



Young Women's Christian Association

PALESTINE



Annual Report

2005

Dear Partners and Friends,

The year 2005 witnessed strategic changes within the YWCA of Palestine characterized by a collective effort to move our association from being merely a charitable organization to a professional one in terms of its newly developed administrative and financial procedures and organizational structure. These changes attempt to decentralize responsibilities and empower all branches on equal level. Following on the new strategic plan of 2005-2007, the National Council of the YWCA took on itself the responsibility to lead a process of restructuring and the development of procedural manuals to regulate administrative and financial procedures in all branches of the association on equal footing. The process which started in the Fall of 2004 by reviewing the strategic plan of 2001-2003, involved staff, volunteers and previous senior staff members of the YWCA. The process continued throughout 2005 and was culminated by its endorsement in September 2005.

Another important landmark in 2005 was the election of a new National Council consisting of the three boards of Jerusalem, Ramallah and Jericho. Ms. Mira Rizek, handed over the presidency to newly elected president of the council Mrs. Hanadi Soudah Younan. It is important at this point to express gratitude and appreciation to the sincere efforts of Ms. Rizek. Throughout her term, Ms. Rizek has lead the association, along with members of the council, through a process of learning and change that revived the history of our association and brought it back to the front within our Palestinian community; she also created a model of professional development to be shared with other sister organizations.

This report shares with you the objectives we set to achieve throughout 2005, what was implemented and achieved, challenges faced and lessons learned. It has been the work of a team of diligent and hard working staff supported by committed boards, and equally supported by confidence of our partners and friends in the mission of our association locally, regionally and internationally.

It is with deep regret that I decide to end my employment relationship with the YWCA, yet so proud of having had the opportunity to contribute to its revitalization and re-establishment of its important role within the Palestinian community and the YWCA movement. Such an achievement could not have been done in vacuum. My contribution was built on previous achievements and more than a hundred years of history. I am proud to have been chosen to continue the mission and proud to have been able to fulfill the responsibilities of such an important task to the best of my knowledge and dedication.

I take this opportunity to thank you for your support and your friendship. The challenges have been great and the hard times numerous. Surviving such difficult experiences could not have been possible without your sincere support and friendship.

Sincerely,

Abla Nasir
National General Secretary
YWCA of Palestine

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1- YWCA of Palestine – Overview:

Mission:

The YWCA of Palestine aims to empower Palestinian women by expanding their options, supporting their economic independence, liberating them from all kinds of oppression and enhancing their participation in the building of a free Palestinian civil society.

Vision:

We envision a free, peaceful, Palestinian democratic society based on social justice, respect for human rights, pluralism, celebration of cultural diversity, gender equality and sustainable development.

History:

The History of the YWCA of Palestine has been closely linked to the history of Palestine, and has been affected by the tumultuous events of the whole region. As early as 1893, informal groups of Christian women were meeting in Jaffa and Jerusalem as YWCA groups. In 1918, the YWCA of Palestine was established in Jerusalem. The events of 1948 and 1967 constituted serious challenges but also enabled the YWCA to reach out to more women and children, particularly in the refugee camps.

Throughout the years, the YWCA has developed a wide range of programs and projects aimed at empowering and providing them with educational, cultural, and training opportunities to develop their skills and personalities, and to support them to actively participate in developing themselves, their families, and their communities.

Goals for 2005-2007:

- Enhance the accessibility to educational, cultural, and recreational activities.
- Create and develop women's economic opportunities.
- Raise women's awareness and advocate their individual and national rights at the community, national, and international level.
- Develop the capacity of the organization so that it can effectively, efficiently, and sustainably serve its target groups and communities

2- Highlights of 2005:

❖ Institutional Development and restructuring:

The year 2005 marked a new era in the work of the YWCA of Palestine, with thorough evaluations followed by structural and developmental changes as part of its strategic plan 2005-2007, and towards more organized, effective and efficient procedures that are

standard in all branches of the association. This process has enabled us to fulfill our need to decentralize our activities thus strengthening all three branches.

The YWCA contracted the Center for Continuing Education –Birzeit University to provide capacity building and institutional development interventions, utilizing the "Total Quality Management" (TQM) philosophy to ensure that the YWCA performs its functions in the most effective and consistent manner. The agreed processes and practices were documented into procedures as follows:

- 1- Procedural Manual
- 2- Financial Manual
- 3- Personnel Manual
- 4- Contract Forms

In November 2005, the YWCA Council approved the study and the manuals. As of January 2006, the manuals came into effect and are being utilized for a trial period of one year. During this year, the relevant staff at the YWCA will be recording all deviations on implementation for further study and adaptation.

In addition, to comply with the restructuring process the YWCA have created a National Office with a technical group that offers support to the branches, and hired Executive Directors in all branches.

❖ *New Staff/Volunteers:*

On 15/2/2005, Bader Rabadi joined the YWCA National Office team as the new Director of Administration and Finance. He has been following up with the consultants on the institutional development and reviewing and setting up the suggested financial and administrative procedures.

On 1/9/2005 Maria Lisoy from Norway joined the Advocacy desk at the YWCA as a volunteer through the GoCY –Intern program. She has been helping with producing an "Information Kit" as well as writing articles and reports about her experience in Palestine.

On 15/11/2005 Nazar Halteh was appointed Executive Director of Jericho branch, after being a volunteer and President of the board in Jericho for the last three years.

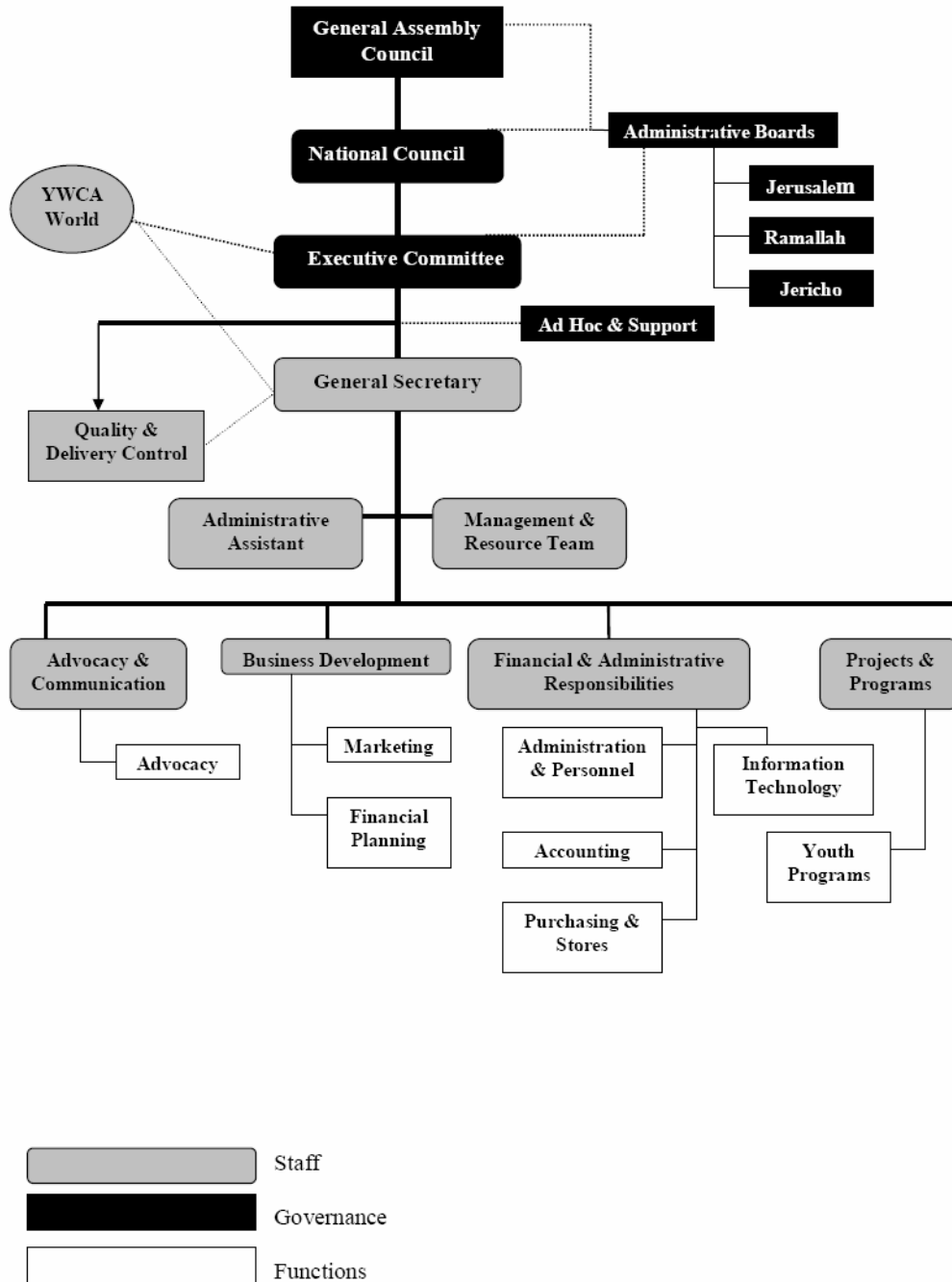
❖ *Board Elections:*

The last week of September and the first week of October witnessed board elections at all branches of the YWCA of Palestine and of the National Council. The newly elected President is Mrs. Hanadi Soudah-Younan, who used to be the Programs Director for the Jerusalem branch until July 2004.

Most newly elected board members are of the younger YWCA members, which is anticipated to bring in new perspectives and fresh ideas to the programs and activities.

You will find a complete list of names of all newly elected board members at the end of this report.

❖ *New Structure (organizational chart)*



❖ *New programs for youth and women:*

The year 2005 witnessed new and innovative programs for women; in our Jalazone refugee camp center, the young women have started new income generating projects; the production of olive oil soap, and growing mushrooms.

The branches have developed outreach programs this year in the neighboring villages and refugee camps within their vicinities. One was an awareness-building program on issues related to "Women's Health", over sixty women benefited from this program. The other program targeted youth in the villages to meet a growing need in the area of youth development work, and women related issues.



Women's Health workshop in Jalazone

❖ *Discussing the World YWCA constitution*

The YWCA of Palestine joined the movements all over the world in discussing the revisions to the World YWCA Constitution and Bye-laws. As a member of the World YWCA Task Force on Governance, Rana Qumsiyeh lead three workshops in the different branches to discuss the suggested changes to the World YWCA Constitution and Bye-laws and fill out the questionnaires. After getting all responses from the general assembly in the braches, the Executive Committee agreed to an official response from the YWCA of Palestine on those issues.

❖ *Day Center for the Elderly in Jericho*

An innovative program, in the form of day club for the elderly in Jericho, was implemented jointly between the YWCA in Jericho and Al-Ata' Association for the services to the elderly during the year 2005. It made use of the facilities of the community based center of the YWCA in Aqabet Jaber refugee, where twenty old women joined this program from June until December 2005. On October 1st, the YWCA in Jericho celebrated the International Elderly Day, with a hundred elderly women from Jericho and the surrounding refugee camps.

❖ *Renovations:*

The old library in the Jerusalem branch was renovated and transformed into a modern National Office. This was in line with the separation between the National Office and the Jerusalem branch. With four offices, a reception area and a meeting room, they comprise efficient and comfortable working space for the National Staff.

Overall renovations for the electrical and water/heat systems were made at the YWCA headquarter in Jerusalem, it was made possible through a generous fund from OPEC.

An electrical gate was installed at the YWCA building in Jerusalem to help organize the parking space under the building, and for increased safety and security.

In Ramallah, a consultation committee was set up in preparation for the Family Park project were carried that was suggested in an answer to the lack of family parks in the Ramallah area. The land of 11 dunums was surveyed, an initial draft of the project was put together, and a search for funds was started. At that time, a new idea had been publicized for a similar project to be carried out by the Palestinian National Authority on a 200 dunum land close to the one owned by the YWCA. Therefore, our project idea was put on hold for the moment, for further study and development of a service that will not duplicate what is being carried out but rather compliment it. Furthermore, a structure plan was developed for another piece of land for the construction of a multipurpose building for the Ramallah branch. The plan was submitted for a building grant from KFW.



The Advocacy Desk at the National Office

In Jericho, the Hairdressing training section was renovated during 2005, through a grant from Christian Aid. In addition, the measurements have been taken for the newly acquired land and the structure plans are prepared for the new building to house the branch. They are in the process of being submitted to the Engineers Association for approval, and for donors who fund building projects.

3- Vocational Training Programs:

In answer to our goal of "Enhancing the accessibility to educational, cultural, and recreational activities" Both Vocational Training Centers in Jerusalem and Ramallah continue to be the main and vital programs at the YWCA, providing a backbone of support for Palestinian women in the community.

The Vocational Training Center (VTC) in Jerusalem has been graduating skilled young women for over 50 years. Housed in the main branch of the YWCA, which was built in 1967, the program offers three different programs and specialties from which an average of 120 young women graduate every year.

The *Vocational Training Center in Ramallah* branch that has been established in 2002 to address the need of students in Ramallah are who are not able to reach Jerusalem anymore because of the Israeli imposed movement restrictions, had been growing and gaining more

publicity and success. This year, it was opened to both male and female students from Ramallah area.

This below table summarizes the numbers of students graduated in October 2005, and the new students enrolled for the new scholastic year 2005/2006:

Number of graduates, 2004-2005	Jerusalem	Ramallah
Office Management and Secretarial Program	58	42
Health program	40	
Assistant in Physiotherapy	12	
Home Economics program	2	
Total	112	42
Number of Students Enrolled in 2005-2006		
Office Management and Secretarial Program	57	50
Health program	38	
Assistant in Physiotherapy	19	
Total	114	50

Employment rate after graduation remains around 70% for the Office Management and Secretarial Program. We are still lacking statistics on the graduates of the Public Health Program, as they have just completed their practical training. Statistics should be available in a couple of months.

As usual several workshops and training programs were carried out for the teachers/trainers in both VTCs to upgrade their skills and continuously improve the teaching methodologies.

The students in both centers, joined several workshops throughout the year, aimed at empowerment and raising awareness on different issues relating to women and youth. Topics ranged from Violence Against Women, to Democracy and Human Rights, Conflict Resolution, and Exploring Identity.

The Hairdressing training program in Jericho continued this year, and twenty young women completed their training successfully. Five of them found employment in the local market, while the others work from home for their neighbors and friends.

Several developments were carried out through 2005 on this program, starting with the curriculum and the addition of modern cuts, styles and colours. In addition to updating the topic of caring for the hair. At the end of 2005, renovations were made to the facility used for this training, with upgrading electricity and water pipes, painting, and the purchase of new equipment and furniture.



Hairdressing in Jericho branch

In addition to those fixed programs, several short courses and workshops were carried out at all branches throughout the year, attended by staff, board members and youth groups. A training course on "Food Production" was organized at the Jericho branch for the women working in the food production project. It was funded by the Welfare Association and lasted for 12 days, covering several topics in food processing and production.

4- Children and Youth

In order to "Enhance the accessibility to educational, cultural, and recreational activities", numerous programs are organized for children, youth and young women, in the different branches and centers.

Preschools in Refugee Camp Centers:

The two preschools in Jalazone and Aqabet Jaber refugee camp centers continue to create a nurturing environment where children can learn and grow. Sixty seven children aged 3-5 are enrolled in the Jalazone Preschool for this year 2005-2006, and eighty one in Aqabet Jaber.

Different activities and special events were arranged throughout the year in both preschools to help those children feel the joy and fun that they are deprived from in their daily life, due to the deteriorating situation.



Preschool in Aqabet Jaber

Child Identity Program:

Three groups, with a total of 77 young girls, aged (9-12), are participating in this program at the Jalazone Center, in addition to two groups of 43 young girls and boys aged (7-15) at the Aqabet Jaber refugee camp center . The program aims to build identity and self-esteem through cultural activities, ranging from drama, dabkeh (Palestinian traditional dance), music, singing and game playing. It addresses an important psychological need and provides opportunities for self expression in a safe and encouraging environment.

Summer Camps:

As usual, summer camps were organized in all branches and the Jalazone Center. In Jalazone, 68 participants girls age 13-15 joined this camp which took place during the month of July. There was a lot of demand on this summer camp and we could not take all those who applied to join. Main activities were dabkeh, arts & crafts and recreational trips.

In Jerusalem, 250 young boys and girls up to 18 years old joined the summer camp from mid June to mid August. 70% of the participants were females and 30% males. Activities included sports (swimming, football, basketball), arts, dancing, trips and overnight camping.

Another summer camp was organized through the Jerusalem branch that included physically and visually handicapped children along with normal children in their age range (8-16) to integrate them in a fun and inviting environment. The total number of participants was 46 in this camp that lasted for eight full days, with different educational and recreational activities and field trips.

In Ramallah, 42 kids aged (6-12) and 23 young youth aged (13-18) joined the summer camp this year. As in Jerusalem, 70% of the participants were females and 30% males. The activities included dabkeh, arts, swimming, introduction to using computers, education and recreational trips in addition to some community service activities.



Summer Camp in Jerusalem

In Jericho, 65 young girls and boys (31 boys, 34 girls) aged 5-16 joined the summer camp in July 2005. Activities included lectures and workshops to raise awareness on Children's rights and health issues, a visit to Alquds University, visits to religious and historic sites, in addition to arts and sports.

Youth Outreach Program:

For the first time, the YWCA approaches youth who are isolated in their villages, to empower them and stimulate their active involvement as active members in the community. Several workshops on youth related issues have been carried out in Abud, Birzeit, and Ain Arik villages around Ramallah. Total number of participating youth was sixty.

Sports:

LilacY, the sports center at the YWCA in Jerusalem, continued to prosper as East Jerusalem's women-only fitness establishments, providing an extensive variety of activities and programs for all ages.

The modern facilities and equipment of the highest standard can be enjoyed in a privacy of an "all women" environment and is aimed at improving the health of



Dance Show by the YWCA Dance Group

women and girls of all ages and is equipped for the physically challenged to facilitate integration with their peers in the community. Participants can chose to exercise alone or take part in group classes, which include a variety of high and low impact aerobics, traditional, and modern dance classes as well as karate.

In addition, ballet classes for young girls, and Dabkeh training for boys and girls continued throughout the year.

Youth groups and youth activities:

○ **Training in Advocacy:**

An intensive training program in advocacy-related issues was organized for youth in Jerusalem, from the 18th to the 21st of July. The training program took place at the YWCA in Jerusalem, with an all day training schedule that was made up of 24 training hours. The main aim was to improve the youths' skills in advocacy-related issues and communication and to help them better express themselves and advocate for the Palestinian cause both on a local and international level. Twelve youth members participated in the course, the topics of which included the history of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, international law, public speaking and media skills.

○ **Workshop on Conflict Resolution:**

On 27/12/2005, a full-day workshop was organized for youth on "Conflict Resolution" at the YWCA in Jerusalem. Fifteen youth members participated in this workshop, in which the facilitator used creative methods including experiential learning, learning by doing/playing and practice case studies.

○ The youth group in Jericho branch (ages 15-19) have been very active throughout the year. Weekly meetings organized by the youth coordinator, and several activities and field trips were carried out. They visited Kalandia refugee camp to witness the effect of the Wall on the Palestinians living there, and some villages around Ramallah with a Christian majority to meet with youth groups there. They also organized visits to local organizations serving the community, and celebrated special occasions with the staff and board of directors and the membership in Jericho.

○ Formation of a dance group in Jerusalem branch, combining dabkeh with modern dance and ballet, though a comprehensive theater show.

○ Arts and painting course in Ramallah branch for three months for the youth group.

○ A training program on "Using sports to develop youth ability" was organized at the Ramallah branch jointly with the Right To Play organization. Youth from different villages participated in this program.

5- Income Generating / Job Creating projects:

To accomplish our goal of "Creating and developing women's economic opportunities", we continued to offer income generating and job creating projects for women who lack the qualifications to enter the job market and be able to provide for their families. Following are our ongoing as well as new projects in this area:

Traditional embroideries in Jalazone (dolls and puppets):

This project has carried out the YWCA legacy for over fifty years. Eighteen young women from the camp are participating in this project, supervised by two trainers. The products include dolls, puppets and a nativity set all in traditional customs, in addition to book covers, purses, bags and quilts with a traditional touch. This year, a visiting volunteer named Dorothy who is an expert in quilting shared her experience with the group and helped to further develop the techniques of quilt making.



Traditional embroidery training in Jalazone Center

Marketing the products continues to be a big challenge under the present circumstances, however, plans are put forth for increased marketing in hope that the project will be able to cover its cost.

Mushroom Growing project:

A pioneer project in the Jalazone refugee camp, aimed at empowering women and upgrading their skills in small business management, and assisting them in generating some income for their families. Eighteen women -mostly mothers of the preschool children- are participating in this project.

Olive Oil Soap Production:

Started out as part of the "Good Earth Campaign" in Jericho during 2004, this year it was carried out by women in the Jalazone Center, where they added different ingredients to the original recipe.

Training in growing mushrooms and olive oil soap production were carried out in cooperation with the Women Training Program of the East Jerusalem YMCA.

Jericho Food Production Project:

Eight women are fully employed by this project in addition to a young man who is responsible for marketing and purchasing of goods. This program has been running successfully for the past five years with a continuous support from HorYzon/Switzerland. During the year 2005, and through a grant from the Welfare Association, we managed to

train twelve women on food production and processing, to be able to employ them in this project. Several developments and improvements were implemented this year, mainly in the purchase of electronic appliances, and producing new labels for the different products. The YWCA Jericho participated in several exhibitions that were organized throughout the year in different locations in the West Bank, where they displayed and marketed the different products.



Making Cookies in Jericho branch

This project faced some setbacks due to closures and our inability to market the products in more areas of the West Bank; however, with the employment of an Executive Director for the branch, who has been following up on a new marketing plan, we anticipate much better results in the coming year. New markets have been explored and the whole operation is now much more consistent and our products have become well known and their quality appreciated.

6- Training and Awareness Building Programs for Women

In order to "Raise women's awareness and advocate their individual and national rights at the community, national, and international level", several programs are carried out every year.

During 2005, and as part of the "Women's Health Project", the YWCA of Ramallah and Jericho organized several workshops aimed at raising awareness on issues related to women's health. The YWCA in Ramallah arranged those meetings in the villages surrounding Ramallah city, such as Aboud, Ataybeh and the Jalazone Refugee camp, with overall sixty women benefiting from this project that was carried out in cooperation with local community based organization working in the health sector. In Jericho, the workshops were organized in refugee camps in the Jericho area, with about forty-five women participating. Topics discussed during the sessions included urinary tract infections, cancer in its different types, pap smear, self examination of the breast, HIV/AIDS, laboratory tests, pregnancy, nutrition, personal hygiene and protecting the environment.

7- The Joint Advocacy Initiative

The year 2005 was the fifth year in the life of the Joint Advocacy Initiative (JAI) of the YWCA of Palestine and the East Jerusalem YMCA, a program that has been gaining more recognition and admiration from partners, groups and friends around the world. Through our movements, we managed to give the true picture of the situation in Palestine to the outside world, mobilizing partners and peace-loving individuals in various countries to

stand up for a Just Peace, and act peaceful to end the Israeli occupation to Palestinian Land.

7-1 Campaigns:

➤ **Olive Tree Campaign- Keep Hope Alive:** This campaign has been the main and most successful one of the JAI. It aims at replanting 50,000 olive trees in the places where they have been uprooted, destroyed, or are threatened by land confiscation. The process of planting trees is carried out through sponsorships from partner YMCA's and YWCA's, organizations, churches, and interested individuals. In 2005, 6,600 young olive trees were planted in 36 fields throughout the West Bank and Jerusalem. Quarterly newsletters were sent out to sponsors, in order to update them on the developments of this campaign. Besides planting olive trees, the Olive Tree Campaign:

- Celebrated one international planting day on March 5th, where volunteers from local and international communities joined staff in planting trees.
- Organized a 10-day Olive Picking program, that took place from October 21st to October 30th. This year, thirty four internationals from various countries joined Palestinian farmers in picking their olives in fields near the Wall or close to Israeli settlements.
- Organized an olive festival on November 12th, in coordination with other organizations. Cultural products and olive related items were sold, and different cultural activities were carried out.



Olive Picking Program-2005

➤ **Al-Ard A-Taibeh (Good Earth) Campaign:**

This campaign was planned to advocate on behalf of and provide support to economically disadvantaged, disabled and marginalized Palestinians, who gain their livelihood from the land. Simultaneously, the campaign would provide a solidarity tool for people to show support for the Palestinian people in their struggle for a livelihood and for peace with justice.

Unfortunately, this campaign met with many challenges that hindered its success. Despite continuous efforts to advertise and promote it through different organizations, mainly YMCA/YWCA movements around the world, the total number of campaign bags sold was about 650 over two years – 2004 and 2005.

In early June, the JAI website was finally launched at www.jai-pal.org, with information, articles, news and updates on the different campaigns and activities of the Joint Advocacy Initiative.

7-2 Publications and Promotional Material

- ❖ "Concerning Peace and Justice"; a booklet stating the World Alliance of YMCAs and World YWCA resolutions concerning the Palestinian cause, in both Arabic and English languages, was published on 11/3/2005.
- ❖ A documentary entitled "KEEP HOPE ALIVE", produced by the JAI, a short DVD/Video CD promoted the main advocacy campaigns of the JAI.

❖ Magazine:

This year, a Joint Advocacy Initiative magazine was introduced, to be published twice a year. The first –special edition- issue was released on 4/5/2005 featuring two articles related to Journey for Justice. The regular first issue of the JAI magazine was issued on 15/10/2005 under the title "Christianity and Palestine". It discussed several topics associated to Palestinian Christians in relation to the struggle for Peace and Justice.

❖ **The Olive Tree Calendar for the year 2006** was prepared and three thousand copies were printed. It included various topics related to Palestinian main issues including: Land Day, Land Confiscation, Palestinian Refugees, Palestinian Culture, Journey for Justice, Water Issues, Olive Picking, Solidarity with the Palestinians, and Christmas in Bethlehem. Moreover the calendar included information on the olive tree and a "Farmer's Calendar" with tips of the month on how to take care of olive trees. In addition to national and international events, it included events of the JAI, the East Jerusalem YMCA and the YWCA of Palestine.



In addition, The Olive Tree Campaign brochure was translated this year to three new languages: French, Arabic and Spanish. Two thousand copies of each language version were produced and are being distributed to partners and friends in the related countries.

7-3 Organized visits:

❖ Journey for Justice (3)

For the third year, this program has been successfully implemented jointly with YWCA-YMCA of Norway and YMCA-YWCA of Denmark. It brings together youth from YMCAs and YWCAs all over the world to experience and share the occupation with Palestinian youth. For ten days, they join Palestinian youth and travel around Israel and Palestine to witness the effects of Israeli occupation.

This year, the journey took place from



Journey for Justice -2005

27/7 to 3/8/2005, with thirty participants this from different countries including Norway, Denmark, Zimbabwe, UK, Wales, Spain, Italy, South Africa, USA, Switzerland and Argentina.

8- Social and Cultural Activities

The International Women's Day on March 8th was recognized in all branches. In Jerusalem a special program was organized jointly with Sabeel Center, and hosted three professional Palestinian women, who are role models as organization leaders, that talked to the members about their experience and how they struggled to reach such positions. In Jericho, this day was dedicated to honoring the staff of the branch with a lunch in a local park in Jericho.

Members in all branches celebrated mother's day, and joined the World YWCA in the annual Global Breakfast event. With this year being the 150th anniversary of the movement, it was an occasion to celebrate being part of this special international movement.

In December, Santa Barbara day was celebrated in Jerusalem and Ramallah, along with the Christmas bazaar, where decorations and sweets were sold, and the special dish of desert served for that occasion. In Jericho, a similar Christmas event was organized for the membership and their families.

9- Networking, Partnerships, and Visits:

▪ **MEATRC:**

The YWCA maintained its membership in the Middle East Association for Training and Retreat Centers (MEATRC) which provides a forum for Middle Eastern lay centers that are addressing spiritual and social issues in their different societies and working in the fields of human development and training. The YWCA is one of 22 centers in this network that are from Cyprus, Egypt, Lebanon, Palestine and Syria. This year, Jumana Tams represented the YWCA at the annual meeting in Cyprus in October 2005, which was focused on the issue of "Christian Presence in the Middle East"

▪ **CROs Network- Jerusalem:**

The Jerusalem CROs network was reactivated in the spring of 2005, and the monthly VOX newsletter was reintroduced after a temporary hiatus, to address the ongoing need for communications from the Holy Land and to focus on humanitarian issues. The theme of the newsletter for this year, 2005, focused on the city of Jerusalem and the current situation and problems facing that city. The first issue for this year (issue #21) was sent out on June 5th, and the issues followed on the 5th of every month. We have been receiving positive feedback from partners and friends of the network.

In addition, the network worked actively in preparations for the launching event of "International Church Action for Peace in Palestine and Israel", an advocacy initiative convened by the World Council of Churches, for March 12-19, 2006.

- Nazar Halteh, President of the board in Jericho participated in a conference in the occasion of the International Women Day (March 8th) in Alessandria/Italy, where she introduced the role of the Palestinian women in the development process.

- Rana Qumsiyeh, the Public Relations/ Advocacy and National Youth Coordinator, attended the Y-Global partner meeting in Paris-France from 16/3 to 21/3/2005. She participated in the advisory council, attended partner meetings on specific exchange programs, as well as joined the World Alliance of YMCAs in its 150th anniversary celebrations.

- Mrs. Abla Nasir, the National General Secretary attended a partnership meeting with YMCA/YWCA of Sweden in Stockholm from May 6th to the 14th. The meeting aimed at evaluating youth programs so far and prepare for new ones for the coming years.



A quilt from Jalazone, as a gift to the YWCA in Lebanon

- A delegation of six representatives from all branches of the YWCA of Palestine, headed by the General Secretary, attended the World YWCA regional meeting that was held in Lebanon from 25/6 to 1/7/2005. The meeting joined the movements in Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt and Palestine, with Helene Yinda, the Program Director for Africa and the Middle East and Natalie Fischer-Spalton, Deputy General Secretary of the World YWCA in Geneva. During the meeting, the delegation gave a country presentation about the YWCA of Palestine and a special session on the Joint Advocacy Initiative and the different campaigns and distributed brochures and other publications.

- A delegation of five young women, from the different branches of the YWCA of Palestine, participated in the educational week on "Women's Leadership for a Change" in Sweden, from 17th to the 24th of August 2005. In addition to the Palestinian participants, the training brought together women representing the YWCAs of Sweden, Lebanon and Belarus. It was a great opportunity to network with YWCA women from those different countries, and to give a presentation about the work of the JAI.



Participants in the Educational Week in Sweden

- Rana Qumsiyeh participated as a speaker in the First Ecumenical Conference for Women organized by Sabeel in Bethlehem with the theme: "Together, we Build". The conference took place at the International Center of Bethlehem on the 2nd and 3rd of December. Around one hundred Palestinian women from Nazareth, Jerusalem and Bethlehem attended this conference. Rana gave a presentation about advocacy; and how Palestinian women can be more active in advocating for peace and justice in their homeland.

- **Advocacy trip to the Netherlands:** From the 15th until the 23rd of December, Rami Bahbah, the Campaigns Officer, was invited to the Netherlands to attend a "Public Day" organized by ICCO, a main partner of the JAI, to give a presentation about the importance of international solidarity and mobilization in advocacy work. Rami was joined by Abu Nidal, a farmer from the Bethlehem area and a beneficiary of the Olive Tree Campaign. Abu Nidal was invited to the Netherlands to tell his personal story, about the confiscation threats to his land for the purpose of constructing the Apartheid Wall, and how his land was replanted with young olive trees through the Olive Tree Campaign.

- **Trip to Japan**

Rami Bahbah, the Campaigns Officer and Mayadah Tarazi the Administrative Assistant to the National Office, visited the YWCA of Japan from the 16th to the 28th of August to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Hiroshima bombing and strengthen the ties with the Japanese supporters of the Olive Tree Campaign. They traveled across the country and visited ten different YWCA branches where they gave presentations about the current situation in Palestine and the progress of the Olive Tree Campaign. They also met with staff members of the YWCA national office in Japan, local community members and a number of youth group members who were interested in learning about our advocacy work.

Receiving organizations representatives individuals and groups

- On February 14th Angela Emilger from HorYzon/ Switzerland visited the YWCA branch in Jericho to follow up on the Food Production Project there.
- On February 19th, a delegation of eight representatives from HorYzon/Switzerland, the World Alliance of YMCAs, and YMCA/YWCA movements in Denmark, Norway and Sweden visited the JAI office. They were given presentations about the accomplishments of the JAI and the different campaigns, and were led on field trips to newly planed olive fields and on a guided tour of the Apartheid Wall in the Bethlehem area.
- On February 21st, Caesar Molebatsi, President of World Alliance of YMCAs visited the East Jerusalem YMCA and the YWCA of Palestine. He was given a presentation about the JAI and the different campaigns and activities, and discussed future plans with both general secretaries of the movements.

- On April 19th, Sieglinde Weinbrenner from EED/Germany, visited the JAI, and was given a presentation about the accomplishments for 2004 and future plans of the initiative. Later Ms. Weinbrenner had dinner with Mrs. Nasir and discussed EED's support to the JAI.
- On May 11th, nine representatives from ICCO/Netherlands visited the YWCA office in Jerusalem and had a presentation from the advocacy desk about the JAI and mainly the Olive Tree Campaign.
- On May 14th, a group of nine Norwegian women from the YMCA/YWCA of Norway visited the JAI. They had presentations about the East Jerusalem YMCA, the YWCA of Palestine and the JAI. They were then taken on field trips to see newly planted olive tree fields. Their program in the country lasted for a week, and on May 19th they met with Mrs. Nasir and Mrs. Nora Karmi from Sabeel, to talk about women living in conflict situations.

10- Capacity Building:

In answer to our fifth goal of "Developing the capacity of the organization so that it can effectively, efficiently, and sustainably serve its target groups and communities", the staff and volunteers joined several training programs throughout the year.

- Mrs. Nasir the National General Secretary, and Ms. Mira Rizek the National President, attended an Advocacy Workshop organized by the World Council of Churches in Geneva, from the 7th to the 12th of February. It was attended by several International Church Related Organizations.
- Nazar Halteh, President of the board in Jericho participated in a training program organized through Harvard University in August of 2005 in Greece. The training was entitled "Palestinians in development/ managing the transition period".
- Erma Darwish, member of the general assembly in Jericho, participated in a training program on HIV/AIDS in Sweden in September 2005.
- Mrs. Nasir, joined a Study Workshop on Inter-faith Cooperation for Justice in the Occupied Territories, which took place from October 21 – 24, 2005 in Alexandria, Egypt. There were 21 participants from 14 different countries in this workshop.
- Bader Rabadi, the Director of Finance and Administration together with Sawsam Mashni, the Executive Director of the Ramallah branch, attended a meeting organized by the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures. It took place in Alexandria/Egypt from December 11th through the 22nd, and aimed at helping civil society institutions find sources and opportunities for financial support, and positively react to them, as well as introducing the Anna Lindh Foundation and networking.

▪ The staff of the YWCA Advocacy desk, attended a comprehensive training program in advocacy-related issues that was organized by the JAI in cooperation with the Institute for Community Partnership (ICP) at Bethlehem University. Three main courses were implemented under this program, which took place from 7/9/2005 to 23/11/2005 and covered the following main topics:

- 1- Development Projects and Seeking Grant Support / Proposal Writing
- 2- Communication Skills, Public Speaking & Public Relations
- 3- Writing for the Print Media

11- Challenges and Threats

1) Israeli Occupation and its implications:

Living under the Israeli military occupation continuous to be the main challenge that we face daily as an organization and as individuals. This has effected our work in several aspects:

- **Jerusalem issue:** We are still struggling to legalize our status in Jerusalem. The Israeli authorities are making it almost impossible for a Palestinian NGO to have a legal status in East Jerusalem. The taxes they impose on us, are beyond our capacity, and therefore we had to close our Hotel in 2005, awaiting a legal solution that will allow us to utilize our hotel in a way that it will form an income generating source that will subsidize our programs.

- **Movement restrictions:** With the continued Israeli strategy to isolate the Palestinians in their villages and cities, it has been harder for us to provide our services consistently. It has limited our reach and our base of members and participants due to the difficulties in reaching our branches and centers. This has hindered the connectivity of our branches and the ability to organize meetings on a national level.

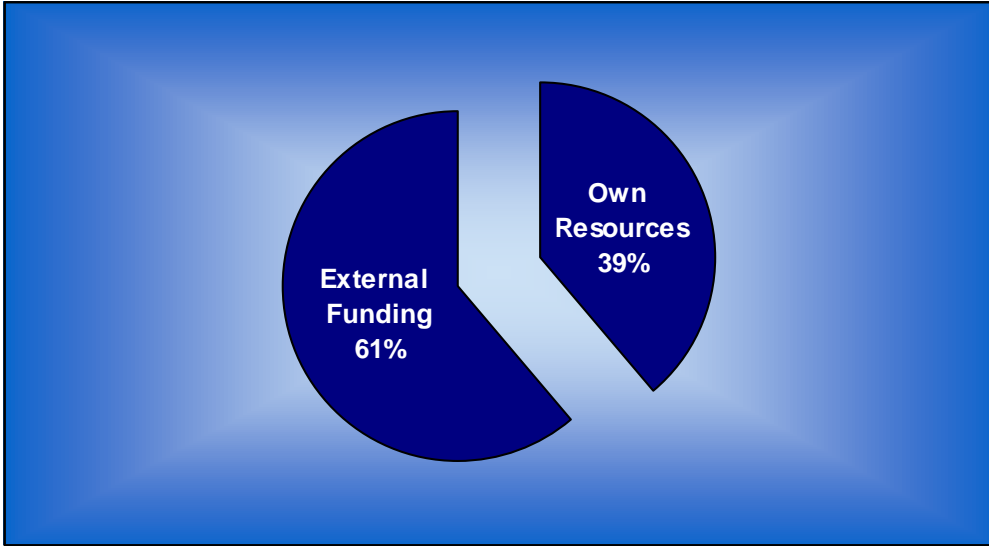
2) Implementing the new changes in structure and procedure:

Advancing our movement forward, from a voluntary based movement to a professional organization is not an easy task. We have put our feet on the first steps of the ladder, with restructuring and standardized procedures, but the implementation remains to be a challenge that we are hoping to get through in the year 2006.

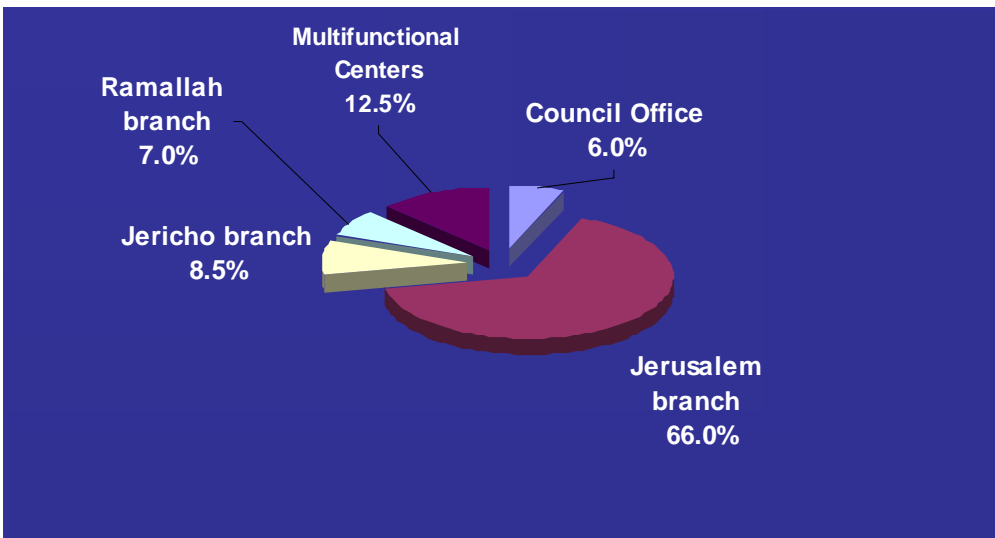
3) Sustainability of our programs:

Securing funds for our programs continues to be a challenge, we are striving to build and develop our own resources to be able to sustain the different programs, and move towards less dependency on external donations.

Following is a chart showing the percentage of external funds in comparison to our own resources, for all branches and centers for the year 2005:



Below also find our budget distribution amongst our branches and centers:



12- Future Plans & Aspirations:

In the year 2006 and beyond, we will strive to accomplish the following:

- 1) Legalizing our status in Jerusalem
- 2) Applying the structural changes, towards standardization and more effective and efficient work procedures.

- 3) Mobilizing the resource, moving towards program orientation rather than project orientation.
- 4) Strengthening strategic partnerships.
- 5) Starting the new building for Jericho branch on the newly acquired land.

13- Thank YOU!

Being able to carry our mission and services to our community in this tough situation is indeed an accomplishment that we are proud of, but we would not have made it alone. It has only been made possible through your continuous support and involvement. We thank you for helping us create hope in a time of hopelessness.

Australian Representative Office
Bread for the World
British Consulate in Jerusalem
Center for Continuing Education – Birzeit University
Christian Aid
Church of Scotland
EED
Fokus–Forum for women and Development
Ford Foundation
Global Ministries – the Netherlands
Global Ministries – New York
HorYzon
ICCO
Oxfam–Québec
Pontifical Mission for Palestine
Presbyterian Church USA
UNDP
Union of Education – Norway
United Church of Christ USA
United Methodist Church
Welfare Association
World YWCA – Geneva
Y Global (previously Delta International)
YWCA of Japan
YWCA–YMCA of Sweden



*Thanks for helping us create
this smile!*

In addition to individual contributions made by many friends of the YWCA of Palestine to support our work.

YWCA of Palestine – Members of the newly elected boards:

The Executive Committee of the National Council	
Hanadi Soudah – Younan	National President
Suad Sifri	National Vice President
Abla Nasir	National General Secretary
Ghada Ahwal	Secretary
Wafa' Khoury	Treasurer
Suad Younan	Jerusalem
Eilene Kuttab	Jerusalem
Haifa Baramki	Ramallah
Jounama Toubassi	Ramallah
Vera Pano	Jericho
Vera Mustaklem	Jericho
Jerusalem Board Members	
Suad Younan	President
Sana' Sifri	Vice President
Hala Salem	Treasurer
Sandrine Amer	Secretary (Youth)
Eilene Kuttab	Member
Rose Naber	Member
Wafa' Khoury	Member
Irene EL-Yousef	Member
Inas Shkeir	Member (Youth)
Ramallah Board Members	
Haifa Baramki	President
Maha Shihadeh	Vice President
Elen Ma'ayah	Treasurer
Rola Izz	Secretary
Jumana Tobassi	Member
Amal Abu Rudaineh	Member
Sonia Abu Hadid	Member
Ghada Ahwal	Member
Jumana Hanania	Member (Youth)
Jericho Board Members	
Vera Pano	President
Rita Jahshan	Vice president
Mai Toubeh	Treasurer
Norma Majrouh	Secretary
Irma Darwish	Member
Vera Mustaklem	Member
Mary Mustalha	Member (Youth)