Administrative Report 2011

Translated from Arabic by:

Tamara Tamimi
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Forward:

This report will cover the activities of the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) in Palestine 2011, which was implemented by the institutions of the Palestinian Coalition for a Safe Teaching and Learning Environment. It will discuss the activities of the GCE in Palestine, which includes the preparatory activities that took place one week before the campaign, and can be summed up as follows:

1) Preparatory meetings of the Coalition,
2) Publications of the Campaign,
3) Bazaar of Handmade Products by Palestinian Women “I Learn I Produce”,
4) Preparation of working paper on the important challenges that women’s face to acquire education,
5) Training Workshop for Journalists,
6) Workshop for Activities Heads of Divisions in Ministry of Education,
7) Round-Table Meeting, and
8) Press Conference.

In addition, the activities of the Global Action Week will be presented, which can be summed up as follows:

1) March of Education,
2) Activities of Public and UNRWA Schools,
3) Reading Rally,
4) Jenin Conference “Women and Education Challenges”,
5) Films Screening “Yes, she is Capable”, and
6) Closing Conference “Role of Political Parties in Promoting Women Right of Education”.

Also, the entire activities that convened in the Gaza Strip will be presented, which can be summed up as follows:

1) Preparatory and Coordination Phase in Gaza, and

Last but not least, the most important demands of the campaign presented to officials to improve women education in Palestine will be presented.
Goals of the Campaign:

This year, we worked on accomplishing two goals; and via the activities of the global action week of the campaign, and those implemented before the week of the campaign we worked in parallel lines to achieve:

1) Increasing Awareness:

We carried out some activities, in which the target group was parents, teachers, students, and the local community in order to increase their awareness about the main challenges that face women in Palestine in regards to education, the importance of educating women, and the impact of education of women and the society. These activities included a bazaar of handmade products by women; the roundtable meeting; film screenings in Al-Tireh College; approaching students in public schools to write factual stories about the importance of the challenges, each in their district, they face in regards to education; the implementation of the reading rally activity in the Ministry of Education and in the presence of the general directors in the ministry by reading the stories they wrote; and last but not least, the closing conference.

2) Pressure officials, decision-makers, and the Ministry of Education to improve the quality of education for women in Palestine:

To accomplish this goal: improvement of quality of education for women in Palestine, we went to officials and decision-makers presenting them with several activities, which were represented in the educational process, in which the public and officials of the civil society marched in to address the Ministry of Education, and convey a message that demands education for Palestinian women in schools and universities. We also carried out the activity of the “Big Story”, for which the schools invited officials to attend this activity, and to send letters to officials and decision-makers demanding that they provide quality-education to women and address the problems these women face in their districts.
Global Campaign for Education in Palestine:

The GCE is an international network that comprises several organizations and individuals who believe that every person has a right to good and free education. The campaign organizes each year an event called the Global Action Week, in which thousands of organizations and teaching groups prepare and carry out a number of campaigns in over 180 countries, to ensure that their governments take the necessary steps to provide education for everyone.

In Palestine, the organizing and implementing party is the Palestinian Coalition for a Safe Learning and Teaching Environment, aiming to remind the Palestinian government, decision-makers, and stakeholders to pay more attention to education; this year, focus in Palestine and worldwide was paid to education of women. We hope to attract, through our activities, the maximum number of interested individuals in the campaign “The Big Story!” which defends women’s right to education, learning, reading, and writing.

The coalition demanded through the GCE in Palestine 2011, the immediate implementation of the following procedures, so that an improvement in the education of women can be attained:

1) International protection for teachers, students, and educational staff for protection from the attacks of the occupation and settlers while going and returning from school,

2) Apply international pressure on the Israeli occupation to facilitate Palestinian access to education, and especially in C territories and most importantly Jerusalem; in addition to stop demolishing schools, and obstruct the granting of licenses to build new schools,

3) Urge the international community to apply pressure to facilitate the arrival of materials into the Gaza Strip, which is currently under siege, in order to facilitate the reconstruction of the schools that were demolished during the Israeli attack in Gaza; in addition to the arrival of all educational utilities for the children of the strip,

4) The need to pay more attention to the education of women and link it to social justice and the developmental dimension,

5) Implement the concept of free elementary education, such that the government also covers the fees of school uniform, course books, and other educational utilities; especially to poor families,

6) Establish a fund to support women, who belong to families with limited finances, so they can enroll in college,
7) Intensify efforts to annihilate illiteracy, especially among women; and establish that the concept of illiteracy isn’t only related to reading and writing but also to acquiring everything related to rights and skills that hinder women empowerment,

8) Practical application of equality on the basis of gender, and especially in the taught curriculum and all developmental plans of the Palestinian National Authority,

9) Practical application of pressure on the Palestinian National Authority to respond more to the needs of the issues of gender, and especially pay more attention to the budget of the social sector,

10) Linking women education to the labor market, and improve the quality of education to suit the labor market for girls,

11) Empower women by opening after-school centers that contribute to building the leadership aspects of women,

12) Working on developing teaching policies that encourage distribution and variation in women education, and especially in higher education, and

13) Apply positive discrimination for women in senior posts.
Preparatory Activities of GCE in Palestine:

1) Preparatory Meetings of Coalition:

Since the beginning of February 2011, the coalition held several meetings to prepare for the Global Action Week (GAW), and coordinate all the efforts of the institutes of the coalition in order for the campaign to succeed. These meetings were as follows:

- A meeting was held for the members of the Palestinian coalition, on Thursday 24/February/2011 in the Teacher Creativity Center in Ramallah. The aim of this meeting was to present the idea, objectives, and logo of this year’s campaign, which aims to women education with the slogan “Yes, she is Capable”,

- A meeting, on Wednesday 2/March/2011 in Teacher Creativity Center in Ramallah, was held for the members of the Palestinian coalition in addition to local feminine organizations, Ministry of Women’s Affairs, representatives of the UNRWA, and the Ministry of Education. The aim of this meeting was to prepare an action plan for each institution in the coalition, which includes the activities that this institution will carry out during the campaign, gather stories for the campaign, and announce the beginning of preparation for the GAW.

- A meeting, on Wednesday 2/March/2011, was held in the headquarters of the Jenin Governorate to coordinate between the institutions and the governorate the activities of the campaign, agree on the joint-activities, intensify the efforts, and implement the activities,

- A meeting, on Monday 28/March/2011, was held in the headquarters of the Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees in Ramallah. The aim of this meeting was to discuss the activities of the GAW, revise it, and approve a final version that includes all required details,

- A meeting with the institutions of the coalition and the representatives of feminine organizations was held in Jenin, on Wednesday 30/March/2011. The aim of this meeting was to agree to implement the activities of the campaign in Jenin as well, and prepare for the activities of the Global Campaign of Education 2011,

- A meeting for the members of the coalition was held on Sunday 3/April/2011 in the Palestinian Hydrology Group headquarters in Ramallah. The aim of this
meeting was to view a presentation prepared by Mr. Salah Subani about the right of Palestinian women to education and participation in the public life. This presentation was revised to be used in the round-table meeting, and

- A meeting for the members of the coalition was held on Sunday 12/April/2011 in the headquarters of the Palestinian Hydrology Group in Ramallah. The aim of this meeting was to view the latest changes and developments of the activities of the campaign, discuss the details of the round-table meeting, and discuss all the required details to hold a press conference to announce the launching of the GAW of the campaign.
2) Publications of Campaign:

The brochure and poster of the GCE were printed in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip separately, due to the difficulty of sending the supplies to Gaza. The printing was as follows:

West Bank: 5000 posters and 5000 brochures were printed, distributed to all schools and institutions of the coalition, with the aim of using them to implement the various activities of the campaign.

Gaza Strip: 2000 posters and 2000 brochures were printed, distributed to all schools, directorates of education, and civic institutions. The posters were also hanged in the streets, and held in the marches during all the activities of the campaign.
3) Bazaar of Handmade Products by Palestinian Women “I Learn I Produce”:

**Date:** 4/April/2011  
**Place:** Plaza of Ottoman Court  
**Time:** 10:00 am - 2:00 pm  
**Number of Participants:** 103

**Objective of Activity:** raise the awareness of the local community and officials of the importance of women education, the ability of womens to produce, and the positive impact of women on the society.

**Activities of the Bazaar:**

Forty women, from different political parties and economic women empowerment institutions, participated by exhibiting their products in the Women’s Traditional Products Bazaar. This bazaar was held on Monday 4/April/2011 in the plaza of the Ottoman Court, and included traditional food products, like Palestinian pastries, oil, and thyme; ceramics and beaded-works; in addition, embroidery and traditional products like soap and wooden sculptures were viewed.

The bazaar, one of the activities of the GCE, came under the supervision of the Palestinian Coalition for a Safe Learning and Teaching Environment, and included several activities, for instance: story-telling by women in their districts and how they challenged difficult circumstances to eventually overcome them; the Palestinian Medical Relief Society was an integral part of the bazaar, and offered womens free medical services that included testing the women’s blood sugar level and heart pressure; and aspiring Palestinian singer, Shadi Zaqatan, sang during the bazaar.

Mrs. Nahla Kura, chairperson of Women’s Affairs Technical Committee (WATC), attended the bazaar and pointed out in her speech that Palestinian women were able to prove their presence all sectors in local and international forums; she also pointed out the accomplishments of WATC, especially the exhibition of hand-made products by organizing and holding bazaars.

Dr. Saida Afouneh, deputy chairman of the board of directors, pointed out in her speech to that the statistics of the Ministry of Education show that there are high rates of educational enrolment of womens, calling upon girls to enrol in university specialities that are needed in the local labour market, so that education becomes a tool of production instead of just for the sake of attainment of a certificate. She also indicated that there is a serious problem with the participation of women in the labour
market and where women go to work. Afouneh also pointed out that the GCE emphasizes the importance of women education, and the eradication of the concept that women education is for the sake of attaining a certificate only, calling upon women to consider developing their careers, and demanding men to provide more support for women.

Mrs. Amal Quaider, representing the Palestinian Coalition for a Safe Learning and Teaching Environment, pointed out that the GCE stems from the hopes of millions who are being marginalized, disadvantaged, and dispossessed. This was accomplished through the alliances of hundreds of thousands of organizations, unions, and political, educational, and journalistic figures, who have one voice and under one slogan that expresses their common dreams and concerns. She confirmed that the participation of the Palestinian coalition in reviving the GAW aims to accomplish common goals in the process of development, integrate thousands of schools, unions, organizations, the media, writers, politicians, and educators, and verify that education is the responsibility of everyone.

She also noted that the GCE was able to reach numerous places that were familiar to none, like secluded, marginalized areas and villages, in the midst of farmers, workers, and poor citizens. Quaider also considered that the GCE successfully pushed people from a state of silence to a state of questioning and subsequently to a state of action to influence governmental policies and procedures, in order to improve the quality of their life.

Quaider also presented a set of positive indicators in the form of statistics; illiteracy decreased from 15.7% to 6.1% between 1998 and 2007; and from 23% to 9.5% among women for the same period of time. She called upon the development of policies and strategies that ensure development of content, curricula, and teaching methods, and that help citizens in general and women in particular on functional, cognitive, economic, political and social levels to improve their lives.

Women participated by presenting their experiences –as part of the activities of the bazaar- where the journalist in Voice of Palestine Radio, Ibtesam Abu Kishek, presented her experiences and the successes she accomplished that enabled her to work in the radio, so that her voice and opinion reaches virtually everyone. She expressed her pride and determination to fulfill her dreams to be a successful journalist even after going through a series of personal, social, and political challenges which
eventually affected her pride and determination; however, she reinforced her decision to accomplish her goal in learning and working uniquely and with creativity. Fadwa Sak Allah, one of the women in the Sanabel project that was implemented by the crew in Jenin over a period of several years, pointed out her experience in challenging the already difficult reality, and how she worked for years in embroidery alongside raising and educating her children, whose father has been in occupation prisons, until they graduated from their universities. The bazaar, which was attended by a number of citizens, concluded with the performance of aspiring singer Shadi Zaqatan, who expressed the concerns of the Palestinian citizen in surviving and challenging the reality, by singing verses that appealed to the ear of the listener.

Media Coverage:
http://www.alquds.com/node/341543
4) Working Paper about Main Challenges that Women face to acquire Education

Mr. Salah Subani, an employee in the Teacher Creativity Center, prepared an intervention about the main challenges that face women in Palestine to acquire education under the title “The Right of Palestinian Women in Education and Participation in Public Affairs”. The main objective of paper which was distributed and discussed with all the members of the coalition was to raise the awareness of the community, teachers, and students in schools to the main challenges that face women in acquiring education in Palestine. These challenges can be summed up in the following:

- Challenges that are related to the prevailing culture and social heritage concerning education of Palestinian women, and attaining their rights,
- Challenges that are related to decreasing illiteracy levels of Palestinian women, and maintaining increased levels of university enrollments,
- Challenges that are related to increasing the number of Palestinian women who continue their education in vocational training,
- Challenges that are related to the participation of Palestinian women in the economic life and work,
- Challenges and indicators related to the participation of Palestinian women in decision-making and policy-drafting, and
- Challenges and indicators related to decreasing the effect of poverty on the Palestinian community.

The intervention also contained a set of general recommendations to empower Palestinian women to be able to face challenges. This intervention was used in the activities of the Global Action Week, and was distributed to teachers in schools to raise the awareness of the students concerning the main challenges that face women in acquiring education is Palestine. The text of the paper is provided in Appendix I.
5) Training Workshop for Journalists:

**Date:** 16-17/March/2011  
**Place:** City Inn Hotel- Ramallah  
**Time:** 10:00 am- 4:00 pm  
**Number of Participants:** 10 journalists.

**Objective of Workshop:** integration of print and audio-visual Palestinian press into the activities of the GCE, familiarize the press with the content, program, slogan, and objectives of the global campaign for education for this year, and research the importance of preparation of reports about education, while taking the concept of gender into consideration.

**Title of Workshop:** “The Importance of the Concept of Gender in Media Work.”

**Proceedings of Training:**

The Palestinian Coalition for a Safe Learning and Teaching Environment supervised the 2-day workshop, in the presence of 10 gender-experts.  
During the workshop, a number of issues that the Arabic woman faces in all aspects of life in general, and stereotypes due to customs and traditions that oppress women and set a perspective of women being inferior to men in particular were addressed. In addition, the discourse of the media was analyzed on the visual, written, and audio levels, and how to employ it in a context that doesn’t include gender.  
The “Big Story” activity was discussed marginally in the workshop, which is a global campaign in which numerous organizations participate under the banner of the Palestinian Coalition for a Safe Learning and Teaching Environment, by determining action mechanism, activities, and supporting actions to support women in their quest for education, and in turn altering the stereotypes concerning women on one hand; on another hand, seeking to integrate gender in all its aspects: educational, political, economic, and social.  
At the end of the workshop, the participants came out with a set of recommendations, including a mechanism to integrate gender discourse in the media, and the means that can be used to induce a change in the Arabic community in general, and the Palestinian community in particular. The trainer of the first day was Mr. Fadel Suleiman, and in the second day the journalist Khitam Al Deek, a presenter in Voice of Palestine radio, and a prominent women’s right advocator. Ola Nairoukh, the coordinator of the GCE in Palestine, presented during the two days a clarification.
about the campaign, its slogan, objectives, and program for this year, calling upon journalists to participate actively in the campaign by covering and reporting its activities.

Media Coverage:
http://www.alquds.com/node/336889
http://www.maannews.net/arb/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=370270
http://www.jadeednews.com/2011/03/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%A6%D8%AA%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%81-%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%A7%D8%AC%D9%84-%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A6%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A2%D9%85%D8%A9-%D8%A2%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%AE%D8%AA%D8%AA/
http://all.hala.ps/showthread.php?t=41998
6) Workshop for Heads of Activities Divisions in Ministry of Education:

**Date:** 20/March/2011  
**Place:** City Inn Palace Hotel- Ramallah  
**Time:** 10:00 am - 4:00 pm

**Number of Participants:** 19, 14 of which are the heads of activities divisions in all Directorates of Education, and Ilham Abdul Kader- general manager of activities.  
**Objective of Workshop:** introduce the GCE to the heads of activities in the directorates of education, introduce the activity of the “Big Story” which will be implemented in schools, and determine the most important details to be implemented in the schools.

**Proceedings of Training:**  
Mr. Fadel Suleiman from the Teacher Creativity Center opened the workshop by introducing the participants to one other. The workshop was attended by Mrs. Ilham Abdul Kader- the general manager of activities at the Ministry of Education, in addition to Mrs. Safa’ Barghouthi and Mr. Hamed from the activities division in the ministry. Mrs. Abdul Kader welcomed the heads of the activities divisions, and presented a briefing about the main activities that will be implemented in partnership with the Teacher Creativity Center.

The coordinator of the campaign, thereafter, presented a briefing about the GCE in general, and about the campaign in Palestine in particular; in addition to viewing a film prepared by the coalition about the activities carried out in public schools during the previous years of the campaign.

A package, containing necessary information about the “Big Story” activity, was distributed to the heads of activities divisions in the directorates of education, and the following was agreed upon:

- A girl’s school and a boy’s school from each directorate will be chosen to participate in the campaign,
- A teacher will participate in the writing of 10 stories for each directorate, to be handed in 14/April/2011,
- The model was explained thoroughly to be filled properly, and
- The activity of the “Big Story” will be on Tuesday and Wednesday 3+4/May/2011, focusing on:
Inviting parents, the local community, and politicians to participate in the “Big Story” activity,

The teacher explaining the main obstacles women face in acquiring education, and how being educated would benefit these women, and in turn benefit the community,

The students reading the five unpublished reality stories they wrote to the audience, and

At the end of the lesson the students write a letter to a certain politician demanding an improvement in education, from their own perspective.

Media Coverage:
http://ratannews.com/ar/22104.html
http://arabic.pnn.ps/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=101800&Itemid=54
http://www.panet.co.il/online/articles/110/111/S-387074,110,111.html
7) Round-Table Meeting to discuss the Challenges the Palestinian Women face in Acquiring Education:

“*Yes, she is Capable*”

**Date:** 18/April/2011  
**Place:** Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees Hall  
**Time:** 10:00 am - 2:00 pm  
**Number of Participants:** 22

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**I. Background:**

This meeting was allocated as a qualitative initiative to discuss the most important challenges and problems Palestinian women face in regards to acquiring education, and highlight the quality of education and the extent it contributes to providing opportunities and widen the choices of women in the labour market.

All studies and research confirms that the percentages of women that have access to education is higher than those of men, the drop-out rate of women from schools is lower than that of men, and that illiteracy rates for females are less than those for men, both in the Arab world and globally. However, if these percentages are translated to numbers, the true size of the problem is shown to be massive. In addition, these problems that have been fought for years by the Palestinian government, prominent Palestinian figures, and civic institutions should continuously be fought so that they don’t accumulate once again in the Palestinian community.

The options for women education and the prospects of vocational education/training for women were also highlighted.

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**2. Objectives:**

1- Develop a clear vision about the challenges and problems Palestinian women face in regards to education,

2- Produce a set of messages to be put forward by the organizers of the GCE, in order to raise the awareness of the local community to the main challenges that the Palestinian woman faces in acquiring education, and

3- Determine the main recommendations concerning the education of Palestinian women to be presented in the closing conference.
3. **Proceedings:**

The meeting contained several paragraphs:

**First: Opening:**

Mrs. Intesar Hamdan, Administrative Manager in the Teacher Creativity Center, opened the session and elaborated its objective, which is mainly to produce a set of recommendations to improve women’s education. Mrs. Hamdan also talked about the GCE, which is occurring concurrently in 180 countries in the world with the aim of discussing and improving women’s education under the slogan “Yes, she is Capable”. Mrs. Hamdan also clarified that even though Palestine joined the campaign only in the year 2007 but it –Palestine- was able to verify its merit by becoming one of the most active countries in the campaign, which subsequently led to the admission of Palestine in the International Council as a Middle-East and Northern Africa representative.

Thereafter, Mr. Khalil Shaha, General Manager of Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees welcomed the audience, emphasized the importance of the existence of the Palestinian Coalition for a Safe Learning and Teaching Environment, and praised its active role each year in the GCE. Mr. Shaha also emphasized the importance of this meeting in order to come up with a set of specific messages to the GCE, delving into the details and the most important challenges that face women’s education, and determining the most important issues and challenges in guiding women in regards to education so that they can face and annihilate these issues and challenges.

**Second: Intervention of Mr. Salah Subani:**

Title: Women’s Right to Education and Participation in Public Affairs

The intervention can be summed up as follows:

- Challenges related to the prevalent culture and social heritage concerning education of women and attainment of rights; the main points that he elaborated on were: system of prevalent culture and social heritage, role of curricula in portraying women as a weak creature, and laws that were put forward to protect women but haven’t been implemented,

- Challenges related to decreasing illiteracy levels among Palestinian women, and maintaining/increasing women’s enrolment in universities,
• Challenges related to increasing number of Palestinian women who enrol in vocational training,
• Challenges related to the presence of occupation and subsequent deprivation from seeking education,
• Challenges related to the participation of women in economic action and life,
• Challenges and indicators of participation of women in decision-making and policy-drafting, and
• Challenges and indicators of the effect of the poverty of the Palestinian community on women “Feminization of Poverty”.

Third: Intervention of Mrs. Kholoud Nasser:
Title: facilities and quality of education in Palestinian Educational System:
The following points were significantly highlighted during the intervention:
• International conventions that verified right to education of women,
• The importance of empowerment of women,
• An educated woman is an important source of income, production, and development,
• The higher the degree women hold the less job opportunities are available,
• Lack of justice in employment,
• School-drop outs and factual statistics,
• Curricula, and
• Violence in schools: statistics indicate that percent violence is between 30-40%.

At the end of the intervention, Mrs. Nasser put forward a recommendation of building a true partnership, based on healthy foundations between the public/governmental sector and civic institutions and civic society to handle challenges of education in Palestine.

Fourth: Intervention of Dr. Ziad Juyles:
Title: vocational training of women in Palestine.
The intervention can be summed up in the following:
• The objectives of strategic vocational and technical education for the years 2008-2012: enrolment- quality- administration- connectivity,
• Demonstrate the most important challenges of vocational and technical education in Palestine, and produce an altered national strategy to face these challenges,
• Availability of schools and colleges, their places, and types of disciplines of vocational education for women in Palestine, were determined,
• Number of students and disciplines chosen by women in vocational education was determined,
• One of the main challenges that face vocational education is the perspective of the community, parents, and students towards vocational education; in addition to the fact that most schools and colleges of vocational training are coeducational, which significantly discourages parents from sending their daughters there, and
• Projects of vocational and technical education in Palestine were determined.

4. **Recommendations and Follow-ups:**

Discussions between the attendants followed the interventions. These discussions can be summed up in the following:

- Collages themselves are an obstacle in vocational education,
- Highlighting an important research paper by Dr. Lamis Abu Nahle about the obstacles that face vocational education.
- The obstacles of vocational education include:
  - Difficulty of reaching vocational school due to their scarce number, and
  - Financial cost (transportation).
- And, the improvement of the educational environment.

**Recommendations:**

- Allow interventions of civil institutions in vocational colleges,
- Economic empowerment of women,
- Guide women and men towards vocational education,
- Increase number of vocational colleges,
- Increase awareness of community and students since primary education,
- Simplify the Palestinian curriculum, and encourage and guide Palestinian students towards vocational education through the new curricula,
- Activate the role of the community to encourage vocational education,
- Provide job opportunities for graduates of vocational education,
- Cooperate and pressure Birzeit University, since all other universities do, to accept graduates of vocational education to complete their education, and
- Enforce private sector organizations to participate in improving quality of education.

Media Coverage:
An interview with the official Palestinian TV was aired the same day of the activity. 
8) Press Conference:

**Objective:** Announce the Launching of the GAW from 2-8/May/2011

**Place:** Palestine Media Center

**Time:** Sunday 24/April/2011; 12:00 pm.

**Number of Participants:** 30 participants.

The Palestinian Coalition for a Safe Learning and Teaching Environment, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and the United Nations Relief and Work Agency (UNRWA) announced the launching of the GAW to demand decision-makers in Palestine to provide more attention to education of women and relate it to the concepts of social justice and the developmental dimension.

The press conference was held to announce the launching of the GAW in the Palestine Media center, with a number of journalists and representatives of the institutions of the Palestine Coalition for a Safe Learning and Teaching Environment among the attendants. Mrs. Ola Nairoukh, the coordinator of the campaign in the Teacher Creativity Center, welcomed the attendants and elaborated the specific goals of the GCE 2011, which are the education of women, sharing stories and experiences of women, and sharing their success stories under the slogan “Yes, she is Capable”.

Mrs. Ilham Abdul Kader, General Director of Activities at Ministry of Education, discussed the participation of the ministry in the activities of the campaign: in 2009 the ministry participated in “The Elders and Reading”; in 2010 in “Financing Quality Public Education: A Right for All”; and this year (2011) in “The Big Story”. She also noted that Palestinian women have success stories that should be a model to the rest of the Palestinian women to look-up to, adding that thirty-two schools will participate in writing stories about women education as part of the “Big Story” activity; from these stories the top five stories will be chosen from each school to be presented in two classes on the 3rd and 4th/May. Parents, the local community, and decision-makers in the directorates will be invited to attend the presentations.

Mr. Refat Sabbah, General Director of the Teacher Creativity Center, a member of the International Council of the GCE, and representative of Palestine, pointed out that the GCE for the year 2011 coincides with the centennial celebration of International Women’s Day, emphasizing the importance of this day as a milestone in the resistance for the recognition of women’s rights all over the world. He added that the GCE is highly proud in being a supporter of women’s rights and empowerment.
Sabbah remarked that the activities of the GAW will be implemented concurrently in more than 10 countries all over the world to unite together in a single call to the politicians: “It is our Right, Make it Right: Education for Girls and Women Now”. Sabbah also added that they will discuss in schools inspiring stories about the transformation in women’s lives thanks to education, adding that they will see the perspectives of boys and girls in the dilemma of gender discrimination, and they will present their demands to parliament members, ministers, and presidents in the forms of motions, petitions, and statements. Sabbah added that their messages about the importance and quality of education for all will be published and broadcasted on the radio and in televisions stations, newspapers, and the media to serve as a call for urgent political action to achieve social equality in and through education.

For her part, Mrs. Ifaf Mazar’a, representative of the Palestinian coalition, said that the coalition was established in 2007 in order to group and organize the efforts of a group of civil organizations and seek to produce policies and educational systems that ensure the rights of every Palestinian child in receiving quality education. She added that the coalition seeks to advance the level of partnership with the Ministry of Education and all those working in and supervising the educational sector since the coalition truly believes that education is the responsibility of everyone in Palestine. The coalition had an endorsing role for Palestine and the Arab World to receive membership in the GCE. Mazar’a concluded her speech by saying that in Palestine in spite of the novelty of the campaign and the coalition, we could see the level of enthusiasm of all the institutes and individuals calling in a united voice against poor education and marginalization, and for equality in education and opportunities.

It is worth noting that the Education Campaign is a global campaign whose activities in the GAW come with the aim of reminding governments to fulfil its obligations towards education-related issues.

Thereafter, the coordinator of the campaign read the announcement to launch the activities of the GAW in the following statement:

The coalition, through the GCE in Palestine, demanded the Palestinian government the need to:

- Link women’s right to education to the economical and social rights systems of Palestinian women,
• Effective application of the slogan “In Response to the Budget of the Palestinian Authority to Gender and especially budget of Social Sector”,
• Link women’s education to the labour market, and improve quality of education to suit the market,
• Improve the facilities so that women can access quality education,
• Work on the development of educational policies that encourage variety in women’s education, especially in higher education,
• Apply positive discrimination towards women in senior posts, and
• Policies that encourage women to enrol in vocational training.

**Activities of GAW:**

• “March of Education”: Monday 2/May/2011, 10:00 am, Manarah Roundabout, towards Ministry of Education,
• “Big Story” activity in public and UNRWA schools in all West Bank and Gaza Strip directorates: Tuesday and Wednesday 3+4/May/2011,
• “The Impact of the Wall on Education of Women in Barta’a village” Meeting: Tuesday 3/May/2011,
• “Armed Conflict and Education in Occupied Palestinian Territories” Conference: Palestinian Red Crescent Society Hall, Gaza Strip, Tuesday 3/May/2011,
• “Photography Exhibition”: Cultural Itihad Gallery, 2-5/May/2011,
• “I appreciate”; 10 drama sketches: during the entire week, girls’ schools in Khan Younis and Rafah,
• “Reading Rally”: Thursday 5/May/2011, Ministry of Education Hall,
• “Education and Women” Conference: Thursday 5/May/2011, Jenin Governorate,
• “Films Screening”: Saturday 7/May/2011,
• Presenting women’s experiences and film screenings about education of women in Palestine: Saturday 7/May/2011, Yafa Cultural Center- Balata camp- Nablus, and
• Closing Conference “Role of Political Parties in Women’s Education in Palestine”: Sunday 8/May/2011, Palestinian Red Crescent Society Hall.
Other meetings, organized by the institutions of the Palestinian coalition, were held in all districts: Nablus, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Tulkarem.

Member-Institutes in Coalition: Union of Agricultural Work Committees, Right to Play, Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees, Palestinian Medical Relief Society, Palestinian Hydrology Group, Freedom Foundation, Early Childhood Resource Center, Teacher Creativity Center, Union of Agricultural Work Committees, Rural Women Development Society, Mothers School Association, Women’s Affairs Technical Committee, Health Work Committees, Palestine Teachers General Union, Women Center for Legal Aid and Counselling, Partners in Sustainable Development Foundation, Women’s Studies Center, Palestinian Women General Union, and Yafa Center.

Media Coverage:
http://maannews.net/arb/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=381811
http://a7lan3m.com/vb/showthread.php?t=13283
http://all.hala.ps/showthread.php?t=55268
http://jo.hala.ps/showthread.php?t=31882
http://g2z4.com/vb/showthread.php?p=365099
http://www.jadeednews.com/2011/04/%D9%85%D8%A4%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%B1-%D8%B5%D8%AD%D9%81%D9%8A-%D9%8A%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%B7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%82-%D8%A3%D8%B3%D8%A8%D9%88%D8%B9-%D9%81%D8%B9%D7%94%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7/
http://www.banatpal.com/t9490.html
Activities of Global Action Week in Palestine:

1) March of Education:

**Date:** 2/May/2011,

**Objectives:** raise banners demanding improvement of quality of education for women; deliver a message from the participants to carry the demands of the civil society to improve quality of education for Palestinian women,

**Number of Participants:** 200, among them politicians, representatives of civic society institutions, representatives of the Palestinian Coalition for a Safe Learning and Teaching Environment institutions, and university students.

**Notable participating personas:** Dr. Mustafa Barghouthi, Member of Legislative Council; Mr. Qais Abdul Karim, Member of Legislative Council; Mr. Refat Sabbah, General Director of the Teacher Creativity Center; and Mrs. Muna Namoureh, Member of the Secretariat of the General Union for Palestinian Women.

**The Demands that were submitted to the Ministry:**

The participants took-up their message, with the basic demands to improve quality of education for women, aiming to produce policies and educational regulations that ensure the right of every Palestinian child of quality education. The demands can be summed up with the following:

- International protection to students and educational staff from the attacks by the occupation and settlers while going to and returning from schools,
- Apply international pressure on the Israeli occupation to facilitate Palestinian access to education, and especially in C territories, of which most importantly Jerusalem. In addition to stop demolishing schools, and obstruct the granting of licenses to build new schools,
- Urge the international community to apply pressure to facilitate the arrival of materials to the Gaza Strip, which is currently under siege, in order to facilitate the reconstruction of the schools that were demolished during the Israeli attack in Gaza; in addition to the arrival of all educational utilities for the children of the strip,
- The need to pay more attention to the education of women and link to social justice and the developmental dimension,
• Implement the concept of free elementary education, such that the government also covers the fees of school uniform, course books, and other educational utilities; especially to poor families,

• Establish a fund to support women, who belong to families with limited finances, so that they can enroll in college,

• Intensify efforts to annihilate illiteracy, especially among women; and establish that the concept of illiteracy isn’t only related to reading and writing but also to acquiring everything related to rights and skills that hinder women empowerment,

• Practical application of equality on the basis of gender, and especially in the taught curriculum and all developmental plans of the Palestinian National Authority,

• Practical application of pressure the Palestinian National Authority to respond more to the needs of the issues of gender, and especially pay more attention to the budget of the social sector,

• Link women education to the labor market, and improve the quality of education to suit the labor market for girls,

• Empower women by opening after-school centers that contribute to building the leadership aspects of women,

• Work on developing teaching policies that encourage distribution and variation in women education, and especially in higher education, and

• Apply positive discrimination for women in senior posts.

Description of the Activity:
The participants gathered at Manarah Roundabout at 10:00 am, carrying the banners with the following sayings:

• Education that doesn’t lead to liberty and social change, leads to enslavement,

• Need to move to actual implementation of the response of the general budget for gender equality,

• Educational curricula that integrate gender are an educational, national, and developmental necessity, and
National reconciliation will be an important factor and a strong motivation to improve the quality of education in Palestine.

At 10:30 the march moved towards the Ministry of Education to read and deliver the demands to decision-makers in the Ministry of Education. Upon the arrival of the participants, Mr. Mohammad Abu-Zaid, Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Education, and approximately 100 employees of the ministry welcomed the participants.

Thereafter, Mrs. Muna Namoureh read the demands to the officials in the ministry, and Mr. Abu Zaid, Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Education welcomed the participants in this demonstration, adding that the ministry is implementing its strategic plan of integrating gender in the curriculum, emphasizing that the ministry welcomes the active participation of the civil society in the preparation of developmental educational plans. Abu Zaid pointed out that the ministry will handle the demands with the utmost importance, adding that they will be submitted to the Minister of Education to be looked-into.

Also attending the march was Dr. Mahmoud Habash, Minister of Awqaf; in his turn he supported the march and their demands and pointed out the importance of women education, adding the relevance of this subject in the Islamic religion. He emphasized that religion doesn’t clash with women education, adding that any religious motions contradicting promoting women education are inaccurate and irrelevant to the stipulations of the Islam.

Thereafter, Mrs. Hanin Zayad, representing the Network of Non-Governmental Organizations, delivered a speech, in which she confirmed that women education is becoming a necessity. She demanded that the Palestinian curricula should become more sensitive to the concepts of gender, develop systems of university education, open the doors of knowledge to meet the renewable needs of the labor market, and invest in the information revolution and modernity in order to empower women and alter the prevailing stereotypes.

Mr. Qais Abdul Karim Abu Laila, a member of the political bureau of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and a member of the Palestinian Legislative Council, emphasized in his word that one of the most important foundations of women liberation is the right to education, since there is a close relationship between women’s education and her political and social participation.

Since the main theme of the campaign this year was the “Big Story”, Mrs. Mariam, from Beit Fajar, Bethlehem chronicled her story about education, pointing out that she didn’t give into illiteracy and went back to school at an advanced age and successfully finished high school and enrolled into the university, from which she graduated with a degree in sociology. She also pointed out that this wouldn’t have been possible if it wasn’t for her parents and the Rural
Development Foundation, adding that she is currently planning to return to the university to pursue a master's degree.

Media Coverage:
2) Activities of Schools: 2-4/May/2011

1. UNRWA Schools: 2/May/2011
   - Beit Anan Elementary School for Girls:
     170 students and representatives of institutions were present. The institutions that were present include Beit Anan Cultural Forum, Beit Anan Local Council, Early Childhood Programs Organization, Palestinian Medical Relief Society, Beit Anan Athletic Club, and Ghassan Kanafani Club; in addition to a number of parents and students from neighbouring schools. Prominent figures attending include the president of the local council Mr. Naji Jomhoor, Mr. Arfan Jomhoor, Mrs. Maha Sabbag, Mrs. Nabeela Nassar, Mr. Deeb Sami, Mr. Sami Hameed, Mrs. Khitam Malouh, and Mr. Nasser Matar. 
     The principle of the school opened the meeting and discussed the effect of the occupation on the education of the girls of the school. The attendants also discussed the challenges that face Palestinian women in regards to education, mainly the issue of girl’s drop-out from schools, and the effect of the economic situation on the education of girls; Mr. Naji Jomhoor also raised the discussion about the role of the school and its different activities in the education of girls. Finally the attendants produced a set of recommendations; most importantly:
     - Decrease university tuition,
     - Provide work opportunities to graduates, and especially mothers who finished their university studies, and
     - Motivate the parliament of the school to coordinate with other parliaments to benefit from and exchange experiences.

     The girl’s of the school also submitted a letter of their demands to officials, with the following main points:
     - Provide university scholarships to girls,
     - Provide work opportunities to graduates,
     - Enactment and implementation of a law determining legal marriage age, and
     - Provide vocational and industrial disciplines within schools.

     At the end of the meeting the girls read the reality stories they wrote concerning the reality of the community they are residing in, which were titled as follows:
     Story of Autumn- Sahar- Suffering- Girl’s Education- The Fighter- Kifah- Withstanding.

Media Coverage:
http://www.qudsmedia.com/?p=10984
http://beitanan.ahlamontada.net/t19383-topic

- Shufat School for Girls:
  120 participants participated in the parent’s meeting.
  A 10th grade student provided a presentation, starting with the definition of the Global Campaign for Education, stating the importance of the campaign this year, and finally moving to the importance of women education.
8th grade students presented a play of their own preparation about women education. The discussion that followed between the students and the attendants was about the impact of girl’s education on the family and society, emphasizing that increasing women’s education leads to providing welfare to children and families. Later, the girls read the reality stories they wrote about the reality of girl’s education in their society, these stories are: door to life, she didn’t get a taste of life, taste of education, girl’s education, tragedy of a youth, and a dream comes true. A girl from 10th grade read a text for Boutros Bustani about women education; and last but not least some participants told reality stories and true experiences about girls and women’s education.

- **Shufat School for Boys:**
  Objective: introduce to boys the impact of girls and women’s education on the family and society.
  90 participants, in addition to teachers and the principle of the school.
  The activity the “Big Story” lesson, lead by teacher Sana’ Abu Wahdan, talked about the importance of girls and women education in Palestine, and about the challenges they face to complete their education. The boys read the four reality stories they wrote: a coincidence that changed my life, patience is the key to liberty, I wish I completed my education, and inevitable.

- **Faraa’ Elementary School for Girls:**
  Number of participants: 200.
  The meeting convened under the title “women education” in the social women’s center in Faraa’ refugee camp. The principle of the school welcomed the attendants and talked about this year’s Global Campaign for Education, which aims at women’s education and the importance of holding such an activity to raise the awareness of parents and students about the importance of girl’s education. Two plays followed, prepared by students from the school, that emphasize the importance of girls education and the dilemmas and challenges that face girls in education. At the end of the meeting, the “Big Story” lesson was implemented and the students read the reality stories they wrote about girl’s education: magic, suffering, the fighter, autumn story, and girl’s education in the society.

- **Yabad School for Boys:**
  Number of participants: 52.
  Delegates from the Cultural Center of Yabad, parents of students, and 9th grade students participated in the meeting.
  Mr. Akram Turkman welcomed the audience, and talked about the importance of women education in the Palestinian society, pointing out that drop-out rate and early marriages are among the most important challenges that face women in acquiring education. The students read the reality stories they wrote about the reality of women education in their society: a reality that changed with one word, Fatimah: the
deprived daughter, Zainab in the court of justice, the tragedy of Yasmin, and my precious daughter. Finally, the attendants shared their opinions about the stories.

- Jenin School for Boys:
  Number of participants: 150.
  Among the attending local organizations were: popular committee for services, youth social center, women’s activity center, in order not to forget society, and the local committee for the rehabilitation of disabled people, in addition to the parents of the students. Mr. Basel Gawdara welcomed the attendants, and the students read the stories they wrote: life and hope?! Smile of a moon, sunrise!! Path of life, silence, and but?! The teacher in-charge presented an intervention about the importance of women education, and the status of education in Palestine. The students and attendants then discussed the importance of women education.

- Rumaneh School for Girls:
  150 participants in addition to members of the village council, the president of the council, a number of supervisors in the UNRWA, retired teachers, and the parents of the students.
  The principle of the school welcomed the attendants and discussed the importance of women education. Thereafter, the students presented songs and poetry of their own preparation about women education in the Palestinian society. A discussion ensued between the students and the attendants about the importance of women education and the main challenges that women face in acquiring education, with the facilitation of teachers Rasha Jabareen and Lubna Amarneh. At the end of the meeting, the students read the reality stories they wrote: Noor’s hopes, Suad’s hopes, a girls dream, those who try succeed, and a story of regret.
2. Public Schools: 3/May/2011

- Rawhi Melhes Secondary School for Boys:
  Objective: confirmation of women’s right to education.
  280 attended the meeting among them students and participants from
  the local society, including Mr. Mahmoud Shtayeh- secretary of Fatah
  movement in Nablus, Mr. Bassam Naeem- secretary of teachers union,
  Mrs. Sahar Akoub- director of education, and a number of the staff of
  the directorate of education, alongside parents of students, the
  educational staff, and the students of the school.
  The attendants emphasized the importance of women education, linked
  it to the role women can play in the society, and confirmed that women
  education is basis for the development of the society.
  The students, thereafter, read the reality stories they wrote about the
  reality of women education: the importance of the school, education is
  important for females, women education, a mother’s dream, and
  education for women.

- Ram Secondary School for Boys:
  In-charge teacher: Mr. Luay Thaher.
  100 participants comprising parents, governorate of Jerusalem
  outskirts, Ram police station, Education Directorate, and the Teacher
  Creativity Center.
  45 male students from 10th and 11th grade participated in the activities.
  Public figures attending: Mr. Adnan Yehya- outskirts governor, Mr.
  Jamil Barakat- director of police station, and Mr. Basem Ariqat-
  outskirts director of education.
  During the meeting, the director of the school presented her story, and
  particularly the experience of her mother and the challenges she faced
  to ensure that her daughters complete their education.
  The demands submitted to the officials can be summed up in:
  - Importance of providing attention to education of disabled
    girls, and
  - Decrease the gap between girls receiving education and their
    chances of finding work, and providing girls with job
    opportunities according to their education.
  The students presented a sketch outlining the deprivation of education
  for girls. The sketch concluded with a poem, presented by a girl who
  was deprived of continuing her education by her parents, and calling
  for her access to education.
  At the end of the activity the students read the reality stories they
  wrote: no despair in life, sunrise morning, and the two sisters and luck.

- Ram Secondary School for Girls:
  Number of attendants was 250, including the majority of students, in
  addition to parents, representatives of the local community,
  representatives of the parents’ council, director of education in the
  outskirts, Al-ayam newspaper, and representatives of deaf school in
  Ramallah.
The demands of the students presented to the officials can be summed up in the following:

- Open a literacy center to educate women and mothers,
- Expand work opportunities to educated women that commensurate with their degrees, and
- Open a center for education of deaf girls.

Two teachers provided information and statistics for women education and literacy levels in Palestine. Thereafter, a group of students presented a drama sketch demonstrating the discrimination between boys and girls of the same household in terms of education, explaining the role of parents in motivating their daughters to continue their education and the impact of women education on the family and the society. At the end of the sketch, the students addressed the audience emphasizing the importance of girl’s education and the importance of opening literacy centers for women who didn’t receive education when they were younger.

Two students from the host school and another student from the deaf school presented the demands of the students from the deaf school, in which the deaf girl presented her argument and the students from the host school translated the demands to the audience.

In the end, the students read the reality stories they wrote about their reality of education in their society: I wish this fact was imagined, Guard Ahmad, Women Education, Life, and Innocent Dreams.

- Barta’a Secondary School for Girls:
  Number of participants: 250, among them Mr. Jamal Zahalka- Knesset member.
  Amneh Al-Kilani welcomed the audience and discussed the aim of girl’s education.
  Elena Al-Ramahi, representing the Palestinian coalition, said that this campaign is implemented every year in 180 countries in order to encourage the governments to commit to the 6 goals of education. Mr. Jamal Zahalka talked about the reasons for the decline in Arab and Islamic countries, and how we should plan to move forward, since the marginalization of women had severe repercussions on the Arab countries, pointing out the declining level of education in the Palestinian lands occupied in 1948, leading to a rise in crimes committed by Arabs. However, he also pointed out that the percentages of girl’s education in the 1948 territories are continuously on the rise. Zahalka demanded that more attention be paid to marginalized territories, especially in the issue of education.

- Omar Ibn Al-Khattab School for Boys:
  60 attendants among them students, parents, and representatives of the local community: Mrs. Raeda Ariqat- director of activities in Jerusalem directorate, and the Islamic religion supervisor in the directorate.
  The students presented a drama sketch that outlines women education and its impact on the society and family. Finally, the students read the reality stories they wrote about the reality of girls’ education:
education for girls and women, importance of women education, and education for girls and women now.

- **Yasouf and Askaka School for Boys:**
  Number of attendants: 75 students in addition to representatives of the local community: Mr. Abu Anas- director of education in Salfeet, Mr. Fadel Soliman- representative of the Teacher Creativity, Mrs. Maysoon Madi- representative of Salfeet governorate, the principle and teachers of the school, a large sum of Ministry of Education staff, representatives of the parents’ councils, and representatives of civil organizations in Yasouf and Askaka.
  The attendants came out with a set of recommendations to the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour, emphasizing the need to open vocational and technical training centers in the governorate to encourage girls to pursue vocational training and education.
  At the end of the meeting, five students read the reality stories they wrote: a wish coming true, a story of failure, a girl’s dream, a female from my country, a suffering story, and women ignorance.

- **Jalameh Secondary School for Girls:**
  Number of participants: 70 including students, teachers, principle of Jalameh Secondary School for Boys, president of Jenin association, Mr. Khaled Abu Farha- representative of Marj Ibn Amer Municipality, Mr. Ahed Abu Al Rub- president of students activities, Mr. Abdullah Jarrar- representative of the Teacher Creativity Center, and representatives of the parents’ councils. The principle of the school, Mrs. Hayat Abu Farha, welcomed the audience and presented a briefing about the accomplishments of the Ministry of Education in regards to girl’s education.
  The meeting resulted in pointing out the main challenges that face girls in Al Jalameh in acquiring education, mainly early marriage that results in a high drop-out rate, and the cultural perspective that stereotypes women as weak creatures.

- **Qabatyah Secondary School for Girls:**
  Number of participants: 150 including Mr. Mazen Jarrar- deputy director of education in Qabatyah, Mr. Walid Kamil- director of municipality of Qabatyah, Mrs. Wajdat Saba'neh- principle of the school, representatives of the directorate of Qabatyah, and representatives of the parents’ council.
  The director of the school demanded free education in Palestine.
  Mr. Mazen Jarrar illustrated the efforts of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in supporting and developing the educational sector and improving the quality of education. At the end of the meeting the girl’s read the reality stories they wrote about women education: Zainab, the tremendous will, patience and determination despite humiliation and bitterness, a burning candle, and women in Palestine.
Adawye Secondary School for Girls:
Number of participants: 150, including representatives of the directorate of education in Tulkarem, the parent’s of the students, and the principle and teachers of the school.
The principle of the school pointed out that despite the popular and governmental attention paid to girl’s education, numerous challenges face girl’s education due mainly to the social perspective. At the end of the meeting the girls read the reality stories they wrote: now she is capable, a laugh amidst the fire, threads woven by my grandmother, the blackboard is now clearer, and an unforgettable experience.

Ramallah Secondary School for Girls:
Number of participants: 156.
Mr. Fuad Thabet- deputy director of education in Ramallah exclaimed that we’re not demanding today women education, but demand their rights of employment. Notable literary figures present include Mr. Abdul Karim Khasham, Mr. Safi Safi, Mrs. Fatimah Khalil Hemed, Dr. Marwan Rabaia, and Mr. Mohammad Kamel Jeber; in addition to the resistor Aisha Odeh, Mrs. Suhair Qassem representing the Ministry of Education, the teachers and students of the school, and a large sum of parents.
At the end of the meeting, the students presented the reality stories they wrote: a candle in the cave of sadness, a human’s suffering, the bride, the girl of the refugee camp, and between the circumstances and ambitions of a girl.

Bany Naeem Secondary School for Girls.
Fatmeh Zahra’ Secondary School.
Dar Al-Salam Secondary School for Girls.

Aqraba Secondary School for Girls:
Number of participants: 50 students from 11th grade and a number of school teachers and parents.
One of the students read a dialogue between an educated woman and a non-educated woman focusing on the economical and social impact of education on the educated woman, in addition to the improvement on the family and on her self esteem.
The students also read the reality stories they wrote: impact of education on a girl’s future, a story about impact of education on girls, knowledge and girls, and impact of education on women.

Dar Saleh Secondary School for Boys:
Number of participants: 150.
The president of the village council, in addition to 10th graders, and parents attended the activity.
Mr. Yousef Mahmoud Salem Salah, a teacher at the school, initiated the discussion between the students and the audience by presenting the
challenges that face Palestinian women in acquiring education, and the impact of drop-out and early marriages.
At the end of the meeting, the students read the reality stories they wrote: Fatimah, a woman’s determination, a persistent woman, my life has eternal dust, and Um Saber.

- Shaima’ Secondary School:
  Number of participants: 63.
  Mr. Yousef Odeh, director of education in Qalqilya, pointed out the illiteracy levels in Palestine are the lowest in Qalqilya, and that 51% of all students in the schools are girls. He emphasized the importance of girl’s education and the importance of raising the awareness of the local community about the importance of girl’s education in achieving development in Palestine.
3. Public Schools: 4/May/2011

- Bint Hares Secondary School:

Number of attendants: 70 students; in addition to Mr. Abu Anas - education director in Salfeet, Mr. Abu Rabee' - deputy governor of Salfeet, Mr. Fadel Soliman - representative of the Teacher Creativity Center, a number of official, civil, and popular representatives, president of the local council, representatives of women’s associations, a number of mothers, students, teachers, and the principle of the school. The director of education, Abu Anas, explained that the decline in education should confirm the need to integrate all the sectors of the local community, and contingency plans should be put forward to improve quality of education. Mr. Fadel Soliman, representative of the TCC pointed out that approximately 120000 graduates are unemployed, each year approximately 40000 students graduate, and from which only 15000-18000 are employed.

In the dialogue between the participants, the need for special courts that deal with students and teachers problems was pointed out.

At the end of the meeting, five students read the reality stories they wrote: a girl’s exclamation, I want my right...I want my right, a legend of challenge, a girl who challenged all for education, and life taught me.

http://www.panet.co.il/online/articles/110/111/S-403413,110,111.html

- Fadlye School for Boys - Tulkarem:

Number of attendants: 350, 300 of which were students and the remaining 50 were public and educational figures (Mr. Adnan Said - head of activities section in Tulkarem educational directorate, Mr. Bader Dmeiri - representative of political and national orientation in Tulkarem, Mr. Ibrahim Zakout Al Shaer and Mr. Lutfi Qataneh - representatives of the advisory committee of the Ministry of Culture, Mr. Rasem Abdul Aziz and Dr. Azzam Fayez - representatives of the father’s councils, Mrs. Mahdye Hamshari - representative of Child Welfare Association, Mrs. Maha Hanoun - Training and Capacity Development Center, Ms. Ola Issa and Ms. Shereen Abdul Nabi - Palestinian Coalition for a Safe Learning and Teaching Environment and the Teacher Creativity Center, Mrs. Majida Kubaj - principle of Adawye School, and the teachers of the Adawye and Fadlye schools in Tulkarem.

The activity of the “Big Story” started with a demonstration, demanding girls and women’s rights in education, by the students in the court of the school.

Mr. Adnan Said, read the demands of the students of the school, and promised to send it officially to the Palestinian Legislative Council. The demands included increasing the involvement of women on the political levels as to be allowed to become ambassadors and/or representatives of the Palestinian people, to become mayors, ministers,
and governors. The students also demanded that a minimum age for marriage be set, so that girls don’t drop-out from schools.

At the end of the meeting, five students read the reality stories they wrote: relaxation after hardship and trouble, a woman’s struggle, period, a conflict with life, and a dream came true.

Mr. Ibrahim Zakout Al Shaer and Mr. Lutfi Qataneh provided constructive criticism of the stories, emphasizing the strong aspects and the weak aspects on the linguistic and literary levels, and based on the content.

- **Takou’ Secondary School for Girls:**
  Number of attendants: 150 including Mrs. Ahlam Al Wahsh, Mrs. Alia Al Shaer, Mrs. Hayat Al Sabbah, members of Takou’ municipality, women committees, medical institutions, and Awqaf ministry, in addition to the students and parents.
  The students of the school demanded an educational supervisor to aid them in different aspects. The principle of the school demanded that initiatives for girls’ education be put forward, and that early marriage be eliminated.
  The students discussed with the officials educational problems, including the technology and civic education curricula. The students demanded the presence of an administration supervisor to increase the awareness of the students about these specialities and the presence of extra-curricular activities. At the end of the meeting the students read the reality stories they wrote: our precious children, the saviour of the drowning, uneducated people can’t provide education, fragrance from the past, and a page from the past.

- **Hashemite Secondary School for Boys:**
  Number of attendants: 50 11th grade students alongside representatives of the local community. The principle of the school welcomed the attendants from the Bireh Municipality, Quds Open University, Ministry of Culture, writers, school’s principles, and a large number of the school’s students participating in the activity of the “Big Story”.
  The representative of the Palestinian Coalition for a Safe Learning and Teaching Environment presented the demands of the school students that will be submitted to the Minister of Education, Mrs. Lamis Al Alami.
  The mayor of the Bireh municipality, Jamil Al Taweel, added that education remains a principle challenge that needs to be dealt with in order to facilitate the obstacles. Dr. Nadi Al Deek, a lecturer in the Quds Open University, addressed the students, emphasizing that they are the future, and reminding the audience that women are not half the society but the society itself; he further elaborated the discussion to include the areas of the philosophy of education, the Palestinian curriculum, the law, and the labour market.
  Mr. Faisal Karkati called for gender equity and addressed the girls by encouraging them to participate in all specialities that are available to them.
Mr. Mohammad Al Mtoor, principle of Ramallah School for Boys, encouraged the establishment of alternative/parallel education centers because they decrease the levels of illiteracy significantly, alluding to his experience in the local center. This local center has 140 students, 120 of which are girls; in the 12th grade final examinations the majority of the students passed their examinations, and the majority of high marks belonged to girls.

During the meeting, the students managed a dialogue that discussed many issues and provided recommendations to incorporate girls effectively in all aspects of life and scientific specialities in the Palestinian universities.

- Rushda Al Masri Secondary School for Girls:
  Number of attendants: 220 students alongside members of the Women’s Studies Center and Dr. Najat Abu Baker- member of the Palestinian legislative council. The principle of the school, Mrs. Kifaya Ameen Darwish, welcomed the attendants and asked the girls to read the reality stories they wrote: the importance of educating women and girls, and a story about education of women and girls. A discussion, in which the attendants participated in, proceeded between the students about the importance of girl’s education.

- Refugee Girl Secondary School:
  Number of attendants: 115 with delegates from Jerusalem Caritas Foundation, Mrs. Muntaha Abu Libdeh, an educational supervisor from the Jerusalem directorate of education, and Ms. Elena Ramahi- representative of the Palestinian Coalition for a Safe Learning and Teaching Environment, alongside the parents of the students of the school. Mrs. Muntaha Abu Libdeh presented her own educational experience, pointing out the obstacles she faced from her family and society to acquire graduate degrees and complete her education, adding that she encourages all women to work hard and fight for their education to accomplish their dreams, as she had. Ms. Elena Al Ramahi, read the demands of the coalition to be presented to the Ministry of Education; at the end of the meeting the students read the reality stories they wrote: it’s too late, my land calls for my education, a woman’s tragedy, an unforgettable lesson, the past and the future, and I hold the keys to my future.

- Yamoon Secondary School for Boys:
  Number of attendants: 90 including representatives from the municipality of Yamoon, the directorate of education in Jenin, alongside students and parents. Mr. Mohammad Rahall welcomed the attendants and emphasized the importance of the meeting. At the end of the meeting the students read the reality stories they wrote: if it wasn’t illiteracy he would have been Abu Ahmad, an educational marriage, it’s hard but not impossible, I wish, and read. The attendants
participated in the discussion about the importance of girl’s education, and provided their opinions about the student’s stories.

- Tamoon Secondary School for Girls:
  Number of attendants: 55 students, in addition to a representative from the municipality, Mr. Jihad Bani Odeh- administrator of the sports club, representatives from women’s associations, and the parents of the school’s students. The principle of the school, and teachers Maha Bsharat, Nawal Bsharat, and Tamador Bsharat welcomed the attendants. At the end of the meeting the students read the reality stories they wrote: the candle of determination, patience and fruits, a rainbow sunrise, rivers of my dreams, and it’s you.

- Zababdeh Secondary School for Boys:
  Number of attendants: 170, among them: Dr. Najat Abu Baker- member of Palestinian Legislative Council, Mr. Victor Saeed- mayor of Zababdeh, Mr. Mazen Jarrar- technical deputy of educational director in Qabatyah, Mr. Hosni Al Araj- director of activities in the directorate, Mr. Abdullah Jarrar- representative of the Teacher Creativity Center, Mr. Nidal Ghannam- principle of the school, Father Tomah- friar of the town, and Mr. Imad Al Deen Soliman- the Imam of the mosque, alongside members of the parents councils, parents of students, representatives of civil organizations, and retired teachers. The principle of the school welcomed the attendants and thanked the coalition for choosing this particular school to hold the event in, emphasizing the right of education for women. The mayor saluted the retired educators for the hard effort they invested in educating generations of students, and stressed his readiness in supporting women not only in education, but in all other aspects. Mr. Mazen Jarrar talked on the behalf of the educational directorate, focusing on the efforts put forward by the ministry and all other partner civil organizations, stressing the efforts of the Teacher Creativity Center. He added that school drop-outs decreased significantly in primary classes, but the rate in higher classes differs due to early marriages for girls and integration in the labour market for boys. Dr. Najat Abu Baker saluted those who endorse education, emphasizing that one of the forms of resisting occupation is by education especially for girls. She discussed her own experience, and how her father prohibited her from entering the science stream in 11th and 12th grade since she had to commute from Arabeh to Jenin, but how she later overcame social obstacles and completed her M.A. and PhD studies in Egypt.

During the meeting, the students read the reality stories they wrote: a story of a woman who fought, the story of Riham Kamel, and the story of Haifa’ Musa. At the end of the meeting, the students presented a set of recommendations to the attendants, they are:

- Provide educational scholarships, especially for girls,
- Provide alternative educational centers to girls who didn’t have the chance to acquire education,
- Determine a minimum marriage age to prevent drop-outs,
- Achieve equity in the labour market, and
- Raise the awareness of parents regarding girl’s education.

- Hisham Abdul Melek School:
  Number of attendants: 50 including a number of parents, a representative of the farmer’s union, a representative of the directorate of education, alongside the 11th grade students, and Mr. Salah Subani-representative of the Palestinian Coalition for a Safe Learning and Teaching Environment.
  The principle of the school welcomed the attendants and emphasized in his speech the importance of girl’s education, adding that the real challenge for Palestinian women is to find suitable jobs after graduation.
  The students read the reality stories they wrote: importance of girls’ education, importance of youth education, role of women in teaching and learning, and the importance of women education.
  Thereafter, Mr. Abu Anas, representative of educational directorate, thanked the students for their stories, and confirmed that women education is a powerful social tool to resist occupation, eliminate poverty, and advance the society.

- Halhoul Secondary School for Boys.

- Akba Secondary School for Boys:
  Number of attendants: 130 including representatives of women’s associations, municipality, and a number of parents.
  The students read the reality stories they wrote: a girl who changed the reality, the reality of women and education, women education, and hope.
  Some women presented their experiences with education and their success stories, at the end of the meeting.

- Kefr Jamal Secondary School for Boys:
  Number of attendants: 150.

- Talfeet Coeducational Secondary School:
  Number of attendants: 154, including 10th grade students and parents of students.
  The principle of the school welcomed the attendants, and emphasized the importance of this year’s theme and slogan “Yes, she is Capable”. Mr. Radi Nawaf Ahmad Awwad, a teacher at the school, initiated the discussion with the students about girl’s education; the students confirmed the importance of women education on the economic, family, and personal levels.
  At the end of the meeting the students read the reality stories they wrote: a girl’s dream, Tala’s days and suffering, it’s my right to learn, and the road to the university.
Media Coverage:
http://wattan.tv/hp_details.cfm?id=a3216104a1484480&c_id=6
http://www.pnn.ps/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=104170&Itemid=40
http://wattan.tv/hp_details.cfm?id=a1347859a9129969&c_id=6
http://pngoportal.org/ar/218.html
http://www.maannews.net/arb/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=384743
http://www.maannews.net/arb/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=384662
3) Reading Rally:

**Objective:** honor the students who wrote the reality stories about the reality of girls and women education in their communities.

**Date:** 5/May/2011

**Place:** Ministry of Education

**Number of attendants:** 75, among them the 19 winning students from all educational directorates, their parents, teachers, the school activities department in the Ministry of Education, and members of the Palestinian Coalition for a Safe Learning and Teaching Environment.

The activity convened with the Palestinian National Anthem in the Ministry of Education to honor the winning students in the activity the “Big Story”. Mr. Mahmoud Eid, from the activities department in the ministry welcomed the students and representatives of civil society institutions.

Mrs. Ilham Abdul Kader, general director of student’s activities in the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, outlined the participation of the ministry, adding that Palestinian women have success stories that we should follow; she also said that 32 schools participated in the activity, 16 of which were girls’ schools.

The best five stories from each participating school were chosen and presented in two sessions, on the 3rd and 4th/May/2011, for which the parents, local society, and decision-makers in the directorates were invited. The stories were discussed, and the best 19 were chosen to be honored on this day.

Mr. Mohammad Salameh, representative of UNRWA, clarified that the “Big Story” activity was effectively implemented in 7 girls and boys UNRWA schools. The education department in the UNRWA participated in this campaign, and is proud of its partnership with the Teacher Creativity Center. Salameh added that girls’ education, in particular, has a direct impact on the development of the society, and is an effective factor in improving growth opportunities and development. At the end of his speech, Salameh thanked the Palestinian Coalition for a Safe Learning and Teaching Environment, and especially the Teacher Creativity Center, for holding such activities.

Thereafter, Mr. Refat Sabbah, the general director of the Teacher Creativity Center, delivered a speech, in which he elaborated on women experiences who achieved success, in spite of the difficult challenges they faced; adding that women education doesn’t constitute only of eliminating illiteracy, but helping them acquire life skills, raise their awareness of their rights, and teach them how to demand and seek them.

Mrs. Nadia Harb from the Rural Women Development Society, representing the Palestinian Educational Coalition, talked about the history of the Global campaign of Education in Palestine since 2008, and indicated that more attention should be paid to the demands submitted to the Ministry of Education, and most particularly providing attention to women and girls education, linking it to social justice and the developmental dimension by providing school uniforms, the entire curricular books, and other school accessories, especially to girls who come from impoverished backgrounds.

Later, the students approached the stage to share their creative stories with the attendants. It is important to note that some of the institutions of the coalition participated in some of the prizes as follows:

- Yafa Company for Trade and Investment,
- Al-Sarisi Company for Stationary and Office Equipment,
• Teacher Creativity Center,
• Palestinian Agriculture Relief Committees,
• Palestinian Medical Relief Society,
• Hydrology Group,
• Right to Play,
• Rural Women Development Society, and
• Mother School Society

Mr. Mahmoud Eid from the Ministry of Education; Mr. Refat Sabbah, the general director of the Teacher Creativity Center; Mrs. Nadia Harb, general director of Rural Women Development Society; and Mr. Mohammad Salameh, from the UNRWA delivered the awards to the students. Interviews by the Palestinian National TV were carried out with Mr. Refat Sabbah, Mrs. Ilham Abdul Kader, and Mr. Mohammad Salameh, and were broadcasted in the evening news.

Media Coverage:
http://www.pnn.ps/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=104217&Itemid=1
4) Jenin Conference “Women and Education Challenges”:

**Place:** Elderly Charity Association  
**Date:** Thursday 5/May/2011  
**Number of attendants:** 42

The conference convened in Jenin, in the presence of the governorate of Jenin, the women’s institutions, and the educational directorate in Jenin. Mrs. Iman Nazzal, the presenter of the conference, welcomed the attendants, and presented Mr. Abdullah Barakat, deputy governor of Jenin governorate, who explained that the activities that deal with women issues and education are highly important because it impacts the social and cultural life in our society, adding that women are no longer only housewives and mothers, but are now an integral part of the society, emphasizing their role in socialization, resistance, research, and building numerous civil society institutions.

Representing the Palestinian Coalition for a Safe Learning and Teaching Environment was Mr. Abdullah Jarrar, who talked about the importance of girls’ education, and confirmed the necessity to provide more attention to girls’ education by the government and officials; he later submitted the demands to the Ministry of Education, which were to provide school uniform, the entire curricular books, and other necessary accessories, especially to girls from impoverished backgrounds. Jarrar also emphasized the necessity of linking girls’ education to the labor market and improve the quality of education.

This conference is part of the Global Campaign for Education, in which Palestine has been involved for the past four years. This year, focus was on women and education, to emphasize the active role of women in the society, and to attempt to overcome the challenges and obstacles she faces to complete her education and participate in decision-making.

Educational supervisor, Mrs. Amneh Mahameed, talked about portrayal of women in the traditional, under-developed Palestinian curriculum that presents women in their traditional role as housewives and mothers; adding that these curricula established and reinforced discrimination based on gender, by providing different curricula to boys and girls, and by providing vocational training schools to boys only. Mrs. Huda Nawahda, supervisor in the counseling and special education department in the educational directorate, talked about the illiteracy program and how it aided some women in completing their higher education.

During the conference, some women presented their reality experiences in continuing their education, and blind teacher Mrs. Raida Jaradat talked about her experience in education in spite of losing her sight, until she became a teacher in Noor Primary School for the Blind.

Mrs. Hitaf Al Zugbi, a feminist and political activist, talked about how she continued her education twenty years after disconnection due to her early marriage. Another example is the story of Mrs. Muna Khmsaye, and how she enrolled in college after being married, and how she had to take full responsibility of her children after her husband passed away. On the other hand, Mrs. Hanye Khmsaye shared her experience in joining the illiteracy program to learn reading and writing in spite of her old age.

**Recommendations:**

- Need to develop educational policies that encourage distribution and variation in girls’ education, especially higher education,
• Need to provide women with the opportunity to hold leading positions based on qualifications instead of discrimination,
• Raise compulsory education from 10th grade to 12th grade, and raise the minimum marriage age such that girls are able to finish their higher education,
• Need for rehabilitation of girls, by civil society organizations, who dropped out from schools, integrate them in the society, and train them in certain professions,
• Need to revitalize media in portraying women by focusing on their qualifications, and
• Need to raise awareness of the society to the presence of illiteracy centers, and encourage women to enroll in them.
5) Films Screening “Yes, she is Capable”:

1st Screening:

Date: 7/May/2011
Location: Tira Institute
Number of attendants: 100.

Objectives:

- Increase the awareness of women and girls in regards to education, and
- Identify major obstacles and challenges that face women and girls in acquiring education.

The films screening symposium about women and the social and economical challenges they face opened with the Palestinian national anthem and the Palestinian flag was raised in the hall. Representatives of the faculty of educational sciences, women society faculty, and the Palestinian Coalition for a Safe Learning and Teaching Environment attended the symposium. Mr. Tareq Sarhan, from the faculty of educational sciences, opened the symposium by welcoming the attendants, and talked about the establishment of the faculty in the early 1960s with the aims of training and development, adding that the Global Campaign for Education this year with the title “girls education” fits with the objectives of the faculty of educational sciences to support girls in poor and marginalized communities. Sarhan added that the faculty is taking the responsibility of aiding and empowering women by acquainting her with her rights and providing her with life skills, to raise her awareness to the challenges women, in general, face and the Palestinian women, in particular.

The representative of the Palestinian Coalition for a Safe Learning and Teaching Environment, Mrs. Afaf Mazar’a, talked about the history of the Global Campaign for Education in Palestine since 2008, and indicated the demands of the campaign to the Ministry of Education, including paying attention to girls education; linking it to the concept of social justice and the developmental dimension; demanding that a school uniform, books, and other accessories be provided to the students especially to students who come from impoverished families; emphasizing the need to link girls education to the labour market; and developing educational policies that encourage distribution and variation especially in higher education.
Feminist Mrs. Ilham Sami, from Ministry of Women’s Affairs, talked about the role of educated women in her family and society, expressing her happiness with the plan of the coalition to promote education, and emphasizing the need to believe in education as we equally do with survival and life. She recommended that there is need to work on the philosophy of education in the Palestinian society, in cooperation with the coalition, adding that the philosophy of education should be criticized and reviewed, since the implementation stage wasn’t reached yet, and demanding that the conditions of refugee girls be improved and qualify them to participate in the labour market.

Following the different speeches, Palestinian films were viewed showing the challenges and difficulties Palestinian women face in education and the labour market. These films were:

- “Savings and Credits Associations”: highlights the role of these associations in villages and remote areas, with the aim of empowering women economically and support small-business projects that entail economic sufficiency for women and their families,
- “Black and White”: highlights the issue of illiteracy and its impact on facing daily challenges. This film also highlights how women dealt with this issue by approaching illiteracy centers to receive education,
- “Tobah Village”: explains the geographical implications of the village, since it is to the south of Hebron, with a large settlements/settlers density that prevents students from reaching their schools and receive education, and
- “Forgotten Women”: presents the problems disabled women face, and how they challenge the community that refuses to accept them in education and work.

Following screening the films, a discussion ensued between the students who welcomed the idea of films screening since it highlighted the main challenges that face Palestinian women, expressing women’s rights in receiving quality education, and freedom of expression and choice.

Accompanying the activity was a free medical day. Testing blood pressure, blood type, and the presence of diabetes for students and attendants was carried out by the Palestinian Medical Relief Society.
Media Coverage:
http://www.maannews.net/arb/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=385592
http://www.nablustv.net/internal.asp?page=details&cat=14&newsID=75285
http://www.clacket.com/34391/%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%B6-%D8%A7%D9%81%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85-%D8%AD%D9%88%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%B7%D9%8A%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D9%83%D9%84/

2nd Screening:
Date: 7/May/2011
Location: Balata Camp, Yafa Cultural Center
Number of attendants: 31, including Mr. Tayseer Nasser Allah- Chairman of Board of Directors of Yafa Cultural Center, Mrs. Afaf Zibdeh- Women’s Affairs Technical Committee, Mr. Abdullah Jarrar- Teacher Creativity Center, Mr. Soliman Awees- representative of parents’ councils in Nablus, Mrs. Frial Khroub- Yafa Cultural Center, UNRWA teachers and directors, retired teachers, and refugee citizens.

Description of Activity:
Mrs. Frial Khroub welcomed the audience and gave the speech of the coalition; introducing and explaining the concept of the coalition. The activity also included reading two success stories for two women. Later, the film “Women behind the Wall” was screened. At the end of the activity, a discussion and dialogue ensued, moderated by Mrs. Afaf Zibdeh from Women’s Affairs Technical Committee, about the film and success stories.

Recommendations:
- Establish a separate 12th grade for women who weren’t tested for the year 2011-2012,
- Hold monthly meetings to screen films and discuss issues in cooperation with Women’s Affairs Technical Committees and Yafa Cultural Center, and
- Establish rehabilitation centers to girls who didn’t continue their education.
6) Closing Conference “Role of Political Parties in Promoting Women Right of Education”:

Date: 8/May/2011

Place: Palestinian Red Crescent Society Hotel

Number of Attendants: 92.

Introduction:

This conference come as a conclusion to the Global Action Week of the Global Campaign for Education, headed by the Palestinian Coalition for a Safe Learning and Teaching Environment, in which the campaign focuses each year on one of six education for all goals. This year, which coincides with the centennial of the International Women’s Day, the campaign focused on women and girl’s right to education using the slogan “Yes, she is Capable”.

Goals of the Conference:

- Pressure the Palestinian government to meet their obligations of providing quality education in Palestine, and
- Describe the role of Palestinian national movements in promoting women’s right to education, and review their role in influencing educational, national, and social policies.

Topics of the Conference:

- Reality of Girl’s Education, including the following interventions:
  - Challenges that face girls in acquiring education in Palestine,
  - Effect of occupation on girl’s education, and
  - Girls Vocational Education in Palestine.
- Role of Political Parties in Girl’s Education, including the following interventions:
  - Role of political parties, in the past and present, in social transformation and civic education “Education Model”, and
Role of national movements in promoting girls right of education, and their role in influencing policies. The majority of Palestinian political parties (Palestinian National Liberation Movement “Fatah”, Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Palestinian People’s Party, Popular Struggle Front, Palestinian Liberation Front, Arab Liberation Front, and Mubadara).

Summary of Conference:

The conference was organized by the Palestinian Coalition for a Safe Learning and Teaching Environment, and in cooperation with the Teacher Creativity Center, to be a concluding activity to the Global Campaign for Education. It took place in the hall of the Palestinian Red Crescent Society in Al-Bireh, utilizing the slogan “Yes, she is Capable”.

Participating in the conference was Mrs. Majida Al Masri- Minister of Social Affairs and representing the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine; Mrs. Haitham Arar- member of Fatah Revolutionary Council, Mrs. Khalida Jarrar- member of Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine political bureau; Mrs. Haneen Zaidan-member of Palestinian People’s Party central committee; Mr. Nasif Al Deek-representing the Mubadara; Mrs. Muna Namoureh- representing the Popular Struggle Front; Mr. Mufleh Nadi- member of Palestinian Arab Front political bureau; and a selection of citizens interested in the local educational issues.

Participating in this conference were the majority of the national forces, as a conclusion to the activities of the Global Action Week of the Global Campaign for Education, led by Palestinian Coalition each year, to remind the Palestinian government to meet its commitments to achieve quality education in Palestine as an integral part of the Education for All goals. The goals this year were allocated to promote the right of girls and women under the slogan "Yes, she is Capable". It is worth noting that the campaign coincides this year with the centennial of the declaration of International Women's Day.

After Mrs. Hala Qubaj from the Teacher Creativity Center welcomed the attendants, the Director of Women's Affairs Technical Committee, Mrs. Soraida Hussein, talked about the importance of the role of political parties in the development of formal and informal education, stressing that the reality of Palestinian women is not declining or in recession, and is going forward but needs all the efforts.

The speech of the coalition was presented by Mrs. Maha Ahmed of the Association of Mothers Schools in Nablus. At the beginning of her speech she congratulated the Palestinian people at home and abroad on the occasion of the signing of the
reconciliation agreement, which she considered to be a milestone in the history of the Palestinian people, wishing that this reconciliation would lead to concerted efforts in order to complete the journey of liberation. Via a letter to all the Palestinian factions and the upcoming Palestinian government, she requested that their first priority be the salvation of all the effects of the divisions on all levels. She talked about the importance of the role of political parties and movements throughout the history of the Palestinian people, clarifying that the goal of this conference is to emphasize the role of political parties not only on the resistance and political levels, but also on the social level and in being leaders of social change, believing that the message of the conference is to activate and remind all parties to play a more active role in promoting women's right to education by impacting policy, and by educating their members, supporters, children, and youth of Palestine through its awareness, mobilization, and organization programs, considered to be a part of education, playing an important role throughout the history of our people in national and social education of generations of Palestine students.

The first session of the conference was utilized to present the challenges that face girls and women regarding education in Palestine; it was moderated by Mrs. Amal Jum’a, and addressed the reality of girls’ education in Palestine. The Teacher Creativity Center presented a paper about the challenges girls and women face to acquire education in Palestine; Mrs. Amneh Kilani presented a paper about the impact of occupation and the discrimination wall on girls’ education; and Mr. Osama Shtayeh, from the Ministry of Education, presented a paper that addresses the concept of vocational education for girls in Palestine.

The second session of the conference, moderated by Mrs. Intesar Hamdan, discussed the role of political parties in girls’ education; Mr. Moharam Barghouthi presented an intervention titled “The Role of Political Parties, in the Past and Nowadays, in Social Transformation and National Education”. Political parties’ representatives presented several interventions that reviewed how their political strength provides space for women, adding the need for advanced representation of women in political parties. The majority admitted that more attention should be paid to education, and and justified this dereliction by postulating that political parties focused on the political program. Others attributed the witnessed decline in political parties in terms of tidal mass to the division and practices of the Israeli occupation. Ultimately, the representatives of political forces and parties confirmed the need to focus on vital issues such as health and education, emphasizing the need to reach villages and refugee camps to discuss substantive issues of education, and research mechanisms to change existing policies, especially that there is room to meet members of the Legislative Council to discuss these issues.

A serious discussion take place about the role of political parties in life issues, focusing on educational policies and the role of political parties in promoting the social status of women in the society; some representatives saw that political parties
have an active roles that needs to be practiced to implement social change by utilizing its influence of the citizens; while others saw that political parties are senescent, and postulated that the citizens themselves are the driving force for change.

Recommendations:

- Vocational education should be linked to the needs of the society,
- A large gap is present between political parties and youth movement, and therefore there is need for education, mobilization, and reconciliation with the public,
- Pooling the efforts of civil society organizations, the Palestinian Legislative Council, and political parties to adopt the Palestinian Student Fund law,
- Develop a work program and follow-up with political parties to hold public meetings in villages and remote areas to alter the social perspective in regards to girls’ education,
- Link girls and women education to the labour market and its needs,
- Encourage vocational and technical education for girls in Palestine, and
- Need to promote women’s status in political parties to be considered a primary component instead of a secondary one, so that she’ll get the same opportunities as men to advance to leading positions.

Media Coverage:
http://www.alaahd.com/arabic/?action=detail&id=68883
Global Campaign for Education in the Gaza Strip:

1) Preparation and Coordination Phase:

- In light of the preparatory steps taken to hold the Global Action Week of the Global Campaign for Education, contact with the office of the undersecretary of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in Gaza was established, by sending the ministry a coordination book and campaign materials,

- Contact was established with the educational director in the UNRWA,

- Contact was established with 50 civil and international organizations to participate in the activities of the campaign,

- Campaign brochures and posters were printed,

- Contact was established with educational activities director in the ministry to follow-up on the coordination of the campaign; the campaign, its objectives, and the activities to be implemented were explained; however, cooperation wasn’t possible since the duration for implementation of school activities ends in April,

- More than 60 civil society and international organizations were visited to distribute the posters and disseminate the concepts of the campaign,

- Contact was established with all types of media: broadcast, written, and read, and

- Approximately 25 youth and college students were recruited as volunteers.
2) Activities of the Global Action Week in the Gaza Strip:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central March in Gaza</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>850</td>
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<tr>
<td>Big Exhibition- Qattan Center for Children and Teacher Creativity Center</td>
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<td>Young Artists Exhibition- Qattan Center for Children and Teacher</td>
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<td>Creativity Center</td>
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<td>Walls and Fences Workshop- Qattan Center for Children and Teacher Creativity Center</td>
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<td>Stories and Tales Workshop- Qattan Center for Children and Teacher Creativity Center</td>
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<td>Web Talk- Qattan Center for Children and Teacher Creativity Center</td>
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<td>Cultural Circle- Qattan Center for Children and Teacher Creativity Center</td>
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<td>Contests- Qattan Center for Children and Teacher Creativity Center</td>
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<td>Information Technology Exhibition- Qattan Center for Children and Teacher Creativity Center</td>
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<td>Panel Discussion with Dr. Aida Salha- East Gaza Association for Family Development</td>
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<td>Workshop with Said Abdullah- Culture, Arts, and Folklore Society</td>
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<td>Conclusion of Campaign in the presence of Women’s Associations</td>
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<td>Biography of Fadwa Toucan- Women’s Programs</td>
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<td>Cultural Contest- Association of Women’s Committees</td>
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<td>Discussion with Muna Abu Jray- Women’s Programs</td>
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<td>Large Model of Book and Pen- Magazi Cultural Center</td>
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<td>Mural Painting- Magazi Cultural Center</td>
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<td>Slogan Embroidery- Radwan Charitable Society</td>
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<td>Experience sharing of Tagreed Laham and Um Sharaf Dahlan- Watan Society</td>
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<td>“My Right in Education” Contest- Women’s Programs</td>
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<td>Film Screening “My Right in Education” and Closing Ceremony- Future Generations Association</td>
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<td>“Big Story” Meetings- Right to Play</td>
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<td>Blogs Workshop- Women’s Affairs Technical Committee</td>
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<td>School Activities with UNRWA- UNRWA Schools</td>
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<td>10 Drama Sketches- UNESCO</td>
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<td>“Education and Armed Struggle” Conference- UNESCO</td>
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<td>“Big Story” Activities- Tamer Institute for Community Education</td>
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<td>“Big Story” Activities- Psychological and Social Support Association</td>
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3) Publications:

The following was printed in the Gaza Strip:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
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<tr>
<td>Poster of Campaign 2011</td>
<td>2000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brochure of Campaign</td>
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</table>

- 250 posters and brochures were distributed to the offices of directors of education districts in the Ministry of Education,
- Posters and brochures were distributed to a number of civil organizations that are active in the educational sector in Gaza,
- Posters and brochures were distributed to houses as part of the “From House to House” campaign,
- Posters and brochures were distributed to the media: broadcast, written, read, and electronic,
- Posters were hanged in the streets, and
- Brochures and posters were distributed in the women’s march to 500 women.

Active work in this campaign was due to the conviction that girls’ and women education is a right guaranteed by the Palestinian constitution, in addition to being a recognized right since 1948 in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Thereafter, a number of international conventions approved this, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. Therefore, it is important to influence governments to increase funds for education, and guaranty that this leads to gender equity in the educational sector. For these reasons, seeking to accomplish active partnerships in the policy sectors in the year 2011 was worked on.
Main Demands handed to Officials in Global Campaign for Education in Palestine:

- International protection for teachers, students, and educational staff to protect from the attacks of the occupation and settlers while going and returning from school,

- Apply international pressure on the Israeli occupation to facilitate Palestinian access to education, and especially in area C territories, of which most importantly Jerusalem. In addition to stop demolishing schools, and obstruct the granting of licenses to build new schools,

- Urge the international community to apply pressure to facilitate the arrival of materials to the Gaza Strip, which is currently under siege, in order to facilitate the reconstruction of the schools that were demolished during the Israeli attack on Gaza; in addition to the arrival of all educational utilities for the children of the strip,

- The need to pay more attention to the education of women and link it to social justice and the developmental dimension,

- Implement the concept of free elementary education, such that the government also covers the fees of school uniform, curricular books, and other educational utilities; especially to poor families,

- Establish a fund to support women, who belong to families with limited finances, so they can enroll in college,

- Intensify efforts to annihilate illiteracy, especially among women; and establish that the concept of illiteracy isn’t only related to reading and writing but also to acquiring everything related to rights and skills that hinder women empowerment,

- Practical application of equality on the basis of gender, and especially in the taught curriculum and all developmental plans of the Palestinian National Authority,

- Practical application of pressure on the Palestinian National Authority to respond more to the needs of the issues of gender, and especially pay more attention to the budget of the social sector,

- Linking women education to the labor market, and improve the quality of education to suit the labor market for girls,

- Empower women by opening after-school centers that contribute to building the leadership aspects of women,
• Working on developing teaching policies that encourage distribution and variation in women education, and especially in higher education,

• Apply positive discrimination for women in senior posts,

• Recognition and activation of mandatory primary school education, and modify it to include secondary school education, especially for girls,

• Provide educational necessities and utilize modern scientific methods, including curriculum development; continuous training of teaching staff; and providing suitable buildings, devices, educational, technological, and scientific tools, to improve the quality of the educational system,

• Need to pay attention to elderly education and illiteracy, especially for women by developing special educational centers,

• Women education sector is one of the most important sectors, and therefore should be given more attention by the government, and

• Need to help women acquire education and limit discrimination against women since it is one of four principle axes that need attention.