

OPERATION 1325

OVERCOMING
OBSTACLES
BRIDGE BUILDING SEMINAR

WITH PALESTINE AND ISRAELI WOMEN IN SUPPORT OF
THE IMPLEMENTATION OF UNSCR 1325



www.operation1325.se



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Foreword

In December 2008, when a group of women from Israel, Palestine and Sweden met in Cyprus, for a bridge building seminar, women are still poorly represented at the peace negotiation tables. The UN Security Council Resolution 1325¹ on women, peace and security, adopted in October 2000, expresses a strong commitment to increase the representation of women in peace building and conflict resolution efforts. The resolution emphasises that women are entitled to a full participation in peace processes.

The question is how the necessary political will is attained that will enable the implementation of UNSCR 1325. Peace is a prerequisite for making a society function and for creating possibilities for people to live decent lives. Women play a key role to ensure peace, since they often experience the hazards connected to conflicts, and therefore often are highly motivated to end these. Women role as active peace agents in conflict stricken areas are today widely recognized. Since women often live as minorities in the society, they have the ability to bring a more egalitarian agenda to the decision making tables where the human rights are respected. Operation 1325 and the Palestinian Conflict Resolution Centre; Wi'am, have during

recent years arranged several activities that target Israeli and Palestinian women to support the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in the region. The bridge building seminar held in Cyprus in December 2008 is the latest of these efforts and can be described as an interactive and process oriented seminar where the participants actively contributed with their experience and knowledge. Twenty-three committed women with strategic positions within the civil society participated and shared their hopes and frustrations. The seminar created a unique opportunity for Israeli, Palestinian and Swedish women to meet and exchange experiences and ideas on how to promote peace in the region and how to increase the participation of women in these efforts with the support of UNSCR 1325.

Joy and sorrows were shared and the concerns about the political context in which the Israeli and Palestinian women are living in. Determined and inspired we finished the bridge building seminar committed to continuously work for peace to create possibilities for women and men to live decent and secure lives. With grief we, in Sweden, received the news about the Israeli army's invasion into the Gaza strip, on 27 December 2008. The war lasted about three weeks and it ceased just before President Barack Obama was installed as the 44 th president of USA on 20 January 2009.

Carin Gardbring

*Board member and Head of delegation
Operation 1325*

¹Hereafter referred to as UNSCR 1325, resolution 1325 or the resolution.

Background Information

a) Background information:

Operation 1325

In 2003 a number of representatives from Swedish women and peace organisations came together to learn more about UNSCR 1325 on women, peace and security. This resulted in the establishment of Operation 1325 which today is an umbrella organisation comprised of five women's organisations. The overall goal of the organisation is to contribute to the implementation of UNSCR 1325, based on the conviction that conflicts must be dealt with through peaceful and democratic means. Through information dissemination, training courses, advocacy and lobbying, Operation 1325 works on both the national and international level to achieve this goal.²

b) Project information

In December 2007 Operation 1325 and the Palestinian Conflict Resolution Centre; Wi'am organised a workshop in Jericho, Palestine with representatives from a number of Palestinian organisations working with women - and peace issues. The bridge building seminar; Overcoming Obstacles, in Cyprus in the beginning of December 2008 is a follow up to this event. In this seminar, participants from Israeli organisations that are actively working for peace and women's rights were also able to participate. This created a unique opportunity for the Israeli and Palestinian women to meet and discuss how they through joint efforts can promote peace in the region.

c) Objectives of the seminar

The overall objective was to increase the participants' knowledge of UNSCR 1325, both on a theoretical and a practical level, to facilitate the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in the Israeli and Palestinian context.

Additional objectives of the seminar were;

1) To learn about the plans and activities for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 at the international and national level, and how these can be contextualised to a local dimension, involving

local laws, authorities etc.

2) To learn and practise networking and advocacy skills as a way of implementing UNSCR 1325.

3) To study human rights and international law in order to get deeper knowledge and develop tools about the legal mechanisms that can be used when working with gender and security issues, internationally, nationally and locally.

The further intention of the seminar was to discuss how the Israeli, Palestinian and Swedish organisations could collaborate in the future to promote peace in the region and secure women's active involvement in this process.

d) Methodology

The most frequently used method was the Logical Framework Approach with an Appreciative Approach (LFA-AI). LFA-AI is a goal oriented method that strives to focus on the resources that exist in an organisation and to make active use of these when conducting projects. LFA-AI combines the systematic analysis of the conditions that underlies a project (LFA), with the more resource-based thinking that permeates the Appreciative Inquiry method (AI).³

More information about the method will be presented in section 2.1

²For more information please visit www.operation1325.se

e) Participating organisations

The participants had basic/good knowledge of UNSCR 1325, a strategic position within their organisations and an interest in sharing the information gained with their organisation. They had further shown an interest in pursuing UNSCR 1325 related work on a long term basis in collaboration with other stakeholders.

³For more information about LFA-AI, please www.sida.se/sida/jsp/sida.jsp?d=118&a=23355&language=en_US

List of participating organisations and representatives

The Adam Institute for Democracy and Peace

Representative: Nisreen Morqus

Web address: www.adaminstitute.org.il

- CWP, Coalition of Women for Peace

Representative: Rachel Amram

Web address: www.coalitionofwomen.org/home/english

- Holy Land Trust

Representative: Rana Al Arja

Web address: www.holylandtrust.org

- ICADH, The Israeli Committee Against House

Demolitions

Representative: Angela Godfrey Goldstein

Web address: www.icahd.org

-New Profile, Movement for the Civil-ization of Israeli Society

Representatives: Lizi Saige and Michal Gelbart

Web address: www.newprofile.org

- NCA, Norweigan Church Aid

Representative: Maria Ardaji

Web address: www.nca.no

- Sabeel, Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center

Representative: Sawsan Bitar

Web address: www.sabeel.org

- Sikkuy, The Association for the Advancement of Civic Equality in Israel

Representative: Chassia Chomsky-Porat

Web address: www.sikkuy.org.il

- Isha L'Isha Haifa Feminist Centre

Representatives: Rachel Amram, Khulud Khamis and Galia Aviani

Web address: www.isha.org.il

- PCPD, The Palestinian Centre for Peace and Democracy

Representative: Hilda Issa

Web address: www.pcpd.org

- WILPF, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Palestine

Representatives: Nariman Awad/al- Far and Hanan Awwad

Web address: www.wilpf.org

g) Team from Operation 1325

Head of delegation and Co-facilitator: Carin Gardbring

Co-ordinator (operating from Sweden): Anna Tulin

Co-facilitators: Malin Brenk, Ragnhild Greek and Karin Axelsson Zaar

Rapporteur: Jonna Sandin

Web address: www.operation1325.se

h) Team from Wi'am, The Palestinian Conflict Resolution Centre

Co-ordinator: Lucy Talgieh

Co-facilitator: Hana Kirrh

Rapporteur Assistant: Marjorie Gourlay

Web address: www.alaslah.org

Day 1: Introduction

1.1 Introducing the seminar and the organisers

Carin Gardbring, from Operation 1325, opened the seminar by welcoming all the participants and by reading the first paragraph of UNSCR 1325. She stressed the importance of determination when working on the issue of women, peace and security and encouraged the participants to “never stop starting”, i.e. to persistently continue their efforts to promote peace in the region. She continued by presenting the seminar programme and its objectives. The work of Operation 1325 and Wi'am was presented shortly.

1.2 Exercise: Getting to know each other

To create an opportunity for the participants to start to get to know each other the participants interviewed another participant whom they did not know from before and then made a short presentation of that person in plenary. The participants shared their experiences from living in a conflict stricken region and how their organisations are working to improve the situation. Some of them had been working for several years with UNSCR 1325 while others were

less experienced in this field. Many of the participants spoke openly about how the political situation affects their lives on a personal level and shared the difficulties they are facing in their everyday life. During the presentations it became clear that all participants are affected by the conflict, although in different ways. Despite of the fact that the women had quite different backgrounds when it comes to ethnicity, religion and social background, they related to each other as women living in the same conflict, although under different circumstances and with different perspectives. This sense of a common ground was a good starting point for the coming sessions.

1.3 Exercise: Brainstorming on UNSCR 1325

Lucy Talgieh from Wi'am began the session by asking the participants to think about why they believe it is important to work with UNSCR 1325. Several of the participants thought that the resolution is important because it stresses women's role as active peace agents and since women often are among the most affected by war, they have a strong motivation in



many cases to end wars and conflicts. Women's strive for peace can be used as a powerful source for action if the efforts are united across borders and are mobilised jointly. The resolution can constitute a firm foundation for such initiatives. Some of the participants also stressed the need for a feminist perspective on security that often is lacking at the decision making tables. UNSCR 1325 is a legally binding document which legitimises civil society's claims for the inclusion of women in all peace building and post-conflict reconstruction efforts.

Some of the Palestinians were doubtful if UNSCR 1325 will improve their situation or not, considering the fact that previous legal instruments in the field of humanitarian law have failed to protect their rights. One participant therefore stressed the need to "take care" of this resolution better than previous UN documents and not hand over to others to decide whether it is implemented or not.

The importance of the Resolution was, according to another participant, illustrated by the fact "that we can cooperate, that we are here. I do not think that men would have gathered here".

1.4 Working with UNSCR 1325. Examples from around the world

Malin Brenk from Operation 1325, talked about the background to the adoption of UNSCR 1325 in 2000 and how women's organisations have contributed to the adoption of the resolution and the implementation process in different countries. This session gave concrete examples of how organisations have worked to influence decision makers and what impact their work has had. Brenk also described actions that have been taken on the international, European and national level to implement UNSCR 1325 and gave examples on how to create political pressure by formulating relevant strategies for each step of a process. In this context, she particularly stressed the importance of ensuring that civil society organisations are consulted when their Governments engage in the implementation

⁴The name of the report is *Women, Armed Conflict, and Occupation – an Israeli Perspective (2005)* and can be downloaded from; www.peacewomen.org/resources/1325/womenconflictisrael.pdf



process of UNSCR 1325. In order to assure accountability, civil society organisations should use this opportunity to push for the formulation of concrete time lines in action plans etc. for each step and objective presented by their Governments.

1.5 Actions taken in Israel, Palestine and Sweden

During this session representatives from the participating countries described what actions that had been taken on the national level.

Khulud Khamis from Isha L'Isha, which means woman to woman, talked about the situation in Israel. In 2005 Israel integrated UNSCR 1325 in the national legislation. The legislation aims at improving the representation of women in decision making bodies. Isha L'Isha has been working with the UNSCR 1325 since 2001 and has organised information campaigns, lectures and a conference on the issue. The organisation has also produced a shadow report⁴ to the UN in order to identify the security threats that women who live in the conflict zone are faced with. The report raised different issues such as violence against women, psychological stress and other health problems caused by the conflict. Today Isha L'Isha stresses that it is crucial to adopt resolution 1325 to the needs of women in Israel. Their current focus is to alter the traditional state centred security concept into a wider concept which entails human security. Other NGOs, such as Women's Coalition for Peace, have also been working actively with UNSCR 1325.

Rana Al Arja from Holy Land Trust described the measures taken in Palestine. In 2005 the president adopted the resolution. But before the formal adoption, NGOs worked intensively to influence the decision makers by awareness raising campaigns and advocacy work. This have, among other things, resulted in an increased number of women in the legislative council. However, the Government has still not adopted a national action plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 and some NGOs are sceptical if a national action plan would make any real difference since past efforts with similar documents have failed. The security situation of Palestinian women is daily undermined due to harassments and abuse at check points.⁵ Nevertheless, Al Arja was still hopeful that UNSCR 1325 can be used as a tool to give human rights advocates strength in their work in the long term perspective.

Jonna Sandin and Carin Gardbring from Operation 1325 described the development within the Swedish context. The Swedish Government adopted a national action plan in 2006 with the intention to create a holistic approach in the implementation process. The approach taken has implied cooperation between agencies and ministries to develop relevant tools and strategies. Genderforce, which is a project shared by a number of Swedish agencies, has trained Swedish personnel involved in missions in conflict stricken countries on gender and diversity issues and strives to increase the



representation of women in these missions. Ethical guidelines and a code of conduct for all Swedish personnel preparing for and participating in international missions were further developed by the Government in 2007. The national action plan will be altered during 2009 and Operation 1325, together with other NGOs, is currently involved in consultative meetings with the Government on the development of a new action plan. Resolution 1820 that was adopted by the UN Security Council in June 2008 will be integrated into the new plan.

1.6 A brief Overview of Resolution 1325

Ragnhild Greek from Operation 1325 finished the first day of the seminar by going through the different paragraphs of UNSCR 1325. The participants were asked to give priority to the paragraphs that are most suitable to work with within their own context. The overview was given to prepare the participants for the final step of the seminar, to create their own action plans that can contribute to the implementation of resolution 1325.



Day 2: Project Planning with LFA-AI (Stage 1)

2.1 Introducing the Logical Framework Approach with an Appreciative Approach (LFA-AI)

Karin Axelsson Zaar from Operation 1325 opened the session by explaining that the Logical Framework Approach, LFA, is an established method within the field of international development cooperation used when planning, implementing and evaluating projects. The point of departure when planning a project with the use of LFA, is to make a problem analysis. When the problems have been analysed, the next step is to formulate objectives and activities that makes it possible to target these.⁶

LFA has yet been criticised for putting too much emphasis on the problems. The risk when working with the method, according to some, is that the focus is on difficulties instead of on the existing resources. The Appreciative Inquiry method (AI) was later added to LFA in order to avoid this negative focus. AI focuses on what is working well and analyses strengths, resources, motivation and driving forces. The methods combined constitute a holistic and systematic model that can be used as an effective tool when planning projects.⁷

2.2 Exercise: Describe the current situation

The first exercise of the day was to sit in pairs and discuss the participants' current situation. This session served as a starting point for the following exercises and two questions were to be discussed;

- How do you experience your situation right now?
- What effects does your current situation have on you and the people around you? (e.g. your work colleagues or/and your family)

2.3 Exercise: Identify what is working poorly, well and hopes for the future

The participants were instructed to split into two groups and stay in the same group as their friend from the previous exercise. The next step was to discuss three questions with the information of all the participants' current situations in mind;

- What is working poorly?
- What is working fairly well?
- What are the hopes for the future?

The answers to these questions were presented in plenary and written down on flip charts.

2. 3.1 Summary of presentations

2.3.2 Working poorly

The participants brought up a number of things that they thought is working poorly in their everyday lives. Many feel economically restricted by the fact that they have to support their children at the same time as it is difficult to get a well paid job as

⁶Unfortunately there are few signs that this situation will improve in the near future considering the humanitarian crisis that has evolved, during the time that this report is written in January 2009.

⁶For more information about LFA, please visit www.sida.se/sida/jsp/sida.jsp?d=118&a=2379&language=en_US

⁷For more information about LFA-AI, please visit www.sida.se/sida/jsp/sida.jsp?d=118&a=23355&language=en_US



a woman. In the Arab community many women are not allowed to apply for jobs which mean that they are economically dependent on their husbands and relatives. Many of the problems that were brought up are linked to the occupation, i.e. the political situation. The freedom of movement is severely limited for the Palestinians, especially for the ones living in Palestine, by check points and closures. This makes it difficult for the Palestinian women to go to work, visit relatives and friends, travel or undertake any kind of practical tasks. As a result, many experience stress and difficulties of coping and family members are often separated from each other.

To be a female peace activist in the Arab community is difficult since not everyone accepts that women express themselves freely and act on their own, for example by having their own jobs, or living or travelling by themselves. The Israeli peace activists feel rejected and alienated as a result of the Zionist ideology that permeate the Israeli Government and laws. Some feel that this ideology to some extent legitimates the occupation and the racist attitude towards Arabs. It also constrains the Israeli women who are given strict reproductive duties, e.g. to have

many children. The political situation in Israel makes it difficult to question the current political situation and many of the participants expressed that they feel alienated from their own society. The conflict between Israel and Palestine is today normalised and as an Israeli citizen you are supposed to accept the situation as it is.

2.3.3 Working well

Many of the participants were proud over their work and commitment to peace. Despite of all the difficulties, the participants feel loyal to their beliefs since, as one of them said; "if we give up it is over." The networking between NGOs working to secure peace and women's rights in the area was another issue that many felt was working well. Several of the participants were also grateful for the international support and the opportunity to meet at this seminar. The feeling of unity and the opportunity to share experiences, thoughts and feelings was appreciated.

2.3.4 Hopes for the future

The primary hope for the future, which everyone agreed on, was that the occupation will end. One of the participants said that we all should get inspired by learning from the experience of conflicts in other parts of the world where conflicts unexpectedly have been resolved and where women have played a crucial role for the peace process. The Palestinian women wished for a democratic, secular and independent Palestinian state and the Israeli women hoped that the Israeli Government will change their politics and priorities. The Israeli women stated that they wanted good leadership which would make it possible to transform Israel from a militaristic state to a civic state where Israelis and Palestinians have equal rights and obligations. The participants also hoped that the legal protection of women's rights will improve and that more women will be represented in decision making bodies to a higher extent and as a result of this a space for implementing UNSCR 1325 from within the political system will be created. Further hopes were that there will be more cooperation between NGOs from the different sides of the conflict, that there will be more international support for humanitarian agendas that targets the real needs of the people and for the NGOs already working on these issues right now.

2.4 Exercise: Identifying the influential factors

The next step was to identify the factors that influence the current situation. Zaar asked the participants to work in smaller groups of four or five to discuss the following questions;

- What factors are influencing the situation in the right direction?
- What factors are influencing the situation in the wrong direction?

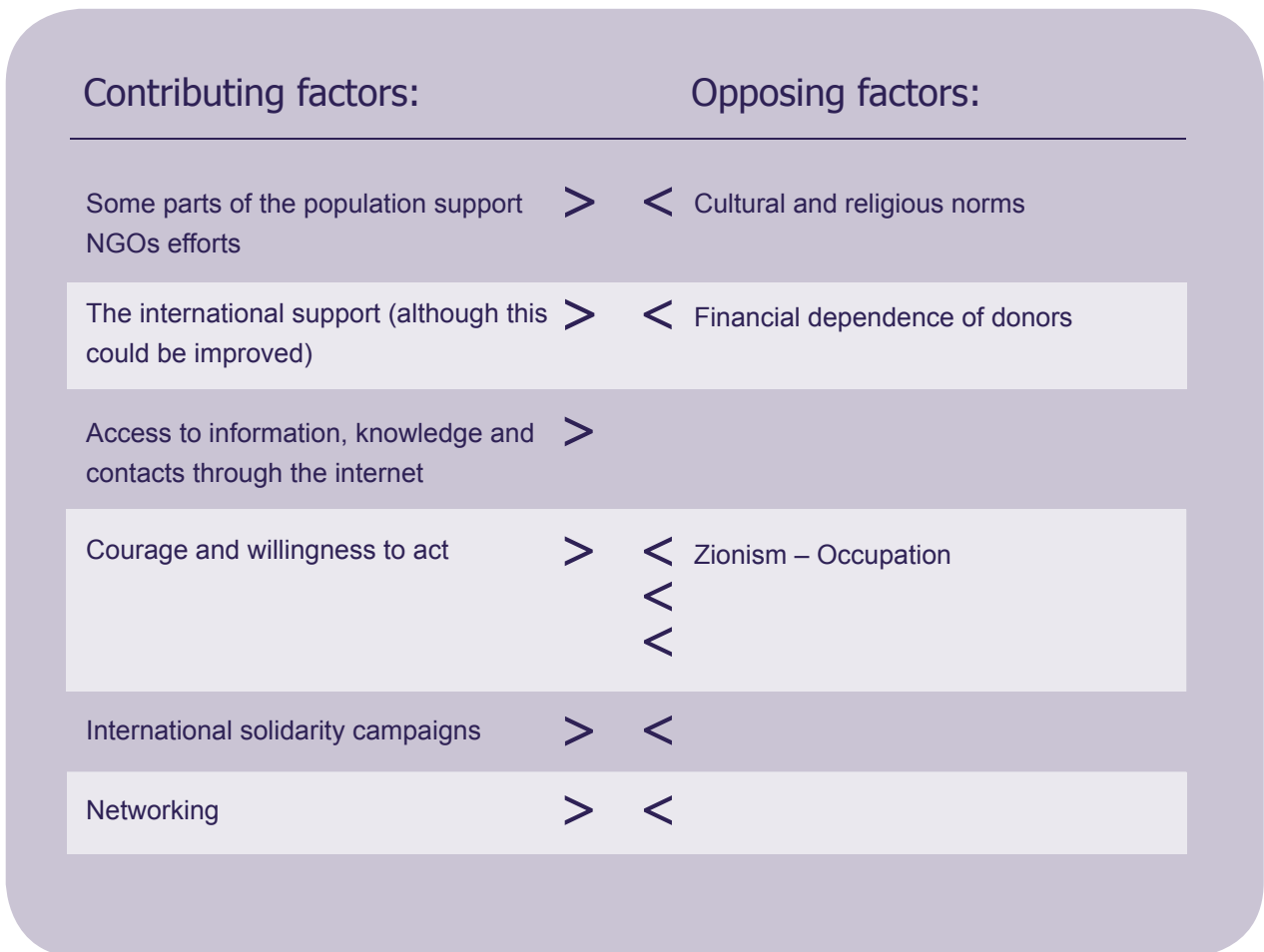
2.5 Exercise: Creating a Force Field Analysis

The following step was to create a Force Field Analysis where the contributing and opposing factors were written down on a flip chart and put in a model to illustrate how they relate to each other. (fig. 1)

2.6 Exercise: Identifying strengths, needs and opportunities for cooperation

Zaar asked the participants to sit individually for a few minutes and think about a situation or an experience that was a success for her own organisation. The next step was to sit in groups and discuss three questions with the success stories in mind;

fig. 1



- What strengths do we have?
- What do we need in order to change or develop to be able to work with UNSCR 1325?
- How can we work together with UNSCR 1325?

2.7 Presentation of group discussions

2.7.1 Strengths

The participants mentioned several strengths that could be utilised when working with UNSCR 1325. The commitment to peace and strong beliefs in the work they are doing were regarded as crucial strengths. The dedication that the participants expressed encourages them to tackle sensitive issues that others do not want to work with. The skills, experiences and knowledge that they share with their colleagues', were regarded as crucial strengths for the effectiveness and impact of their work. Others strengths brought up were important contacts, networks and strategies.

2.7.2 Needs

A number of needs were identified to facilitate the participants' work with UNSCR 1325. One of the most frequently mentioned, was the need to raise awareness about the resolution within the target

groups, especially among women, and among other NGOs working in the area. In order to reach these groups, a first step would be to increase the general gender awareness. But in order to be able to work with awareness raising campaigns some felt that they would need more information about UNSCR 1325 to be able to teach others. When the gender awareness have increased among larger segments of the population it would be possible to push for the integration of UNSCR 1325 into policies and programmes of the NGOs working in the field. Another need was to improve the documentation of their organisations' efforts, to scrutinise both the successful - and less successful projects. This would enable more in-depth analysis of how different factors affect the outcome and impact of projects. Several of the participants also thought that there was a need to get better at exchanging information and experiences. To improve the quality of the follow-up of projects, through e.g. evaluations, would also make it possible to share information to a higher extent. The participants also expressed a need to improve their advocacy skills in order to be able to approach decision makers more effectively and to get more knowledge on how to use media channels more efficiently.

2.7.3 Cooperation

The participants expressed that it would be useful to cooperate more, both with organisations within their own community and with organisations working for peace on the other side of the conflict, as well as with organisations at the international level, by sharing information, experiences and developing common plans for action. Considering the current polarised climate between the groups, one of the participants suggested that it would be easier to cooperate with individual peace activists, than to convince organisations on both sides of the conflict to collaborate in joint efforts. Cooperation was also regarded as important in order to avoid overlaps of projects and to ensure that actions taken for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 are coordinated and adapted to the specialisation of the different organisations. One specific issue mentioned, was to put pressure on both the Israeli and Palestinian Governments, to seek measures to end the occupation and to ensure that war criminals are prosecuted.





2.8 Implementing UNSCR 1325

Creating action plans and connecting them on different levels. In this session, held by Ragnhild Greek, the participants were divided into groups and were asked to think about concrete actions that could be taken to implement UNSCR 1325 that would correspond with their current peace work. Greek encouraged the participants to think about how to approach politicians, other decisions makers and the media in strategic ways and to prepare for these meetings by listing all questions and answers that might come up. On the fourth day of the seminar the participants were given more time to continue this work and the outcome of it will be presented further below.



⁸For more information please visit www.operation1325.se and/or www.operation1325.se/images/stories/infobroschyr_1325_webb.pdf

⁹For more information about the NCA project, please visit www.nca.no

Day 3: International Law and Advocacy

3.1 International law and human rights

Carin Gardbring started the day with a session about international law and human rights to present UNSCR 1325 in its legal context and to make a comprehensive description of the history of international law, how the international law system is regulated and the central mechanisms and tools that are relevant in the work for peace, women and security.

3.2 Exercise: Identify aspects related to women's human security

Hana Kirrh from Wi'am asked the participants to divide in smaller groups to discuss either the cultural, social, economical or the political aspects of women's human security by answering the following questions;

- Who are the violators?
- How are the violators responsible?
- Where can solutions be found for solutions and remedies?
- What strategies can you use? (social, political, cultural or economic)

3.2.1 Summary of group discussions

The participants identified a number of actors violating women's human security. Among the mentioned were; the Israeli and Palestinian Governments, since they despite issuing laws that are granting women their rights in theory, do not live up to these standards in practice, e.g. in law enforcement institutions such as the police and the army. Other actors mentioned were the men and women that support and reproduce the patriarchal

system that permeate traditions, customs and values which violate women's security, the superpowers that support the Israeli Government and the EU that is planning for a closer collaboration with the Israeli Government as well as the private companies that benefit from the conflict. These actors are, according to the participants, responsible because they have the power and authority to violate women's human security without receiving sanctions for these acts. Through the occupation the Israeli Government violates Palestinian women's human security e.g. by deteriorating their rights to land, water, health facilities, work and ability to move around, inside and outside the Palestinian territory. The Israel Government also violates Israeli women's security by making military service compulsory for all young women and men, by not informing students in school about the human rights and by supporting patriarchal views on women's roles and responsibilities.

To find solutions and remedies for these violations, the participant suggested that women's rights activists, such as themselves, learn from the success stories in other parts of the world where actions have been taken to defend women's security. International law can be used as an important tool to secure women's rights and security if it is used strategically. UN and the EU can be used to put pressure on relevant politicians and decision makers. The participants suggested a number of strategies that could be used to enable change. Among the mentioned were to work with awareness raising campaigns, empower women e.g. through education, political advocacy and use the media to draw attention to different issues.

3.3 Exercise: Four corners

Carin Gardbring asked the participants to read four assumptions that she had written on flipcharts and fixed on the wall in different corners of the venue. After the participants had read and thought about the assumptions, she wanted them to choose one of them and explain to the others why this statement



had caught their attention. The four statements were;

1. All states have the obligation to safeguard the equal rights of all people. Women and their experiences are still severely underrepresented in work related to peace and security. If resolution 1325 is to become a reality, concerted effort is required in many different areas.
2. The human rights declaration is described as a genuinely multicultural project. Can there be different interpretations depending on culture, geography and gender? The declaration was born in the post second war context, when the world seemed to have one centre. During the 60 years the understanding of multicultural and diversity has changed. How does that affect the implementation of the resolution 1325? The resolution 1325 is for all. It is not only a responsibility for women. (can be related to art 18)
3. "Strictly speaking" International law is not legally

binding, because it cannot be considered a law. It is more of setting priorities, goals and values, towards what the states have agreed upon to strive for. There is no system or mechanisms for punishment. Or are there? How to differentiate? Are there any mechanisms that can safeguard the implementation of the resolution 1325?

4. UNSCR 1325, the international norms and standards expressed in the Millenium Development Goals, the CEDAW and other human rights treaties and conventions are binding for the European Union. The absence of UNSCR 1325 and references to gender and women are therefore both surprising and saddening. According article 25 in the UN charter the conventions, treaties and resolutions are binding for the members. "The Members of the United Nations agree to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council in accordance with the present Charter." How does this lack of implementation of decisions affect the grassroots and local community opportunities to work effectively on the implementation of 1325?

3.3.1 Summary of discussion

The participants discussed how it is possible to fully implement a legal system with the intention to provide all human beings living in the world with the same basic human rights. Considering the different viewpoints that exist in different parts of the world on what justice is, or should mean, it is difficult to know how far the universal attempts that permeate international law can be stretched. What kinds of local practices and behaviours can be justified by culture and when should the international community intervene? Can for example violence against women be accepted because some view it as part of their culture? One of the participants said that we need to consider how cultural practices sometimes violate women's rights. Another participant agreed but added that culture often provide the underpinnings that sustains the community, and it is not always easy to make the distinction between when cultural practices are harmful for the individual and when it is beneficial. The next question, which the participants elaborated on was, who should be given the authority to make this distinction and decide what is right or wrong? To be able to enforce international law we all have to engage in a multicultural project that sets the standards for all of us. The question that then

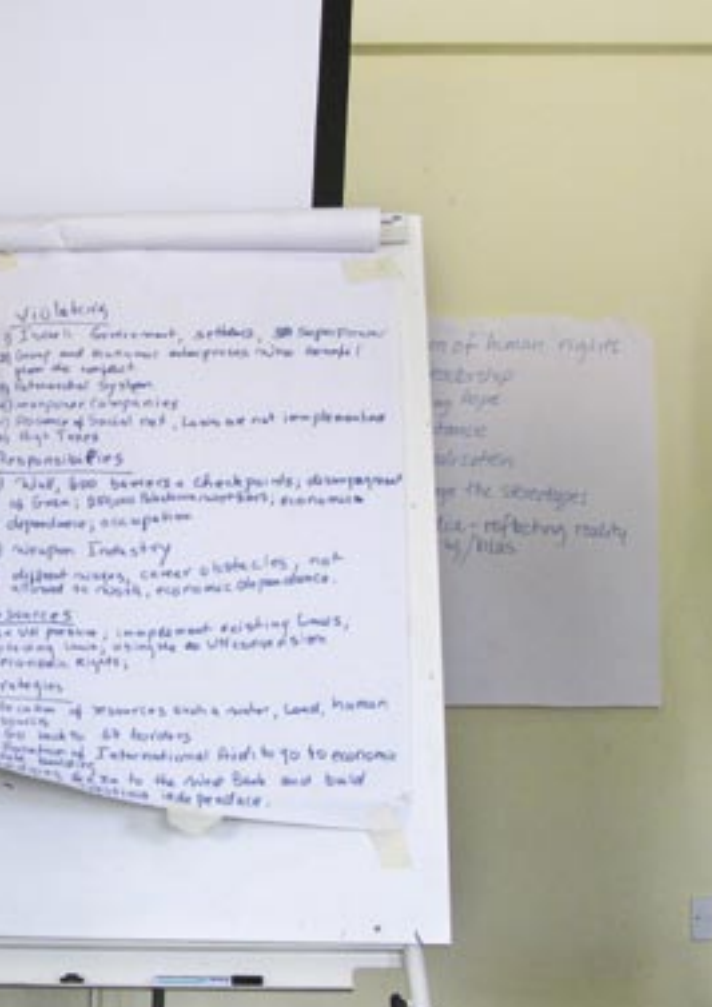


followed was if we and all other citizens in the world can accept an international law system that has the authority to question state sovereignty? No simple answers were given to these questions but it was still important to discuss these issues.

3.4 CEDAW and UNSCR 1820 related to UNSCR 1325

Carin Cardbring described the content of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and how the implementation of the convention is monitored. To illustrate the relationship between CEDAW and UNSCR 1325, Gardbring made a comparison between the documents. The analysis showed that although the documents support each other in many ways, they sometimes work against each other, which is not surprising considering the time that has passed since CEDAW was written in 1979 up until UNSCR 1325 was adopted in 2000.

Gardbring also talked about UNSCR 1820 that was adopted fairly recently, in June 2008. She stressed that by adopting 1820, the UN Security Council recognise sexual violence against civilians in war as a security issue, which support the statements made in UNSCR 1325. UNSCR 1820 is an attempt to end impunity for these acts and to regard the possible outcome of these violations, such as HIV/AIDS, as security threats. When comparing the monitoring of UNSCR 1325 with UNSCR 1820, it is clear that the requirements are stricter in the latter, which can be regarded as a step forward. In UNSCR 1820 there is a date set for when member states shall report back to the UN General Secretary, which is missing in UNSCR 1325. Gardbring asked the participants to take a closer look at the specific paragraphs of these documents and to think about which ones they would like to focus on in their own projects and how they can use these documents to support their case.



3.5 Measures taken by Operation 1325

One of the participants wanted to know more about how Operation 1325 works to implement UNSCR 1325 and as a response to this Ragnhild Greek gave a short summary of the work of the organisation. Greek stressed that the way Operation 1325 works might not be possible to replicate in different settings but that Operation 1325's work hopefully still can be regarded as a source of inspiration for those who are interested in examples of concrete actions that can be taken to implement UNSCR 1325.

3.6 An example of advocacy work

Maria Ardaji from Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) talked about the project that she currently is involved in to give an example of advocacy work. The overall goal of the project is to support the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in the Middle East region but Ardaji focused on the work her organisation currently is carrying out in Israel and

Palestine. One of the objectives with the NCA project is to strengthen networks and collaborative efforts between organisations working with women and security issues on the ground since there is a lack of coordination between these organisations today in the area, according to Ardaji. As a first step in improving these links, Ardaji is mapping which organisations that currently are working with these issues and how. She asked the participants about their opinions about networking and what they thought is needed in order for the networks and alliances to function better. The participants shared their network experiences which showed that some of them are collaborating with organisations from both sides of the conflict, although these kinds of collaborations seem rare. Although many of the participants agreed that the networks, especially between Israeli and Palestine organisations, are not working well as of today, many still expressed an interest in more collaboration between the groups.

Day 4: Project planning with LFA-AI (Stage 2) and Evaluation of the Seminar

4.1 Exercise: Formulating project - and overall goals

The last day of the seminar, Karin Axelsson Zaar asked the participants to think about concrete measures that they could take to support the implementation of UNSCR 1325, keeping in mind all the knowledge and experience that had been shared during the preceding days. In accordance with the LFA-AI method, the participants were asked to formulate a project goal and an overall goal for their coming work on UNSCR 1325. The project

goal should be a goal that they could guarantee in the nearby future, while the overall goal should be the vision that they would like to achieve on long term. Zaar stressed the importance of making sure that the project goal was something they knew that they had the capacity to achieve, with or without the support of their organisations, to avoid a situation where the project is dependent on the approval of an organisation.

4.2 Exercise: Creating action plans

The participants were asked to create action plans by formulating an overall goal, a project goal and activities to achieve these goals. When thinking about appropriate activities, Zaar wanted the participants to keep a number of questions in mind;

-Who, why, when, where, what and how?

Copies of the Swedish action plan were handed out for those who were interested in reading it to get some inspiration before getting started on their own plans. The plans were later written down on flip charts and presented in plenary.

4.2.1 Presenting the action plans

Group 1. Towards the implementation of UN resolutions related to women

Slogan: *'From baking to decision-making'*

Overall goal: Increased representation of women at all decision making levels in the Palestinian society (decision making both in the private sphere and the public sphere). Some women will never reach the political level but they can get more influence over decisions taken at home, for example related to their children's future.



Project goal: To create an understanding of international laws and conventions related to women with a special focus on CEDAW; UNSCR 1325 and UNSCR 1820.

Target groups: Women representing civil society organisations, politicians and legislative members, human rights activists and grass root women in rural areas.

Why? To create an understanding of international law that could increase women's representation in all decision making bodies. An increased representation of women in important decision making forums could enable alterations of laws to support women's rights and promote conflict resolution.

Where? In Palestine. (11 districts in the West Bank, no access to Gaza unfortunately).

What? Awareness raising activities such as; political advocacy, information dissemination and training.

When? The project will be running for three years and many activities will be carried out simultaneously.

How? Workshops with representatives from the Women's Ministry, meetings with the Palestinian Legislative Council and representatives from political parties, training for trainers (targeting the well educated women) and training of women (targeting grass root women in the rural areas). Media will be used to spread information about the project e.g. by participating in the radio, TV and writing news letters. A network of women will be created that can push for the implementation of UNSCR 1325. These women (representing civil society organisations) will be used as key agents to enable change at the political - and local level.

Challenges?

1. Convince the politicians to cooperate
2. Funding
3. Reach out to the grass root women
4. Show the impact

Solutions?

1. Not to take no for an answer and be persistent in

the efforts taken. One solution could be to convince key female decision makers first and reach other important actors through them. International support could also help legitimating the issue.

2. The network could function without funding but the other activities need it.

3. Present the issue in a way so that grass root women can relate to it and realise the importance that these issues can have in their daily life. Some of them might be critical to UN Resolutions in general, since previous resolutions have not been implemented, but it is important to relate the contents of these documents to the needs of the women.

4. Decide on measurable targets (in figures) to be able to analyse how far the project has been able to met the goals set out on short –and long term.

Group 2. Isha L'Isha's Pilot Project

Overall goal: Increase the number of feminists in decision-making positions, at various levels, in Israel.

Project goal: Empower teenage girls so that they have the capacity to enter decision making positions in the future.

Target group: Girls in high school from various ethnic, economic and social backgrounds. Young girls are targeted since the assessment is that it is easier to teach girls about critical thinking and feminism in a young age before they are "part of the system".

When? Fundraising: six - twelve months.

Empowerment training: about twenty sessions in ten months. Evaluation: two months.

Actions: During the first phase of the project, preparations will be initiated and a steering committee will be established. The steering committee will decide and concretise the action plan, design the training sessions, explore cooperation options and be responsible for the ongoing evaluation of the project. They will further follow the project closely throughout the implementation period and deal with

different dilemmas that might occur. The members of the steering committee will be feminist activists with different backgrounds and professions that already are part of the organisation's network. The second phase of the project will be devoted for fundraising. To be able to finance the project, about 20 000 dollar will be needed (4000 \$ for the two facilitators/ project coordinator, 2000 \$ for overhead and other material for the courses etc. and 2000 \$ for the evaluation).

Running the project: Coordinators/facilitators will be employed to conduct the training sessions with groups of Jewish and Arab girls. The training sessions can deal with different issues such as personal empowerment (self confidence and identity issues), interpersonal relations (at work, in a group, in centres of power), and issues related to feminism, militarism, politics as well as women in politics. The sessions will be held in community centres or venues hosted by local NGOs.

Evaluation: Since it is a pilot project it is particularly important to spend some time thinking about e.g. what worked well and less well and how to follow-up the project.

Challenges?

1. Raise the funds
2. Raise the awareness of the girls
3. Reach the overall goal

Solutions?

1. Can take some time but will probably be solved.
2. This is the biggest challenge since feminism and critical thinking is likely to be new concepts for the girls. It will take time and efforts to change their perception of themselves and their roles in the society.
3. The overall goal is not reached by this project but it is a starting point that can enable the overall goal to be reached in the future.

Group 3

Overall goal: To increase the representation of women in the decision making bodies in Palestine.

Project goal: Prepare and empower women that

are interested of becoming candidates in the next election.

Why? Women committed to find peaceful solutions to the conflict and have the capacity to bring positive change to the society.

When? The project will be running for the next nine months before the election. The first three months will be dedicated for the preparations such as writing proposals, applying for funding and making a detailed plan of the project. The implementation of the project is conducted during the following six months.

Who? The target group is women who see themselves as candidates in the upcoming election but that have not had the opportunity to establish themselves on the political arena yet.

What? The project will cooperate with the Palestinian Legislative Council, the President and the Prime Minister office, NGOs working with women – and human rights issues and institutions that are interested in collaboration on this issue.

How? Organise workshops on International law instruments such as UNSCR 1325, the human rights treaties and carry out leadership training. Media will be used for the project campaigns. A slogan and posters will be produced.

Where? In villages, cities and refugee-camps in Palestine.

Support? The project will need the support of local trainers as well as international experts on the issue.

Challenge?

1. The short time that lies ahead before the election.

Solution?

1. The project personnel need to be ready to start the planning and organisation of the project immediately to have time to prepare the women before the election.



Group 4 “Lyzi Strata”

Overall goal or vision: To change the Israeli discourse, that currently is permeated by militaristic and chauvinistic ideals, to a civil discourse that analyse the society from a feminist perspective. The word feminism will not be used from the start when presenting the work of the organisation, since it brings negative connotations to the public. The exact phrasing when presenting the work of the organisation will be elaborated further.

Project goal: To establish the organisation Lyzi Strata and build the organisation from the ground. When? Preparing the establishment of the organisation will take one year. During the following year, competent women will be trained on the different themes that the organisation wants to work with.

How? The first phase of building up the organisation will be to create a steering committee and an advisory committee. The representatives of the steering committee will be recruited from grass root organisations representing all segments of the Israeli population, including all minority groups. The idea is to use the knowledge and expertise that exists in these organisations to build the foundations of Lyzi Strata. The advisory committee

will consist of individuals that hold influential positions in the society, such as layers, school principals and journalists. The latter committee will be used for consultancy on different matters but they will not have the power to run the organisation. A network of competent women will also be created to support the development of the competence of the organisation. The organisation would also like to have a partner organisation on the Palestinian side that is working in parallel with similar issues as Lyzi Strata to make the impact of their collaborative efforts stronger.

Activity 1: Establish the steering committee.

Why? To build networks, open doors and develop the competence of the organisation.

Where? Need to find a guest house that is accessible to everyone in the committee and where the process of bonding and committing to the work of the organisation can begin. The members will meet there regularly one weekend each month.

How? The members of the committee will receive three levels of training; 1) leadership 2) critical thinking 3) capacity building. The open space technique will be used during these sessions.

Activity 2: Develop an empowerment and capacity building training programme for the organisation. The programme will include sessions on the subject of international law (including UNSCR 1325 and UNSCR 1820), leadership, empowerment, conflict transformation tools, teambuilding tools, capacity building tools, lobbying, media skills, networking, militarism, feminism, critical thinking, social psychology and multiculturalism.

Challenge?

1. To change the discourse of the Israel society.

Solution?

1. The vision will take many years and a strong commitment to achieve but the first step is to found the organisation and work persistently and strategically step by step to reach the overall goal.

When everyone had finished their project presentations, Zaar concluded the session by encouraging the participants to continue and develop their plans when returning back home.



- What was great in this seminar?
- What can be improved?
- What will you take with you back home?

4.3 Evaluating the seminar

The last session of the seminar was focusing on evaluating the previous days in order to give the organisers information about how to follow-up the event and what improvements that can be made. The participants were able to air their opinions, both in a written and an oral evaluation. Three questions were to be answered in the oral assessment;

4.3.1 Summary of the oral evaluation

The participants were all very thankful for the opportunity to meet face to face with women from the other side of the conflict. For many of them, this was a unique occasion to meet and discuss issues in a neutral setting that would have been difficult to participate in in Israel or Palestine. The seminar gave the participants an opportunity to share their experiences of the conflict and the difficulties that they are faced with in their every day life. According to several of the participants, the seminar gave them an opportunity to get a better understanding of the situation for the other part in the conflict and to realise that they are not alone in their strive for a peaceful and just society. Many saw the seminar as an opportunity to improve their networks with other organisations who are working with similar issues and said that they had gained knowledge and tools that can support their work for peace and women's rights in the region. Although some felt that they would have needed more time to develop deeper relations, many still felt that this could be considered as a starting point for future contacts to emerge from. Many also expressed that they would have needed more time to discuss sensitive issues, not always directly related to the seminar exercises, but still regarded as important to take into account in order to increase the feeling of trust and

mutual understanding between the groups. The organisation – and facilitation of the seminar was appreciated by several of the participants. Many felt that the sessions were well planned and that there were clear links between the different themes brought up. Some were thus a bit confused about the purpose with a few exercises and felt that it would have been more fruitful if the seminar would have been focused on fewer subjects, to enable more in-depth analysis of these and to have more focused discussions. Many felt that they need more in-depth knowledge about UNSCR 1325 and other related legal instruments to be able to teach others about them. Several of the participants also requested more training on advocacy skills.

There were further mixed opinions about whether it would be more productive to have all group work exercises in national groups or if it was better to work with the assignments in both national and mixed groups, in the way that the organisers had planned it. Several of the participants appreciated the rather relaxed atmosphere that the organisers managed to create together with the participants, which was crucial in order to make the seminar productive. However, some felt that there were some tensions beneath the surface that should have been addressed more directly.

4.4 Final words

Carin Gardbring ended the seminar by thanking the participants for their active and productive involvement. She emphasised that although all of us that participated come from different countries, have different backgrounds and experiences, we also have a lot of things in common as women and that we need to build our capacity on this common ground. She encouraged everyone to continue with their efforts for the promotion of peace and women's rights and stressed how important this work is, especially in war-torn societies. She concluded with stating that the commitment shown by the participants represents hope;



“You are the light because you are there and all the work you are doing is the light in the tunnel (...) - that is the hope for me”

Operation 1325:

Operation 1325 is an umbrella organisation gathering five organisations from the Swedish women's and peace movement:

- **Swedish Ecumenical Women's Council**
- **The Federation of International Associations for Immigrant Women**
- **UNIFEM Sweden**
- **Women for Peace, Swedish section**
- **Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Swedish section**

We also collaborate closely with the **Swedish Women's Lobby**.

The aim of the organisation is to contribute to the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) by departing from its first paragraph:

“Resolution 1325 [...] urges Member States to ensure increased representation of women at all decision making levels in national, regional, and international institutions and mechanism for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict.”

Through capacity building and training, advocacy and information – both in Sweden and elsewhere – Operation 1325 aims at strengthening women and women's organisations and thereby preparing them to work at all levels and stages of conflict prevention, management and resolution. This is a report from our Training of Trainers seminar in the Sudan, November 2008, held in cooperation with the Sudanese organisation NuWEDA, Nuba Women for Education and Development Association.

