

NGO Study in the West Bank and Gaza Strip

Main Results

Of a total of 199 surveyed institutions, 96 or 48% were located in the central part of the West Bank, 49 or 25% were located in the north, 21 or 11% were located in the South of the West Bank and 33 or 17% in the Gaza Strip. Those interviewed were divided as follows: 34% were presidents of their institution, 27% directors, 10% secretaries and 30% were one of the members. The majority of the interviewees were rather well educated, relative to the local standard, with 73% reporting having had more than 12 years of schooling, mostly at the University level. We found appreciable differences in the levels of education of the different types of interviewees, with elected presidents appearing to have the least education and directors the most. Specifically, we found that 40% of the heads reporting having had up to high school education, followed by 35% for secretaries, 19% for members and a low of 15% for directors (chi square = 12.43449, $p=0.006$). Although one would have expected a possible difference in educational levels of interviewees by region, in fact, we found these differences not appreciable.

Of the total, 58% were working in their institutions as volunteers, and the rest were working for pay. A high of 97% of the presidents and 65% of the secretaries of these institutions reported that they were elected to hold their positions, in contrast to 74% of the directors reporting that they were appointed and worked for pay. Thirty-four percent reported being in their stated position for 1-2 years, 30% for 3-6 years and 36% for 7 and up to 35 years. On the whole, the average length of involvement in the position in which the interviewees held at the time of the survey was 7.9 years, perhaps reflecting an over-involvement of selected individuals, as opposed to collective work, in the affairs of these institutions. We found no appreciable differences in the length of tenure in position and type of position or region where the institution is located.

On the whole, the institutions surveyed reflected long term activity and involvement in social development in the area, with 33% reporting that their institutions have been operating for the past 1-9 years, 24% reporting operations for 10-19 years and a high of 43% reporting operations for 20 and up to 90 years. The average length of time within which these institutions have been active was found to be 21.3 years. Interestingly, there were no significant differences in the date of establishment of the different NGOs by region. In general, then, these data indicate that NGO activities in the area are not a recent phenomenon, but that such activities have grown gradually over the years. It is well known that the beginning formation of NGOs in the area began in the turn of this century, first mostly in the form of charitable society activities, gradually responding to the Palestinian political experience with emergency work in the late forties, followed by the relief of refugees. Once again emergency took over the operations in the 1967 period, again leading to the move towards the provision of services as a matter of national survival during the years of occupation. By the late 1970's and early 1980's, the new social movements began to emerge and consolidate developmental, women's rights, human rights and finally democracy approaches to NGO operations in the area.

Of the total, 30% of the surveyed institutions stated that they had branches in more than one locale. When asked about where these institutions were extending their activities, 8% reported being active in urban areas only, 24% reported being active in rural areas only, 2% in camps only, 61% in all three localities, 6% in urban and rural areas and 1% in urban areas or camps. Although this data tends to indicate a wide and extensive involvement in the different regions, in fact, the research team believes that a tendency to over-glorify the activities of the agencies that respondents represent may have over-inflated the responses. It is believed that respondents may have included very limited and selected one time or irregular activities in rural areas as regular programmes. For, it is well known that the majority of institutional services remain unevenly distributed in this country, with the rural areas being at a disadvantage, relative to the urban ones.

When asked about the main focus of activities, the reports were as follows:

**Main area of Activities
Percentage of Total Institutions**

Area/Focus of Activities	Percentage of Total Institutions
Children's care	18%
General charitable care	18%
health care	13%
Disability care	10%
Cultural, scientific and literary	10%
Developmental rural	7%
13%	5%
Educational	3%
Family planning	3%
Women's development	4%
Human rights	4%
Old people's care	4%
Urban development	0.5%
Youth activities	0.5%

The above table indicates that general charitable and child care are on the top of the list of priority activities that these institutions are engaged in, with 18% of the institutions reporting being engaged in working in these areas, followed by health care, with 13%, disability care, and general cultural activities with 10% each, and 4% each for old people's care, human rights, women, and rehabilitation. The rest is scattered into what is perceived as less important avenues such as youth activities, educational activities and urban development. What is interesting is that the above figures tend to reflect the gradual process of change in purpose and approach to ngo work that took place over the years in this country. With general welfare and child care being the oldest trend, such activities continue to dominate the scene. Gradually, and with the changing political and socioeconomic structures, new and different social needs began to emerge with changing times. As time went by, new approaches to dealing with new problems also began to emerge, in the form of new types of ngo's or old ones adopting new foci. Thus disability rehabilitation, the care of old people, women's rights, human rights and democracy institutions came into being, and mostly in the late 1980's and beginning 1990's, reflecting a response to the needs of the time.

Institutional structure

1. Distribution by gender:

Of the total institutions surveyed, we found that 79% of the presidents of institutions were male, while 21% were female. Although the level of involvement of women in these institutions at the higher and policy making level is still far from comparable to men, these results still indicate an appreciable level of women's activism within the non-governmental, mostly charitable, sector in Palestine. However, these results should be interpreted with caution, as women tend to be presidents of all women institutions, while men tend to be presidents of mixed institutions. Nevertheless, clearly, the level of female activism in this sector is impressive. Indeed, it is well known in Palestine that perhaps the only avenue for female activism, especially in the area of the promotion of the advancement of women is in the NGO sector. This is one of the main reasons that today, women activists are so much in support of the local ngo movement and network.

The results pertaining to the sex of the director and secretary of these institutions is similar, with 71% of the directors being male and 29% were female, and 65% of the secretaries being male and 35% female. Interestingly, we found no statistical differences between the gender of the president, director or secretary of these institutions by region, although one would have expected to find more female activism as expressed by these post in the centre of the country, relative to the peripheral areas.

On the whole, there were appreciable differences between men and women in terms of the level of their general engagement in ngo activities. Specifically, there were 1155 men reported as being members of the administrative council, in contrast to 551 women; 1654 male employees in contrast to 652 females. The gap between the

involvement of men and women decreases with general ngo membership and with volunteers: 786 men were listed as being volunteers in these organizations in contrast to 683 women, and 4809 men were listed as being general members of these institutions, in contrast to 4380 women. Clearly, men tend to occupy the majority of decision making or salaried posts in these institutions, while women and men seem to be almost equally represented in general membership or voluntary post. These data confirm the impression that, firstly, women are still not adequately and equally incorporated into the local ngo structure, although their presence is felt, and, secondly, that, when present, women continue to operate within the constraints of the decision making and control of men.

2. Institutional democracy

What is impressive about the results is that 81% of the institutions reported that the head of their administrative council was elected, 16% reported that these heads are both elected and appointed, depending on the circumstances, and only 4% reported appointment as the way in which administrative council heads reach their positions.

A closer examination of these results revealed significant regional variations as follows:

**Choice of Administrative Director by Region
Percentage of Institutions in Each Region**

Choice	Region			
	Central WB	North WB	South WB	Gaza
Elected	81	90	86	64
Appointed	5	2	0	3
Elected or app	14	8	14	33

Chi Square = 12.23985, p=0.056

The above table demonstrates that, while the large majority of administrative directors in the three areas of the West Bank are elected, only 64% are in the Gaza Strip. In contrast, 33% of the administrative directors of Gaza are either elected or appointed, depending on the circumstances, in contrast to 14% in the central and southern part of the West Bank each and 8% for the northern West Bank. Thus Gaza appears to stand out in that appointments tend to be more frequent there, perhaps because of the more severe political conditions that Gaza lived during the years of occupation, relative to the West Bank. But it also could be due to the generally less developed ngo structure and experience in Gaza, and the generally less pronounced consciousness regarding general democratization issues there, relative to the more developed West Bank.

Looking at responses to the question of appointment of the members of the present

administrative council of the institutions, 72% of the institutions stated that those were elected, 20% stated that they were appointed and 8% stated that they were elected or appointed, depending on the circumstances. Similar regional variations were noted, with rather more appointments for Gaza relative to the West Bank:

**Choice of Administrative Council by Region
Percentage of Institutions in Each Region**

Choice	Region			
	Central WB	North WB	South WB	Gaza
Elected	69	88	90	47
Appointed	25	12	5	25
Elected or app	6	0	5	28

Chi square = 30.77028, p= <0.005

Note that the above table indicates that 69% of Central West Bank institutions elect their administrative councils in contrast to 88% and 90% for the north and the south of the West Bank respectively, and a low of 47% for Gaza. What is interesting about these data is not merely that it confirms the above impression that in Gaza, the style of appointment is rather more common than the West Bank, but also that the central part of the West Bank, the supposed major centre of NGO activity, in fact, lags behind the north and the south of the West Bank in terms of holding elections for these important posts, and as a gauge for democratization within institutions.

When asked about appointed general members of these institutions, the large majority, or 98% noted that there were no appointed members within their institutions. Of the total, a high of 35% reported that none of their members paid their dues, another 35% reported that 1 and up to 123 members paid their dues, and 30% reported 130 and up to 2500 members having paid their dues.

When asked about the type of work relationship that these institutions have with the governmental authorities- remember that in the Palestinian context at the time of the survey, government referred to very informal, although well established, links with the PLO before the handover of authority to the Palestinians - the responses indicated a high level of contact with the PLO, with 36.5% of the institutions reporting some sort of relationship with the Diaspora leadership. When asked about whether the PLO authority was engaged in financial assistance of these institutions, again a high of 41% reported some financial involvement. Interestingly, regional variations were marked, with 74% of the institutions located in the South of the country reporting relations with the PLO authorities, in contrast to 43% in Gaza, 36% in the centre and a low of 17% in the south of the West Bank (chi square = 19.76813, p=0.00019). The responses to financial involvement revealed a similar pattern, with a high of 68% of southern institutions reporting receiving aid from the PLO

authorities, in contrast to 46% in the central area, 28% in Gaza and the north respectively (chi square = 12.07221, p=0.007). Clearly, then, and for understandable reasons, PLO linked funding appears to be one of the foundations of relationships between the ngo structure locally and the leadership outside, propelled by the national struggle and the need for societal survival. However, such links, especially the financial also allows for the involvement and intrusion of the PLO authorities in ngo activities, and raising questions as to how such relationships might have an impact on the development of these civil society institutions and on the process of democratization. Indeed, the question pertaining to direct supervision by the authorities is also revealing in that 30% of the institutions reported being supervised by the authorities, in return for receiving financial assistance.

III The Relationship of the authorities to the NGO's.

a. The Legal framework:

Hala.. you must write something about the laws under occupation, and the newly emerging laws now. You need to get a copy of the new NGO law and criticize it fully, as it ensures the complete control of NGO's in the area

The questions here are irrelevant, even though you can write extensively on the problems of the laws of the military, and lead to today's law, showing its problems.

b. The actual relationship with the authorities

Looking at the responses to the question of the number of appointed members, we find that only 1% reported having members being appointed by the authorities. Naturally, at the time, the level of involvement of the PLO in the details of the workings of local NGO's under occupation was limited by the political context. Whether the level of involvement will rise or not in the future remains to be seen, and will depend to a large extent on the understanding of the authorities to the importance of the present and growth of an independent NGO movement, as a necessary condition for the move into civil society and democratisation.

Examining the level of involvement of members through yearly administrative council meeting, only 4% reported not having meetings at all, 23% reported having up to 11 meetings, 30% reported having had 12 meetings, and 48% 13 and up to 55 meetings, indicating the great variation among institutions. As for general assembly meetings, 41% reported that they had none, 37% had one meeting, and 22 had 2 and up to 12 meetings. This reflects the local NGO picture in that some institutions continue to operate based on the old patronage mode, while others, composed of persons from the younger and more democratically inclined generation, are operating under a new and more participatory mode.

In general terms, the responses revealed a good response towards the PLO authorities in that 65% stated that the authority did respond well to the demands of the institution - at the time of the survey, while 14% said that the Authorities do not respond to these demands, and 13% said that they respond sometimes. Asking the

responded whether the institution would be independent of the future Palestinian government, 40% said yes, 47% said no - probably because of financial links and commitments, and 13% said that this will be done sometimes, depending on the situation. That is, almost half of these NGO's do not see themselves as separate from the future Palestinian government, or independent of it. This is probably due to the fact that many such institutions operated during the years of occupation precisely because of the absence of a state structure that can support and sustain people with services. Many institutions thus perceived their role as support in lieu of the government, and with close links to it. Such a perception of NGO work departs from another approach that prevails in the country today as well, namely one that perceives the NGO movement as totally independent of the state, contributing to pluralism, democracy and the move into civil society. In this sense, the responses appear to reflect the two trends taking place within the NGO movement in the country in general: one that perceives itself as gradually merging into rising state structures, and another which is seeking the fulfilment of a social policy and democracy agenda, perhaps in cooperation with the Authorities, but as an independent body.

When asked about the different ways they perceive the lack of independence from the government, a high of 30% reported the necessity of obtaining permits to establish the institution as a principal indicator of lack of independence, another 29% thought that control and supervision after establishment was an indicator, 9% thought that the right of refusing permission to operate, 5% thought that control and supervision before establishing the institution, 4% thought that the right of the authority to merge one institution with another, 4% thought that factionalism was another form, and 1% thought that appointment of people was another indicator of lack of independence from the authorities. Clearly, these results have been influenced by years of occupation where obtaining permits from the military have over the years become a main issue of Palestinian struggle with the Israeli military. At the same time, a fair and understanding NGO law is required to allow these NGO's to operate. At the moment, this is not clear, nor is it clear that the Authorities are seriously interested in safeguarding the independence of NGO. Indeed, the newly drafted NGO law indicates quite the opposite, re-inforcing fears of potential problems between the NGO sector and the current Authority.

Returning to the existing laws regulating NGO activities - Jordanian laws in the West bank and Egyptian laws in the Gaza strip - a curious 36% reported that these older laws are adequate and allow for independence from the Authorities, while 63% reported that these archaic laws pose too many restrictions on the independence and freedom of NGO's, while 1% thought that these laws are sometimes workable and sometimes not. When asked whether legal changes are necessary or not, 40% responded positively, 15% negatively and a high of 45% felt that some changes - in contrast to a total change - are needed. While there were no significant difference in the responses to this question by region, substantial and significant differences were noted, and related to whether the institution receives funding from the PLO authority or not. Specifically, it was found that 53% of those who receive funds from the authorities reporting satisfaction with the present laws as allowing for the needed freedom and independence, in contrast to 24% who do not receive funding (chi

square = 17.49566, $p=0.00016$). This data suggests that the responses to these important issues of democracy and democratization pertain to the institution's position within the economic and political power structure, rather than an approach to NGO activities that reflects the need to build independent institutions and community action that can be in close cooperation, or conflict, with the authorities depending on the situation.

Examining the questions pertaining to what type of characteristics should the new law entail, 39% of those who thought changes are needed thought that the new laws should ensure the decreased bureaucratic regulations and relations with the governmental departments, 12% thought that such legislations should guarantee democratization within institution and in relation to dealing with other institutions, including governmental ones, 9% thought that guaranteeing human rights and abiding by the Geneva Conventions were essential, 8% thought that the laws must be changed in order to reflect the changes in society, 7% reported thought that the new laws must be democratic, liberal and imbued with a social understanding, all designed a first priority. As for the rest of the responses, they generally dealt with a desire to have laws that can provide the needed freedom of movement for NGO's, the important of elections, and the safeguarding of independence. As for the second priority, 22% thought that these legislations should guarantee democratization within institutions and in relation to dealing with other institutions, including governmental ones as a second priority, 21% reported the importance of guaranteeing human rights and abiding by the Geneva Conventions, 17% stressed the need to decrease the bureaucratization of dealing with governmental bodies and departments, 9% stressed the need for equality between the sexes in all the rights, and the rest, again generally stressed issues of liberalization and freedom of movement in operating NGO's. The highest responses for the third priority were the right for democracy and the right of elections, and equality between the sexes, with 21% of the responses each, followed by, 10% stressing the need for democratic laws in dealing with employees, 11% stressing the need for the independence of NGO's in ways that do not conflict with social good, and another 11% stressing the need to develop laws that can guarantee cooperation with the state because of social need, as opposed to institutional interest or power position in relation to the state. In other words, while these responses do vary quite considerably, a constant theme is the theme of human rights, equality, freedom of movement and democratization, an interesting finding give that the main topic of discussion and conflict between the Authorities and the NGO's today is precisely these issues.

Turning to the question of where these institutions receive their primary sources of funding, 7% stated that they receive no support at all, 23% reported that the United Nations are a primary support, a high of 50% reported international aid agencies as a primary source, 11% reported Arab NGO's, 6% reported international government, 4% reported Arab institutions and 0.5% reported Arab governmental support as the primary support for their institutions. These results are remarkable in that, overall, they indicate a heavy reliance on international aid as a first line of support - 79% for governmental, NGO and UN support - for sustenance, clearly showing the fragile financial situation in which the NGO movement lives in this country. Secondary and tertiary support appears to contain a similar pattern in that 24% receive no

secondary support, 42% of such secondary support is foreign, and the rest Arab, while for tertiary support, 48% do not receive any, 27% receive foreign support and the rest is Arab. Indeed, since the peace negotiations, substantial sources of funding shifted support from NGO's to authority structures, threatening this way the viability of not only the NGO movement, but one of the main bastions of democratization and human rights in the country. What is also interesting is the very limited stated support that comes from the Arab World, whether governmental or otherwise. This is one of the indicators of the rift between the area and the rest of the Arab World. The Arab World does not lack financial resources, although such resources are rather unevenly distributed. Why such resources do not reach the West Bank and Gaza Strip is a question that is beyond this survey. It remains clear however, that much can be done in the area of NGO support through Arab funds and assistance, that is, if an Arab NGO network that is based on the principles of democratization, human rights and equality is to be contemplated.

When asked about the type of cooperation these institutions have with others, as expected, 80% reported funding as a primary type, 9% reported no relations, 6% reported consultancy and the rest were scattered and included cultural events, training and food privisons. Secondary cooperation included 29% with no secondary cooperation, 28% consultancy, 17% technical assistance and the rest scatters as above. Third cooperation included 54% without any third form at all, 13% training, 11% technical assistance, other than the scattered responses that were listed above. When asked about who chose the forms of cooperation with with external agencies, 76% said that they chose the forms themselves, 13% said that it was Arab sources that chose the forms, and 4% said that it was international sources, while 8% said that these forms of cooperation were non-existent. When asked about the right of these external agencies to follow up the activities that were linked to it, 74% said yes, 15% said no and 12% said that this happens sometimes, depending on the nature of the contract. When asked whether the external agency appointed specific individuals that the agency is responsible for and paid by the budget of the specific activity that the external agency supports, only 6% said yes, and the large majority, 81% said no. The rest stated that this happens sometimes or that such involvements do not happen in their institutions. Overall, and once again this data indicates a serious dependence on financial assistance for the survival of local NGO's. While it is understandable why external agencies would want to follow up activities supported by them, the nature and the extent of this involvement is also of question, as the range can be from the very reasonable - for instance, ensuring that the project or activity follows the lines previously listed in the proposal, good financial and narrative reporting etc - such an involvement can also go beyond the scope of what is normally expected, all the way to interference in the internal affairs of the institution. However, it is beyond the scope of this study to elaborate the different types of relationships between donors and NGO's that exist in this country. Suffice it to say that, by virtue of the heavy financial dependence, great care must be taken in order to ensure that NGO's do not deviate from their original mandates and their locally developed aims, objectives, strategies and concrete programmes.

IV The Relationship between NGO's with foreign governmental and international aid agencies

Turning to the question of the dynamics of the relationship between foreign agencies, governmental and otherwise and local NGO's, the responses to the question of agreements to purchase the equipment needed from the project from the country in which the external agency originated revealed the following: of those who had relations with external sources, 16% said yes aid money to project entails buying the needed equipment from the country of the donor, while 77% said no, there were no such stipulations, and an additional 7% said that this happens sometimes. It should be pointed out here that usually, western governmental aid, even if it filters through external NGO's, is usually conditioned with buying money from the donor country origin, while external NGO aid does not include this limitation. This is the case, for example with USAID funds, German Development Aid funds etc., European Union funds, while the choice is left open by European NGO's such as NOVIB, OXFAM and Christian Aid.

When asked about whether the local NGO changed the way in which activities were originally planned for to suit the views of the external donor, an expected 8% stated that they had done so in the recent past, in contrast to 80% who stated that they never do and an additional 12% who stated that they sometimes do. This research team believes that it is difficult to gauge the responses to this question for accuracy, mainly because there is a general reluctance to admit to shifting strategies and programmes because of the influence of money. In other words, the suspicion and the team's knowledge of this field raises the question as to a much bigger role of international aid in determine the course of developmental action than this study's results reveal.

Asked if the activities that the local NGO embarked upon in cooperation with external donors reached its goals, the large majority responded positively, or 83%, while only 3% said that such projects did not succeed and an additional 14% said that such projects sometimes succeeded and sometimes did not. Once again, the view of the research team is that local NGO's would be very hesitant to admit failure, resulting in the under-reporting of failing joint projects. Consequently, the responses to the question for the reasons for the failure become not only insignificant, but do not reflect the actual picture in this country during the past decade.

In response to the question of generally assessing the relationship of local NGO's to external donors, 7% thought that the relationship entailed equality between the two partners, 72% stated that the relationship was one of good cooperation and 21% frankly stated that international aid in fact control the relationship. No relationship was found between the responses to such a question and the region in which the institution is located. That is, when it comes to relations with foreign donors, which the majority of local NGO's are involved in, there is an element of homogeneity in perception in general terms which is quite rational and realistic, mostly recognizing that a funding relationship cannot be equal a priori and that instead, a good way of assessing the relationship is in terms of good or inadequate cooperation.

Turning to the question of the different sources of funding that the local NGO has available to operate, we find that 70% stated that they make some income from

membership fees, 34% reported income from selling different sorts of produced materials, 35% said that they make income out of some of the activities that they conduct, and a high of 68% reported income generated from services they deliver, and 51% reported income from general donations. In the same line, 18% reported receiving funds from the government on a yearly basis, usually called general funds - in this case the PLO or Jordanian sources up till the early 1990's, 14% reported receiving funds for specific projects from the government, 4% reported governmental support through the employment of staff and through the provision of technical consultants, 30% reported some sort of income from the private sector institutions, usually in the form of irregular donations, 37% reported income donated from individual business persons, and a high of 57% generate income from charity - a substantial amount for Zakat.

In the same vein, 40% reporting receiving some sort of income from Arab states - probably mostly Jordan, Kuwait and Saudi up till the period of the Gulf War especially, another 37% reported receiving income from foreign states, and a high of 75% reported receiving income from foreign institutions, reinforcing the impression of heavy dependence on western aid. Overall, it appears that the income generating capacity of these institutions is quite diverse. However, it should be noted that, although diverse, it is doubtful that a substantial amount of income is made locally from the different activities, and that, by and large, the heaviest source of funding today remains international aid agencies. This is the case even with, for instance, health institutions, who make some income through physicians fees and medications, but who in general make not more than one quarter of their income through such sources. While this dependence on donor money is worrisome, the other side of the coin rests with the general mandate and approach to NGO work locally. There is a strong, and understandable, emphasis on reaching those who are excluded with services, and with the issue of human rights. Such activities, with a social perspective, cannot produce the income level needed to operate local NGO's. This is why the issue of dependence is a chronic and un-resolvable one, until the Palestinian political and social formation reached an advanced stage where basic needs are met by the state as a matter of right, and where democratization becomes the general practice. In the meanwhile, every evidence points to the need for the continuation of the activities of local NGO's in the area of service provision, human rights watches and democratization, while at the same time maintaining an element of financial dependence on the outside world.

When asked about their opinion regarding the future Palestinian Authority interfering and deciding about how Palestinian Authority money should be spent 47% of those who receive governmental aid reported yes, 48% no and 6% sometimes, clearly indicating the skepticism and expectation regarding the attitude of the future Authority to the work of NGO's. When asked if this would influence independence, 19% of those who do receive governmental funding said yes and a high of 60% said no while 21% said sometimes, depending on the occasion. Such responses at the stage in which the PLO was still not handed over authority remain seen in terms of speculations and expectations, including worries, rather than concrete experiences in the Palestinian setting, and in contrast to other parts of the Arab World where this

study has been conducted. . In contrast, when the discussion turned to international aid, and when asked if international and Arab aid affects the independence of local institutions, only 9% did not respond, indicating that the large majority were sustained by sources external to the Palestinian setting. For those who responded 15% said yes, a high of 76% said no and 9% said sometimes. Again, and although in this question the respondents were discussing a concrete experience that they have had, in contrast to the questions pertaining to the Palestinian Authority, nevertheless it is understandable why it would be difficult to admit to interference when you represent an institution that has been dependent on international aid for a long time and for appreciable nationalistic and social reasons combined. When they were then asked whether they can visualize relinquishing the relationship with international aid and surviving, 47% said yes , 51% said no and 2% said possibly and depending on the situation. Clearly, in the Palestinian setting, where the economy is still in ruins, and when, almost three years after the beginning of the peace negotiations, occupation continues, land confiscation continues, the local market is captive to the Israeli one, it is general difficult to conceive of independence precisely because it means the generation of money internally.

When asked about their knowledge of funders in general, 65% maintained a good knowledge of international funders and 83% maintained a good knowledge of Arab funders. When asked if they know how to contact international funders, 73% responded positively. Thus knowledge of sources of Arab funding appears to be superior to the international one, while ability to make contacts with international funders was also found to be adequate, based on these responses. Indeed, years of occupation coupled with international NGO interest in the area for both political and humanitarian reasons exposed local NGO's to quite a few funders and possibilities, whereby such knowledge gradually became generalized within the NGO sector in the country, in contrast to more 'remote' Arab countries that do not attract as much international interest as Palestine. However, when asked about whether they thought there is a need for some party that can provide NGO with information about external sources of funding a high of 88% said yes to the question, probably reflecting the attitude of ' the more the better', and probably not out of a real scarcity of local resources, and the responses to the previous question clearly indicates.

When asked whether they thought there is a lack of public and general information on how to establish an NGO, a high of 78% responded positively. When asked if they thought difficulties are encountered in establishing new NGO's, 74% stated yes, probably reflecting the difficulties faced by the Israeli military authorities, that continue up till today in the West Bank. When asked about the type of difficulties encountered 27% referred to the difficult procedures, 21% stressed the difficulty of locating startup money, 16% thought that the fact that the regulations are not widely known is the problem and the rest of the responses were scattered.

Overall then, the local NGO's can be characterized by heavy dependence of external aid, both Arab and international. Realistically, there is no way out in the near future, ad up till such time when the Palestinian Authority is able to absorb the responsibility of basic human rights and sustenance, such as social security, old age, care of the disabled, health care, education and the like. In the meanwhile, knowledge of

international and Arab aid is apparently widespread, probably reflecting the specific Palestinian condition and the interest that the national struggle generated within the Arab and international community. Finally, while the local NGO community is widespread in this area, the majority reported difficulties encountered in setting up local NGO's because of different reasons, financial, legal and procedural, raising questions as to the need to reformulate the laws to make them more accessible, understandable and less bureaucratic.

V.Funding: sources and problems

When asked about the skills and experiences that their organization possesses, 52% reported that they have research experience, 55% accounting, 68% planning, 56% communication, 31% production, 20% marketing, 31% and international relation experience, 51% public relations and media experience, 64% training experience, 46% mobilization experience, 81% administrative experience, 38% fundraising experience, and 52% proposal writing experience. These responses reflect the general Palestinian situation in that NGO's have had to accumulate such experiences for survival, and where marketing and production experience is the least experience that they have. This is probably due to the structural limitations - occupation and captive market to Israel - of the situation, which led NGO to spread their activities and knowledge in other areas, especially administration and training.

When asked whether they prepare regular reports on the course of activities that their institution's operate, an expected 88% said yes, 6% said sometimes and 6% said no. Such results are expected in that, given a heavy financial dependence on external funding, it also because imperative, a requirement, to provide both narrative and financial reports of activities. When asked whether the NGO works based on a plan of action, an unbelievable high of 92% said yes, when it is well known that some efforts, sometimes substantial, occur without appropriate planning, and based on the influence of international aid agencies - donor led projects.

When asked whether the plans achieve their goals, 46% said yes, 52% said no and 2% reported that sometimes yes and sometimes no. When asked about the causes, 23% said that there are no real deterrents, failing to identify the cause, 7% listed a time problem, 13% the lack of human resources, a high of 50% the limited funds at hand - raising the question then of why they plan beyond the realistic financial abilities of their institutions - 5% blamed occupation forces, 2% factionalism among the different political parties locally, and the rest - 0.5% each - political changes, the lack of awareness of beneficiaries and lack of planning skills. Clearly, the respondents do not seem to be sufficiently aware of realizable planning procedures, and blame the lack of funds as the main source of problems, as if funds can make or break a good plan, and when in fact, all the local evidence indicates that it is not how much money you have that can cause success, but rather the way in which you use this money, a fundamental element in professional planning principles.

When asked about the areas in which activists would need training in the country in general, 30% listed research skills, 21% listed accounting skills, a high of 52% listed planning skills - and in a way contradicting the 92% who reported that they

work based on a plan - 23% listed communication skills, 27% production skills, 32% marketing skills, 34% in Arab and International cooperation, 22% in public relations and the media, 49% in the training of trainers, a low of 12% in mobilization - probably because they perceive it as political, 27% in administration, 45% in fundraising, and 33% in proposal writing. These results do reflect the skills need that depends on the type of work that these institutions do, the way they which they generate income, and finally, their perceptions of their abilities in relation to their work.

Raising the question of their estimate of the target population for which they work as well as the actual size of the present beneficiary population, the responses were generally very unhelpful, with a tendency to list thousands, and in the typical Palestinian NGO tradition of 'serving all Palestinians' in moments of hardship. Another reason for inflating the figures out of proportion to the activities that reach the target group is a historic rival/political and other types of factional relationships of establishing 'your NGO' on the scene. This has in the past led to highly over-inflated figures related to services rendered, people reached and activities completed. Because of this, we remain unable to adequately analyze the responses to the questions pertaining to target population.

When asked about the difficulties encountered in reaching the beneficiaries, 29% responded that they did face difficulties, 53% said no and 18% said that this sometimes happens. When they were asked about the type of difficulties encountered, of those who responded that difficulties were there, a high of 22.7%, once again, listed the financial problems and lack of funds as the principal impediment, 19% indicated that Occupations limitations on movement was key, 18% listed other military occupation problems, 11% listed disagreement of members, 11% listed the difficult emergency conditions, 9% listed social acceptance, and the rest of the remaining responses were scattered between unwillingness of beneficiaries, the lack of skilled resources, lack of availability of transport and the absence of a data base. These results unfortunately indicate a perhaps overdue focus on the physical, to the exclusion of the administrative, precisely the problem that many NGO's face today, and an awareness that is just beginning to build in the area.

When asked about what their demands were from the future Palestinian authority, a curious 49% stated that they do not want anything, perhaps indicating the need to be cautious at a time of political flux, 5% listed the facilitation of NGO activities, 5% listed the need to redistribute services in a more equal way, 3% listed giving NGO's a leading role in society, 5% listed the respect of human rights, 7% listed equality between all citizens, especially men and women, 13% listed the preservation and protection of NGO activity, its support in a democratic way, and a high of 42% listed locating sources of funding, 2% listed governmental provision of emergency equipment such as ambulances - in response to specific needs of specific organizations, 2% listed training and counselling opportunities in the general area of community development, 11% listed allowing for the freedom of action, whereby the Palestinian Authority would not replicate what is taking place with Arab governments, 1% listed regulating the market and market forces, 2% listed promulgating laws that can increase the independence of NGO's and that can

guarantee its legal protection, 2% listed the importance of not marginalizing NGO activities and consulting NGO's as new policies and regulations are set up, and the rest of the responses were scattered calling for a range of wishes reflecting a lack of experience with the state structures than real life. In a nutshell, these responses, focusing on financial aid for some - those NGO's that were brought up with strong links with the authorities outside the country and who always saw themselves as an extension of the Paletinish authority during occupation, and those NGO's who were the children of occupation, the grass roots movement and the Intifada, whose approach to NGO work calls for liberalization, democratization and legal guarantees of protection and participation from the policy level downwards.

VI. Problems and Institutional Needs:

When asked about their needs/demands from international aid, 7% said they want nothing, 5% listed flexibility in providing support, 2% listed the decrease in the conditions for funding, a dramatic high of 68% called for the continuation of funding and other forms of support to NGO without relying on the Palestinian Authority, despite changing political conditions, 2% listed the need for increased cooperation and linkages in the future period because of its dangers, 3% called for increased objectivity and fairness in providing assistance, 9% called for the provision of aid without conditions, 2% called for cooperation with local NGO's regardless of political allegiance, and the rest of the responses were scattered to include more financial support than the past, professional cooperation, assistance in reaching independence and increased interest in the area. These responses are revealing in that, firstly, they almost singularly focus on funding, the need for continuation, and the fear of the future. Indeed, today, a main arena of negotiations and contestation between the NGO community and the Authority is precisely over the issue of funding, as it is perceived as a main are of empowerment, from both sides.

When asked whether they consulted the beneficiaries as a step in defining policy, 46% said yes, and the rest said no. When asked whether beneficiary groups are able to assess their needs, 51% said yes, 16% said no and the rest maintained that they sometimes can do so. When then asked about the causes for the inability of beneficiaries to define their need, 66% of those who said that beneficiaries cannot define need said that beneficiaries are unaware, 18% stated that they cannot appreciate issues, 15% stated that the NGO representatives are more aware of beneficiary need than beneficiaries and 2% said that beneficiaries are non-responsive. These are almost evenly split results :about half of the institutions do link quite well with the grass roots, have a mobilizing function and have had experience which led to their understanding that beneficiaries need to be consulted because they are able, given certain conditions, to assess their needs and demands. This is the democracy human rights grass roots oriented NGO movement. The other half, probably represented by the more traditional charitable society, believe in the typical old style mode of operation, where strategy, planning and implementation ' is done to the beneficiary' rather than the beneficiary's active involvement and empowerment. These results are not surprizing in that, for instance, the women's and health movements have been split along these lines for years,

maintaining a constant dialogue, negotiations, arguments and movements which gradually led to the further development of the NGO community in general. That is, as a reflection of the split reality, these results also indicate a move, even departure from the old charitable society mode, pertaining to an appreciable number of NGO operating in the country. These results re-inforce the notion of the need to continue to support these NGO's in their activities, as such issues pertain directly and indirectly to the making of Palestinian civil society and democracy.

When asked whether the institution that the respondent represents has an impact on society, a high of 86% said yes, and 14% said that the impact was limited. Given that impact can be interpreted in different ways and that the question in some was rather elusive, it remains true that all NGO's in Palestine did have an impact, in terms of political survival, the maintenance of Palestinian culture, emergency or otherwise. However, when asked about what they thought were the measure of impact, 6% stated that such things are impossible to measure, 42% stressed good links with beneficiaries - rather subjective - 19% listed the size of services, 30% listed the increasing number of beneficiaries, 11% listed the increased areas of activities and 6% listed increased membership. As for those who listed that their impact was limited, the large majority, 76%, blamed the lack of funds, 12% blamed the inadequate human resources, 12% blamed administrative problems, and 3% blamed the captive Palestinian market.

When asked whether they face a problem recruiting volunteers, 32% said yes, 41% said no, 11% said sometimes and 15% said that they have no volunteers in their organizations. There were no differences in these responses by region, eliminating the possible differences in voluntarism between the central part of the West Bank, the periphery and the Gaza Strip. When asked about the causes for the lack of male volunteers, those who responded yes to the previous question indicated the following: 72% stated that these days people must make wages - increasingly difficult financial conditions - 14% stressed the decreasing sense of belonging - some of which is thought to be due to the initiation of the peace process - 10% stressed that these days people do not have time any more to do volunteer work, and 4% stated that there were too many heavy burdens on people to support also volunteer activity. When looking at responses for female volunteers, of those who said that they face problems with volunteers, 6% said that women face too many work burdens - in contrast to 4% for men -, 12% said that the NGO cannot absorb women volunteers, an interesting high 22% said that women prefer to earn wages, 31% said that volunteer work is no longer valued, 29% blamed customs and norms and 1% blamed factionalism. On the whole, and since the study was conducted, it has been observed that voluntarism in Palestine - known to have sustained much of the activities of local NGO's during especially the 1980's and pertaining to both men and women, is on the rapid decline. The general sense is that of demoralization, given the prevailing political conditions, and a sense of the need to withdraw from the public into the safety of the private. While such a trend is in fact sad, it is also understandable, in view of the continued occupation in the face of the peace negotiations, the blockade of Jerusalem, the generalized difficulty of movement imposed by the Israeli Occupation forces, and the severe economic hardship and substantial unemployment that continues to affect the majority. Such a

demoralization also has an impact on women in that family conservatism is on the rise, making it more difficult for women to move into this public sphere, especially given that the move of the 1980's is no longer being perceived as fruitful or worth it. The result: generally increasing conservatism not only among the families, but also among women themselves in terms of their image of themselves and their role in society (see the Fafo study, the women's chapter Hala, and refer to the Book and the pages in the Chapter of Reema).

When asked about what they suggest to solve this volunteer problem, 24% had no suggestions at all, 44% stressed awareness building - the ideological level which never works unless linked to material and concrete interests that people have - 9% thought that honoring volunteers would be an answer, 21% thought financial incentive would be a response, and 2% thought that increasing opportunity would be one answer. Clearly, none of these responses adequately deal with the causes, of which is the loss of national political incentive in the face of the political framework of today. Voluntarism does not arise in a vacuum from the material and political realm. The 1980's witnessed a substantial level of awareness, politically and otherwise, and a willingness to volunteer activities for a cause. Today, the conditions are different. On the one hand, there is a general demobilization of the population in evidence, affecting both men's and women's institutions. Today, the Palestinians are witnessing the emergence of their authority, and they are waiting to see what is picked up by the Authorities, how much leeway will be allowed for activism in general, and within the NGO movement in particular, and where their role will be in relation to social action. It is thus quite understandable why this hopefully temporary demobilization is taking place. One needs a vision and a strategy for action, and, currently, no clear vision is offered by any institution, whether social or political, perhaps with the exception of an islamist one. Moreover, the feeling here is one where people are heavily burdened by serious financial crises, coupled with simply being tired of struggling all their lives. It is suggested, therefore, that this is a temporary and transitional period in Palestine, with an impact of a temporary reduction in the voluntary spirit and action. This may reverse or get worse in the future, depending on different factors, including the continuation of financial assistance to NGO's, the regulations which the Authorities will eventually adopt to regulate the activities of NGO's and future social need, among other factors.

B. The extent of NGO impact

When asked whether the lack of volunteers impedes the work, 25% said yes, a surprisingly high 72% said no, implying the institutionalization of the basis of the organizations, and 3% reported that this sometimes does impede the NGO work. When then asked about whether they recognize conflicts between employees and volunteers within the organization, 20% said yes, a high of 79% said no and 2% said sometimes. When asked about the causes of such conflicts, 28% of those admitting conflict reported that conflict has to do with the control of employees over volunteers, 67% thought that unclear tasks and division of labour between volunteers and employees was the cause, and 5% said that it is a combination of both reasons.

Turning to the question of whether volunteer activities are increasing or decreasing, a high of 53% stated that voluntarism is decreasing, 28% said that it is increasing and 19% said that it has remained stable during the recent past. These results reinforce the existing notion of a general demobilization within the country at large, affecting NGO activism, but political activism as well. Overall, whether these results are an indication of the impact of NGO work in the past decade or not remains unclear, as it is believed that their responses to the voluntarism questions are influenced by the immediate present rather than reflecting the recent past and the strong activism witnessed in the country in the 1980's and early 1990's. A main reason for this lack of clarity is the transitional phase that these NGOs are going through, making it difficult to make a judgement on impact, beyond what is sensed at the time of the interview, and does not reflect the overall strong impact that NGOs in general have had in Palestine up till the beginning of the Peace Negotiations.

Turning to the vision that these institutions have of their role in the future, the large majority, or 97% believed that NGOs should have a bigger role in the future, and the rest thought that they should not have a bigger role, mainly because they thought that this role should now be handed over to the Palestinian Authorities. When asked about areas in which they should expand, a high of 64% thought that social services would be a prime area for expansion, 15% thought that development is the area, 5% thought that culture, 2% religious, 12% democratization, 1% Arab solidarity and 1% general expansion are the areas in which they should focus. Thus while social services continues to take the bulk of the attention of the interviewees, it is also interesting to note that democratization work is relatively high on the agenda of some organizations.

When asked whether NGOs should be able to participate with the Authority in decision making and delineating developmental policies, 84% said yes, 8% said yes but it would be difficult to apply, and another 8% said that there is no need for this. However, when asked whether NGOs are currently ready to take that role, a lower 65% said yes and 35% said no, indicating a possible reluctance among some NGOs to engage in such a demand. When asked about the impediments to such participation, 31% stated that there are no impediments - diplomatic answers probably, or alternatively, a very close link with the present authorities, 16% said that the current NGO structure is still weak, 28% said that there are currently no possibilities for sharing such roles, 11% said that the Authority is unaware of such a role for NGOs, 8% blamed laws and regulations, 4% blamed the lack of funds, and 1% blamed factionalism. Clearly, a substantial proportion of NGOs in this country do perceive their role as partners with the Authority in delineating policy and informing action. However, it will remain to be seen whether the Authority shares this type of vision of its role and the role of NGOs in the area, as this will to a large extent determine whether NGOs will in fact venture to cooperate or not.

However, when then asked about what they think would be solutions that can assist in NGO participation in policy formulation, 4% stated that there are no solutions to this problem, a high of 33% said that increased funding to NGOs would help in them having this role in the future - remember that responses were obtained at a time when the entire NGO structure was being, and continues to be, threatened with a

shift of funding away from NGO's, and consequently, NGO's have since been most worried about financial survival, explaining why a good proportion of these respondents listed financial assistance as a primary concern for participation- 20% stated that NGO's need to be encouraged to participate, 9% said that NGO's need to be more independent in general for better participation, 21% thought that increased democratic practices in general are the answer, 4% thought that public campaigning and awareness building as to the role of NGO's is important, 5% thought that increasing NGO privileges would help, 2% thought that NGO participation in productive projects would help and 4% thought that mobilization of the population into the NGO framework would help. Once again, then financial assistance, coupled with democratic practices and liberalization are the principal demands of NGO's for an effective adoption of policy making and cooperation roles with the Authority.

Future visions and potential Arab coordination

When these respondents were asked about their membership in the different possible types of Unions of NGO's, 69% stated that their institution belonged to a national regional union, 39% said that they belonged to a union based on specialty - for instance, health, agriculture, women etc., only 15% said that they belonged to an Arab regional union or body, 14% reported belonging to an international union or body, and 32% said that they belonged to a coordinating committee of some sort. Thus these results indicate a relatively high level of organization and internal networking among the different NGO's in the country, where different groups either belong to larger regional or national organizations, or, they have successfully been able to coordinate through other forms, such as coordinating committees etc. At the same time, the level of networking and linkage with the outside world remains weak, and can be explained largely by the presence of occupation, which has over the years made it very difficult, if not impossible to have relations with the outside world, and especially the Arab World.

When then asked the question of how important it is to have an Arab network, as one would expect 99.5% thought that this would be important. When asked about the forms of coordination possible, 6% thought that the forms needed are not possible to have, given the political context present at the time of the interview, 24% thought that joint conferences and workshops would be good, 39% thought that the creation of Arab follow up committees would be important, 8% thought that there is a need to create an Arab umbrella to become a lobby and pressure group working with Arab governments, 10% thought that there is a need for different communication networks that would depend on the nature of the work of NGO's, 2% thought that cooperation with equality that depends on the independence of NGO's would be crucial, 4% thought that mobilization, financial assistance, and training should take place at the Arab level, 4% thought that there is a need to coordinate in order to delineate general policies, while ensuring the safeguarding of human rights in the Arab world and within the context of democratic societies, and the rest thought that the creation of Arab Unions, without interfering with independence and internal regulations would be important. When asked whether the institution they belonged to would be willing to join an Arab umbrella, once again 93% responded positively, reflecting the general desire of local NGO's to link up especially with the very Arab

world that they have been denied access to during the years of occupation. When asked about the immediate needs of the NGO they represent, 3% said that they have no needs, 2% thought that marketing the products of local NGO's is important, 7% said that they need more equipments for the fulfilment of their work, 12% thought that training Palestinians so that they could join the NGO movement is important, a high of 47% thought that financial assistance is crucial, 6% needed more cars for their institutions, 23% needed further physical infrastructural development, such as buildings, 2% believed that rehabilitation of those who went to prison is a prime need, 4% believed that they needed assistance in creating libraries and the rest of the responses pertained mostly to physical infrastructure assistance. Quite clearly, the principal focus of these respondents in terms of their relationship with the Arab world is primarily one of financial assistance and perhaps some training/technical support, omitting the important area of negotiations for the liberalization of the area and the general democratization needed for effective NGO activities.

The principal problem with these responses is that, they form a 'wish list' that is not focused on specifics, where respondents are not really expected to say no for the principle of Arab or international networking, and especially in the face of the years of isolation that Palestinians have faced in their recent past, and where the respondents are trying to find solutions to their immediate material problems through linkages with the Arab World that has previously sustained many of these NGO's. That is, the problem with these responses is partially the problem with the consciousness of the respondents, partially also lying with the history of the relationship between Palestinians and the Arab World. But it also brings out the methodological problem, namely, that a questionnaire form of investigation does not and usually cannot adequately reply the questions raised, as all sorts of relationships and constraints come into the response this way and mar the analysis .

At another level, IT should be remembered here that , as many of our extended interviews indicated, there is a real local need first to effectively coordinate locally and for the survival of the local NGO movement, and then link up with the outside world. At the moment, a local NGO democratic network is in operation, and at this stage, it is still struggling to define its role and relationship with the Authorities. It is presently grappling with serious and far reaching issues, of which are financial consideration and issues of democratization. There is a great need for consolidation internally at this stage, before one can effectively use external networks and relations, or at best, in conjunction with external relations. It is important to note that there were several networks that were begun in the recent past, relating to selected NGO's, and with the Arab and international world. However, consistently, it was found that without the necessary precondition of effective networking and cooperation locally, Arab and international networking does not achieve much. While especially Arab networking is very important, it can only be build on solid grounds, and those solid grounds must be local networking strength first and foremost, and secondly, couched in concrete action, and not just workshops and meetings and conferences. Much money have gone to waste in the past attempting to achieve networking results by focusing on meetings and travel. It is

high time that networking as a whole is rethought, with the hope that Arab regional cooperation could assist NGO's, in Palestine and other parts of the world, to achieve their most important goals, not only service provision, but the gradual move of their society into the civil mode and towards democracy.