

Editorial

It has been over a year that the NGO Development Center became fully operational. The year 2007 witnessed some major challenges for NDC, marked mainly by the signature and startup of the implementation of the Palestinian NGO Project III. We, at NDC, strive constantly to improve the quality of our work, which, we believe, is unique in addressing NGO sector wide issues.

In this issue of the newsletter, you will find focus specifically on our program related to the grants component. I am pleased to report that USD 4 million dollars have been committed already in the forms of grants, in addition to the exciting developments underway regarding the Code of Conduct that will hopefully be signed by more than 400 NGOs in Palestine early next year. By the end of the year 2007, NDC would have committed an additional USD 2.5 million in grants bringing its total commitments to over USD 6.5 million dollars. Indeed, it is common knowledge that the NGO sector plays an important role in community building and development. However, NGOs are only one of many actors in a vibrant civil society. These include: the private and public sectors, the non-profit sector, institutional and individual supporters of development and an engaged general public. All of these non-profit organizations have one thing in common. They all need assistance to improve their work and to see it flourish. It is in this sense that NDC is striving to implement a long-term program of development. It is true that some of our programs are emergency focused, which is quite understandable at this stage of the current situation, yet we are undertaking this important mission.

NDC is shaped by the combined efforts of its staff, board, and of course its stakeholders and donors. All my colleagues at NDC alike deserve recognition for their hard work in taking on the formidable task of producing tangible results on the ground. I hope the end of the year will go smoothly for all and above all thank you to NDC's readership, for your highly valued opinion in us. I hope that this newsletter provides you regularly with the updated information on NDC, and that it presents in itself a window of opportunity to disseminate information properly and gain your confidence in the work of NDC. NDC is also grateful to all stakeholders and partners involved in this process, and to the confidence placed in it by the various donors.

For updated information about NDC and its work, I encourage you to visit our interactive website www.ndc.ps which has been completed in both Arabic and English versions and is being continuously updated.

Ghassan Kasabreh

Director

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Head Office

Mujahid Building, Dahiet Al Barid
P O Box 2187, Ramallah, Palestine
Tel: 02 234 7771-5
Fax: 02 234 7776

Gaza Office:

Al Haitham Building, 4
Rashid Street,
Al Rimal, Gaza
Tel: 08 282 8999
Fax: 08 284 9921

www.ndc.ps
Email: info@ndc.ps

NDC moves forward in the Grants Program

NDC has moved significantly forward in the Grants Program and has, so far, allocated more than USD 4 million to various NGOs in the West Bank and Gaza. There has been steady progress with the start-up of activities with the NGOs, by agreeing on work plans and budgets. The Center already started to contribute towards building their capacity, by conducting procurement sessions of two days for these NGOs in November in both Ramallah and Gaza. These sessions aimed at getting them better acquainted with the procedures and guidelines on procurement, so that each NGO can come up with its own procurement plan; a managerial tool that facilitates the work a great deal.



Training on procurement for NGO grant recipients, Al Bireh

All the activities relating to the Grants Department are underway: The appraisal of the NGOs applying for the AFD grants; the local government-NGO partnership grants; and partnership grants is almost towards its end. The department has also been busy with the follow up of an additional grant provided generously by SDC for an amount of USD 280,000 aiming at improving the facilities of KGs in various parts of Gaza. NDC has also informed Empowerment Grants' recipients of their eligibility. The idea behind the empowerment grants is to support experienced NGOs in providing innovative programs designed based on needs identified by the community to help them cope with the current crisis. In April 2007, NDC issued a call for proposals in the local press. 313 applications were received. Of these 313, 81 have reached the second phase of

evaluation, and finally 28 were approved. These 28 organizations are well experienced NGOs who have experience and a solid track record of success in their respective sectors.

The organizations that have successfully applied for this type of grant are spread throughout the West Bank and Gaza, and upon the end of this 24-month program, NDC estimates to have reached hundreds of beneficiaries. On October 31, NDC signed agreements with the organizations in the West Bank and on November 22 with those in Gaza. The total amount of the 28 grants is USD 2.6 million, and will be allocated to various NGOs.

One of the NGO empowerment grant recipients is the Association of Visually Impaired Graduates League, an association located in Gaza. This

association helps the visually impaired live their lives in dignity and with a fuller opportunity to interact with the world around them regardless of their inability to see. The center works to provide a variety of services to the visually impaired especially targeting those who have finished their university studies. These services include providing job opportunities, cultural and educational training and providing the chance for the blind to read by making audio books.

List of NGOs receiving Empowerment Grants

West Bank

1. The Four Homes of Mercy- Bethany
2. Spafford Children's Center, Old City of Jerusalem
3. Saraya Center for Community Services, Old City of Jerusalem
4. Silt Al Harthieh Charitable Society – Jenin
5. Union of Charitable Societies – Nablus
6. Al Khader Charitable Child and Care Society – Bethlehem
7. The Regional Committee for Rehabilitation – Ramallah
8. Elderly Home Charitable Society – Jenin
9. Palestinian Association for Cultural Exchange – Ramallah
10. Tarqumia Charitable Society – Tarqumia
11. The Edward Said National Conservatory for Music – Jericho and Askar Camp
12. Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development – Ramallah
13. The Arab Thought Forum – Outreach program
14. PYALARA – Salfit
15. Taffouh Center for Culture and Arts, Hebron
16. Islah Charitable Social Society, Jericho

Gaza

1. The Palestinian Farmers Association – Khan Younes
2. Basma Society for Culture and Arts - Gaza
3. Al Beit Al Samed - Gaza
4. El Amal Rehabilitation Society – Rafah
5. Palestinian Environmental Friends Association – Rafah
6. Fekra Arts Institute – Gaza
7. Palestinian AL Nakheel Association – Khan Younes
8. Al Mawassi Agriculture Cooperative Association – Rafah
9. Association of Visually Impaired Graduates League – Gaza
10. Ard El Insan Palestinian Benevolent Society – Khan Younes
11. The Young Scientists Club – Khan Younes
12. Agricultural Engineers' Association – Gaza

The association has been awarded a grant of USD 75,500 to develop the educational and cultural aspects of the visually impaired by establishing a specialized central library. In addition, this library will produce books printed in Braille as well as recorded audio books. This extensive facility will serve as one of the center points in Gaza for visually impaired persons and will give them access to the world of reading and learning via audio means.



NDC Signs an agreement with the Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development, Ramallah

Not only will the project serve 750 visually impaired persons in Gaza with a comprehensive program of personal and professional development tools, but it will help to provide meaningful employment

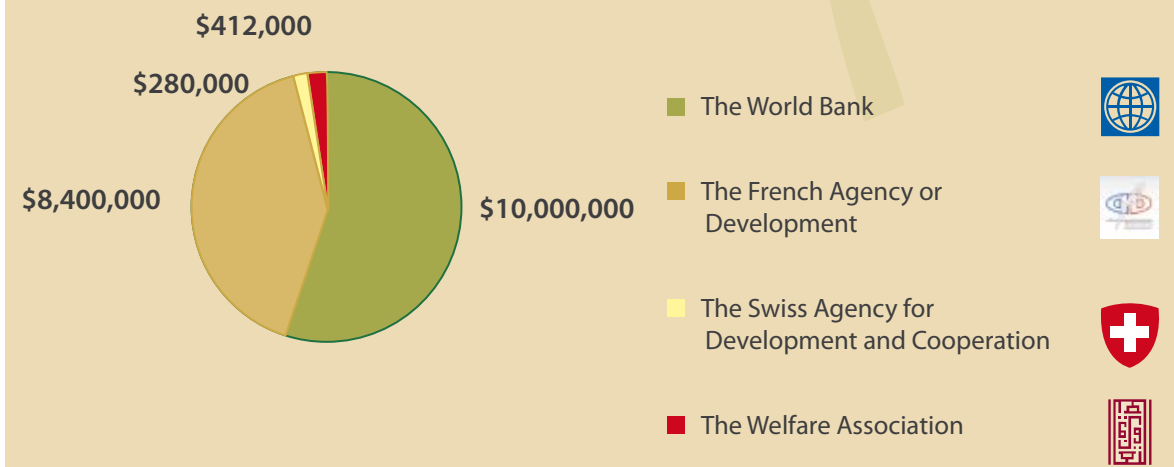
opportunities to members of their own community. This will allow these individuals who have worked so hard to achieve their positions in life living in the harsh situation which is daily life in Gaza, but to do so with dignity and the ability to provide for themselves and their families.

This being said, NDC is quite aware that the needs are much greater than what can be provided for. Consequently, it maintains a priority II list of additional qualified projects, to create a platform for leveraging funds from other donors.

Committed Grants

Type of Grants	Amounts Allocated \$	Number of NGO Grant Recipients		
		West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Empowerment Grants	2,625,000	16	12	28
Health Grants	1,440,000	4	3	7
Total	4,065,000	20	15	35

NDC donors and fund amounts till end of 2009



The NDC Monitoring and Evaluation system – Focusing on results

NDC is continuing to refine its new Monitoring and Evaluation (M & E) system. In early October, Suzanna Kruger a short-term advisor on M&E was seconded by the German House for Development Cooperation (DED) to NDC offices to continue the process of building the staff's capacity in this important area.

NDC is also working to help our partners attain

higher levels of performance and produce more positive and comprehensive results to better help their beneficiaries. Through the implementation of a new participatory M&E system, we are working to take the mystery out of and dispel the fears that many organizations have about this issue. Organizations fear M&E because the tendency is to think that it is a tool that points out only the individual or organizational deficiencies and this is

something which most people are not always comfortable discussing.

At NDC, we are working to expand the level of understanding of M&E and to develop greater levels of appreciation of how it can help us do our work better and help our partners embrace it solidly.

A good example of this concerns the need of organizations to look deeper into the impacts of their work in a more collaborative way rather than just focusing on the hard data facts. This approach to M&E helps NGO workers, particularly program officers to start thinking more about real long-term development impacts. This approach not only can lead to better project designs and results but also toward NDC's and NGOs organizational change which helps to see more thoughtful program work being undertaken which is not so technical and is more holistic in thinking with a view to providing greater benefits to the subject communities.

The Palestinian NGO Code of Conduct: A milestone

The work of the Sector Development Department is solidly progressing concerning the Palestine NGO Code of Conduct. The initial Code of Ethics developed by the Welfare Association Consortium during the second phase of the PNGO Project and agreed upon by almost 200 NGOs in summer 2006; represented a major milestone in setting standards for the sector. It was however, far from being complete.

It is obvious that NGOs play a primal role in emergency, relief and development in Palestine, making it even more necessary to adopt a "self regulatory measure" to which the NGOs would adhere, in which NGOs themselves commit themselves to the standards of Best Practice and show their constituents, and other stakeholders, that they have good intentions and are concerned by the end- result of the process: addressing the society's' development challenges in a most fruitful manner.

Adhering to the code is of course voluntary, applicable to any NGO locally or nationally, big or small. The current code lays out basic principles & standards of good governance, and it promotes the application of Best Practice within the context of sustainable human development. At this stage, NDC has facilitated the establishment of a coalition of the four Umbrella NGO networks. Each coalition member is holding individual consultations with the various member organizations. This process reached out to embrace more than 400 NGOs and was completed by end November 2007. As for the networks they include Palestinian NGO Network (PNGO); the Palestinian National Institute for NGOs

(PNIN); the General Union of Charitable Societies; and the General Union for NGOs in Gaza.

The final draft of the Code of Conduct has been formulated, and it was revised by our partner, AMAN, a group of six Palestinian NGOs who, in coalition, have been recognized by Transparency International as the Palestine chapter. Following this process, a conference is planned in January 2008, where the final draft of the code will be officially signed by the Palestinian NGOs.

This is only the beginning of a campaign concerning how NGOs undertake their work here in Palestine. After the ratification of the document, NDC will undertake an assessment of the NGOs who have signed the document to select (50) who are in the greatest need of assistance toward compliance with the Code and who will receive technical assistance to help develop their organizational capacities. This technical assistance might take the form of helping the organizations to construct organizational manuals, assist in developing reporting capabilities, work guidelines, job descriptions, and build organizational systems to assist these organizations to reach a level of compliance with the Code.

In addition to this, a promotional campaign will be undertaken to help raise awareness about the Code of Conduct and to inform the public about what it is and how it helps them to have a more professional working environment. NDC strongly believes that the Code of Conduct represents an important leap forward towards self-regulation of the NGO sector in Palestine.

Mr. Mario Carera, SDC Head of office talks about the emergency projects in Gaza

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) provides USD 280,000 of additional funding for the rehabilitation of 32 KGs in Gaza



Mario Carera, head of the SDC, Jerusalem



Q: When did SDC establish its offices in Palestine?

A: SDC established its offices in 1994 after the signing of the Oslo Accords in order to start a cooperation program to support the peace process and a social development program for ex-detainees aiming at integrating released Palestinian prisoners from Israeli prisons into active professional life.

Q: Do you have branch offices in Palestine?

A: Besides our head office in Jerusalem, we opened a branch office in Gaza in early 2006 to directly follow up on our projects there.

Q: What is SDC's strategy in Palestine?

A: We prepared a cooperation strategy for the year 2006 – 2010 which is guided by four main principles:

1. From crisis management to peace building

2. From emergency support to sustainable development.

3. A commitment to state building and

4. Aid harmonization.

These overriding principles are intertwined. The program is based on a continuous approach, taking into account the objectives and activities of the humanitarian aid and development department of SDC. The cooperation modalities between SDC and other Swiss stakeholders are set in place. Considering the Palestinian context, good governance is a chief topic of this cooperation strategy and is a cross-cutting issue.

SDC has three main objectives in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) which are 1) Enhance prospects for peace, 2) Improve living conditions. 3) Promote viable and sustainable institutions.

Q: What is SDC's project intervention in Palestine?

A: SDC has two main project interventions, development cooperation projects and humanitarian aid projects. Projects under these two interventions are implemented in cooperation with local partners who have specialty in the sectors we fund.

Our development cooperation projects are divided into the following fields:

1. Human rights & good governance projects implemented in cooperation with PICCCR – National Human Rights Commission, ...etc.
2. Employment & income generation projects in which the Welfare Association is our main partner, Palestinian Farmers Union.
3. Capacity building projects, those projects are implemented in Partnership with the Applied Research Institute, Jerusalem (ARIJ),...etc.
4. Cross Cutting Projects such as cultural activities implemented in cooperation with various partners.

As for the humanitarian aid projects, we provide funding and support the following partners: UNRWA Program 2007, UNRWA Emergency Appeal 2007, WFP – Support to the Palestinian population affected by the conflict, UNOCHA information and advocacy, ICRC Contribution 2007.

Q: Why did you choose the Welfare Association Consortium (currently NGO Development Center) for implementing the emergency employment generation program in Gaza?

A: We have a long partnership with the Welfare Association, since 2002, we provided them with funds for implementing various projects in the West Bank and Gaza, and we were very impressed by their work especially in the Gaza Strip. The Welfare Association Consortium team in Gaza is a very professional and capable team; we are very impressed by the outputs they achieved. That is why in 2005 and after the Israeli disengagement from the Gaza Strip, we decided to fund an emergency employment generation program in response to the emergency needs of the Palestinians, and the WA was our best partner in implementing such projects.

Q: What tools do you use in monitoring and rating your partners work and outputs?

A: Reporting, field trips, we directly meet with

end beneficiaries to listen to their constraints, suggestion, satisfaction...etc, we conduct financial monitoring to ensure proper disbursement of funds, and distribute surveys among beneficiaries to measure partners' ability to build confidence with them.

Q: What are the challenges SDC encountered during the implementation of the emergency projects in Gaza?

A: Our main challenge, is the constant deterioration of the political, economical and social situation in Gaza. In addition to the difficulty in importing needed material for the completion of projects, shortage in construction material, and we also faced some difficulties in identifying local partners.

Q: What are the successes achieved from the implementation of the emergency projects and rehabilitation of KGs in Gaza?

A: I consider Khan Younis kindergarten owned by the Palestinian Early Childhood Education Program NGO, a success story, because of the joy, and excitement, it brought to the hearts of the people living in that area. Upon arrival to this particular KG, I was impressed by the people present helping in completing the project, and talking about the importance of having this KG built in their area and to the life improvements it will bring to tens of children.

Q: What encouraged SDC to provide additional funding for the rehabilitation of KGs in Gaza?

A: KGs are considered an important tool for the social development of children, families and communities. Such projects achieve results and employ workers in such a short-term, which is in line with our quick impact strategy. Besides, the KGs proposal NDC submitted, expressed the immediate need for rehabilitating these KGs and reflected their drastic hygienic, and safety conditions, which encouraged us to provide additional funding for enhancing the severe environments of those KGs.

Mr. Carera thank you for giving us the opportunity to discuss with you our valuable partnership, and for expressing your views about the progress, implementation and successes of the emergency projects in Gaza implemented by WAC / NDC.

Promoting safe environments for early childhood development and education in Gaza

After the Israeli disengagement from the Gaza Strip on May 2005, many donors directed their funds to the Gaza Strip as a response to the emergency situation there, aiming to enhance the living conditions of the Palestinians who long suffered from miserable political and economical situations. The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) chose the Welfare Association Consortium (WAC), the predecessor of the NGO Development Center (NDC), for the implementation of the "Emergency Employment Generation in the Gaza Strip Program" for a total amount of USD 1.6 million. Due to the remarkable outcomes and successes achieved from this project, SDC decided to grant NDC additional funding for a total amount of USD 280,000, but this time for the rehabilitation of 32 Kindergartens (KGs) in the southern and middle parts of the Gaza Strip.

According to the latest statistics from the Palestinian Ministry of Education (2006), there are about 230 KGs in the Gaza Strip with around 23,000 kids attending them. Most of the KGs' premises are old, lack hygienic bathroom facilities and in urgent need for rehabilitation, purchasing new furniture, equipment, and outdoor play facilities. In addition, a number of KGs were destroyed by the Israeli continues incursions to the Gaza Strip.

Baraem Bisan, Rafah, Bonat Al Mustaqbal, Rafah, and Baraem Alamal and Almahaba, Al-Maghazi KGs are considered three success stories for the enormous change they made to the hygienic and safety conditions of about 300 kids. The KGs lacked sewage lines and suffered from severe and unhealthy condition.

NDC urgently responded to those drastic conditions, and with the help of local contractors and workers, NDC was able to make a change in the hygienic and safety conditions of hundreds of kids attending those KGs, and at the same time improved the economic situation of tens of workers who had been unemployed for years.

A total change was made to those three particular KGs, now both Baraem Bisan, and Baraem Alamal and Almahaba KGs, have sewage lines directly connected to the municipality's main sewage line, and the existing bathroom for Baraem Bisan KG is

rehabilitated and the kitchen sewage line is also directly connected to the municipality's main sewage line. New and closer bathrooms for Baraem Alamal and Almahaba KG were constructed in addition, to the overall rehabilitation of the two KGs' buildings.

As for Bonat Almustaqbal KG, an extension to the kitchen and bathroom area was made with a separating partition and hallway built in between.

As a result of the successful implementation of this project, parents became more encouraged to register their kids in those KGs knowing that they are spending their time in a hygienic and safe environment, while enjoying the newly installed outdoor play equipment. According to the KGs' administration, more kids have been enrolled and there is currently no more capacity to accept more kids. It was estimated that the percentage of kids attending those KGs increased to about 20%.

