

Tatweer

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Message from the Director

For the past two years, the political and economic situation in the Gaza Strip has severely deteriorated particularly after Hamas took control of the Gaza Strip in mid 2007. Consequently, a tight siege was imposed by the Israeli Authority on the Gaza Strip, resulting in complete closure of all crossing borders to and from Gaza. Adding to this is the latest Israeli offensive attacks on Gaza beginning December 27, 2008 and lasting 22 days. The course of the assault, brought with it utter devastation, with over 1,285 Palestinians being killed, among which hundreds of children and women were included. Moreover, the Israeli bombardment has resulted in extensive damage to homes and public infrastructure, leaving thousands of families homeless and scattered.

In response, NDC decided to launch a Gaza appeal in an effort to mitigate the impact of the ongoing military operations. Such entailed the development of a four-fold intervention which focuses on emergency relief and creating exits from the turmoil once the dust and the chaos subside. Various international funding agencies responded to the Gaza appeal and NDC is currently in the process of signing financing agreements with a number of donors and discussing ways of cooperation with other donors.

In the aftermath of the Israeli offensive attacks, various institutions undertook rapid assessments to assess the initial damage and immediate need in the Gaza Strip. NDC was among those institutions which took the initiative to assess the damages accruing to the NGO sector through conducting a rapid needs assessment workshop for Palestinian NGOs particularly those that work in the sectors of health and rehabilitation, agriculture, social services and education. This was the first needs assessment for and by local Palestinian NGOs. NDC has also participated at the United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People which aimed to contribute to wider international efforts intended at supporting the process of recovery and reconstruction in the Gaza Strip.

Finally, NDC's presence in Gaza has been strongly visible since 1997, and the impact of our work is evident in the improved living conditions of thousands of the improvised Palestinians. NDC's intervention would not have been possible without the tremendous efforts and dedication of our capable and professional team.

Ghassan Kasabreh
Director

NDC Partakes in the Reconstruction and Development Efforts in the Gaza Strip

In the aftermath of the Israeli attacks on the Gaza Strip, NDC took a lead role in assessing the role and needs of Palestinian NGOs in Gaza. For this purpose, NDC held a two-day rapid needs assessment workshop for 47 Palestinian NGOs working in the sectors of Health and Rehabilitation, Agriculture, Social Services and Education in Gaza City on March 3 and 4. The objectives of the assessment delved deep into the needs, preparedness and role of NGOs in responding to the current situation and the emerging needs of the community, in addition to assessing capacities and capabilities to absorb additional funding to expand programs. This was the first needs assessment for and by local Palestinian NGOs since the beginning of the Israeli offensive on the Gaza Strip on December 27, 2008. Immense cooperation and enthusiasm was observed by

the participating NGOs who stressed the importance of this workshop. The mechanism applied focused on sector working groups and highlighted the need of each sector by priority, immediate and mid-term interventions with an emphasis on quick start, and the possibility of cooperation and coordination among NGOs as well as other actors.

The preliminary findings of the rapid needs assessment indicated that Palestinian NGOs in Gaza face new and additional challenges as a result of Israel's 22 day military offensive. The vast majority of NGOs indicated the unstable political situation, the Israeli occupation and its manifestations continue to be the main detriment to their work. NGO participants highlighted the need for continued advocacy initiatives on various tracks to end the Israeli occupation. NGOs also stressed the need for unity among Palestinian parties, coordination of efforts among all actors and the importance of finding exit strategies and working in the context of both immediate needs and long term development. It was also noted that in addition to the immediate and mid-term needs resulting from the latest Israeli actions, it was imperative to continue with the on-going projects and programs in place.



Rapid Needs Assessment Workshop Session - Gaza

NDC Participates at the United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People

Mr. Ghassan Kasabreh, NDC Director, participated in the United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People, which was held on 10 – 11 March 2009 in Cairo. The objective of the Seminar was to contribute to wider international efforts aimed at supporting the process of recovery and reconstruction in the Gaza Strip. The Seminar also addressed the current situation, identified the most urgent humanitarian, reconstruction and development needs, including those of Palestinian children and women, the most vulnerable segment of Gaza's population and looked into ways of coordinating international relief and reconstruction efforts.

NDC's participation in such an international Seminar is a success in itself for it emphasizes the importance of the work undertaken by NDC and the role it plays in development in Palestine. The Seminar's invitees included ministers, country representatives, United Nations officials, members and observers, and internationally renowned experts. The opening session commenced by speeches made by H.E. Mr. Abed Rahman Salah, Assistant Foreign Minister for Arab Affairs Representative of the Host Government, Ms. Karen AbuZayed, Representative of the Secretary – General of

the United Nations, H.E. Mr. Paul Badji, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, H.E. Zakaria El-Agha, member of the Executive Committee of the Palestinian Liberation Organization, as well as other experts.

Mr. Kasabreh's intervention partook during Plenary II of the second day of the Seminar entitled "Looking ahead: Identifying the most urgent humanitarian, reconstruction and development needs". In his speech, Mr. Kasabreh presented an overview of the situation in the Gaza Strip, role of the NGO sector in the recovery and reconstruction process, the initial findings of the rapid needs assessment workshop, which was held by NDC for local Palestinian NGOs prior to the Seminar. He stated that Palestinian NGOs remain the stabilizing force in the community, and any planning and efforts must be inclusive of those organizations. He also indicated that coordination strategies, while addressing early recovery needs, should plan to diminish dependency on humanitarian assistance, while putting in place the foundations for longer-term sustainable development. (For full report, please logon to http://www.ndc.ps/view_news.php?id=20).

Fundraiser for Gaza Children

An area of priority for NDC is the welfare and wellbeing of Palestine's children. In an effort to enhance the early education of hundreds of impoverished and marginalized children in Gaza, NDC held a ticketed fundraising dinner last fall entitled the 'Meal of Hope' to raise funds for the purchase of essential equipment and supplies for kindergartens renovated through NDC's NGO partners in the Gaza Strip. The event was a success with a turnout of nearly 100 persons from the local and international NGO and donor communities and the Palestinian private sector. The proceeds of the meal (over USD 12,000) contributed to the purchase of equipment and supplies ranging from indoor and outdoor games to DVDs and scanners for nine kindergartens in Gaza.

The Association of Women Committees for Social Work in Al Maghazi, is one of the beneficiary NGOs that received a total amount of USD 1,750 to purchase a DVD, an outdoor children's play facility, educational and recreational toys and stationary for Al Hannan Kindergarten in Al Maghazi. Nariman Abu Kwaik, Chairwomen, indicated that due to the difficult mental health situation of children in Gaza, there was a great need to find proper ways to alleviate the tension and terror they experienced. Purchasing the

DVD, which costs an insignificant amount of money (USD 300), considerably contributed to enhancing the state of mind of the children, "It created an environment of fun and laughter among them". Such tools, be it outdoor play facilities or indoor educational toys and devices, improved the psycho-social conditions of children by shifting their thinking and imagination from aggression and depression to laughter and happiness.



Al Hannan Kindergarten in Al Maghazi

Resource Kit Dissemination and the Commencement of the Technical Assistance (TA) Program with 20 NGOs

In February 2009, NDC held an event to disseminate a Resource Kit to NGOs that voluntarily signed the Palestinian NGOs Code of Conduct, (signed by over 300 NGOs from the West Bank and 200 from the Gaza Strip). The event was held in the West Bank, however the worsening situation in Gaza hindered a parallel activity as planned. Despite this challenge, NDC pursued its efforts to provide Gaza NGOs with the Resource Kit through mailing copies to NDC Gaza office. Thus far, only 122 copies out of the 250 originally sent were received in small portions due to Israel's restrictions on goods entering the Gaza Strip.

Moreover, NDC began the Coaching Technical Assistant Program for selected 25 NGOs from the Gaza Strip. A needs assessment was conducted for benefiting NGOs and intervention plans were developed for each organization. The Resource Kit is a necessary tool to compliment this program as it aims to increase NGOs compliance with the Code of Conduct principles and best practices. The Resource Kit consists of variety manuals including financial, administrative, strategic planning, procurement, human resource and governance in addition to guidelines that aim to enhance capacities of NGOs.



The Resource Kit of the Palestinian NGOs Code of Conduct



One of the Technical Assistance Sessions - Gaza

Alleviating the Suffering of Gaza Children and Reintegrating them into Society

Fekra Arts Institute was founded in 2002 in Gaza and works in theater, animation and various types of artistic production to help children and youth develop their skills and enhance their artistic abilities. Fekra is one of NDC's beneficiary partners through the Empowerment Grants Program. The project implemented through this grant consists of eighty animation workshops that will be held in Gaza City and Northern Gaza. Fekra is implementing the project in coordination with the Ministry of Education and UNRWA, whereby eight schools from each of Gaza City and North of Gaza were selected for the animation workshops. Each school (according to the recommendation

of the Ministry of Education and UNRWA) was requested to select eighty children to participate in the workshops. These children were divided into four groups by Fekra, and each group was trained separately for a period of three days. Fekra trainers selected children from the four workshops and included them in a seven to ten day production to produce an animated film that reflects their feelings, needs, emotions, etc.... At the end of the project, Fekra will hold a central exhibition to present the work of the children. Moreover, through the program an animated central film festival will be organized in Gaza to present animated films made by the children in sixteen schools.

Story from the Field

When the Israeli tanks halted their fire and began withdrawing from the Tal El Hawa neighborhood of Gaza, following three weeks of intensive assault on the people, only then did Shorouq Al Helo realize that her grandfather (Fouad) and her uncle (Mohammed) were amongst the martyrs killed during the Israeli bombardment. Moreover, Shorouq realized that her eighteen months old cousin was killed becoming the 420th child killed during a span of three weeks. Shorouq learned about the death of her three relatives from local media outlets and since then has not been able to forget what she visualized of the war jets

bombarding her relatives' homes and killing them. Shorouq somehow feels guilty because she was unable to help them and has become overwhelmed with emotions, cries until she is exhausted and surrenders to sleep. This is how Shorouq illustrated her feelings.

Shorouq was selected by her teacher to take part in Fekra's animation workshop because she noticed how negatively affected Shorouq was by the situation. Shorouq had been sad, isolating herself from other children, and no longer laughs or plays with other children.



Shorouq Al Helo among her Classmates - Gaza

The workshop began with 'story telling,' where children were provided with the space and support to tell their individual stories. As each child shared their story, what they witnessed and lived through, Shorouq began to realize that many other classmates had common experiences and lived similar tragedies such as hers. Shorouq, with her voice breaking and emotions outpouring, told her story. At the end of the day Shorouq stated, "I listened to many stories from my friends, some were sad while others were funny. This helped me tell mine." Having Shorouq in this workshop contributed to enabling her to take part in the twelve day production workshop, reintegrating her in day to day activities with other children and encouraging her to play and have fun again, as any child has the right to do.



Internal Activities and Events

NDC Carries Out a Strategic Planning Workshop

NDC conducted a two-day strategic planning workshop for NDC staff in Jericho from March 25 – 26, 2009. The objective of the workshop was to review and update NDC's vision, mission, strategies, objectives and interventions that would produce a well-defined strategic plan for the coming three years. For this purpose, NDC contracted a professional consultant to facilitate the course of the assignment and to direct the discussion in a positive and construction manner. The workshop was implemented using a participatory approach to ensure that all staff contributed to the development of the plan.

The first day of the strategic planning session included conducting an external environmental analysis (political, social and economic), in addition to an internal/external assessment (SWOT analysis). The second day included intense discussions through working groups as well as general group discussions. NDC staff along with the facilitator were able to reach conclusions regarding the

role of NDC, based on results of the SWOT analysis, in addition to updating general strategies in line with NDC's mandate. Furthermore, the two-day session was followed by a one day meeting at the NDC office to discuss NDC's future interventions, programs and activities inline with the proposed strategies. The findings of the workshops will be presented and discussed with NDC board of directors for input and approval. Upon finalization and approval NDC will prepare its plans and scope of work for the coming three years.



NDC Strategic Planning Session - Intercontinental Hotel, Jericho

The World Bank Conducts a Mid-Term Review for the PNGO III Project

During November 2008, the World Bank conducted a Mid-Term Review for the third phase of the Palestinian NGO Project (PNGO III). The Review aimed at assessing the experience of NDC in addition to the progress in achieving the agreed upon performance indicators. The team was led by Mesky Brhane (PNGO III Task Team Leader) and comprised of consultants and specialists in various fields such as grants, sector development, institutional development, financial management, procurement, monitoring and

evaluation and health. The mission met with key stakeholders including NDC board, management and staff, NGO representatives, community leaders and PA officials. A report presenting the findings and recommendations of the mission was issued early 2009 and includes a proposed timeframe for implementing tasks aimed at enhancing NDC's performance. As a result of its findings, the mission recommended a one year extension of the project to allow for effective completion of activities.