



Supporting Young Palestinian Political Leaders
May 2008 – July 2009

This project builds on the outcome of a recently implemented comprehensive assessment of MIFTAH's youth empowerment program and its experience in implementing youth empowerment projects throughout the past few years. The exercise was conducted with the facilitation of an expert in the field. The basic objectives of the evaluation were to identify weaknesses and strengths of the program and, at the same time, set a three-year strategic plan which identifies the program's vision, mission, strategic objectives, and activities to achieve those objectives.

As part of a comprehensive three-year program, this project was designed to be as a cross cut of first-step activities in the process of achieving the aimed objectives. The project targets young political leaders and independent youth activists in the political arena. It focuses on three main areas of empowerment: Youth representation, dialogue, and society awareness.

The present project is funded by the Norwegian Representative Office, and it aims at achieving the following **objectives**:

1. To contribute to the increase in the representation of the young Palestinian political leaders in advanced decision-making positions in the structure of the political system.
2. To contribute to boost a culture of dialogue and acceptance of the 'other' within the factions and within the Palestinian political system.
3. To raise the awareness of society of the role of the young political leadership in the process of change and development and provide an enabling environment that empowers the youth in the structure of the Palestinian political system.
4. To build the capacity of young Palestinian leaders so that they are more able to assume positions at high levels of responsibility.
5. To expose young Palestinian leaders to experiences and counterparts from various districts from which they can learn lessons applicable to their own situation.
6. To guide young leaders through initiatives that respond to specific democratic development needs in their own parties and communities.

1. Preparatory phase

a. Contact – making and Networking

It is essential that the leaders of the various Palestinian political parties and factions are positively involved in the process of the project. As such, the project team will send an official letter to the leaders of the parties. The letter aims at introducing the project and discussing prospects of coordination and cooperation.

Next, the team will officially request a personal meeting with the leaders to better introduce the project and its target group, objectives, and opportunities, and request the nomination of a contact person for further cooperation and coordination.

A central meeting/gathering of the nominated contact persons will be held to discuss prospects of cooperation and specific needs of young political leaders for the nomination of candidates to participate in the project and the three-year program (on the condition that they fulfill the set criteria).

b. Brochure

An *ad hoc* brochure will be designed to include the vision, mission, objectives, processes, and activities of the program. It will be the official introductory document of the project and will be distributed to prospective stakeholders, partners, and participants.

c. Bill Boards

Launching the project through proper messages on billboards in various districts in the West Bank and Gaza will help it gain momentum in the Palestinian society, assist in recruitment, cooperation, and networking, and guarantee better outreach and coverage.

d. Newspaper and magazine ads

Nowadays, a number of publications are being regularly published targeting the youth sector. These publications comprise an effective tool to reach prospective participants and stakeholders. As such, several well-designed ads will be published in these publications to give a clear message to the project's targeted audience.

2. Research study on youth representation in the leadership of parties

The study aims at shedding light on youth representation in the leadership of parties. It is anticipated that the study will reflect an image of the current situation, the degree to which the youth are involved in the political parties, and how they are represented in the structure of the parties and their advanced leadership positions.

3. Workshop to discuss results of the research study

A centralized workshop will be organized comprising field experts, academics, youth political activists, and first row leaders of political parties to discuss the study. This has proved an efficient method of dissemination among prospective stakeholders, and at the same time an opportunity to draw recommendations and set a collective strategy for better representation.

4. Centralized series of capacity building training courses

Two centralized series of inter-connected training courses will be conducted by experts in Gaza Strip and the West Bank. Participants in the training comprise 20 selected young political leaders in each and will cover two main topics with a total of 72 training hours. The aim of these training courses is to build the capacity of young political leaders to become more qualified candidates to assume higher responsibility in the political system.

5. Television talk shows

Two TV talk shows will be produced and broadcasted on 11 local TVs in the West Bank and Gaza. Each show will host young political leaders, civil servants working with youth issues, experts and party leaders. The shows are intended to highlight the issue of youth representation and youth in politics and in the public agenda.

6. Fostering initiatives and models of change

This activity is concerned with fostering initiatives by which the youth can apply the training they have received. The aim is to encourage the young politicians to initiate real life activities that would contribute to change in the society, whether that be in their political parties, local politics, or their own communities.

7. Utilizing the Website

www.miftah.org has been successful in disseminating press statements, articles, and editorials. It has also been MIFTAH's gateway to its programs. It has, therefore, become a necessity to better publicize MIFTAH's youth program, not only to disseminate information among youth, but also to create a platform by which young political activists and leaders can interact, discuss, and coordinate their work.

The idea is to put a link on MIFTAH's main website that leads to a separate web page for the young political leadership program.

Timeframe

The activities of the project will be implemented over a period of twelve months, commencing in May 2008 and ending in July 2009.