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Musharka

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Association of Women Committees for Social Work

Our overall mission is to attain gender-equality in a democratic Palestinian society, to which end we focus our efforts on promoting the social, educational, economical, and political development of Palestinian women. We also spend great effort in raising the legal awareness of women, in order to promote their participation in decision-making processes, to protect their rights and to encourage development.

Rabiha Diab: Palestinian women achievement is highly noted, but continue in her demand to be empowered with her eyes focused for a better future

"To be at a Political position is a serving assignment more than an honorary one and what so called the political position is always a task of service nationally recognized for the development of the Palestinian community"

Special for "Musharakah":

Real and active participation at all levels and at all times was the motive governing the work of many Palestinian activists and citizens going under an exceptional circumstances, and in spite of the contextual historical dynamics the area went through our nation managed to write its name on the sunlight. Today when addressing reality of the Palestinian women achievement, we must stress that what we see, and recognize is not ultimately the end of women's quest for empowerment; what had been achieved was not to be without the participation and leadership of the Palestinian Female Leaders whom paid a huge tax to secure what they believe in where they detained, house arrest and threatened.

Rabiha Diab is one of the active pioneers who recognized the important role of the Palestinian women; Rabiha is one of the elite who took it upon themselves to organize women's social efforts under the Palestinian context to intensify the feminist movement act and makes it more realized on the ground. Ms. Diab had a clear imprint in feminist work and significant achievements in terms of women rights. She was arrested by the Israeli occupation around seven times and spent nearly seven years in detention, also was prevented from traveling for more than 19 years, but her faith in the justice of the cause as a Palestinian, and her general believe in the ability of women to stand and accomplish empowerment whatever the circumstances inspired her journey even after the establishment of the Palestinian Authority.

Diab history talks about her; where she contributed in the establishment of several well-known national centers and institutions at Palestinian, and had a prominent role on the social, economic and political Palestinian arena by assuming several important national positions, which she served as Minister of the Ministry of Women's Affairs, not forgetting to a membership of the Palestinian Legislative Council, and was one of the founders of the Palestinian Prisoners' Club and currently heads the Association of Women's Committees for Social Work (AWCSW).

Five years, a milestone in the history of MoWA (Palestinian Ministry of Women's Affairs)

Diab says "The fact that we are not talking about a short period spent in the Ministry, I have continued my work as Minister for five years in a row, and it was for me, an important assignment that led the Ministry to a quantum leap, my first step as a minister was to call for the Ministers Cabinet to approve the gender-sensitive budget to MoWA, in a mean to introduce such budgeting at all aspects of governmental departments, that in addition to the adoption of strategies that serve the Palestinian women". She adds "As a minister at MoWA I had the chance to introduced strategic plans at the general governmental plan then to each ministry separately, and in order to implement such plans funds had to be secured from sources other than international donors, here it is necessary to emphasize the Palestinian government is recognized as a state and women sector should be part of the general state budget especially at each ministry".

For that a national committee was formed after acknowledging the completion of the (National cross-sectorial gender strategy) and how to introduce women rights to all fields, and to combat violence against women, Ms. Diab says: "We demanded the formation of a national committee to supervise such sensitive budgets to include members from the different concerned ministries and civil society organizations in a step to stress and confirm the harmony of networking in serving the Palestinian women, adding to that to consider drafting a Palestinian Penalty Laws that is gender sensitive not forgetting that so far the Palestinian territories still follow the old Jordanian Penalty laws and regulations that is not taking into account Article 340 relating to excuse and mitigating circumstances relating to the issues of honor killings". Diab has contributed through her leadership of the Ministry of Women's Affairs in the formation of constituent units of gender at various other ministries, and at this point is extending to include the

various national security agencies. MoWA under the leadership of Rabiha Diab during the past five years was able to establish many achievements at the regional, national and international levels despite the political contextual situation and the occupation.

Excellent relations with partners

When Ms. Diab entered the Ministry of Women's Affairs, the relationship between the ministry and the acting women's organizations at its worst conditions and virtually was non-existent, the first step Ms. Diab took and at the first chance she invited all women's organizations and the General Union of Women's and started to rectify the relationship where any decision to be taken by MoWA would not take place unless women's organizations are present and familiar with, involving them at all aspects of networking and partnerships in a participatory integrative relationship.

Diab asserts that since many years and until the present day, the work is characterized by extensive coordination between the various factional women's institutions. Now, each institution has its concerns but all operate under the banner of the General Union of Palestinian Women, just as the case with factions working under PLO.

Quota system and the bet on changing the culture of our community

Regarding the reality of women participation in political and social life Ms. Rabiha Diab says "The struggle still continues to achieve what is best for the Palestinian women and their future requirements of development where the "quota" was a step and an input to bring about change at the stereotypical thinking that prevails in the Palestinian society.

Diab recalls the first law passed after the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority regarding elections, in which gave women the right not only to vote but also to run for elections, a huge accomplishment while we see other independent States women still suffers from oppression and injustice and not given their respectful right to vote until recently.

She asserts that women in Palestine succeeded in writing success stories despite their extraordinary reality, they entered the Legislative Council at the first legislative elections, not forgetting the deceased Samiha Khalil ran for presidential elections against the late President Martyr Yasser Arafat, came as a testimony for what empowered women can accomplish.

We also have female members of parliament and as ambassadors whom are very successful, ministers, governor and deputy governors as bright names, we have the President of the Capital Market Authority and chairman of the Central Bureau of Statistics, and we also have female judges; Therefore, it must be emphasized that we have accomplished and evolved in the right direction, still we are aware that the road is still at the beginning to achieve the best.

The quota is a mechanism to intervene in favor of increased female participation, we are required to work in two directions: A concerted efforts through training and rehabilitation, empowerment and awareness of women and men, in order to address imbalance in our society and to educate young people about equality and that women be given an opportunity to make achievements.

The other direction is within the Palestinian political system, the previous governments all agreed to respect gender sensitivity and all women rights, even the Palestinian President forward to women all in her favor, as noted when signed, "CEDAW" agreement even before announcing Palestine as an independent state which was and this is a quantum leap for the better and moving in the right way.

The 30% quota proportion

As for the quota proportion, the feminist movement stressed the need to raise the ratio up to 30% in order to fit and suit the global standards, in addition and officially the Ministry of Women Affairs raised an explanatory memorandum addressing the Council of Ministers requesting to make a decision to raise the proportion of the quota to 30% and to submit the request to the Palestinian President in order to issue a decree to amend the local elections laws, Ms Rabiha Diab personally met the Palestinian President Mahmoud



Abbas in regards where he expressed his consent and approval in regards within the legal procedures.

Rabiha Diab "My task is not yet complete"

After years of work and struggle, Ms. Rabiha Diab says "Before I became a minister, and after I finished my ministerial duties I'm still a member of the Palestinian Legislative Council, the head of AWCSW and co-founder of several institutions and centers, and the founders of the Palestinian Prisoners' Club and assuming many different regulatory political positions, I considered MoWA as an important ministerial duty and struggled to achieve new accomplishments for women, Now, after the ministry will stay as I am, present in all areas that require my support towards women equality and rights.

So far Ms. Diab did not set her mind to run for the upcoming elections, she says "Talking about it to be premature, but I see in myself that I have the ability to add more, the idea is not distant or impossible, and until this moment I have not decided whether or not to run for the election".

Cancel mitigating circumstances in cases of women murder

Ms. Rabiha Diab sees that President Mahmoud Abbas decision cancelling mitigating circumstances in cases of women murder would have a huge effect and she adds "To whatever degree societies are developed, and to whatever its laws are civilized, they cannot cancel crimes, however, that the cancelation of mitigating circumstances means reduction in crime against women, then no doubt that this decision was the right one.

Ms. Rabiha Diab concludes her words " We are moving in the right direction, there are many achievements that we must build on, and we should not start each time from scratch, Palestinian women are able to be on an equal foot with men, that proven with an enormous potential for adaptation to all circumstances, women should gain all the respect, as any community that is half paralyzed will never ever succeed". She stressed the need for women to be present in all areas and not to limit her in agriculture or home, the Palestinian women had a big role throughout the historic march of Palestinians and cannot be marginalized or excluded.

A Direction to formulate a special Media strategic plan to empower women

Association of Women Committees for Social Work (AWCSW) convened a special workshop aiming to formulate a special Media Strategic Plan to promote women empowerment in political and social life. The meeting was attended by several representatives of national and international organizations working in women empowerment, mainly the head of Public Relations and Media section at the Ministry of Women's Affairs Mrs. Magda Ma'arouf, the head of general relations and media from the Ministry of Information Mrs. Nevin Abu Al-Ezz, a representative from the Ministry Local Governance public relations department Mrs. Amani Al Asmar, a representative from the Palestinian Center for Peace and Democracy Mrs. Ro'a Barghouti, Add to Mnsagta in addition to coordinators from the Media Development Center at Birzeit University Mrs. Nahed Abu-Taima and Mrs. Wafaa Salem, under the supervision of the Program Focal point Mr. Alaa Ayesh from the Fund for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment at the United Nations.

The workshop attendees discussed the basic foundation pillars and principle to start building a special media strategy plan that will address the theme of Palestinian women empowerment in political and public life, at the beginning the Program Manager Mr. Said Awadallah noted the importance of having a campaign advocating such issue especially for AWCSW, and highlighted the urgency to have women institutions involved as partners in building, adapting and utilizing tools that strategize women issues at the present and future.

A view of a the basic principle of such strategy had been presented by the media experts Mr. Khaled al-Faqih and Mr. Ahmed Barghouti that pointed-out the theoretical aspect prior to highlighting the practical aspects of application that requires time, resources and networking that may extend up to the end of the current year.

It is worth mentioning that this consultative meeting is part of AWCSW program built to strengthen women's participation in political and public life, with funding from the Fund for Gender Equality and Women's empowerment at the United Nations. All that in terms of Palestinian national priorities and strategic mobilization to support the women sector and to enhance the process of organizing the national efforts and energies.

Meeting at Al Quds Open University in Ramallah to discuss the women's political empowerment program outputs

With a delegation from AWCSW and Student Council Affairs from Al-Quds Open University a meeting was held at the office of university Deanship in Ramallah to discuss the outcomes of the women empower program implemented by AWCSW, the meeting was attended university Dean Dr. Mohammed Shaheen in the presence of Students affairs representative and AWCSW coordinators associated with the targeted villages elected female council members from the program targeted areas.

The meeting came to discuss the presented young active students' needs identified by the program women forum meetings notes in the targeted villages, here the meeting started with the Dean welcoming the attendees referring to University policy and openness to the discussion and collaboration with the Palestinian society especially its working non-profit institutions that serves the public interest. Topics of discussion reached about 34 subjects, addressing various aspects of the services offered by the university for its student, Dr. Shaheen replied to the various questions, explaining all the points that have emerged and summarizing all aspects of services provided by Al-Quds Open University for its students, and presenting a full set of numbers and statistics as examples supporting his answers.

Subject discussed included matters pertaining to the student tuition fees, the grants process and students aid, also highlighted the crowdedness observed at the student community and the university faculties, mentioning the importance of female representation at the Students Affair



Council, and in summary highlighted the amount of aid and grants presented to students every year internally and externally; explaining the subject of raising the premium though it is considered the lowest in Palestine taking the financial crises of the Palestinian universities into account, also addressed the crowding subject by explaining the difficulty of building new facilities in the past 10 years. He also pointed to the achievements of the university at the regional level, where the university received during the past three years the first place in the Annual Creative Forum's for its student's research and accomplishments. To be mentioned that AWCSW program targeted (40) female students from the university at its branches Ramallah and Jenin, averaging 4 young active students from each village of the 10 targeted areas.

A special course on "Methods of writing and drafting of projects with its budgets construction"



Recently, AWCSW concluded a special training entitled "Methods of writing and drafting projects concepts and construction of budgets" directed to the members of elected local council members, community leaders and young activists.

The course utilizing twelve days and over 50 hours of training aimed at enhancing participants capacity in addressing developmental concerns at their locations in regards to women empowerment in political and social life and in terms of national priorities and strategic in a way to mobilize and support women sector at all fields, also in order to enhance the process of organizing efforts and energies to participate in all activities of political, social and economical aspects. The training course targeted about 50 women under a direct supervision of AWCSW contractual services with Al-Darb training Institution specialists represented by Mrs. Alia Siksik and Mr. Aref Jaffal. Training addressed several topics on how to design and writing project concepts with the necessary tools to recruit funding or donations, also convened the importance of self-motivation and time investment aspects in addressing funding, as well as how to assess the reality and the capabilities of local councils and explained why should councils correctly build in depth financing plans, Capacity enhancement regarding the principles and basics of planning in all aspects of building and writing projects, with its respected budgets, to enable beneficiaries' to submit proposals that would reach the level of immediate funding. It is worth mentioning that such program activities has continued over the past two years to target more than eighty of women activists and elected leaders at ten communities at province of Ramallah and Jenin.



AWCSW concludes a series of workshops addressing awareness regarding laws and regulations governing the work of the local municipality councils, the sessions highlighted the legal constitutional, financial and technical laws founded by the Ministry of Local Governance. The workshops took place at two provinces of Ramallah and Jenin.

Workshops targeted 50 participants from members of the village local councils at 10 communities, and several activists from the community in addition to a group of young men and women.

This comes as a series of awareness raising workshops in the way to empower women in political and public life.

Workshops had been facilitated by the legal expert Advocate Mrs. Halima Abu Solb, that notably provided the target audience with the necessary knowledge, foundations and basic rules of law governing Palestinian local councils, all in the way to support councils in the development of their community-based programs that are directly related to the identified needs of the targeted areas.

The awareness series conducted under the methodology and techniques of adult education, participation and general group discussions, as well as focusing on information delivery through a simulation technique based on real life examples reflecting the Palestinian context especially when looking at the reality of the social and economic burdens at Palestine. All that not forgetting the historical context of local councils in Palestine, such as the basic Palestinian law and that of local council's reality testimonials and case studies.

These sessions were part of AWCSW program built to strengthen women's participation in political and public life, with funding from the Fund for Gender Equality and Women's empowerment at the United Nations. All that in terms of Palestinian national priorities and strategic mobilization to support the women sector and to enhance the process of organizing the national efforts and energies. It is worth mentioning that this program has continued over the past two years, targeting women at ten Palestinian villages from community activists and leaders of the population at the provinces of Ramallah and Jenin.

Forwarding the idea of granting initiatives to empower women in political and socially life

AWCSW staff in coordination with formed CPWP committees concluded a public meetings discussing with the community advocacy groups the idea of (outsourcing) granting initiatives activity to empower women in political and socially life, the public meetings were held in every village target villages within the program in a way to strengthen women's participation at the governorates of Ramallah and Jenin.

This meeting revealed the intention of the program implemented by AWCSW to support and grant funds for initiatives intended to support and empower women participation in political and public life, a funding value up to three thousand dollars will be forwarded to selected initiative concepts that address the subject in hand to reflect women participation at the community level to contribute to the development of their society,

The initiative was planned to prove the role of women in society and their ability to meet its needs, all that with the support of AWCSW and fund of Gender Equality – United Nations for Women Empowerment. Here it is worth mentioning that the ten targeted villages in which the program is implemented are Beit Sira, Kharbatha Bani Harith, Beit Ur al-Tahta, Saffa and Kharbatha Al-Musbah in Ramallah, and Burkin, Fahma, Yamoun, Kafr Raee and Silat Harthiya in Jenin.

Meetings to support the Palestinian villages in building developmental action plans

Social and public meetings held in order to assess beneficiaries needs and develop action plans emerged from CPWP's (Committees to Promote Women Participation), AWCSW formed committees at the villages levels conducted two meetings at each village at Jenin and Ramallah provinces, the villages included Kharbatha Bani Harith, Kharbatha lamp, Beit Sira, Saffa and Beit Ur al-Tahta in the province of Ramallah, and Yamoun, Burkin, Fahma, Kafr Ra'ee and Silat al-Harithiya in Jenin.

Participants varied from local elected council members, women leaders and representatives of grassroots organizations in order to debate the emerged needs and build over action plans addressing and solving problems presented by CPWP representatives, the workshops was facilitated by Mr. Aref Jaffal and under the auspices of AWCSW.

AWCSW coordinators receive, scheduled issues, concerns and needs raised that have been forwarded by the beneficiaries' reporting the specific action plans agreed upon, where specialist Mr. Jaffal directed the committee members and leaders to the best ways and means of which they can address and go directly in solving developmental issues especially these concerning women empowerment, here it is worth mentioning that this program is funded by Fund for Gender Equality - United Nations for Women's empowerment.

A conclusion of a series of follow-up meetings to determine community needs for ten Palestinian villages

AWCSW concluded a series of meeting addressing and focusing on a previous capacity building training over writing and drafting of projects and budgets, the follow up sessions came to determine and help communities for their developmental community needs at the villages level, in a preparatory step for launching an initiative grants enabling for the submission of project proposal initiatives to ten Palestinian villages in the governorates of Ramallah and Jenin, and as part of the program "Empowering women's participation in political and public life".

Participated in the meetings members of villages local councils, a number of community leaders, representatives of women's grassroots organizations, in addition to the participation of a number of young university student activists.

The meetings were managed by AWCSW under the facilitation of Mr. Aref Jaffal in order produce a number of social trends and ideas for project proposals enabling the support and empowerment of women at a developmental level at the targeted populations.

The program of enhancing the participation of Palestinian women in political and public life comes with funding from Fund for Gender Equality - United Nations for women's empowerment, in parallel terms of national priorities and strategic mobilization to support the sector of Palestinian women in all fields and in order to enhance the process of organizing efforts and energies of Palestinian women to participate in all activities in the political, social life.

Program Coordinator Hanan Sabbah

AWCSW Program “Enhancing Women Participation in Political and Public Life” is a vital tributary program to women achievements

For a special "post" to Musharaka Magazine – The coordinator Mrs. Hanan Sabbah points that AWCSW consistently aims at strengthening the role of women all over Palestinian territories in a way to strengthen them and build experiences to fulfill their part in development.

Mechanisms varied according to AWCSW work in empowerment of women in a way to supplying her with all kinds of knowledge that she can utilize wherever she at. Among such mechanisms was the delivery of capacity enhancement tools under the program named “**Enhancing Women Participation in Political and Public Life**”, a program aiming to strengthen women's participation at her community that is funded by the Fund of Gender Equality - United Nations for Women's empowerment.

Hanan Sabbah - the program coordinator - says “The project began in 2012 and will end in December 2014, implemented in the governorates of Ramallah and Jenin, targeting ten community villages of Kharbatha Al-Musbah, Kharbatha Bani Harith, Beit Sira, Beit Ur al-Tahta, saffa, Yamoun, Silat Harthiya, Borqeen, Fahma and Kafr Raee.

Going back to the program's beginning Mrs. Sabbah says “Our point of entry into the target villages was through the elected village local councils and municipalities; were AW-



CSW selected a set of direct beneficiaries at the beginning within a targeted active groups of women leaders and about 40 young activists from university students all each villages in the two provinces or Ramallah and Jenin, as well as women of the community elected local council members’.

Selection of the program direct beneficiaries was voluntary and through filling AWCSW membership forms; and as noted the members identified within the categories of elected female council members, women leader at the community level and young activists of university students, all considered as direct beneficiaries for the program to build their capacity through variety activities though young activists were given a separate capacity building training when assessed for their needs and interests in life.

Capacity building and skills enhancement tools utilized by the program addressed a set of topics including gender awareness, leadership, building budgets, voluntarism, communication and networking, lobbying and advocacy, effective communication. These topics given to women leaders and elected female council members, while young activists and university students were given a more specific training on communication and participatory leadership, due to the identified differences in needs.

Mrs. Sabbah continue “Later the direct beneficiaries collectively went under different topics of capacity enhancement such as how to build alliances and to form networks, a step towards one of the program objectives in forming social networks at the community levels that resulted in establishing CPWP's “Committees to Promote Women's Participation” that consists of several divisions of community Advocacy members 12-22 individuals at each locality consisting of activists from local councils (Male or female) as well as members and heads of grassroots organizations in the village in addition to the elected women members and university students. A Sub-Committee CPWP at a higher level established that its members nominated by the advocacy groups but in a smaller scale consisting of two female members from the elected councils as well as one community leader, one young activist and one of the CBO representing at each village”.

At a Higher level came the supporting Advisory Committee - according to Mrs. Sabbah - which consisted of nominated representatives from the Ministry of Local Governance, Ministry of Women's Affairs in addition to the elected women members from the direct program beneficiaries, and representatives of institutions working and handling women's empowerment such as the Women Affaires Committee, Women's Center for Legal and Social Aid, the Working Women Association, the Rural Women Development Association and nearly 12 other institution.

During the second year of the program life, beneficiaries went under more specific capacity enhancement training over subjects like writing project concepts and budgets building that to be followed by an initiative to grant and fund projects that help in enhancing women empowerment at each targeted village in an amount of three thousand dollars supporting community initiatives that will serves the largest class of the community.

Mrs. Sabbah referred to the diversity of the initiatives to be submitted by each locality that the program will support of which most was about socio-political-economic empowerment of women and infrastructure basic development among other identified priorities, all that enabled the program reach the final stage of capacity building in which addressed training in advocacy and media utilization in a belief that media plays a significant role in women empowerment.

As for the topics raised at the media training, circled over what is the media concepts in general and its effects and how to deal with it and use it effectively, why/how we need to utilize the media to empower women in our community politically, economically to raise and stress our needs and our women issues?

The Utilizing Media capacity training participants at the training did came up with a Media plans that address the most prominent 6 needs within each of the ten targeted villages, needs like adding classrooms or build a public park or a park for children, where each locality is to utilize and employ their built media plan to address their identified specific needs. Notably, what interested participants to undergo such training was the lack of knowledge on how to invite media backs.

The training addressed several topics like how to invite the media to cover any news, lobbying and advocacy and its importance in achieving the needs that came out of the local communities, how to utilize media campaigns, lobbying and advocacy, as well as instructions on how to use the media in general. The coordinator Hanan Sabbah points to the overwhelming response and broad participation by the targeted community females, also other community citizens officially were asking AWCSW to be involved in sessions coordinated and held by the Association since the result of the program intervention and the outputs up to this point was positive.

Success Story

“Eman Abu Ali” a local Council Member a model of an experienced Palestinian women pioneer in the fight against corruption.

The fight against corruption is a global trend in this modern era, corruption eats away the body of communities and the best way to fight it by involving everyone's participation especially when women stands in the war against it to uproot from our community.

Palestinian women in Palestine has always been spearhead in fighting occupation and in defending the public interests of its community especially after the advent of the Palestinian Authority women had a leading role in that, despite the difficulties to prove herself she achieved success after success and etched her name on more than one panel of honor.

“Eman Abu Ali” walking a path from being a membership of the local municipal council ... to participating in solving the problems of her own town village.

This success story is presenting before us an extraordinary heroine woman whom took upon herself a burden to protect the assets of her hometown and its people uncaring for the consequences to be the first woman locked in an open war against corruption and the corrupt.

Eman Abu Ali a former captive at the Israeli prisons, a housewife and a mother for a boy and girl, a school teacher, living in the town of Yamoun at the governorate of Jenin; an energized enthusiastic women that led her to be elected within the local village council in 2006 talks about her waging experience and says: “My experience in the municipal council has started in 2006 when I entered the first stage of the elections, and as it was my first experience I had the full support from my husband and my family, and after entering the council board I had the chance to one of the active leaders in the town educational committee, personally I have had a professional relationships with those responsible especially parties from the local government, my participation was at the level of staffing and as a treasurer in the municipality in addition to my league at the Town educational committee”.

She adds “Through my work in the municipality, I had the chance to gain further capacity and skills through AWCSW program and was able to help in assessing and providing actions to some of my community urgent needs; one example was establishing a school's classrooms in addition to a computer lab and providing different aid to needy students, all that was summed in our networking success in the opening of an elementary girls school branch the area named "Alhouchyia" in Yamoun town of a population estimated at 20,000 inhabitants”.

Also she adds “The new branch of the school was a necessity because of the accumulation of problems faced by the students, from several cases of girls harassment and the high number of drop-outs of young girls, opening a new school branch was not to be meant without the networking and cooperation with our local community and partners such as AWCSW”.

Community service means also protecting it from corruption

Eman Abu Ali success was not only limited to her role at the school or at the municipal council only, but also was demonstrated by revelation of a corruption case at "Yamoun" municipal council where her insistence and pursuance uncovered an internal financial corrupt cases despite the fact that such corruption was manifested at the council for many years and took her a long time to uncover and present it with prove giving the credit to the capacity building provided by AWCSW program.

Story details is told by Eman, she says "Since the year 1998, I was aware that there is something wrong at the municipality engineering department, and when I entered the Council at the first round of elections in 2006, I was surprised by the role and authority of the mayor, who was weak and lacks management skills besides the will to improve and serve Yamoun community, his lack of competence extended to different sections and departments at the council, while we – members – were focusing and stressing the need to supervise and audit the work of the municipality staff “handed over” to their work plans weekly or daily and to provide a summary of the accomplished work, but blocking our entry and supervision to sections prompted us to ask for help from the Ministry of Local Government, though the MoLG tried to curb-thread the matters and referred it to the jurisdiction of the mayor”.

Eman obsession did not stop and her faith engine led her search for the truth, at this point she adds “In the second session in the year 2012, I was determined to investigate the engineering department problems, at that time we formed a special commission named (Engineering Commission) where one of my colleagues at the council was enthusiastic and always emphasized that there was thefts occurring at the department in amounts exceeding a million shekels”.

She tried through the Engineering Commission to reveal and find out the dilemma in cooperated with the council treasurer who confirmed his cooperation, at the Commission first meeting the mayor attacking the members by yelling and Cursing in the the presence of the council Engineer; at that point Eman forwarded her speech to the mayor “ All what we need is to access the engineering department to schedule files and find out the debts and dues of municipality”, at this point the Mayor declined, Eman and the commission members did not kept silent introduced the subject during the official Yamoun municipality meeting presenting the fact that the Mayer always attacks members when it comes to transparency and integrity, where denied it at the time.

Quest for the truth pushed Eman Abu Ali to move forward as determined by engendering the cooperation of the municipal staff, and at this year (2014) confirmed the pursuit of the problem knowledge, and in April 2014 the facts began to surface escalating to a conflict between herself and the Mayer whom tried to attack her physically.

Shuttling around to the Ministry of local Governance with the support of AWCSW “Association of Women's Committees for Social Work”

According to Abu Ali she presented a complaint to the Ministry of Local Governance MoLG and went presenting her case with her colleagues to lady Rabiha Diab (Minster of the Ministry of Women Affairs MoWA) and AWCSW whom provided her with all the support needed, and petitioned with 8 other members through legal channels for the ministry to decide on the issue, “After advocating for the issue the MoLG in Ramallah called upon all of Yamoun council members including the President” she says, where an investigation took place at the time regarding the corruption, threats and verbal abuse suffered by Eman.

At that point the Mayer assistant apologized to Eman for the Mayer abuse, and tried to fix the subject by turning to appear as a personal conflict, which was highly rejected by Eman and the other 8 members of the council confirming - at the time - that there was no personal problem or issues between Eman and the Mayor, pertaining the matters to the general public interest of Yamoun village, Eman and the council members asked to commission an inspection Committee to oversight the engineers the council municipality and find out what is going on there.

The Case

The case Yamoun municipality is summarizes by the issue of financial corruption (Theft) found under falsifying financial charge receipts by the engineer department that varied in dates going back from the year 2002 until the 2014, where financial thefts amounts estimated at more than 3 million shekels.

At the time Ministry of Local Government did not deal with the subject in the form required or needed, Eman went to the Preventive Security Service “PSS” and the Institutions Security Department “ISD” who accept and followed her petition revealing the truth and proving the corruption and the occurrence of theft.

Eman continuo “What we wondered and Reprobated was not to abuse of the Mayer but the stand of MoLG (Ministry of Local Governance) and how it dealt with the matter, though the ministry does have an oversight committee that periodically monitor and evaluate local councils every year touring municipalities, is it reasonable that this committee did not notice any imbalance in the municipality of Yamoun??

Mechanism of fraud in the municipality receipts

The fraud in receipts - according to Eman Abu Ali – was found in the discrepancies between the carbonated paper copies of the receipt and the original white paper, for example, a citizen comes to authorize something and pays the amount of 2,038 JD where the Eng. should write a receipt of the amount to the payer, here the carbonated paper presented to the council treasurer indicates a written amount of only 38 dinars, but the white piece presented to the payer indicates an adds amount of 2,000 dinars, all of which are written on fake financial books that do not differ from the originals. This was found in addition to the engineer (the defendant in the case) found to sign for the space monitor/observer eng. and others (Forgery), also the accused toke from citizens sums of money without any receipts for the amounts paid, here when things started to unfold when citizens tried to claim the amounts they paid he denied receiving any.

Threads of the case

The Engineer or (Head of the Department of Engineering at the municipality of Yamoun) is the only suspect in the corruption case, when proved his embezzlement through investigations Preventive Security Department he was transferred the corruption Court, in addition to directing five federal counts to the Mayor were both had been arrested.

The immunity was lifted from the Mayor on April 25th, 2014 and was arrested under custody for 5 days, the engineer was requested for investigate the first day, at that point and before appearing in front of court he went to his office and tore fake receipts to wipe the evidence, but the staff were able to access his office and acquired other evidences of his embezzlement of a huge sums of funds.

Dissolution of the Municipal Council of Yamoun

Eman says “The case ended by the dissolution of the Municipal Council of Yamoun, the Mayer was imprisoned for five days before being released on bail, while the engineer still a prisoner of the Security Services Department where the court refused to release him on bail”.

Threat and intimidation

Eman received several intimidation and threatening messages on her phones and notebook for her and her family stating that what she did will not pass unnoticed and will be retribution and pay the price. Regardless, Eman assures and confirms her belief that women can protect society from corruption where they can do their part to its fullest, even more than what is expected of them if given the opportunity, the relationship from the perspective of Eman is integrative and our community cannot thrives and develops without gender equality.

AWCSW “Association of Women's Committees for Social Work” contribution

Eman says about her relationship with AWCSW “Inseparable, through AWCSW support I had the chance to accumulate skills and experience not forgetting engorgement”. “ I always followed what they offer about needs of women for that I participated and engaged in many workshops and training session they offered, now I have the ability to coach and relay my experience to others, my gained skills allowed me to participate in community needs assessments not forgetting several workshops through the Ministry of Agriculture, AWCSW added to my experience at the local council and gave me the basic knowledge, concepts and guidance for women's empowerment”.



Musharka

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