

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Website development.
- Directors message.
- NDC Updates.
- All new Voice from the Field!
- Insight from NDC partner Al-Haq.
- New Vision: Hebron Blind Society.

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PNGO III: A Fond Farewell

The Palestinian NGO III (PNGO III) project was officially closed across the West Bank and Gaza Strip during ceremonies at the Red Crescent Building in Al-Bireh on June 22nd 2011 and the Roots Hall in Gaza on October 4th 2011 respectively. For a period of four years, NDC has responded to the needs of Palestinians through the PNGO III scheme. Providing capacity building expertise, funds for social empowerment projects and initiating sectoral development across the NGO community (including the NGO Code of Conduct of 2008), it was fitting that the closing ceremony was attended by representatives of many organisations who benefit from the contribution of a vibrant Palestinian

NGO community. Zahi Khoury (NDC Chairman) and Ghassan Kasabreh (NDC Director) were joined by Prime Minister of the PNA Dr. Salam Fayyad, Mariam Sherman (World Bank) and Dr. Rana Khatib (Welfare Association) in Al-Bireh; whilst NDC Gaza Program Manager, Alaa Ghalayini, welcomed Deena Abu Ghaida (World Bank, Gaza) and Fadi Al-Hindy (Welfare Association, Gaza) to the Gazan event. Salam Fayyad acknowledged "[NDCs] provision of essential social services in particular in Gaza, Jerusa-

lem and areas where the public sector has difficulties operating". Reflecting NDCs commitment to sector development, Mariam Sherman, noted "the development of the Code of Conduct under PNGOIII has been a major achievement and is recognised as a model to set ethical guidelines and management standards for NGOs". PNGO III - a credit to NDC and Palestinian NGOs.



(L-R) Mariam Sherman, Salam Fayyad, Zahi Khoury, Ghassan Kasabreh.

PNGO IV: The Future

PNGO IV continues to develop the successes of its three preceding PNGO projects. Jamileh Sahlieh, Grants Programs Manager, outlines the impact PNGO IV is having: "NDC is supporting 23 organisations in West Bank/Gaza...to enable them to deliver social services to Palestinian

communities. Organisations are targeting marginalised groups in marginalised areas". In terms of sector development, NDC has a litany of programs designed to build upon the success of the Code of Conduct (PNGO III). Sector Development Manager Areej Daibes notes, "NDC is

taking the code and its implementation to a whole new level by designing a Ratings and Capacity Building system... it will be the first of its kind in the region in terms of self-regulation initiatives and rating schemes, deepening the practice of social accountability by NGOs in Palestine."

NDC News – Your Voice



NDC Director
Ghassan Kasabreh

Welcome to our last newsletter of 2011! This edition is a sign of things to come. NDC is proud to be a main funding mechanism for Palestinian NGOs and passionate about providing our partners with online and offline opportunities to tell the story of their cause. Inside 'NDC e-news Autumn 2011' you'll find NDC updates and a selection of our partners articulating their messages of hope and plans for the future. In particular, the 'Partner Post' and 'back page feature' sec-

tions are dedicated to our partners. What's more, NDCs online offering is changing. The *ndc.ps*, *humanrights.ps* and *masader.ps* websites are being upgraded with an emphasis on partner participation. We want to hear your stories and see your pictures – the work of the Palestinian NGO community and its effect on the population is too significant to remain purely of local concern. Palestinian civil society is unique and vibrant – your engagement will ensure that

our ability to share knowledge, information and success is not impeded by bricks and mortar. In the context of creating an interactive NDO sector, NDC is also proud to announce the introduction of the Code Coalition's 'Ratings, Incentives and Capacity Building System'. Each participant NGO will be analysed by a recognised accreditation body who will highlight the level of organisational compliance with the 2008 Palestinian NGOs Code of Conduct, capacity deficiencies

“Online engagement will ensure that our ability to share is not impeded by bricks and mortar.”
(Ghasan Kasabreh)

and assign a corresponding rating. This assessment process will recommend how NGOs can further enhance their level of ethical governance and award each individual organisation with a recognised rating. The first of its kind in the region, this system has the potential to institute a process of standardised self-regulation within the NGO community and place the Palestinian NGO sector at the center of a global commitment to transparency, accountability and ethical practice within the de-

velopment sector. Keep up-to-date with the progression of the ratings system and all NDC news by visiting our websites. On behalf of the NDC family, allow me to wish all of you a wonderful end to 2011. We look forward to hearing how you continue to empower Palestinian society in the face of daily restrictions and hardship. Your work is our strength.

Ghasan Kasabreh
NDC Director



(L-R) Zahi Khoury and Mariam Sherman.

NDC Supporting Human Rights

Signing of grant agreement with NGO reps at NDC.



In October NDC signed grant agreements with a further six NGOs from the Gaza Strip and West Bank (including Jerusalem), bringing the total to have received grants under the Small Grants Facility from

the Human Rights and Good Governance Secretariat (Phase II) to 19. Totalling \$327,001, these grants will promote and protect the human rights of marginalised youth, refugees and women. In this case the six recipient organisations are diverse, but each share a commitment to instituting sustaina-

ble change throughout Palestinian society. The Human Rights and Good Governance Secretariat is passionately committed to supporting the significant contribution independent Palestinian NGOs make to the cause of universal human rights and good governance.

PalTel Partnership



In June NDC and PalTel Group's 'Foundation for Community Development' announced the recipients of the 2011 'Annual PC Initiative'. This year's initiative provided selected under-resourced NGOs with

new PCs and internet access. Corresponding ceremonies revealing the successful organisations were held at the Leaders Hall in Ramallah and Roots Hall in Gaza. Dr. Hussein Al-Araj (representing President Abbas), NDC Director Ghassan Kasabreh and Ammar Al-Aker (PalTel CEO) were present to congratulate representatives from the winning NGOs. Dr. Al-Araj was warm in his praise of the initiative: "[NDC/PalTels'] role and commitment in spreading the internet and PC culture strengthens communication and cooperation". 123 NGOs

(70 - WB, 53 - Gaza) were selected and 150 PCs distributed as part of NDCs continued commitment to strengthening the Palestinian NGO sector. The 2011 PC initiative is especially important due to its focus on NGOs involved in providing social services to the community. Furthermore, the PC initiative provides a significant proportion of the NGO community with access to NDCs NGO portal, *masader.ps*. The portal offers a space for NGO interaction in the context of severe restrictions on basic civil liberties.

"PC initiative not only empowers NGOs, but sets the stage for the development of a vast network linking all Palestinian communities and cities" (Ammar Al-Aker)

Online and Innovative

NDCs website offerings are changing. The *ndc.ps* and *humanrights.ps* websites and *masader.ps* portal are all being upgraded with the aim of improving ease of navigation, access to information and facilitating further interaction and exchange between NGOs, donors and members of the public. The *ndc.ps* and *humanrights.ps* sites will benefit from a structural edit whilst the Masader Portal will offer an unprecedented service to member NGOs.

The addition of expanded electronic and audiovisual libraries will provide the user with a vastly increased pool of resources and extensive but intuitive search mechanism. Furthermore, the new portal will be specifically constructed to encourage networking. Introducing a document share facility and internal social networking service gives NGOs, donors and public alike the opportunity to chat, discuss and comment on articles, sectoral is-

ssues and the weekly Masader Blog. This level of interaction and dialogue is an essential part of NDCs mission to support and develop a strong, expert and resilient Palestinian NGO community. The Masader Portal, along with the NDC and Human Rights and Good Governance Secretariat websites, will contribute hugely to this process. Please keep visiting our sites and utilise the fantastic potential of Masader! All feedback welcomed!!

Boost for Thematic Networks

The PNGO IV project has further increased the ability of Palestinian NGO networks to respond to the needs of members. The Palestinian Environmental NGOs Network (PENGON) and the Palestinian Network for Small and Micro-finance (Sharakeh) signed grant agreements with NDC on October 13th. As NDC Sector Development Manger Areej Daibes notes,

"...thematic network grants provide support for activities designed to improve services to member organisations. Improving the quality of networking and coordination among NGOs and government institutions is vital to the sustainability of civil society". Cooperation within each field of interest benefits the particular cause and the communities they serve.



NDC Voice from the Field



Local youth march in support of the elderly.

In honour of the annual International Day of Older Persons (October 1st), Jenin's Elderly Home Charitable Society (EHCS) held a festival on October 24th. The event was attended by the Minister for Social Affairs, Majeda Al-Masri, NDC Program Officer Saed Quzmar, over two hundred members of the elderly community and numerous willing volunteers. It was a fantastic example of how the NGO community, government and elderly community can com-

bine to institute progressive policies for society's wisest inhabitants. Led by a local Jenin scout band to the Green Valley Hall, guests were treated to speeches from the five panelists and singing, dancing and acting from the local volunteers - many from the Arab American University in Jenin. Established in 1973, the society aims to provide services, build its organisational effectiveness and publicise the importance of elderly rights in wider Palestinian society. Minister Majeda

Al-Masri emphasised the role government must play in the protection and empowerment of the elderly whilst paying



“The Social Affairs Ministry wants a social insurance law for the elderly” (Minister Majeda Al-Masri)

tribute to NDCs continued commitment to the EHCS. Saed Quzmar noted that “the relationship between the Ministry, NGOs and the elderly themselves is essential for the protection of our oldest community members”. This event was conspicuous by the diversity in age groups who were in attendance. Such community-wide involvement in elderly affairs will ensure that Palestinian communities throughout the oPt remain cohesive and compassionate.



Partner Post: Al-Haq Update



Al-Haq is an independent Palestinian human rights organization (Ramallah, est. 1979). We protect and promote human rights and the rule of law in the oPt and have special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council. Al-Haq documents violations of the human rights

of Palestinians in the oPt; irrespective of the perpetrator's identity. We prepare studies and interventions on breaches of human rights and humanitarian law and undertake advocacy before local, regional and international bodies. Al-Haq also cooperates with civil society and government in order

to ensure that international human rights standards are reflected in Palestinian law. Al-Haq recently instituted a Center for Applied International Law which aims to provide individuals with expertise to defend human rights. Please visit our website for further information - www.alhaq.org.

NDC: PHOTO FEATURES



(Top left: NGOs display their wares at the PNGO III closing in Gaza. Left: Dr. Salam Fayyad addresses the ceremony)

(Above: Minister Majeda Al-Masri gets the word out at the festival for the elderly in Jenin.)



(Above/right: Jenin's scouts lead the way for the elderly.)



New Vision: Hebron Blind Society

Now reaching the end of its 19th year, the Hebron Blind Charitable Society continues to provide invaluable services to the blind community – a section of our community so often forgotten. The society has consistently shouldered the responsibility of implementing comprehensive care programs for the visually impaired; with an emphasis on health care, social care and rehabilitation. Initially, this process required the practical identification of a largely anonymous blind community. Through the sponsorship scheme, blind children now have an opportunity to avail of support in the Hebron area. The society currently sponsors 65 visually impaired students, ranging from kindergarten to seventh grade. The Kindergarten and Primary School for the Blind are the only institutions of their

kind in the city of Hebron – their importance to the blind community cannot be overstated. The primary school very often acts not only as a place of educational development, but an environment for preparatory experience before students join sighted schools. Providing free daily transportation services for students in the city of Hebron, pupils are taught by twenty-one highly qualified teachers; in the



spirit of education, care *and* experience, the teaching body is comprised of both blind and sighted professionals. Through NDCs empowerment program, the society is currently implementing the “Developing Teaching Methods for Blind & Low Vision Children” project. This initiative will provide specialist equipment for the students, build the capacity of society staff with particular focus on managing learning difficulties and motivating students, train parents to use the visually impaired reading system, and finally, increase the variety of skills currently taught to visually impaired children at the school. Hebron Blind Charitable Society gratefully welcome all interest in, and support for, their new vision. Please visit www.hebronblind.maktoobblog.com for further information.



NGO Development Center

www.ndc.ps

Head Office (Jerusalem)
Mojahed Building
Jerusalem Road, Al-Ram
PO Box 2173, Ramallah, Palestine

Phone: 972 2 234 7771-5 (ext. 101-117)
Fax: 972 2 234 7776
E-mail: info@ndc.ps

The NGO Development Center (NDC) is the largest Palestinian organization of its kind working hand-in-hand with Palestinian NGOs and community development organizations to improve the delivery of services to the disaffected and build a more capable, responsive Palestinian NGO sector.

Our programs and grants empower Palestinians to help Palestinians by providing NGOs with the skills, tools and funds they require to address social needs and promote self-reliance amidst poverty. We advocate greater NGO transparency and accountability through the adoption of professional financial and management practices and promote sector-wide coordination and sharing of best practice experiences.

NDC - Palestinians Helping Palestinians