



LEADERS ORGANIZATION

2009 Annual Report



Table of Contents

About Leaders

- **Our Vision** 2
- **Our Mission** 2
- **Our Principles** 3
- **Our Programs** 4
- **Our Goals** 5
- **Our Approach** 6

Our Activities

- **Training and Capacity Building** 7
- **Workshops and Conferences** 9
- **Initiatives** 11
- **Partners and Networking** 13

Our Publications

- **Medical Errors** 17
- **Right to Education** 18
- **Violence Against Women** 19

Leaders and the Media 22

Electronic Social Networks 23

About Leaders

Leaders Organization is a youth led non-governmental organization that was established in 2002. The Organization prides itself for its principles and unique approach to development in the Palestinian territories.

At the time, it was established to allow youths to participate in serving their society. Since then, Leaders has established a reputation for working with, serving, and empowering youths in Palestine to become true leaders in their communities. It has continuously provided young Palestinians with the chance to express their views and act for a peaceful and democratic society both in Palestine and abroad.



Our Vision

Leaders Organization envisions a secular Palestine that respects civil and political liberties while safeguarding peace, equality, participation, and democracy.

Our Mission

Leaders Organization empowers Palestinian youth to actively contribute to the democratic, sociopolitical, and economic dimensions of their society. We promote the voice of Palestinian youth by providing them local and international platforms for expression.

Peace, Equality and Democratic Participation

Our Principles

The main principles that drive Leaders Organization are:

Professionalism: We employ a highly qualified young team of dedicated professionals with long experience in management, social, political, economic development and financial management. This team plans and implements our activities based on a clear strategic orientation that views with favor the crucial role of young people in the development of the Palestinian society.

Accountability: We are a society of young people. Our General Assembly elects a board of directors once every two years. The Board is responsible for setting the strategic direction and the policies of the Organization and is responsible for submitting annual administrative reports and externally audited financial statements to the General Assembly.

Responsiveness: Our activities are intended to leave a significant impact on the situation of young people in the Palestinian territories. The activities and projects implemented by us are designed based on assessments of the needs of the target group. To boost our responsiveness, we often host activities and events designed and executed by youth teams and provide logistic support to such activities.

Secularism: We are working to create a tolerant Palestinian society. This commitment is driven by the rising need for principled intervention that promotes secular values. Through our activities, we encourage youth to work for a secular and democratic Palestine that respects human, religious, social, economic and political rights of all.

Professionalism, Accountability, Responsiveness, Secularism

Our Programs

Leaders Organization operates three programs targeting young Palestinians. These programs are designed to contribute to the organization's mission of empowering young Palestinians to contribute to development in economic, social, cultural and political fields in their society.

Economic Empowerment

While the economic situation in the Palestinian territories keeps on fluctuating, young people are the most adversely affected by this lack of stability. Young people generally lack the relevant skills to enter the labor market or the entrepreneurial drive to establish personal businesses. Leaders' Economic Empowerment Program aims to develop the professional skills of young people in fields of relevance to the local market. This program also focuses on enabling young Palestinians to drive the market forward through empowering innovative youth and developing their entrepreneurial skills. Leaders' envisions the development of a sustainable economic empowerment program that can provide support services to young entrepreneurs, reduce vulnerability to economic and political risks and develop their professional skills.



Social and Political Leaders

The marginalization of Palestinian youth extends to all fields of the society. Young people have far fewer opportunities for voicing their concerns regarding political and social issues that impact their lives. The Social and Political Leaders Program aims to develop the leadership skills of young people and acquaint them with the tools they can use in promoting and leading social and political change. Under this program, Leaders supports initiatives independently launched by young people and proposes new initiatives to be led by young volunteers.

Creative Expression

Young Palestinians lack suitable platforms for expressing their creativity. The Creative Expression Program aims to provide young Palestinians with opportunities to express their creativity through arts and cultural productions. Under this program Leaders support local initiatives proposed by young artists with the aim of providing them with platforms for free and open expression of creativity.

Our Goals

Establishing networks with community-based organizations that promote youth civic engagement

Increasing the youths' capacity for civic participation and democratic involvement

Providing Palestinian youth with a platform for activism and creative expression

Our Approach

Leaders approach to development action is based on:

Volunteerism: We encourage young people to volunteer in areas that benefit their society. In encouraging volunteerism we mobilize youth with expertise in professional fields such as law, media and business in activities that leave a positive impact on their society. In this approach we apply the innovative concept of “service learning” where our young volunteers benefit their communities while developing their professional skills.

Equal opportunities: We are keen on providing equal opportunities to members of our target groups. The Organization’s Gender Policy adopted by our Board of Directors ensures that at least 40% of our beneficiaries are females. We are currently formulating a policy that will ensure that our activities and programs benefit individuals with special needs.

Modern Media: We recognize the potential of modern technologies in creating awareness and increasing outreach. We exploit this potential by ensuring an active presence on the Internet and Social Networking platforms. In addition to the Organization’s website, we manage a Facebook group and our own YouTube channel. These tools allow us to reach out to a wider audience and to disseminate information on our activities and programs.

Partnerships: We understand the power of partnerships. We know that synergies can ensure a wider outreach and more significant impact. This knowledge drives us to maintain a strong network of community based, national and international partners.

Our Activities

Training and Capacity Building for Young Leaders

Effective Leadership Practices

As part of its Social and Political Leaders Program, Leaders Organization and throughout the year 2009 held a periodic training course titled “Effective Leadership Practices”. This course comes as part of our plan to create young leaders capable of promoting their communities. The course targets groups of 20 female and male participants from marginalized areas in the West Bank and continues for a month and a half at 20 training hours. The periodic course aims at developing the participants’ leadership skills through improving their administrative, outreach, communication, decision making and teamwork skills.



This training course was designed to meet the needs of the target group aged between 18-22 years taking into account the specialty of the Palestinian society. The training material and exercises of the course were compiled based on the preliminary results of the needs assessment study conducted by Leaders.

"I participated in this training course in order to introduce myself to new terms and understandings. Once the training was over, for the first time in my life I felt that I have both the energy and potential to improve myself on both a personal and professional level."

-Samir Ahmad (Ramallah)

Young Lawyers' Capacity Building Program

Within the frame work of the project “Lawyers for Citizens’ Rights”, twenty-five lawyers from all regions of the West Bank were targeted through an integrated training program in order to enhance their skills in leadership and the defense of citizens’ rights. In addition to this, the participating lawyers were introduced to the organizations working in the field of defending human and citizens’ rights in Palestine through an integrated visits program to the human rights organizations.

The program consisted of training in group work, building effective communication skills, leadership qualities, active citizenship, as well as professional legal writing skills. As a partner with Leaders Organization on the Project, the Palestinian Bar Association also targeted the participants with a legal training program, whereby they were trained on the general framework of human rights, citizens’ rights in the Palestinian Basic Law and Legislative Acts, in addition to the Palestinian Judicial System.



"Throughout my interaction with the group, I have acquired new skills in communication and networking, just as I have learned to appreciate listening to others and maintaining self control. In addition to this, I have benefitted a great deal from the legal training, especially in human rights documents and its application in the Palestinian reality".

- Amal Massis (Birzeit)

Workshops and Conferences

Workshop on the Right to Education at the Arab American University

Board Members of the "Lawyers for Citizens' Rights" Project held a workshop on the Right to Education targeting the Law students at the Arab American University in Jenin.

Lawyers Muhannad Hariri and Amin Abu Al-Rub who are members of the Citizens' Rights Monitoring Board, conducted a detailed presentation on the status of the right to education in the Palestinian territories. Both participants addressed the right to education from the legal aspect by presenting the international standards and instruments that deal with the right to education. Additionally, the board members presented the enforced Palestinian legal texts related to the right to education. In this vein, the Palestinian texts were addressed and discussed in details and compared with the international standards. Other issues discussed during the workshop included the challenges and problems facing the enforcement of the right to education in Palestine.



"Every citizen has the right to education. It shall be compulsory until at least the end of basic grades, and it shall be free in public schools and institutes."

-Palestinian Basic Law, Article 24

Two Conferences at the Arab American University in Jenin and Al Quds University in Abu Dees

Leaders Organization held two conferences at each of the Arab American University in Jenin and Al Quds University in Abu Dees. Throughout these conferences, Law students in addition to a group of Academic faculty members participated and were able to receive copies of the researches led by the participants of the Project “Lawyers for Citizens’ Rights”.

Throughout both conferences, the legal reports prepared by the participating Lawyers were presented and discussed with both Law students and staff of both Universities. The discussions included legal and academic aspects of the studies as well as the recommendations that the lawyers presented at the end of their researches.



Initiatives

Leaders Organization Presents

The Documentary Film: "Thorns and Silk"



As part of the Creative Expression Program for Leaders Organization, that aims to provide young Palestinians with opportunities to take on leadership roles in society, Leaders in coordination with "Write This Down Productions", presented the Documentary Film "Thorns and Silk" for the Producer, Paulina Tervo. A lively discussion between the films' producer and a group of young Palestinians took place after the movie screening regarding the ability and willingness of the four women to face the culture and traditions within their societies.

Thorns and Silk

A documentary film that discusses four fascinating stories from Palestine, featuring women who work in male dominated jobs. All four have the courage to break traditional rules, but not without challenges.

We dip into the life of a wedding filmmaker, who films women-only weddings in the most conservative part of Palestine; hear the stories of a female taxi driver who works in the Israeli parts of Jerusalem; discover a young police trainee at the Palestinian Police Academy and learn about the hardships in occupied Nablus from a mother who takes on male roles in order to keep her family toilet paper factory going.

The stories reflect a variety of women in the West Bank. But all of them have something in common. They are defying gender stereotypes and working hard to survive in a country paralyzed by occupation.

Leaders Organization hosts "My Book is Yours" Initiative

Within Leaders Organization's Creative Expression Program, the Organization hosted twenty young people whom are the founders of "My Book is Yours" Initiative. This initiative is led by independent youth who seek to establish a children's public library in every Palestinian refugee camp and poor neighborhood. The initiative was launched from Jordan, where a library was established at the Gaza Refugee Camp in Jarash.

The initiative currently seeks to establish children's libraries in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Jerusalem whereby the most marginalized areas will be targeted at this stage of the initiative.

Different committees in several Arab countries had been formed in order to support this initiative, specifically in Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Morocco. The tasks of these committees are to collect books from individuals and publishers and have them sent to the branches of the initiative in Lebanon, Syria, Palestine and Jordan.



A word from the Initiative Members:

We are a group of volunteers from different age groups, working diligently as individual volunteers. We are independent, and therefore do not belong to any organization, nor are we affiliated in our work with any organization.

"Yes to Humanity and Childhood", is our motto and we do not seek any financial or personal gain. We do not receive any financial support from anyone, nor do we accept financial charities from individuals. We simply collect children books from individuals, publishing houses, and libraries in an effort to establish public libraries in refugee camps and poor neighborhoods.

Partnerships and Networking

Leaders Organization hosts a group of trainees from the Youth Development Resource Centers

Leaders Organization hosted a group of trainees from the Youth Development Resource Centers- Ministry of Youth and Sports. The group, which was trained on leadership, was comprised of 35 young members from the various West Bank governorates. The group members were introduced to Leaders Organization and Leadership concepts were also discussed during the visit.



Visits to Human Rights Organizations

Under the template of the Project, “Lawyers for Citizens’ Rights”, Leaders Organization networked with a group of Human Rights Organizations that operate in the occupied Palestinian territories; whereby a visits program along with workshops were conducted during the months of May and July 2009 at the headquarters of these organizations. Such visits and workshops aimed to familiarize participants to the nature of the work of these organizations in their attempts to defend the rights of citizens as well as the challenges that face them in their work. Under this component of the Project, the teams of Addameer Prisoners’ Support, Al-Haq Organization, Human Rights Association, as well as The Independent Commission for Human Rights and the Defense for Children International/Palestine all welcomed the participants of “Lawyers for Citizens’ Rights” at their respective headquarters throughout the two months.



Leaders Participates in the Visit of the Elders

As part of its mission to provide the youth of Palestine with the opportunity to express themselves and work towards a peaceful and democratic state, Leaders Organization through its Outreach Officer participated in the meeting that took place with a group of the Elders Organization* visiting the Palestinian territories. The event revolved around the challenges that the youth of Palestine face on the political level, as well as the vision of Palestinian Youth for the future.

The trip made to Palestine by the Elders comes as part of the Elders Organization attempt to support the current efforts to resume the initiation of the Peace Talks in the region. The group was headed by Fernando Cardoso (President of Brazil 1995-2002), and included Ela Bhatt (Founder of the Self Employed Women's Association in India), Gro Brundtland (first female Prime Minister of Norway), Jimmy Carter (39th President of the United States of America), Mary Robinson (First female President of Ireland), in addition to Desmond Tutu (President of the Elders) and the businessmen Richard Branson and Jeff Scoll.

**The Elders are an independent group of eminent global leaders, brought together by Nelson Mandela, who offer their collective influence and experience to support peace building, help address major causes of human suffering and promote the shared interests of humanity.*



"We do not come to participate in negotiations, that is not our job. Rather, we come to support the attempts made towards this end. We come, before anything to listen to the people from all sides. We wish to discuss the reality of everyday life and their hopes for the future. This is necessary in order to overcome the fear and mistrust from both sides."

Gro Brundtland

Leaders Organization hosts a delegation from the European Commission

Leaders Organization hosted a European Union delegation headed by Mr. Sebastien Lorion, Focal point of the Thematic Programs. The visit came to follow the latest developments in projects funded by the European Commission in the Palestinian territories including "Lawyers for Citizens Rights" Project that was being implemented by Leaders Organization in partnership with the Palestinian Bar Association and funded by the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights "EIDHR". The Project aimed to develop the professional skills of a group of trainee lawyers to enable them to defend citizens' rights within the Palestinian territories.



During the meeting which brought together the European delegation members, Leaders staff members and the participants of the "Lawyers for Citizens' Rights" Project, the EU delegation members were informed with the latest activities and programs of Leaders organization. Furthermore, the participating lawyers presented the preliminary findings and recommendations of their researches in addition to the challenges they faced during the preparation of the reports.

Mr. Sebastien Lorion Commented that "Lawyers for Citizens' Rights" Project is very valuable in promoting the motivation of young lawyers who will in turn be the best advocates for lobbying the enforcement of the rule of law in Palestine".

Mr. Shadi Atshan, the Executive Director of Leaders Organization expressed the Organization's "deep appreciation for the European Commission's efforts in improving the human rights status in the Palestinian territories and the European Union's continuous empowerment for the young people in Palestine."

Our Publications

Three Legal Reports Published concerning the reality of Palestinian Human Rights in the territories

Leaders Organization published three legal reports that covered “Right to Education”, “Medical Errors” and “Domestic Violence against Palestinian Women”. These reports were prepared by a group of young trainee lawyers who were targeted in the Project “Lawyers for Citizens’ Rights”.



A Glimpse of the Reports

Medical Errors Research

Areas throughout the Palestinian National Authority have, in recent years, seen an emergence of medical negligence cases that resulted in some circumstances with the death of patients. These cases of negligence are neither restricted to a particular category—for those affected by medical negligence include children, adults, men and women— nor restricted to specific health centers, for these cases take place in hospitals and clinics alike, within both the private and public sector. This is in addition to the variety of errors that take place without being restricted to one kind.

This research comes as an attempt by the research team to raise awareness on this fatal issue and to draw the attention of the officials as to its importance due to its direct relation with citizens' right to life and health. In this context, the research team addressed the following:

- The nature of medical errors
- The liability for medical errors
- The current status of the medical errors in Palestine
- The relevant bodies in charge for monitoring and resolving the cases of medical errors and their responsibilities.

The researchers concluded at the end of the research a number of findings and recommendations that may contribute to some extent in mitigating and restricting the cases of medical errors in Palestine, which in turn requires the legislative bodies and executive authorities to consider their effort in addressing this issue. The recommendations include the following:

- The ratification of the Palestinian Civil Law should include articles that regulate the work of medical and health professions and thus replace the current legislation in force in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.
- The Palestinian Legislator should set deterrent penalties for those who practice the profession without license.
- The activation of the Palestinian Insurance Law No. (20) for the year 2005, particularly Article III, paragraph (j) which is related to insurance against the hazard of the profession.
- Given the cases studied throughout the research, there is a desperate need for cooperation between the governmental bodies responsible for monitoring the cases of medical errors and the various committees formed to study such cases.

Right to Education Research

As part of their effort to spread a culture of human rights in Palestine, the participants in this research focused in particular on the Right to Education which, like many other sectors throughout the Israeli occupation, witnessed a period of neglect and marginalization. However, since the inception of the PNA in 1994, the education sector has been improved and yet still demands greater efforts in order to meet the required level. In this vein, the researchers tried to answer a series of questions that intended to offer insight on the status of the Right to Education in Palestine:

- Does the Palestinian citizen enjoy his right to education under the laws in force in Palestine?
- Do the Palestinian legal texts comply with the international standards and rules that regulate the right to education?
- Is there a Palestinian Law of Education?
- What are the challenges and obstacles that face the educational process in Palestine?

The researchers concluded at the end of the research a number of findings and recommendations that may contribute to some extent in mitigating the violations of the Right to Education in Palestine, which in turn requires the legislative bodies and executive authorities to consider their effort in addressing this issue, including:

- Elementary education should be compulsory, penalty measures should be established in case of violation.
- The Palestinian Legislator is responsible for enacting a Law of Education that should comply with the international standards and regulations and should dispense the Jordanian Education Law of 1964 that remains in force in Palestine.
- The General Budget of the Palestinian National Authority should increase the budget share to be allocated for the Ministry of Education
- The principle of free education should be applied. School fees should be abolished, since they are not in accordance with laws in force.
- The Palestinian Child Law should be amended in a manner that ensures sanctions on parents who force their children to leave school.

Domestic Violence against Palestinian Women Research

As a result of the prevalence of the phenomenon of domestic violence against Palestinian women on one hand, and the inability of the judicial and legislative bodies in Palestine to protect the Palestinian women on the other hand, taking into consideration that the Palestinian legal texts are in need to comply with the international human rights standards to ensure that the Palestinian women can fully enjoy their rights to life and safety; the produced research comes as an attempt to shed light on the phenomenon of domestic violence against Palestinian women as well as the measurements used by the judicial, legislative, and executive authorities against this phenomenon.

In this vein, the research team tried to answer a series of questions aimed at providing clear legal insights onto the procedures employed by the Palestinian relevant bodies, in addition to measuring the protection that the Palestinian family receives in general, and the Palestinian women in particular, whether pertaining to legal or social protection. In this regard, the research team tried to answer the following questions:

- Dealing with the issue of domestic violence, which one prevails; Law or traditions?
- Does the Law in force in the oPt deal with the phenomenon of domestic violence against Palestinian women?
- What are the legislative solutions available to address the legislative limitations in Palestine?

The researchers concluded at the end of the research a number of findings and recommendations that may contribute to some extent in mitigating the phenomenon of domestic violence against the Palestinian women in Palestine. This in turn requires the legislative bodies and executive authorities to consider their effort in addressing this phenomenon, including the following recommendations:

- The Palestinian legislator is responsible for setting legal standards that should intend to protect the Palestinian women on one hand, and to deter the aggressor on the other. The absence of such standards and legal texts leads the Palestinian society to use the solutions offered by the tribal laws that are unfair to women.
- Regarding the Sanction Law, the Palestinian Legislator should follow the path of other legislators and omit paragraphs and articles that give excuses to men to practice violence against women. The Law should ensure equality between men and women.

- The Palestinian Authority should provide the Palestinian women who were subject to domestic violence with safe shelters in all the governorates of Palestine.

A copy of these reports can be found in the Arabic Language via:

- [Medical Errors](#)
- [Right to Education](#)
- [Domestic Violence against Palestinian Women](#)

Leaders Organization concluded “Lawyers for Citizens’ Rights” Project

Leaders Organization, in cooperation with the Palestinian Bar Association, concluded their joint project “Lawyers for Citizens’ Right” that was implemented through the year 2009 and was funded by the European Commission through the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights.

Within the frame work of the project, twenty-five lawyers from all regions of the West Bank were targeted through an integrated training program in order to enhance their skills in leadership and the defense of citizens’ rights. In addition to this, the participating lawyers were introduced to the organizations working in the field of defending human and citizens’ rights in Palestine through an integrated visits program to the human rights organizations.

“This project is an important step in strengthening the skills of the trainee lawyers where the ability of writing scientific researches is considered to be the most essential”.

- Mr. Abdullah Najajra, the Vice Dean of the Faculty of Law and Professor of Criminal Law (Al Quds University)

Leaders and the Media

Leaders Organization focuses on media coverage of all its activities and projects. Leaders adopts a media strategy aimed at reaching the largest number of people interested in youth work both through the printed media and electronic media.

Throughout the year 2009, many media outlets covered the news and activities of the Organization. Mentioned below are a few of them:

- **Maan News Agency**
- **Palestine News Network**
- **Al Quds Newspaper**
- **Al Ayyam Newspaper**
- **Salfeet Net**
- **Siraj Net**
- **Al Hayat Al Jadeedah Newspaper**
- **Dunia Al Watan**
- **Al Quds Net**
- **Palestine Future**

Maan Network radio hosts one of the members of Lawyers for Citizens' Rights

The Project Participant lawyer Fadi Alawneh was hosted in the radio program "National Discussion" in a special interview titled "The file of medical errors in Palestine," that dealt with the in force Palestinian laws on medical errors in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the role of the Ministry of Health and Palestinian Medical Association in pursuing complaints and issues related to medical errors. Other guests hosted during the radio program included Dr. Jawad Awwad, Palestinian Medical Associate and Dr. Shawqi Subha, Director of the complaints department at the Palestinian Ministry of Health.

Social Electronic Networks

Leaders Organization seeks to apply modern media outlets in its attempt to support freedom of expression, human rights, democratic principles and the defense of basic rights. Leaders Organization is able to address such principles through its promotion of modern media tools amongst the youth. In addition, the Organization works to provide Palestinian youth with training opportunities and youth scholarships via its Facebook group.

Leaders Organization has established a few groups that utilize modern media for different purposes, including:

- “Leaders for Citizens’ Rights” Facebook Group

The group follows up on legal news and cases that deal with human rights, including alerts and violations, whereby the monitoring board is responsible for sending such messages and updates to the members. In addition to this, the group is responsible for creating pressure groups in cases that the members adopt to follow up on.

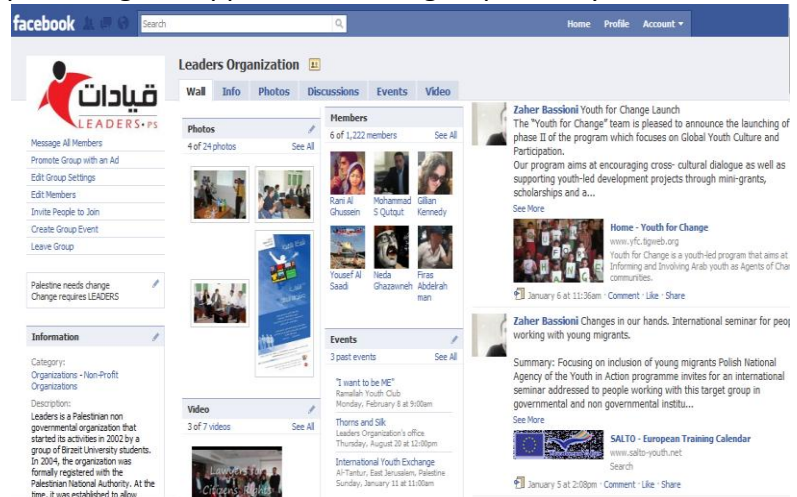
- Art of Photography Blog

Leaders Organization created a blog whereby it publishes the photographs taken by its youth members who participated in the Project “Art of Photography” which aimed to develop the capacity of young people and to encourage them to continue their work.



- Leaders Organization Facebook Group

Leaders Organization created its own group on the social network Facebook, in order to announce to the youth of Palestine training opportunities, available academic scholarships in addition to conferences and local activities. Furthermore, the group’s administrators respond to those with inquiries or those who need help in filling out applications. The group already has 1200 members.



- Leaders Organization’s YouTube Channel

Leaders Organization launched their own page on YouTube, where it presents documentary films on the activities that it has implemented. The Organization is currently working on updating this channel.

