



Al-Maqdese *for* Society Development - MSD

Protecting Workers' Rights Project

Grantee name:	Al-Maqdese <i>for</i> Society Development (MSD)
Grant number:	2010-779
Grant amount:	27,300 \$
Project Title:	Protecting Workers Rights
Location:	East Jerusalem
Duration:	One year (01/07/2010-30/06/2010)
Document:	Narrative report
Reporting period:	01/07/2010-30/09/2010
Submission to:	National Endowment <i>for</i> Democracy (NED)

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1. PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

To raise legal awareness of workers' rights, especially among laborers in East Jerusalem

2. PROJECT SUMMARY:

Due to the grant agreement signed on 27/06/2010 between The National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and Al-Maqdese for Society development (MSD). *Al-Maqdese* launched its new project "Protecting Workers' Rights" on 01/07/2010.

We in *Al-Maqdese* choose our projects from Palestinians real, pressuring and challenging needs in Jerusalem. According to this methodology, the PR & Resources Development Department at *Al-Maqdese* prepared, designed and wrote a proposal to protect Jerusalemites workers' rights in the Israeli labor market specially settlements.

Through this project and as a first phase, *Al-Maqdese* will provide Jerusalemites workers with cluster of awareness raising services and activities, in order to decrease their suffering due to violating their rights by the Israeli employer. And so, *Al-Maqdese* will conduct several numbers of legal rights awareness sessions and on-site briefing sessions in Al-Maqdese's offices, work places and Jerusalem neighborhoods to raise their awareness of their rights under the Israeli's labor law. Moreover, *Al-Maqdese* will carry out a campaign "Workers Rights are Human Rights" for Palestinian workers in East Jerusalem to help them get their rights. Besides, preparing and printing different publications which tackle the issue of workers' rights such as legal booklet, pamphlets, newsletters, posters...and many other activities.

This report will cover all activities carried out by the project team in the reporting period which is 3 months (01/07-30/09/2010). During the first three months, project team implemented the following activities: 1. held **4** legal rights awareness sessions 2. held **2** On-site briefing sessions 3. Prepare for the campaign "Workers Rights are Human Rights" 4. Design and print **2000** copies of *Know Your Rights* legal booklet which cover workers' rights under the Israeli's labor law 5. Send 100 mass text and 110 cell messages to workers.

3. IMPLEMENTED ACTIVITIES:

3.1 legal rights awareness sessions:

The project team organized and held **4** legal rights awareness sessions for Jerusalemites workers. The sessions covered different workers types.

At first, **2** sessions organized to tackle workers basic rights according to the Israeli's labor law. Specially, work hours, rest times, overtime, holidays and vacation days, sick leaves, minimum wages, retrieved taxes and so on, in addition, to answer tens of inquiries and questions raised by the participants.

These two sessions allocated to males (Workers), as it were organized at evenings due to work hours which end at the evening.

Another **2** sessions organized and allocated to females (workers) as most of them work part times and in specific days of the week. This opens the opportunity to organize sessions at the morning which suits most female's workers. During the sessions the legal consultant explained for workers their rights due to the law with special attention to rights of working pregnant women, rights of mothers after birth, birth vacation, dismissal and resignation, as a result of birth, adoption rights, insurance benefits and additional rights of the child from the workplace.

1st session was held on 05/08/2010, at the Women Center in Al-Thouri neighborhood. 15 women from Al-Thouri and Silwan neighborhood attended the session. Through the session Al-Maqdese's lawyer Mr. Alaa' Adeleh manage the session, and explained women worker rights according to the Israeli labor laws. For instance, he explained for them the national insurance laws, which give them privileges and due to their ignorance on that they don't get their rights. They were very excited to the information given through the session, and the floor was open to all at the end of the session to ask questions, and the lawyer answered their inquires and questions.

2nd session was held on 20/08/2010, at Al-Hayah Association for Elderly in Shoufat neighborhood. 20 women from Shoufat, Biet Hanina and Al-Assawieh attended the session. Through the session Al-Maqdese's Lawyer explained the women worker rights and retired age, and the women rights after retired from work. After that a discussion was took place, and the floor was open for questions and inquires to be answered.

3rd session was held on 02/09/2010, at the Committee for the protection of Silwan's land and property office. 25 men from Silwan and Ras Al-Amoud who work at settlements attended the session. Through the session Al-Maqdese's lawyers explain for participants the basic rights under the Israeli Labor Law. Besides, opened the floor for questions and inquires to be answered and discussed. Their questions and inquires were focused on work-related injuries, and workers rights accordingly, the amount of compensation, besides, workers rights at the case of dismissal from work or leaving work.

4th session was held on 18/09/2010, at Silwan Sport Club in Ras Al-Amoud. 31 men from Silwan, Ras Al-Amoud and Al-Thouri attended the session; most of them work

at settlements. Through the session Al-Maqdese's lawyer explained workers rights who hold Jerusalem ID and work for an Israeli employer in (shops, hotels, factories...).

At the end of each session the legal booklet *Know your Rights* were distributed on participants. Most of participants were thankful, as, the book is written in a simple way and include most of workers' rights under the Israeli labor law.

Through the 4 sessions Al-Maqdese's lawyer noticed that most of workers (females and males) are ignorant of their rights under the Israeli labor laws. Accordingly, many of them are exploited, for instance, most of them don't know that they should receive a salary slip (Tlosh) from the employer and so they can't prove their rights if he exposed to an exploitation.

3.2 On-site briefing sessions:

2 on-site sessions were organized and held in Silwan and Wadi Al-Jouz neighborhoods. These two sessions tackle the issue of workers' rights due the international law, especially the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Also, it addressed many international conventions and declarations on protecting workers' rights, of which, Convention on freedom of association (to form trade unions), 1949, Abolition of Forced Labor Convention, 1957, Convention on the Prohibition of discrimination in employment, 1958, Minimum Wage Fixing Convention, 1970, Social Security Rights Convention, 1982, Night Work Convention, 1990 and Child Labor Convention, 1999. As right to work is one of the fundamental rights in International legitimacy.



Picture (2): one of the on-site briefing sessions in Silwan neighborhood

1st session was held on 20/09/2010, at Al-Maqdese's office in Wadi Al-Jouz. 18 male and female attended the session. Al-Maqdese's lawyer explained for participants the basic rights under the Israeli Labor Law and under the international laws as they are living under occupation.

2nd session was held on 30/09/2010, at the Committee for the protection of Silwan's land and property office. 25 male and females attended the session. Al-Maqdese's lawyer explained for participants the basic rights under the Israeli Labor Law and under the international laws as they are living under occupation.

At the end of each session the legal booklet *Know your Rights* were distributed on participants.

3.3 Designing and printing *Know Your Rights* legal booklet:

Al-Maqdese legal unit prepared printed and distributed legal booklet which cover workers' rights under the Israeli's labor law.

This booklet considers first of its kind in Palestine according to its subject as no other publication covers the issue of workers' rights and the Israeli Labor Law. It covers all Israeli laws which address and organize rights and commitments as set forth in the Israeli Labor Law. Also, it covers many of the collective labor agreements concluded with the Israeli Histadrut (the Israeli body which defends workers' rights in Israel). Where these collective agreements are considered as a modification to the law because they are collective agreements and give workers

better work conditions than what is set forth in the Israeli labor law. For instance, a collective agreement for workers in the hotel sector, a collective agreement on the nursing sector, a collective agreement related to the security sector, the rights of workers in the construction sector, and the rights of workers in the hygiene sector. Workers in these sectors are the most benefited from such collective agreements.

Whereas, in order to protect workers in the Israeli settlements which are considered the most violated, the booklet contains the Israeli Supreme Court orders. The orders state that; the Israeli Labor Law applies to any Palestinian worker who works for any Israeli employer, and not the Jordanian Law as set out in the previous Military Order. Which means that; Palestinian workers will benefit from the Israeli labor law privileges, such as, minimum wages, compensations in the case of firing and dismissal from place of work.

In addition, a whole section was allocated to the rights of working women. The section concentrates on their fundamental rights, as, rights of working pregnant women, insurance benefits and birth vacation and so on.

The booklet content was formulated by specialized lawyers on workers' rights under the Israeli labor law. Taking into account writing all rights and privileges in a way which enables anyone reading the booklet to know his rights without the need for a lawyer to explain the rights. By this we achieved our main objective of the booklet which is benefiting the largest number of Palestinians (workers) when they read this booklet.

The booklet is distributed to beneficiaries who visit the Legal Clinic to get services which ensure distributing it to large and different segments of the Palestinian society in East Jerusalem. The booklet was uploaded on *Al-Maqdese* website to make it accessible to anyone who visits the website. To download the booklet please visit the link below:

http://www.al-maqdese.org/arabic/news/plugins/spaw/uploads/files/worker_rights.pdf



Picture (2): The Legal booklet *Know Your Rights* outside cover from both sides.

3.4 Send mass text and cell messages:

The project team sent 100 cell messages showing workers that they have rights noting for them the ability to call *Al-Maqdese* if they need any help.

Mass text reached 110 beneficiaries. When they call to take services on legal and civic rights from the Legal Clinic, the Legal Clinic team asked them if they face any problems with their employers or in work places. If yes they asked them to visit the Legal Clinic to meet the workers' rights project team. Who provide them with the needed services, give them legal booklet and follow up with them through mass texts and phone calls.



Picture (1): A Palestinian worker visited the project team asking for legal advices and guidance and he was given the legal booklet *Know Your Rights*

Besides, the project team will coordinate with the IT department to upload the project awareness raising publications on *Al-Maqdese* official website in order to reach larger segment of beneficiaries.

3.5 prepare for the campaign “Workers Rights are Human Rights”:

Through the previous three months, the project team prepared the awareness raising campaign for Palestinian workers in East Jerusalem under the slogan “Workers Rights are Human Right” publications and material. For instance, the campaign posters which hold slogans and fragments; against the violation of the rights of the Palestinian workers; to raise workers awareness of their rights; and encourage them ask for their rights, were prepared. Besides that, the campaign program and activities are set. It will start from November 2010 till June 2011. It will include public events such as conferences, public meetings... etc, distributing of publications, posters, material and many others.

4. Main accomplishments of the first period 01/07-30/09/2010:

1. Print 2,000 copies of the legal booklet which covers workers' rights under the Israeli's labor law. The booklet is distributed through *Al-Maqdese* two offices in Wadi al-Jouz and Al-Ram. Besides, the different activities which are implemented by the project team.
2. Held 4 legal rights awareness sessions for females and males workers. More than 120 participants participate in the sessions. A specialized lawyer in workers' rights under the Israeli labor law present the sessions. Through the sessions, workers awareness of their rights were raised, workers' inquires and questions were answered, the legal booklet was distributed and some urgent cases were referred to *Al-Maqdese* Legal Clinic for legal representation.
3. Hold 2 on-site briefing sessions in two different neighborhoods in Jerusalem. The sessions included a talk with labors, to listen to their problems with their employers, giving them solutions, guide and advice them, explain their rights under Israeli labor law, distributing the legal booklet and referral urgent cases to *Al-Maqdese* Legal Clinic for legal support.

4. The direct and daily communication with labors wherever they are in labor market and in their work places through the mass text and cell messages which were collected from labors to contact them. Through this technique workers are provided with advices and guidance from distance, daily and in their work places. This lead to connect workers faster, daily, and in the moment of violation if occurred.

4.1 Relevance of activities to the planned objective:

Through a participatory medium-term evaluation session (with a participation from the project team, PR department team and administration), MSD evaluated the relevance of implemented activities and the project objective to ensure relevance of outputs and then impact.

All participants come up with the same conclusion, the implemented activities relevant significantly to the project objective. Besides, they have led in total to reach the project objective (To raise legal awareness of workers’ rights, especially among laborers in East Jerusalem). Further, the implemented activities achieved results better than its target. Where legal representation offers to some cases, some beneficiaries have the ability to avoid violations that could have been exposure due to the ignorant of the Israeli labor law and to claim their rights when knowing their rights.

Table (1): shows relevance of implemented activities to the project objective, where a scale of five was used (1 is the lowest and 5 is the highest):

Project objective	Implemented activities	<u>Relevance of activities to the objective</u>				
		1	2	3	4	5
To raise legal awareness of workers’ rights, especially among laborers in East Jerusalem	1	✓				
	2	✓				
	3	✓				
	4	✓				

The above table evidenced that the four implemented activities through the project first quarter (01/07-30/09/2010) as mentioned under section 4. “Main accomplishments of the first period 01/07-30/09/2010” are 100% relevant to the project objective. And they participate in achieving the project objective by raising awareness of workers of their rights through the mentioned activities.