



Civic Forum Institute – Six-Month Review

January – June 2013

Summary:

Through the first six months of 2013, CFI has built on the successes of 2012, achieving excellent results in the concluding months of its two ongoing projects, *Building the Capacity of Women Holding Local Council Seats* and *Improving the Quality of Political Coverage and Expanding Media Space Ahead of the 2013 Palestinian Elections*. On an organisational level, CFI has completed its strategic development process and has an effective, implementable three year strategy in place. This has included further development of Civic Forum Institute Worldwide (CFIW), the CFI's sister organisation in the US, to support CFI's work and wider expansion.

Project Activities:

Building the Capacity of Women Holding Local Council Seats:

Although the preparatory work on this project took place in late 2012, all the key activities took place between January and May 2013. These were introductory meetings to build the initial links between CFI and the women council members and identify the core development areas for each district, a series of workshops with 22 groups of women from all areas of the West Bank, and closing events (both regionally and centrally) to celebrate the project's achievements and to explore future areas of development.

The key achievements of the project were:

- 88 workshops were held with around 450 women from all areas of the West Bank each attending 4 workshops
- Approximately 72% of the women sitting on local councils benefitted from the project
- Training topics were chosen in consultation with the beneficiaries and included Local Authority Law, Financial Management, Communication Skills and Community Outreach, Advocacy and Lobbying, Women Rights & Gender and Public Relations
- 60 representatives selected by the women themselves as the focal point for future networking and collaboration in each region
- Women reported increased knowledge, as well as greater self-confidence to contribute to the work of their councils and communities

Improving the Quality of Political Coverage and Expanding Media Space Ahead of the 2013 Palestinian Elections:

This project was launched in August 2012, in partnership with Electoral Reform International Services (ERIS) in the UK, and the 2012 activities focused on supporting senior media practitioners to develop their own Code of Conduct for Election Reporting in Palestine. The development of the project was inevitably affected by the decision not to hold the Legislative Elections planned for spring 2013, and the activities were adapted accordingly.

Following a Signing Ceremony to promote the Code of Conduct and encourage journalists and media institutions to commit to following it, CFI launched an advocacy campaign to continue this promotion. This included an online 'sign online' campaign, seminars with journalism students and public meetings with journalists throughout the West Bank and

Gaza, and resulted in 176 signatures from journalists and media professionals as well as around 75 signatures from students and related bodies.

CFI also held four three-day training workshops with the participation of over 100 young journalists. These workshops focused on exploring the meaning and importance of ethical journalism and discussing and applying these concepts in the context of a journalist's day to day work, particularly in political or election reportage. The final event of the project was an Ethical Media Forum with around 45 senior media operatives who came together to discuss and debate the status of the media in Palestine and explore ways of improving and developing this further. This resulted in a position paper, outlining possibilities for future work in this area.

Other Projects:

Following the receipt of funding to work in East Jerusalem, CFI has been exploring ways of re-activating its work in that area. This has included liaison with groups active in different fields to explore potential needs and gaps in current activity, and developing partnerships to optimise effectiveness. Implementation of a small project utilising this funding to work with young people to develop their skills around advocacy and a better understanding of their rights, is planned for autumn 2013.

CFI - General Development:

Following discussion and consultation, both internally and with a wider stakeholder group, CFI has finalized its three-year strategic plan, following a programme-based approach to increase its long-term sustainability and optimize the impact of its work. The influence of this strategy can be clearly in CFI's project development, and through this six-month period, around 15 different funding applications have been developed targeting a number of different organizations locally, regionally and internationally. Responses are still outstanding on many of these, and CFI is confident of success in one or two of these proposals which will guarantee CFI a more stable foundation on which to build its work.

Another positive outcome of the strategy development process has been an increased emphasis on the importance of partnerships and this has resulted in the emergence of a number of partnerships and joint project proposals. These include partnerships with Lawyers without Borders, Al Shams, Transparency Lebanon, The Institute for Leadership Excellence in Jordan and the UK based Minority Rights Group, all of which bode well for CFI's development and longer term strategic goals of wider regional expansion. Alongside these developing partnerships, CFIW, CFI's sister organization, has also developed through this six month period. The Board of Trustees now has five members and the website is developed and will be launched formally in autumn 2013.

Outlook for the rest of 2013:

During the second half of 2013, CFI will focus on:

- Further development of its work with Local Council Women and the Media
- Implementation of work in East Jerusalem funded by the Islamic Solidarity Fund
- Securing funding for its planned projects through outreach, partnership and ongoing development
- Supporting the launch of CFIW as a fully operating organization in the US
- Re-developing CFI's website and publication materials to reflect the strategic direction of the organization

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