how Palestinian women view their priorities and needs within the restrictions and dangers of occupation and a patriarchal society – was finalised and published in the second semester of 2012.

The Gender Analysis of the Third Draft Constitution of Palestine was published and distributed in 2011. Due to high demand for the study from civil society organisations, WCLAC reprinted a further 500 copies in the first semester of 2012.

Furthermore, WCLAC published two new booklets in 2012: the first highlights the experience of women's organisations in advocating for amendments to the PSL, and the second outlines proposed amendments to the PSL and presents legal justifications that will protect women's rights. These two booklets will support the advocacy work on legal reform going forward.

#### Falling through the Cracks: How the Israeli Occupation Breaks Palestinian Families

In 2011, WCLAC began work on an ambitious multi-donor, multi-partner project to provide legal aid and counselling to women whose right to family life is undermined or denied by Israeli occupation practices, and to advocate for their rights. The project, funded by UNDP and Foundation Open Society Institute, sees three Palestinian women's

organisations working together with different capacities, in different contexts, and despite the arbitrary obstacles imposed on them by Israel. The project is being implemented by WCLAC, the Jerusalem Centre for Women (JCW) and the Centre for Women's Legal Research and Consulting (CWLRC) in Gaza, with considerable programme support from UNDP.

WCLAC is providing legal and social counselling across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and is also leading the documentation methodology, literature review and analysis of documentation. The project aims to develop a structured analysis, using case studies and women's own words to describe the Israeli rights abuses they struggle against. Over the course of the project, the research team has documented 90 sample cases: 30 from the Jerusalem municipality, 30 from the West Bank and 30 from Gaza. During the interview and documentation process, WCLAC's staff provided legal advice and counselling based on each family's particular legal situation, regardless of whether or not the case was selected to be included in the study. The full draft of the research study has been finalised, and it is now being reviewed by partner organisations and external readers from the gender and legal perspectives. An advocacy paper is being drafted by the WCLAC team and a documentary will be prepared by JCW which will highlight the stories of women from the Broken Families project.

### **1.2.3. Oversee a gender-sensitive analysis of court procedures.**

WCLAC sees this as a challenging new activity which would strengthen the basis for its analysis of current legal practices which discriminate against women (whether as victim, defendant or claimant), thereby strengthening the evidence base for WCLAC's advocacy positions in calling for legal reform. Work under this activity includes internal discussions with WCLAC on methodology and the creation of a literature review. In 2011, WCLAC met with the Judge of Judges (Chief Justice of the Shari'a Courts) and presented the aim of the study, which is to improve gender sensitivity within the judicial system so that women have access to their rights. He promised to facilitate our work through making employees available for interviews and allowing WCLAC access to court records. In 2012, WCLAC contracted a lawyer to conduct this study. Two cases were randomly selected and monitored as they progressed through the judicial system in the Ramallah and Birzeit Shari'a courts. The researcher interviewed employees of the Shari'a courts, including judges, registrars and members of the family counselling units. Once the report was finalised it was shared with the office of the Judge of Judges for comment and feedback. The report was printed in 2012 and a summary of the report in Arabic and English will be published in a separate booklet in 2013.

## **1.3. Use legal reform processes to institute bylaws introduced at Ministerial level governing Palestinian protection services for women at risk of violence.**

### **1.3.1. Revise and advocate nationally applicable by-laws for emergency shelters providing protection to women at risk of violence.**

WCLAC has been working with MOSA on drafting comprehensive national regulations and bylaws for shelters and safe homes. WCLAC was asked by MOSA to submit further comments on the draft, which were submitted to the Office of the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister subsequently approved the draft, thereby making the regulations national policy. WCLAC is pleased with this positive step toward ensuring the protection of women and girls at risk of violence. Based on its expertise, WCLAC will remain available to the Minister of Social Affairs for consultation on implementation of the policies.

### **Special project – "Helping the PLC and PNA in enacting new legislation which enhances the security of Palestinian women and girls."**

WCLAC began a one year special project in 2011 in partnership with the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) under the title: "Helping the PLC and PNA in enacting new legislation which enhances the

security of Palestinian women and girls.” DCAF, WCLAC and representatives from civil society and government established a working group of experts in security legislation (with representation from many key stakeholders) and produced a publication condensing key findings from a series of seven workshops, two briefing sessions and a final conference.

The final conference and the briefing session with decision makers drawn from a broad range of parties and sectors was held in 2012; during the conference the key points of the workshop discussions were presented and the diverse participants were invited to give feedback. Numerous key stakeholders praised the initiative and provided constructive input.

*Strategic goal 2: To contribute to raising awareness within Palestinian society regarding gender issues and women's rights, and to combat negative practices against women.*

**2.1. Empower and coordinate WCLAC volunteers to gain skills and to organise and facilitate awareness-raising events.**

**2.1.1. Provide support to 5 volunteer clusters across the occupied Palestinian Territory &**

**2.1.2 Form 1 new volunteer cluster.**

WCLAC understands the importance of including young people as volunteers and advocates for women’s rights. WCLAC believes that working with volunteers is a cost effective way to change negative attitudes and behaviour towards women through building a network of volunteers who learn to identify and condemn negative practices in their own communities. Volunteers are selected from remote areas who, through the training and support they receive from WCLAC, are now able to have a significant impact in communities that WCLAC might not otherwise reach. For this reason, WCLAC continued to support the activities of 4 volunteer clusters in the remote communities throughout the West Bank.

In 2011, WCLAC initiated a new group of volunteers in the remote areas South of Hebron. In July 2011, WCLAC staff held a 3-day (20 hours) training course for the new volunteer cluster in the south Hebron governorate on Palestinian laws, with a particular focus on gaps in existing laws that effect women’s rights. In March 2012, WCLAC conducted phase-two of the introductory training course. The 3-day (18 hours) training course focused on skills required to organise community projects (30 total participants; 28 female, 2 male).

Following the training, the volunteer clusters were encouraged to develop an idea for community projects. Each cluster chose projects according to identified community needs and adapted their activities accordingly (see 2.1.4).

In order to increase the capacity of the volunteers to provide high-quality awareness-raising sessions in their communities, WCLAC conducted a 4-day (35 hours) training of trainers course for selected volunteers from each cluster (18 total participants; 11 female, 7 male).

**Partnerships with local organisations developed**

WCLAC has held many meetings with the volunteers and has worked over the years to encourage the volunteer clusters to initiate and maintain partnerships with local community based groups, NGOs and various authorities. WCLAC has encouraged volunteers to work with like-minded local partners in order to develop a network of community supporters who are committed to protecting and supporting women’s rights. An additional benefit of these partnerships is that volunteers are able to reduce the costs of their activities by finding local support and community contributions, for example, such as meeting rooms and equipment or catering. In 2012, WCLAC

maintained relationships with 60 partner organisations; for a complete list of active partnerships please see Appendix A.

### **2.1.3. Support volunteer clusters in working together on central activities, highlighting landmark events and women's rights issues.**

### **2.1.4. Support volunteers in organising activities (25 per year) promoting women's empowerment, women's rights and gender awareness.**

The volunteer network has an amazing role to play in organising and – now that the volunteers have been trained by WCLAC over several years – leading awareness-raising workshops. Several of the events were marking International Women's Day (8 March) and the 16 Days of Action Combating Violence Against Women, while other workshops were information sessions taking on a particular topic including: femicide, safe adolescence, gender-based discrimination, early marriage, gender-based violence, women in the workplace, and women's rights under Palestinian law. At the workshops, participants are given information which it is hoped can help them better understand the protections they have, legal changes that might come in the near future, and how their own actions – such as favouring boys over girls, or arranging early marriages – may perpetuate patriarchy and women's insecurity in their children's lives.

Volunteers held awareness-raising sessions to introduce WCLAC's legal and social counselling services to women in remote and marginalised areas. Volunteers conducted workshops to introduce existing Palestinian laws and their impact on women's rights. Workshops were designed to create open discussion in communities about the importance of gender-sensitive legislation that protects women's rights and will lead to equality between men and women. Through awareness-raising activities, volunteers focused attention on gender-based violence that can result from unjust traditional practices in conservative communities. They also used these opportunities to lobby local decision makers with regards to laws that protect women's rights and sought to recruit women's rights advocates from within their communities. Because a significant number of volunteers are media professionals, volunteer groups chose to focus on improving the use of the local audio and visual media to advocate for women's rights. Volunteers participated in creating a safe educational environment for children and adolescents through providing awareness-raising workshops and counselling in local schools. In order to create sustainability for the volunteer program, volunteer groups created partnerships with local like-minded organizations. Volunteers used partnerships with these organisations to reach communities that they identified as being particularly vulnerable and whom they would not be otherwise able to reach.

In May and December, the four volunteer clusters met to share their experiences and present their action plans and reports. Each cluster is made up of a unique mix of young professionals, with distinctive areas of expertise and interest. This expertise is reflected in the types of community activities each group undertakes (see Appendix B for full list of volunteer activities).

- The **Hebron** cluster is a mix of young media professionals, lawyers and social workers who have chosen to focus on highlighting violations against women using various media mechanisms, including documentary films.
- The majority of the **Tulkarem-Salfeet** cluster are experienced social workers and focused on providing psychological support to women and children living in the seam zone, for instance in Jubara and Al Ras (conducted in partnership with the YMCA).
- The **Jericho** cluster is well-connected to the student affairs office at Al Quds Open University Jericho and worked in partnership to build a new support group of university students who have the potential to be future WCLAC volunteers. They also worked closely with the university on a women's political empowerment project, which encouraged and provided support to young women interested in running for student council.



- The **Bethlehem** volunteer cohort is made up of artists who organised art exhibitions and film screenings designed to generate discussion and challenge traditional patriarchy.

Success Story: The struggle for access to education in Hebron.

The young media professionals, lawyers and social workers within the Hebron cluster became aware of the struggle to access education faced by teenage girls in the remote village of Mnazil (Hebron governorate). Using their media expertise, and the advocacy training they have received from WCLAC, the volunteers have documented the girls' stories and helped the village residents advocate for the reopening of the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade classes at the village school. Volunteers met with teachers, parents, and students in order to document their stories on film; these films will then be used for important advocacy and awareness-raising purposes. The Hebron cluster was also able to help the residents of Mnazil write an official letter to the Ministry of Education encouraging them to reopen the classes. This letter successfully secured an important meeting with MOE officials which was attended by a delegation of men and women from the village. This meeting, and the work prior to it, was successful in insuring the reopening of the school.

On the first day of school (2 September), the volunteers visited the village and invited the governor, community leaders, representatives of the media, and a representative of the MOE to visit the reopened school for girls. Five students attended on that first day.

#### **2.1.5. Document and evaluate volunteer activities.**

In 2011, WCLAC conducted an internal evaluation of the volunteer programme. The results of the evaluation demonstrated the high commitment of the volunteers to the vision and mission of WCLAC, as well as the cause of women's rights in general. For further information regarding the result of the evaluation, please see WCLAC's 2011 Annual Report ([www.wclac.org](http://www.wclac.org)).

### **2.2. Work with and through national and Arab-regional bodies to promote women's rights, to publicise women's rights issues and to disseminate gender-specific and gender-aware information.**

#### **2.2.1. Work with Media Forum, to develop new sources of funding, and to promote media awareness and accurate media coverage of women's rights issues.**

The Media Forum was established by WCLAC in 2005 and works to increase journalists' awareness of violence against women and to promote media coverage of women's issues and women's perspectives. Under its strategic plan for 2010-2012, WCLAC planned a limited engagement with the Media Forum during 2010, with a view to approaching donors to find specific funding for an expanded Media Forum project. WCLAC's commitment to changing social attitudes by promoting better understanding of gender and women's rights among media professionals is now being channelled through activities such as the "Women's Rights are Human Rights" modules with outreach to media students, as well as workshops on specific legal reform issues which WCLAC has held with various members of the Media Forum. In 2012, for example, WCLAC conducted training for young media professionals (see 1.1.3.). However, in the period during which the Media Forum has not had the budget for regular activities, other organisations with a media-focused mandate have been increasing their work on gender issues.

#### **2.2.2. Actively participate in NGO Forum on Violence Against Women.**

In the first semester, the Forum held 6 regular meetings, and one urgent meeting to discuss proposed funding for a media campaign that would raise awareness amongst the Palestinian community of the draft Law on Family

Protection from Violence. In February, a new coordinator was hired and in April Women's Affairs Technical Committee (WATC) was elected as the Forum's host for the next two years.

Al Muntada issued two press releases condemning an attack on a female lawyer in Hebron and an incidence of femicide in Nablus. In February, the Forum held a press conference in front of the offices of the International Committee of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (ICRC) to raise-awareness and show solidarity with Hana Shalabi, who had entered into a lengthy hunger strike to protest the treatment of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails. In March, a panel discussion was held with representatives of the chief prosecutor's office and the deputy minister of MOJ on the punishment of the killers of women (femicide) and the Prime Minister's budget-driven decision to close the gender departments in all of the PNA ministries. WCLAC's femicide report, "Women Without Names" (2011) and the study titled "Analysis of Court Decisions in Dealing with Femicide Cases" (2011) were presented. Finally, in May, Al Muntada held a panel discussion with the minister of social affairs about shelters, safe homes, and the rights of women with disabilities.

In July, Al Muntada received special funding to allow them to prepare their strategic plan in cooperation with Amal Coalition—a group of women's organisations that work in Gaza on the issue of violence against women. Al Muntada held a joint workshop with the Amal Coalition in Egypt where a joint strategic plan was successfully drafted.

Al Muntada also conducted an advocacy and media campaign, calling for the adoption of the draft law on Family Protection from Violence and actively condemned the increased number of femicides that occurred in 2012. The important advocacy work centred on a national campaign against sexual violence and harassment during the 16 Days of Action. WCLAC actively participated in all these activities, and also attended all regular and emergency meetings held throughout the year.

### **2.2.3. Support and participate in selected coalitions working on issues concerning the legal or social status of Palestinian women.**

For the Criminal Law Coalition, see report of activity 1.1.1.

For the Personal Status Law Coalition, see report of activity 1.1.2.

For the Committee on the Family Protection from Violence Law, see report of activity 1.1.4.

#### Council of Palestinian Human Rights Organisations

This Coalition was formed in 2008 with WCLAC, Al Haq, Centre for Rehabilitation of Tortured Victims, Defence for Children International, Mandela and the Jerusalem Centre for Legal Aid. Its mission is to identify human rights violations and to monitor and report them to the relevant authorities, to visit Palestinian prisons, to issue reports of violations and to receive complaints from citizens. Part of the aim of the Council is to magnify the voice of Palestinian civil society by uniting and unifying positions on key issues. One common position reached is that civilians should not be tried by military courts.

In 2012, the Council held 10 regular meetings and conducted three field trips to the seam zone and other areas whose location near settlements places them under threat of land confiscation and home demolition. The Council also issued a number of press releases concerning the human rights situation in Palestine, with a particular focus on the hunger strikes waged by Palestinian prisoners and the November war on Gaza. The Council also issued statements condemning human rights violations committed by both the Palestinian authorities in the West Bank and Gaza and by the Israeli occupying forces settlers.

Additionally, the Council represented a Palestinian NGO—Society of Arab Women Union from Nablus, one of the oldest women’s orgs in Palestine—that had been closed down as a result of a decision from the Ministry of Interior (MOI). The Council won the case and the Society of Arab Women Union was reopened.

### Other National Coalitions

WCLAC remains a member of a number of Palestinian civil society coalitions, including:

- *Palestinian Forum for Safe Abortion*: WCLAC attended 3 meetings with this forum in 2012
- *Coalition Against Capital Punishment*: Inactive this year, partly because the current draft of the Criminal Law would successfully abolish capital punishment.
- *The Rights of the Child Forum*: Inactive this year
- *Jerusalem Coalition*: WCLAC attended 8 meetings this year with this useful forum for joint advocacy work, project planning and information sharing. The topics addressed included the rights of Palestinians living in Jerusalem, Israeli human rights violations against Jerusalem residents and advocacy tools to protect the rights of Jerusalemites.
- *National Committee to Support Women in the Workforce*: Newly formed in 2011 to work on improving policies that control the entry of women into the workforce, providing women with equal employment opportunities and combating discrimination against women in the workforce. Members include the Ministry of Labour, International Labour Organisation and other governmental and non-governmental organizations. In 2012, the Cabinet accredited the National Committee—composed of representatives of 16 governmental and non-governmental organisations—to serve as an official advisory committee responsible for improving policies that impact women in the workforce. The committee also prepared their strategic plan for the coming three years (WCLAC participated).
- *Union of Jerusalem Women*: WCLAC attended five meetings with this coalition of Palestinian women’s organisations working in Jerusalem. The purpose of the coalition is coordinate activities of the member organisations to benefit women in Jerusalem.
- *Coalition of Palestinian Women’s Organisations in 1948 (Nisa’a wa Af’aq)*: This coalition includes women’s organisations, retired judges, academics and Arab Knesset members who are working on changes to the Family Law in Israel. WCLAC was invited to participate because of our experience working on the Personal Status Law in Palestine. In 2012, the coalition provided to support to a Knesset member who submitted a proposal that successfully raised the minimum age of marriage to 18 for all three religious groups in Israel. The coalition conducted a workshop in Jordan in which members shared their experiences of amending personal status laws in 1948 in Palestine and in Jordan.

### International Coalitions

WCLAC is a member of several international groupings whose value is in solidarity, sharing information, training opportunities, sharing best practices and spreading advocacy messages.

- *SALMA Network*  
WCLAC attended SALMA’s joint annual meeting with AISHA Network held in Jordan in November. The focus of the meeting was to advocate for the rights of Syrian women refugees and finding mechanisms to ensure the protection of women. WCLAC also attended a field trip to the Al Zaatari Refugee Camp in northern Jordan. These meetings resulted in the development of a project that will serve Syrian women in refugee camps in Jordan and Lebanon. This project will be funded by OSI.
- *AISHA Network*  
Joint annual meeting with SALMA Network held in Jordan. See above for details.
- *Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN)*

At EMHRN's June meeting in Copenhagen, WCLAC was granted full membership in the network. WCLAC also participates in the Gender Working Group within the EMHRN and attended a 2-day meeting held in Cyprus. Members worked to build the strategy of the Gender Working Group to protect women's rights within the context of the political changes happening in the Arab world. The annual meeting was conducted in December in Cairo where, among other important issues, members discussed the difficulties facing Syrian women.

- *Jusour Network*

This newly formed network is lead by the Teacher's Creativity Centre and focuses on the political participation of women. Member countries include: Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco. In January, WCLAC participated in a regional meeting in Jordan where members reviewed the Network's 2012 strategy and exchanged best practices for work related to women's right to political participation. Also in 2012, the Network held two 3-day training sessions for Palestinian civil society on lobbying and advocacy skills and women's political empowerment. WCLAC staff provided training for one of the sessions in its Hebron office (39 participants, 34 females, 5 males). WCLAC also actively participated in Jusour Network in the central and southern sub-committee meetings.

- *Musawa Coalition (Equality Without Reservations)*

WCLAC participates in the Musawa Coalition, which works towards removing reservations of CEDAW articles in Arab countries Member countries include: Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, Bahrain, Syria, Lebanon, Sudan, Palestine and Yemen.

#### **2.2.4. Represent WCLAC's vision and policy positions to the Board of Directors of the Alimony Fund.**

WCLAC participated in 7 regular meetings with the board of directors of the Alimony Fund. Topics addressed include the approval of the 2012 budget, approval of the 2012 strategic plan and approval of the 2011 audit report. The meeting was also used to discuss the financial difficulties facing the Fund. WCLAC participated in field visits to municipalities in the Hebron Governorate to coordinate the work of the Alimony Fund. A special internal committee was appointed to review the bylaws that were drafted in 2011.

### **2.3. Raise awareness of women's rights within key target groups who can support an end to negative practices in their own lives and among their peer groups, or through their careers.**

#### **2.3.1. Lead awareness-raising workshops on women's rights for targeted groups and institutions (e.g. service providers, student groups, mid-level and high level decision makers, PLC members,).**

##### Awareness-raising with partner groups

WCLAC has a variety of training tools and approaches for working on different topics and with different target groups. As well as the workshop series for vulnerable women (primarily housewives) reported in 2.3.2., WCLAC responds to opportunities and requests for information sessions throughout the year from institutions, NGOs, CBOs and groups of individuals perhaps in the first stages of self-organising. A table of awareness-raising workshops held with partner organisations across the occupied Palestinian Territory can be found in Appendix C.

WCLAC conducted numerous awareness-raising events with partner organisations to mark International Women's Day (8 March) and 16 Days of Action to Combat Violence Against Women (November). For a detailed list, please see Appendix D.

**2.3.2. Hold awareness raising workshops across the West Bank with women, particularly working women and housewives without knowledge of women's rights, who might spread information among their peers and benefit from identifying rights breaches in their lives or in the lives of their families and peers.**

Service Unit awareness-raising workshop series for vulnerable women

These activities consist of running a series of around 6-10 workshops with a medium-sized group of housewives or other women drawn from a particular sector of society or united by a common experience. The reason for targeting relatively homogenous groups of women as beneficiaries is that by giving a series of talks to a particular group, the direct beneficiaries can then disseminate the information informally to their families, colleagues and/or communities knowing that other people in their community have similar information and that they are not speaking as a lone voice. With a series of typically between 6 and 10 workshops (and at least 20 hours), participants can build a sense of camaraderie and WCLAC can try to respond to key questions, concerns or misunderstandings that arise throughout the course or that especially relate to that particular group. A table of workshops held by WCLAC Service Unit in 2012 can be found in Appendix E.

Awareness raising through media

WCLAC attracts significant Arabic language local media coverage and its representatives make frequent appearances on radio and television channels reaching audiences across the Arab region. In 2012, WCLAC continued to be a primary address for media professionals seeking information on topics including: women's rights, violence against women, sexual violence, the Criminal Law, femicide, equality between men and women, women's inheritance rights and the rights of divorced women and widows.

During the reporting period, WCLAC staff participated in 84 media interviews. Other media outlets in which WCLAC staff have participated in interviews include MBC satellite channel, Radio Alam (Hebron University Radio), Ma'an News Network, Birzeit Radio (Birzeit University Radio), Al Hayat Al Jadidah Newspaper, Radio Palestine, Palestine Sattelite Channel, Radio Ajiyal, Al Quds Newspaper, Al Hureiya Radio, Nawras Radio, Al Khalil Radio and Raba' Radio.

Other awareness-raising and networking activities

In the second year of a two-year project funded by the EU, WCLAC, in partnership with Shashaat, presented films made by Palestinian women filmmakers to university students in a project entitled "I am a Woman from Palestine". The presentation of these films was done by Palestinian women and WCLAC's social workers and lawyers were available after the film screenings to participate in discussions and to provide one-time consultation services to those students in attendance. Subsequent to the films being made, WCLAC wrote five articles about the films that were later published. In 2012, there were 10 films produced that focused on the lives of women within the Palestinian community. There 10 films were presented at 47 screenings in 8 governorates, all of which were followed by WCLAC led consultations.

In addition to media professionals, WCLAC was (and continues to be) a place where university students, researchers and other NGOs came to find information and training on topics including: domestic violence, women's rights, feminism, court procedures, the situation of Palestinian women under occupation, femicide, women's empowerment, the Palestinian women's movement and the status of women under Palestinian law. WCLAC's experience administering a shelter for women victims of violence means it is also a place where NGOs and others sought training and awareness materials concerning shelters, safe homes and other mechanisms for protection from violence. During 2012, over 200 people came to WCLAC seeking information from staff or from materials in WCLAC's Ramallah, Hebron and Jerusalem libraries.

**2.3.3. Hold workshops to promote gender-sensitive professional practice among law and social work university students and Shari'a court counsellors.**

### Practical training for social work students

Because of its reputation for high-quality service provision, a number of social work students in West Bank universities were referred by their professors to complete their 120 hour internships at WCLAC. Seven female students were selected—though there was greater demand, WCLAC could not absorb more students without sacrificing the quality of their internship experience. WCLAC interns are matched with an experienced WCLAC social worker, who tailors a training plan for each student, holds routine follow-up meetings and conducts regular evaluations. Interns receive training on topics including procedures for documenting cases, managing cases of gender-based violence and ethics in social work.

### Workshops for Shari'a court counsellors

In 2012, WCLAC held a 3-day workshop, covering 20 training hours, entitled “Protecting Women’s Human Rights Within Palestinian Laws”. The workshops were attended by 20 Shari’a Court counsellors and judges (9 female, 11 male). The course covered topics including: the Personal Status Law and the administrative orders issued by the Chief Justice in 2011 and 2012 (session presented by the Chief Justice of the Shari’a Court), draft Law on Family Protection from Violence, the Criminal Law, and procedures for implementing court decisions. Participants expressed a desire for more extensive training from WCLAC on these and other issues related to women’s rights.

## **2.3.4. Hold workshops on women's rights with youths and university students of any discipline**

### Workshops for university students

Working with university students WCLAC works with our own, adaptable module called Women’s Rights are Human Rights. The core course requires 20 hours, which can be done in 4 days, or spread through a greater number of shorter sessions. The curriculum begins with an introduction to understanding gender and its roots in culture, as well as linking these to violence, before considering both global rights and laws in Palestine, for example, examining the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and discussing the key Palestinian legal areas on which WCLAC works: the Criminal Law, the Personal Status Law and Law on Family Protection from Violence. A new element to the curriculum—the referral system for women victim of violence as developed by WCLAC and Juzoor in the Takamol Project—was introduced into the curriculum in the second semester of 2011. In 2012, WCLAC led seven “Women’s Rights are Human Rights” courses. A full list of courses can be found in Appendix F.

### Inclusion of young men

WCLAC considers the inclusion of men in discussions of gender and women’s rights to be an important way to ensure that they actively support women’s rights and understand their role as duty bearers (as fathers, husbands and brothers) who help shape the rights environment for Palestinian women. With this in mind, WCLAC conducted a 4-day winter camp for young men from Al Jalazon Refugee Camp and Jericho Refugee Camp on subjects including: gender, the Personal Status Law, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (specifically the covenants on Social and Economic Rights and Political and Civil Rights), Criminal Law and the draft Law on Family Protection from Violence. The camp was held in Jericho for 24 participants, mostly university students (ages 18-22).

*Strategic goal 3: To extend, improve and provide services to women suffering discrimination or violence.*

### **3.1. Provide professional protection, legal and social services to women who are victims or at risk of violence, abuse and gender-based discrimination.**

#### **3.1.1. Provide legal services (in Shari'a and Civil courts) and social services to women.**

As the backbone of its work, WCLAC continues to provide legal and social services to women through a team of lawyers and social workers based in East Jerusalem, Ramallah and the south of the West Bank (one team of staff working in WCLAC's Hebron office and in the Bethlehem area). These services include taking cases to court, giving legal advice in one-off advice sessions, and mediating discussions between family members.

In the reporting period, WCLAC provided legal and social counselling to a total of 441 women. Of those, 382 case files were opened in the reporting period, while 59 were files that were continued from the previous reporting period.

There were also a further 493 one-off consultations for clients (402 provided in WCLAC's office or over the telephone; 91 provided at awareness-raising sessions).

<b>Total client numbers (by location)</b>				
<b>Location</b>	No. of clients carried forward from 2011	No. of new clients during reporting period 2012	<b>Total no. of clients seen during the reporting period 2012</b>	No. of cases closed during reporting period 2012
<b>East Jerusalem</b>	25	83	<b>108</b>	80
<b>Ramallah</b>	19	103	<b>122</b>	58
<b>South WB</b>	15	196	<b>211</b>	68
<b>Total:</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>382</b>	<b>441</b>	<b>206</b>

The following tables show the details for the whole of WCLAC's service unit. Note that one client can have more than one case, and that several cases could involve just one antagonist, so totals do not necessarily equal the total number of clients. Details by location are also kept on record. A brief analysis follows.

<b>Type of service provided</b>	Social	Legal	Social and Legal	Emergency	<b>Total</b>
<b>Total</b>	34	111	212	25	<b>382</b>

<b>Source of referral</b>	Individuals	Government bodies	Courts	Awareness-raising session	NGO	Police	<b>Total</b>
<b>Total</b>	175	21	91	17	70	8	<b>382</b>

<b>Age of Client</b>	<20	20-35	36-50+	<b>Total</b>
<b>Total</b>	39	277	66	<b>382</b>

<b>Relationship to "antagonist"</b>	Husband	Blood-relative	In-laws	Non-relative	Ex-husband	<b>Total</b>
<b>Total</b>	320	24	11	18	52	<b>425</b>

<b>Years of Education</b>	0 yrs (no schooling)	1-9 yrs (basic school)	10-12 yrs (high school)	13-16 yrs (college & university)	<b>Total</b>
<b>Total</b>	3	98	155	126	<b>382</b>

<b>Work by sector</b>	Does not work	Private sector	Governmental sector	Other	<b>Total</b>

<b>Total</b>	258	56	19	49	<b>382</b>
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<b>Marital Status</b>	Single	Engaged	Married	Separated	Divorced	Widowed	<b>Total</b>
<b>Total</b>	28	18	230	55	46	5	<b>382</b>

<b>Geographical distribution, by place of living</b>	Refugee camp	Village	City	<b>Total</b>
Total	49	102	231	<b>382</b>

### Analysis

The total number of clients, at 382, is higher than expected, showing the continued demand for our services. This is a good indicator of trust from clients, many of whom say that they prefer our services because they know that all our lawyers and social workers are women, and that they do not need to spend money – thereby risking repercussions from the leaders of their family – to pay for the services. While the number of clients served exceeded expectations, WCLAC closed only 206 cases in 2012. This number is lower than in previous years and results from the large number of strikes carried out Shari’a court employees during the course of the year.

The source of referrals shows a good balance of individuals who know how to access our services, and of institutions – for example Shari’a Courts – who trust WCLAC well enough to refer clients to us regularly. 41% of clients heard about WCLAC’s work from previous clients, indicating a high level of trust and satisfaction with WCLAC services.

In 87 percent of cases, our clients indicate that their antagonist is a husband or ex-husband. It should be noted that the total number listed in this table exceeds the total number of clients because in some cases women have indicated more than one type of antagonist (e.g., husband and in-laws).

Most clients were young adults; put together with Palestine’s high marriage rate and traditions of marriage at a relatively young age, this suggests that many women are experiencing difficulties either in entering marriage or in the first few years of married life. However, the high number of middle-aged clients (between 36 and 50 years of age) indicates that difficulties can also emerge well into married life. These difficulties often relate to the social and economic stresses inherent to living within an economy strangled by occupation, and are exacerbated as children in the family mature and family expenses are increased by the growing cost of food, education, clothing and more besides.

The high number of legal cases (382) suggests that WCLAC is a primary service-provider for women seeking legal services. Over half of WCLAC’s clients (258) are not wage earners outside the home. WCLAC notes that these women want to live with dignity and self-determination, without having to sacrifice their human rights simply in order to survive within a patriarchal society in which the law typically favours men, and in which only 14 percent of women are in the workforce (giving them the possibility of direct access to income). Additionally, 67 percent of WCLAC’s clients did not pursue higher education (college or university), making it more difficult to obtain the skills and experience required to enter the labour market.

There is a high number of married and divorced women seeking legal and social services from WCLAC (86%), and WCLAC notes the high number of domestic violence cases in which the antagonist is a husband or ex-husband (87%). Further, the geographical distribution of women victims of violence who seek services from WCLAC is roughly equivalent to the population distribution. This indicates that WCLAC is successfully reaching women across the West Bank.



### **3.1.2. Provide emergency protection for women at risk of violence through managing and referring people to the emergency shelter.**

WCLAC struggled against obstruction from local power-holders who insist that WCLAC make structural changes to its emergency protection shelter which was closed in early 2011. This consisted of their advising WCLAC to build a razor-wire-topped wall around the compound and to install security cameras. WCLAC's constructive agenda for ending the standstill included maintaining our strong and supportive relationship with the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA), and pushing the Interior Ministry to resolve the issue. In the first semester of 2012, WCLAC obtained a small grant to build the wall as required by the local authorities. The work for the wall is completed, and WCLAC is now in the process of reopening the shelter.

### **3.1.3. Build the capacity of WCLAC's Service Unit.**

WCLAC values support for our lawyers and social workers as an integral part of our work, and of the methodology we share with partners seeking to implement service provision for women. To support the service unit staff, WCLAC restarted a formal partnership with the Palestinian Counselling Centre (PCC); they provided three types of support:

- 37 hours of supervision discussing areas of concern with the whole WCLAC social work and legal team together;
- 35 hours of one-to-one supervision for the junior social workers recently having started with WCLAC;
- 36 hours of one-to-one supervision for WCLAC senior social workers who are supervising other staff themselves.

### **3.1.4. Develop strategic relations for the shelter with relevant institutions including local authorities, security forces, traditional authorities, the justice sector and MOSA.**

Despite the temporary impasse with certain local authorities regarding the security provisions for the shelter, WCLAC has maintained close and mutually supportive relations with the Ministry of Social Affairs, particularly at national level, as well as with other key stakeholders. WCLAC continues to be a member of the steering committee for Nablus Shelter, a member of the National Committee for Protection of Women (headed by MOSA), member of the National Committee to Combat Violence Against Women (headed by MOWA), where we also participate in a number of subcommittees including protection, security, awareness-raising, and legal reform. In 2012, WCLAC and partners from MoSA, the police, and representatives from governorate offices held 40 case conferences to coordinate responses to emergency cases of gender-based violence. In addition, WCLAC staff met 51 times with local partners to receive and/or refer cases, as well as exchange best practices and implement joint activities.

## **3.2. Extend women's service provision and referrals to less well-served parts of Palestine through partnering, and building the capacity of selected grassroots organisations.**

### **3.2.1. Identify a new grassroots partner organisation.**

New partnership with Tubas Charitable Society was initiated in 2011. For further information, please see WCLAC's 2011 Annual Narrative Report ([www.wclac.org](http://www.wclac.org)).

### **3.2.2. Build the capacity of the Board and the Admin Teams of the selected grassroots partner.**

WCLAC has also continued its partnerships with Tubas Charitable Society (TCS), Women for Life and Al-Najdeh-Tulkarem in 2012, although the intensity of support is being gradually phased out in the more mature partnerships

with Women for Life (WFL) and Al Najdeh. WCLAC held 21 meetings with the three grassroots partner organisations. Topics included: the development of tools such as brochures and websites; organisation of activities for 8 March; follow-up on the progress of awareness raising activities; examine ways to improve the quality of legal and social services provided by each organisation. In addition, WCLAC provided 18 professional supervision sessions for the legal and social work teams and 23 individual supervision sessions to social workers at all three partner organisation (12 at Al Najdeh, 9 at TCS, 2 at WFL). In addition to the supervision sessions, WCLAC also held 10 meetings to monitor the quality of services provided by the legal and social work teams at the three organisations. WCLAC provided three awareness-raising sessions for the TCS board members, staff and members of the local community (65 total participants). Topics included gender-based violence and the need to provide services to women exposed to violence; women's rights within the Palestinian labour law; women's right to child custody within the PSL.

### **3.2.3. Work with the partner organisation to develop and see the adoption of organisational bylaws and written administrative and financial procedures.**

As close support is being phased out, WCLAC met with the partners 11 times to monitor compliance with financial and administrative procedures, to review budgets and to ensure that proper supporting documentation is being collected for reporting purposes. WCLAC's finance team provided 2 training sessions for the accountants at the grassroots organisations in order to develop their skills in bookkeeping and other financial matters.

### **3.2.4. Support WCLAC's three key grassroots partners in developing strategic relations with potential donors.**

WCLAC met 25 times with the General Directors and fundraising officers of all three organisations with the aim of improve fundraising skills, particularly in the arena of proposal development, and to supervise the process of drafting concept notes. Using the help of international volunteers, WCLAC helped the organisations develop strategic documents that will assist the organisations in their future fundraising efforts. WCLAC organised a six-day training course for TCS on fundraising and proposal writing (12 total participants). By the end of the course, participants were able to write a proposal, which was submitted to a donor and funding was approved. Finally, WCLAC supported the three organisations in networking with their local communities and organising events to mark International Women's Day on 8 March and the 16 Days of Action to Combat Violence Against Women.

### **3.2.5. Support the grassroots partners in developing and following strategic programmes and action plans.**

Over the course of nine meetings, WCLAC supported the three organisations to monitor progress according to their action plans in service provision and awareness-raising. WCLAC staff also accompanied the Tubas team to three awareness-raising sessions and Al Najdeh to one session in order to provide feedback on training strategies and monitor consultations that were given following the sessions. WCLAC organised a four-day training course on report writing for the staff of the three grassroots organisations (24 total participants). An external evaluation of WCLAC's support, as well as the partners' activities within the local communities, was conducted in the second semester 2012.

### **3.2.6. Fund and oversee the procurement of new equipment or meeting other expenses (e.g. personnel development, administrative costs) that fall within budget and meet prioritised needs of the organisation.**

WCLAC continues to provide financial support to meet the needs of the three organisations.

**3.3. Build the capacity of state and non-state service providers, by raising their awareness of women's rights and of best practices in dealing with women, particularly women victims of violence.**

**3.3.1. Hold workshops in West Bank and Gaza which share information and best practices with police officers, social workers, social service professionals and female students.**

As a strategic follow-up activity, and in order to maintain WCLAC's engagement with the health, social, and security sectors subsequent to its leadership of the Takamol project, WCLAC held three training courses (30 hours each) in Ramallah, Nablus and Beit Jala for service providers from the health, social and security sectors on topics including gender and gender-based violence, ethics of dealing with women victims of violence, intervention and National Referral System mechanisms and training of trainers (64 participants; 55 female, 9 male). WCLAC conducted a workshops for UNRWA service providers, including social workers, awareness officers and health providers, from across the West Bank. The 2-day training session provided participants with best practices in responding to women victims of violence and included WCLAC's 20-hour course, "Women's Rights are Human Rights". Participants were also given techniques on using the manual to train colleagues when they return to their places of work (15 participants, 13 female, 2 male).

**3.3.2. Undertake gender audit of four major civil society organisations in Palestine to support them in integrating gender-sensitivity into their programmes.**

Completed in 2011. For further information, please see WCLAC's 2010 and 2011 Annual Reports ([www.wclac.org](http://www.wclac.org)).

**3.4. Contribute to improving overall delivery of legal, health and social services for women victims of gender-based violence and those at risk of violence. (Takamol Project).**

The Takamol project was completed in 2011, with funding from the EU and in partnership with Juzoor. WCLAC contracted an external evaluation consultancy company to conduct the final evaluation in February, the results of which have been sent to funders at the European Union. Evaluators provided very positive feedback.

Other activities completed during the reporting period:

- Legal framework for the national referral system was drafted and has been submitted to the ministers of social affairs and women's affairs.
- An automated central databank system for all the referred cases was completed and submitted to MOSA.
- The police academy committed to including training in the national referral system in their required coursework for academy students. The curriculum was finalised and submitted.
- A training manual to teach service providers best practices in using the referral protocols was finalised and published. The manual is designed so that once a person is trained in the referral system's protocols, they can return to their place of work and train colleagues.
- WCLAC participated in a workshop organised by UNRWA in Jordan where it was invited to share its experience in building the referral system with UNRWA staff and representatives from women's organisations in Palestine and Jordan.
- WCLAC participated in a regional conference organised by the Jordanian National Commission for Women in Jordan on the opportunities and challenges of implementing a referral system for women victims of violence. WCLAC shared its experience in developing a referral system in Palestine.
- The referral system has been incorporated as a major topic in WCLAC's awareness-raising workshops and training courses for service providers.
- For information on the submission of the draft referral system to the PNA, please see 1.1.4.

*Strategic goal 4: To document violations of women's human rights and to disseminate this information through reports and position papers locally, regionally and internationally.*

**4.1. Document and publicise the impact of violations of human rights and humanitarian law suffered by Palestinian women.**

**4.1.1. Document and report on cases of femicide in Palestinian society.**

WCLAC has documented the gender-based murder of Palestinian women since 2004, using the term femicide rather than the term "honour killing" which might infer some justification of what is, to WCLAC, the violent and needless death of a woman, often by a family member or intimate partner, and is in no way honourable. The documentation is used to give background to the statistics and to build a base of qualitative knowledge on an issue in which WCLAC and others believe the numbers significantly understate the scale of the problem.

In 2012 alone, 14 cases of femicide were documented, eight in Gaza and six in the West Bank. According to plans WCLAC conducted three workshops in the West Bank and published its femicide report, "Women without Names" (2011) and a study titled "Analysis of Court Decisions in Dealing with Femicide Cases" (2011). A total of 67 people participated; 54 women and 13 male including representative from various civil society organisations; PLC members, media professionals, students, representatives of from the Palestinian Bar Association and a judge from the high judicial council and human rights activists. The main recommendations in the report state that the killing of women should be considered relentless crimes. The criminal law has to be changed to prohibit judges from issuing light sentences or allow for perpetrators to be given mitigating circumstances. The media should play a larger role in bringing attention to these cases; however, in a sensitive manner since femicide often include sexual assaults and false accusations. The report also brings to the fore the responsibility of governmental and non-governmental organisations in providing support to families of victims. A coordination mechanism between various parties such as the police and the Ministry of Health should be established so that also suicide cases as a result of these issues are acknowledged and investigated. The report finally encourages all women organisations to highlight this phenomenon and to raise awareness within respective target groups. Due to high demands, WCLAC has reprinted an additional 500 copies of the report.

**4.1.2. Document and analyse violations against women in Palestine within a framework of international human rights law and international humanitarian law.**

During 2012, WCLAC documented 72 cases of violations against women (6 Jerusalem, 57 in the rest of the West Bank and 9 in the Gaza Strip). Violations documented included night raids, arrest of family members mostly children, impact of the blockade and the dire economic situation in Gaza, destruction of wells and agricultural land, home demolitions and displacement of Bedouins and residency rights in Jerusalem.

WCLAC has also been producing "women's stories" – short documents (around 2 pages of A4) which are prepared for use for quick impact in face-to-face advocacy, and for powerful advocacy on the website giving personal stories, not just statistics and legal analysis. 15 such testimonies have been prepared so far and posted on the website.

**4.1.3. Distribute, present and publicise reports and present WCLAC's findings and opinions to local and international audiences.**

WCLAC is focusing significant advocacy resources on targeted advocacy to small groups – individuals or delegations – of influential people with mandated power such as elected foreign politicians, or with the power to influence communities, such as media professionals, religious leaders and other community leaders.

WCLAC conducted 25 targeted advocacy interventions in the first semester. As well as sharing examples and stories with delegations, both verbally and using WCLAC's published documentation, WCLAC takes delegates to affected areas—for example, Silwan, Nabi Saleh, Old City of Hebron, Beit Omar, Jordan Vally, etc.—to meet with women whose stories have been documented by WCLAC, and with whom WCLAC is working to empower so that they become advocates for their own cause. Delegations included Parliamentarians, foreign politicians, diplomats, media professionals, human rights advocates, donors, representatives of international human rights organizations, international university students, and members of churches.

During an advocacy trip to Washington D.C., organised by the Telos Group, WCLAC was able to carry the voices of the Palestinian women, whose cases we have documented, to a number of audiences. In addition to presenting to diverse civil society groups, a highlight was the large number of new advocacy targets with whom contacts was established. A second trip to the USA saw WCLAC meet with mental health professionals and established many new contacts.

#### WCLAC's international advocacy website

In the first semester of 2012, WCLAC's English-language and international advocacy websites were re-designed and consolidated. The new website is more visually appealing and serves as an archive of WCLAC's publications and reports. The website publishes testimonies from Palestinian women who tell their own story of how Israeli occupation affects their lives. WCLAC also collates articles and publishes links to stories of particular interest by other organisations, authors and journalists addressing issues of Israeli violations of Palestinian's rights, and its particular impact on women. The website can be found from WCLAC's homepage, or by going directly to [www.wclac.org/ihl](http://www.wclac.org/ihl). Also in 2012, WCLAC set up Facebook, YouTube and Twitter accounts in order to more effectively reach out to journalists and other international supporters.

#### Presenting report to CEDAW

In March, WCLAC staff presented the report "Proposed General Recommendation on Human Rights of Women in Situations of Conflict and Post Conflict, the case of the occupied Palestinian Territory" to the CEDAW committee for consideration during the process of drafting the General Recommendation.

## **4.2. Increase the capacity of field researchers and media professionals in Palestine.**

### **4.2.1. Train key people in identifying and analysing cases, and understanding and publicising key legal frameworks and writing reports.**

WCLAC gives on-going coaching and accompaniment to a team of field workers finding and documenting particular cases of Israeli rights violations against Palestinian women. WCLAC conducted several individual training sessions with the field workers in the West Bank to give them feedback about their work and improve the quality of documentation. WCLAC notes that, as a result of this coaching methodology, there is a marked improvement in the quality of documentation submitted by our fieldworkers. On account of Israeli restrictions to freedom of movement, WCLAC works closely by phone with the Gaza field worker, while with other field workers, accompaniment of field visits is also part of the coaching methodology.

One of WCLAC's advocacy team participated in a three training programmes conducted by Al Haq and OHCHR on international law, documentation techniques and international media.

*Strategic goal 5: To enhance WCLAC's own abilities, performance and sustainability.*

## **5.1. Develop the capacity of WCLAC staff**

### **5.1.1. Implement strategic training for staff and develop working practices which meets staff needs**

In line with its ongoing policy to develop staff capacity, WCLAC held two 2-day retreats attended by all available staff members, on strategic planning, in addition to 10 regular monthly staff meetings. Additionally, 21 staff members participated in different local training courses related to human rights and women rights. Members of the WCLAC's team also received training in financial management. 14 WCLAC staff members participated in regional and international workshops on a wide variety of topics. WCLAC also conducted training for its staff on the following topics: "Most Significant Change" (2 days; 22 participants), report writing (2 days; 25 participants), feminist jurisprudence (3 days; 13 participants), debriefing and retreat for service unit staff (2 days; 12 participants). In addition, two staff members are pursuing a 1 year, post-graduate diploma in NGO management with Birzeit Continuing Education Centre.

## **5.2. Continue and enhance WCLAC's programme and information management, ensuring adherence to due financial and administrative process**

### **5.2.1. Develop an electronic catalogue for the WCLAC library**

During 2012, 166 people used WCLAC's Ramallah library and 55 the Hebron library, to access the range of English- and Arabic-language publications, which include reports by NGOs, as well as published books on gender issues in Palestine, and on feminism, gender and violence more generally.

WCLAC's library facilities are being improved, with media reports about VAW by Israelis as well as from within the Palestinian community being systematically archived, and with the libsys library cataloguing system now installed, with two staff members having been trained on how to enter data and use the system. In 2012, WCLAC continued to archive media coverage of violence against women in Palestine's three main newspapers, Al Quds, Al Ayam and Al Hayat. In 2012, WCLAC improved its archival system and now uses the libsys library cataloguing system for these purposes.

### **5.2.2. Enhance WCLAC's monitoring and evaluation (for programmes and personnel)**

WCLAC's internal monitoring mechanisms are continually being strengthened through the production of monthly updates and quarterly reports from programme staff, which are then compared against outputs and outcomes outlined in WCLAC's yearly action plan.

### **5.2.3. Evaluate and update WCLAC protocols, policies and procedures**

WCLAC's Financial Rules and Procedures protocols were completed during 2011 and were approved by the Board. In 2012, the management team also developed incentive procedures and amended the by-laws, which have been submitted to the board for approval. The development of a staff performance tool was completed in 2012 and will be used in 2013 to appraise staff performance. In November of 2013, WCLAC hired a new Director of Finance and Administration who will be working to further refine the organisation's policies and procedures over the course of 2013. WCLAC also recruited an internal auditor who will oversee the implementation of WCLAC's financial and administrative policies.

#### **5.2.4. Review and develop WCLAC's strategic plan, budget and annual work plans and administrative reports**

WCLAC's strategic plan and budget for the years 2013-2015 have been prepared and presented to the General Assembly. WCLAC has also completed the narrative, financial and audit reports for the year 2011, which have been shared with donors. Work plans and budgets for 2013 were completed and submitted to the Board for approval. Financial and narrative reports, including special reports upon request from donors, were prepared throughout the year.

#### **5.2.5. Hold regular meetings of the board and of the general assembly and facilitate board members participation in events in which they could promote WCLAC**

WCLAC's board and General Assembly each met once during the first semester. Members of the General Assembly met with mid and senior level management of WCLAC to discuss the strategic direction of the coming three years, in light of the strategic planning process that the organisation went through in 2012. The Chairwoman of the Board of Directors conducted a staff meeting to discuss WCLAC's work means of further improvement. WCLAC Board members also participated in events organised by WCLAC, which included the central conference for regional sub-committee on the PSL as well as meetings with the ministers of MOSA and MOWA regarding the national referral system.

#### **5.2.6. Expand the use of MIS to facilitate management and evaluation of more parts of WCLAC's programme**

Applying the MIS system on all programmes remains a challenge, both because of staff capacity in data entry and due to difficulties with the software itself. Finding technical support for software issues has become particularly difficult since the company that developed the software has gone bankrupt. However, WCLAC has been able to find a consultant familiar with the package who is able to provide some support. The Service Unit enters data into MIS with a view to maintaining files in a structured and easily analysed way. WCLAC conducted two three-hour training sessions for all staff members (30 participants) in the use of the management information system (MIS). WCLAC also recruited a full-time IT officer (who will begin work at WCLAC in January 2013). WCLAC anticipates that with the support of this full-time staff member, MIS will be fully utilised in the coming year.

#### **5.2.7. Hold targeted evaluations of selected projects or objectives within WCLAC's strategic programme**

The Norwegian Representative Office evaluated WCLAC's service unit, the results of which were positive. The evaluation included good recommendations that are already being incorporated into WCLAC's 2012 revised action plan and in the new 2013-2015 strategic plan. An external evaluation was conducted of WCLAC's awareness-raising program, the results of which will be available in 2013.

### **5.3. Improve WCLAC's financial sustainability**

#### **5.3.1. Maintain ongoing donor relations**

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:

- OXFAM-NOVIB (Dutch Organisation for International Development)
- Norwegian Representative Office
- Danish Church Aid
- United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

- Church Development Service (EED)
- Welfare Association
- Open Society Institute – Middle East and North Africa (OSI Mena)
- Foundation Open Society Institute
- ACSUR – Las Segovias
- NGO Development Centre (NDC). (Through NDC's Human Rights/Good Governance programme WCLAC benefits from joint funds and indirect partnership with the governments of Switzerland, Denmark, the Netherlands and Sweden).
- Caritas Switzerland
- Drosos Foundation
- United Nations Development Fund (UNDP)
- French Consulate
- European Union
- United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM – now UNWOMEN)
- Kvinna till Kvinna
- Broederlijk Delen
- Icelandic Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Conemund
- DCAF (The Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces)
- Biladi
- British Consulate

This list does not include all the potential donors and project partners with which WCLAC maintains periodic contact with a view to information sharing or possible future partnerships.

### **5.3.3. Optimise the use of WCLAC resources, when possible and practicable, to add an additional income stream of locally generated revenue**

WCLAC's resource centre Dar Makhlouf, in Beit Jala (near Bethlehem), continues to receive overnight guests and host events both led by WCLAC or by other groups sharing WCLAC's vision and needing a large and characterful meeting space. Groups and individuals using the centre are asked to make a financial contribution to WCLAC which adds essential diversity to WCLAC's sources of revenue.

WCLAC's resource centre Dar Makhlouf, in Beit Jala (near Bethlehem), continues to provide for overnight guests and a useful meeting space for events hosted by either WCLAC or/and other groups sharing WCLAC's vision. In exchange the groups and individuals are asked to make a financial contribution, which adds to WCLAC's source of revenue in a diverse way.

WCLAC's meeting rooms in Ramallah have frequently been used by WCLAC to host coalition meetings or large meetings with working groups or by student groups learning about women's rights. The rooms have also been used frequently by other NGO's, making a significant contribution (including a valuable diversity) to WCLAC's funding streams.

## **5.4. Develop media mechanisms according to the Centre's needs**

### **5.4.1. Streamline and enhance WCLAC's media presence and media output, including its use of online media, and integrate it within the reporting system**



In 2012, WCLAC has taken major steps forward in developing its online presence, with the development of a re-designed website. The new website is more visually appealing and better organised, thus allowing WCLAC to increase the amount of information on the site, increase control of the site and increase the speed with which news stories or new materials can be uploaded.

#### **5.4.2. Prepare media materials and coverage, and events, for WCLAC's 20th Anniversary**

This was completed in 2011. For further information, please see WCLAC's 2011 Annual Narrative Report ([www.wclac.org](http://www.wclac.org)).

#### **5.4.3. Develop tools and materials for WCLAC's public relations and media output**

As stated above, the major change in 2012 has been the creation of the new WCLAC website. Materials have been produced that increase the visibility of WCLAC and the "sticking power" of the organisation and its contact details (i.e. for how long the organisation is remembered and contact details can be found) such as: folders with WCLAC's vision, mission, strategic goals and contact details, and notepaper with WCLAC's logo and contact details. These can be used at WCLAC workshops or meetings and can ensure that WCLAC's contact details are accessible to potential clients in more and more Palestinian homes (as well as being on hand for potential partner organisations). Additionally, WCLAC has set up Facebook, YouTube and Twitter accounts to further its online presence and outreach potential.

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