

Young women mediators and board trainee for women, peace and security

A handbook on how to train and engage cross generations;
drawing from experiences from Operation 1325 and the
Palestinian Centre for Peace and Democracy



2020

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Introduction/Foreword

When women of all ages have a seat at the table, decisions on women, peace and security will have more effect. Women of all ages need to reflect diverse experiences and expertise from different fields. The experience of discrimination and marginalization is multifaceted and is a resource when working towards holistic and sustainable solutions on conflict situations. The agenda for women, peace and security requires society to search for a wider understanding of human security in which women's human rights is central. The nexus between social, economic and political policy must be integrated. Crisis and conflict in relation to humanitarian needs must be worked on in parallel with development issues for a humane and sustainable planet. The inclusion of all women is the core for this work.

As the UNSCR 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security was adopted in 2015 an instrument highlighted the importance of greater consideration for youth inclusion in the work for peace and security. Operation 1325 translated this to making it about work at home, including young women and girls with a particular focus on intersectionality. This has been reflected in Operation 1325's international collaboration in the MENA region with its network to include junior and senior women, and in Albania and Turkey to include or establish direct partnerships with youth organizations.

The Palestinian Centre for Peace and Democracy (PCDP) has since its establishment in 1992 given special attention to the vulnerable, poor and marginalized sectors. Young women continues to be the most marginalized sector in Palestine and represent 60% of the targeted groups that the PCDP works with. The issuing of the UNSCR 1325 and 2250 enabled a major entrance to merge the youth to work for peace

and democracy; the issues that PCDP is based upon. The PCPD target all the districts of the West Bank in a time when there are difficulties with working in Gaza and Jerusalem. The organization has also experience of working on the regional level with Libya and Tunisia, implementing a project on women and human security. The PCDP is currently implementing a project for youth on the Freedom of Religion and Belief in Iraq, Lebanon and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, countering the four pillars of discrimination.

Concept of the Board Trainee Program

The Board Trainee Program has been carried out every year since 2016 by Operation 1325 and is now doing its fifth cohort. Civil society has been organized into women's organizations for over a hundred years with a strong voice for women's rights and international peace. Sweden's long tradition of popular movements has influenced the state in fundamental ways with support and protection for civil society organizations seen as a pillar of democracy and human rights. The way people are organized has naturally changed over the decades with an important addition of popular movements and activism performed through digital channels like social media. Another change which may be observed is the shift from CSO-membership to ad hoc engagement for a single issue, like a petition or a protest.

The PCDP, as other civil society organizations, believe in and abide with the principles of human rights in general and women rights in particular. The PCDP have a humanitarian mission which is represented in making a change in the Palestinian society and the world. The

change that it seeks to achieve needs the participation and contribution of women and youth, who are capable and interested to change the world to a better place they want to live in. When women do participate in the change, they will definitely end the marginalization that is due to the religious and social restrictions. This change will provide the needed space for the women to be activists, create peace and security, which all the Palestinians dream of. The Palestinian women suffer the most, in addition to the suffering caused by the Israeli Occupation, they face social restrictions that is imposed on them within the habits and customs in the patriarchal society. In a society that treats women as second-class citizens and imposes on them a number of feudal unhuman values, much is required from the Palestinian woman. She has to participate in the struggle to free the land, she has to find a job opportunity to be independent, and she has to be involved in the solving the internal conflicts, especially the political one between the West Bank and Gaza, in addition to the importance of her participation in the negotiations in solving the conflict between the Palestinian and Israeli sides.

The Concept of Training

Operation 1325 wanted to facilitate for young women to have access to membership based CSOs by providing them with relevant information. Operation 1325 also wanted to learn from young women about how to organize civil society in an inclusive way. The need to spread information about how civil society organizations are organized is linked to a segregated society in which certain groups of the population has less access to membership-based services and channels for socio-political inclusion and influence. To be a democratic and open

women's organization required Operation 1325 to find a way of including those furthest away. In the trainee concept there lies an anticipation of the future prospects for individuals, largely stemming from workplaces especially in the private sector. Since the discrimination of women in the workplace is proven statistically every year this seemed like a fair word to reclaim. As young women with immigrant background are even more marginalized, starting from early childhood education to academic education and in first employment, it was desired that the board trainee program in every possible way show openness and flexibility to meet needs which can only be identified by the person herself. Support from a mentor in the board was deemed to ease individuals into an CSO and providing personal support and network which is often lacking for some groups of young women.

The issue of involving the youth in conflict resolution and peace processes is not new in the Palestinian society. Since the beginning of the last century when the Arab Women Union was established women have continued the struggle and demanded their own rights. The peak of women political participation was during the first Intifada between 1987 to 1991, where women participated side by side with men being engaged through the civil society organizations that was the public face of the political parties. However, in 1994 and with the establishment of the Palestinian Authority, the role of women deteriorated, and their rights and achievements began to decrease gradually. Today, the marginalization of women and youth continues to be seen in the high rates of exploitation in working places and unemployment. PCDP have given special attention to avoid these problems by implementing interventions against institutions and by enrolling youths in internship positions, as well as capacity building programs, to increase their knowledge of the needs

and give them space for their activism. The PCDP consult its targeted groups to obtain their ideas and initiatives to ease their situations. The achievements are seen through the targeted groups, where they are the initiators, the planners and the implementers. This has created a great commitment between the targeted groups since they feel that the initiatives are their own. The staff at the PCDP have also learn a lot from the youth as the activities are hosted in the halls of the community based organizations, to support and reinforce the membership of the youth there. With the UNSCR 1325, the effectiveness of the targeted youths and their community based organizations increased. Now with the social media outbreak, all the citizens have a safe platform to be active and the PCPD is using this technology to spread the values of democracy and gender equality.

Selection of Participants

The number of participants in the Board Trainee Program has grown over the years. Operation 1325 has used its social media channels as well as other CSOs in order to announce and advertise the application period to the Board Trainee Program. Using the established channels has not been sufficient to increase outreach and resulted in a predominantly Swedish-background, academic and career-ready applicant. Operation 1325 has increased its activities with young women in segregated housing areas, women with skills in languages spoken in diaspora communities and women with an experience of migration and intercultural background. Through a wider network more communication channels were established, and recruitment could also be wider. Interns at Operation 1325 who match the target group in age and interest have also been instrumental in

widening the network. The language used for adverts has been tweaked in order to be understandable and appealing. Special attention was put on not being excluding in public information.

The criteria for selection is largely interest in the Women, Peace and Security agenda, knowledge about international affairs and cooperation, activism in civil society or local community and the wish to engage with and support other women. In order to maximize the potential activism, it has been key to protect the individual applicant from exhaustion or false expectations. Therefore, the selection process scrutinized if applicants were mainly looking for employment, could not set aside time required or wanted to be absent from the program from the onset. One participant decided to resign from the board trainee program when she was employed by an authority which also acts as donor. The same need for integrity and separation of roles concerned employment at the Ministry of foreign affairs. The advert was written so that principles of democracy and protection against exclusion through the statement that Operation 1325 has no religious or political party affiliation. This was also followed-up in the selection of applicants so that the group would be welcoming for all.

Currently, at PCPD there are about 500 young interns who believe and abide by the mission and vision of the organization. These youth are from the different regions of the West Bank and they are targeted in the projects related to equality, gender and UNSCR 1325. The second target group are the community-based organizations and their members. The criteria for choosing the participants include the relation to the inhabitants, the education level and an emphasis on the ones who live in the marginalized, poorest and most isolated regions (Area C) as in accordance to Oslo Agreement. The PCPD took into

consideration a number of conditions for the group members to enable them to participate in various activities by the PCDP, especially the media ones. These conditions include the experience, knowledge and history of the women movement. Activists were also given the opportunity to join, in order for them to reach a platform to experience their activism in the public sphere. After the capacity building training, the trainees put forward ideas for project implementation. They suggested names of women political leaders that they wanted to meet and escort. During these meetings, the youths had the chance to ask questions and give presentations. These meetings reinforced the self-trust, who did not find these women leaders as super-politicians and they declared that they could be similar to them, since they have the knowledge and skills that allow them to be leaders in their societies. These political women were chosen based on their activism and not their political or social status. The same applied to the trainees who come from different political and social backgrounds. What was similar between all of them was their interest in UNSCR 1325; the marginalization that they experience by the male political leaders as well as the habits and cultures that are patriarchal.

Preparation of the Board/ Mentors

The mentorship program was carried out since the very first cohort of the Board Trainee Program at Operation 1325. It was positive for the board members and also a component which was seen as important for the trainees. Instructions about mentorship came early in the program but not at the very first meeting which created some curiosity and excitement. It also provided the opportunity to know the trainee personally for a matching to

be successful. When the board trainee program grew it was more difficult to find suitable mentors. In the first years there had been trainees who had two mentors who cooperated. In the recent years one mentor has had two trainees in order to cover the demand. We have also had alumni from the Board Trainee Program be a mentor which has worked as a supportive partnership for the trainee and as exposure to leadership tasks for the alumni.

Each trainee was matched with a mentor according to her place of living or work, her educational background or expressed interests. At one occasion a trainee requested for another mentor with a more specialized background knowledge. This request was feasible because the trainee had high ambitions and showed much initiative. The employed/professional trainer for the board trainee program has contributed with individual coaching sessions in particular situations but not shouldered mentorship which was reserved for volunteer board members. In this way the way into volunteering and activism was strengthened. Mentors have met their trainees individually to get to know each other, learn about the trainee's passion and goals and to share what engages the mentor. They have then attended public events about women, peace and security together and represented Operation 1325. Some relationships have been more active than others and have organized public events and information-sessions together. One of these is the annual Book- and library fair in which a number of volunteers and the trainee shared information and organized a seminar under the leadership of the board member mentor. Other opportunities have been public speaking events as university student organizations in which a trainee has invited her mentor to speak. Other mentors have actively promoted their trainee to take on roles in the organization like chairmanship

and secretary during annual general meetings and participation in the election commission.

At least once a year a trainee has attended a board meeting and sat around the table with her mentor. This was an opportunity to meet more women engaged in the Operation 1325 board, to learn how organizational decision-making is done and to understand the implementation of statutes. Mentors have also provided reference for job applications for the trainee if the relationship developed. Trainees have appreciated the perspective and the experience of the older mentors and they have expressed how inspired they are and sometimes also surprise at commonalities in the struggles for women's rights. The mentorship has officially been closed by the end of the year whilst some personal relationships have continued.

PCPD discusses all its programs and projects during the general assembly meeting, who act as the parliament, and they elect a board of directors for two years. The board has to follow up the work of the executive team who implements the annual monthly plan and has to abide by the budget. The working team got the approval of the general assembly to implement the Board Trainee Program; however, the board do not interfere in the choice of the political leaders; an issue which is kept for the trainees themselves.

The meetings between the trainees and the political leaders were mainly conducted in Bethlehem and Ramallah, as was stated in the project, where these political leaders served as mentors to the young women. During these meetings, the youths escorted the mentors and learnt a lot about their work, activism, experiences and challenges that they face. This experience was rich and affected the youths positively. One of the participants have stated that before the project she

did not care about these leaders since she thought that they reached their leadership positions through undemocratic ways, but she continued to say: "After meeting them, I realized that they suffered a lot of challenges to reach to those positions and we have to support them and learn from them." The Palestinian women participated in all the stages of struggle. On the level of rights, the Palestinian woman and through the first Intifada, has achieved a number of political, legal and social rights; however, after 1994, and after the establishment of the Palestinian Authority where most of its leaders came back from the Arab reactionary countries; they brought with the Arab patriarchal mentality. To defend themselves, and to keep their past achievements the Palestinian women activists established their non-governmental organizations in different fields, most of the mentors the interns have met had a major role in the establishment of the Palestinians NGOs.

The trainees were invited by the mentors to attend a number of activities like meetings and workshops. In their turn the trainees will invite the mentors to the PCPD activities and events that will be taking place in 2020 mainly the International Women Day, the International Labor Day, the Palestinian Independence Day, the International Democracy Day and other national and international occasions. As on the social and human level, there are regular contacts between the trainees and the mentors through telephones and social media. The trainees have their own evaluation to their mentors, which is different from each other, a number of them considered their mentors as a school, others said the mentors were not an added value as they expected before meetings. Despite this evaluation, all are having excellent relations and it is expected that such relations will be having a positive impact on the interns' life.

The Program of the Year of Board Trainee Program

Operation 1325 have four themes that have been the focus of the training program at one training session each. The training program is mainly carried out by the coordinator with some guest-lecturers that visit as specialist. The themes are:

- Engagement
- Strategies
- Leadership
- Future

At the PCDP six main topics are covered during the training program:

- The history of humankind when women were taking the power during the Primitive Communal System
- The struggles of the women movements since the French Revolution in 1789 and movements demanding freedom and democratic systems
- The UN Resolutions related to women and youth; mainly CEDAW, UNSCR 1325 and UNSCR 2250
- The importance of these resolutions on the life of the Palestinian woman
- Mechanisms to develop the Palestinian laws and legislations to be in line with the international legitimacy
- Getting deep into the details and content of UNSCR 1325 as a catalyst to enthuse the trainees to build self-confidence to confront the challenges and make achievements

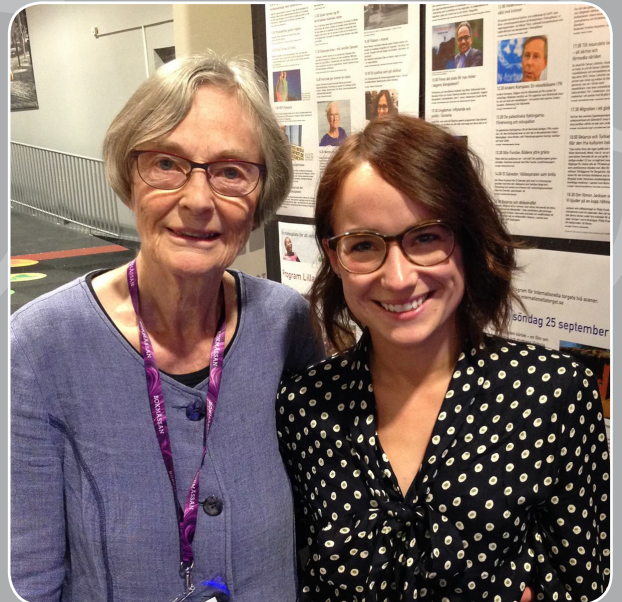
Sample Agenda Engagement

Operation 1325

- Welcome: explain that the Board trainee program wants to be a safe room supporting inclusivity and learning, explore any need for ground rules, invite dialogue and curiosity
- Presentations: say your name, the subway station you got off at and a fruit you like
- Introduction to Operation 1325
- Exercise: River of life - split into groups, which happenings in your life led to your engagement tonight
- Introduction to statutes, member organizations, democratic decision-making principles of CSO, representation
- Exercise: Knowledge hunter - split into new groups, formulate a question on the topic Women and girls in peace and conflict, and appoint a knowledge hunter to find answers from the other groups
- Introduction to activities and strategic priorities of Operation 1325, provide links to reference reading for further knowledge, give practical information
- Exercise: 45 second speech - split into new group, speak on the topic which fuels your engagement
- Evaluation: interactive

The PCDP

- The training process depended on participation; being away from the traditional banking training system. The training process was more critical, participatory and based on dialogue. Throughout the trainees were able to





analyze cases and to get to result and decisions. Further, the youth were interested to join another project that PCPD is implementing which was conducting live TV sessions, and they succeeded in making a session on UNR 1325.

- Training on the National Unity: The trainees did an exercise on the national unity on a programmatic basis (political – economic – socio – struggle). On the ground, the two parties in conflict did not agree and the youngsters believed that if women were part of the negotiation processes and part of the decision makers, then the reconciliation will have been achieved earlier.

Sample Agenda Strategies

Operation 1325

- Check-in round
- Introduction to strategies used by Operation 1325 spreading information, influencing decision-makers and strengthening capacity in women CSO
- Exercise: which strategies for engagement do I use, which roles do I play in society and which methods do I like, which are my networks and my platforms. List, draw, energies, try out.
- Introduction: what is Operation 1325 currently planning and where is participation needed
- Exercise: split into working groups and plan for activity, spreading information, campaigning, representation
- Alternative to this session is to have a guest speaker specialist in social media and communication

The PCDP

- Exercise
- How have people seen that something changed in you, what could they see with their eyes and hear with their ears?
- Which 'good example' did a mentor give you and what did it motivate you to do?
- What positive thing did somebody say about your activities?
- What positive change has somebody gone through after seeing you?
- Which CBO, CSO or network are you active in and in which capacity? How has that changed during the year? Who gave you individual or personal support for this change?
- Which new leadership skill did you make use of and how?
- Which questions did you lobby or advocate for? Who was lobbied? Which change did it bring?
- Which methods from the trainings and from the program do you remember being most transformative?
- Most of the trainees agreed that their families played a major role in encouraging them to be involved in the political and social work; they regarded that the reason that they reached to that position is their families, mainly the father, mother, sisters and brothers; at a time when the extended families were not happy of that.

Sample Agenda Leadership

Operation 1325

- Check-in Round: How are you right now? What do you need to feel safe and to participate fully?
- Introduction to leadership: different styles of leadership.
- Listening exercise: Stand in two lines facing each other, listen habitually to a story with middle-low affect. Notice how it was to be heard. Repeat but listen blindly i.e. switching off the inner monologue of commentary, analysis and interpretations. Notice any difference in both roles. Repeat but listen for underlying feelings and universal needs of the speaker. Notice any difference. Summarize learnings in whole group.
- Exercise: identify your core values – walk silently arounds sheets of paper with universal needs/core values and select which five that appeal the most. Link your values to your leadership style.
- Exercise: Decision-making with Stephen Covey matrix - jot down things you have to do on notes, draw a matrix with Urgent, Non-urgent, Important, Non-important and stick your notes into the matrix. Explore which core value is activated in the Important box. Move things between boxes. Debrief in whole group.
- Exercise: choose a story of personal experience of leadership and tell the group. The group suggests core values which came were practiced in that story, which characteristics make up your personal style, which competencies you showed, which responsibility you take for your society, which road your development may take.

- Round of reflections about what was learned and what I commit to
- End with poem
- Alternative to this session is to conduct a focus group discussion.

The PCDP

- **An example of the skills of the leaders:** Throughout the training, the leadership skills were approached and the trainees gave their ideas; they were the spokespersons, they planned for the meetings, and put forward some questions to be asked to the leaders. They were trained on how to talk to the camera, and this was within the international standards.
- An exercise about a young woman called Hanan from Emmaus, and her story with her father and brother. Hanan is an activist in the society and she works at a farm. This story was distributed on the four groups and they were asked to differentiate between the political and rights challenges, in addition to their humanitarian needs, and the techniques of challenges to live in dignity and freedom.
- The trainer asked the youth whether they were invited by some based organizations to attend some activities or hold a lecture or a workshop. This opened the chance to the trainees to talk about their various experiences; where Anbara was asked to participate in more than one political workshop; and one TV program. All the trainees participated in street demonstrations against killing of women within the activities of “Talqat” (a feminist movement against killing women). Taqwa stated that she now writes, and others are reading; while Nur talked about the self confidence that she acquired especially when she meets others.

Sample Agenda Future

Operation 1325

- Introduction and updates
- Trainees report back, use the group as network for feed-back
- Exercise: Vision Board - visualize a future of your leadership, use color and form and beyond concrete images towards symbolism, mood and intuition.
- Evaluations of the program, drafting educational concepts, feed-forward
- Prayer for leaders by Donna Hughes or another alternative ending.

Board Trainees Participate in Activities and Advocacy

In addition to participating in the work of the Operation 1325 board, the trainees are also invited and encouraged to participate in the work of the organization and taken on the tasks of a volunteer for Operation 1325. The trainees come with their own networks and experiences which are appreciated and needed for the organization. It also has provided the trainee with an opportunity to give back, contribute to the work for Women, Peace and Security and to test new leadership skills.

There is a wide variety of activities which have successfully been performed. Often information-sharing has been done by board trainees and by board members or employees in cooperation. The trainees have posted and shared news and campaigns in social media and have written articles in various magazines, especially targeting students and civil society organization. The trainees have

also organized events on International Women's Day, the Feminist Festival and at the Fair for Human Rights. They have moderated public discussions and they have given presentations and led workshops about Operation 1325 or a topic at their workplaces, at schools, and in a language other than Swedish which they speak.

One board trainee organized a seminar in the parliament about women's participation in a certain peace process. It was supported and supervised by her mentor and the Operation 1325 staff in order to be in line with the CSO's policies, but the brunt of the work was done by one board trainee and the success was due to her skillful and enthusiastic voluntary engagement.

For the trainees at the PCDP it was clear that they were in need to develop their skills and learn more. Therefore, the PCDP gave them the opportunity to join other projects. Some were involved in the Youth Feminist Forum, which is a group of youths who are interested to reach decision making positions, while others joined a project in Conflict Resolution within the International Legitimacy. Most of the trainees stated that by the end of this project, they will be interested to join other projects during 2020. The trainees wanted to evaluate the project, as a result, they conducted a one-evaluation day to talk about their experiences, which will be published in a booklet and distributed to others.

Three of the trainees succeeded in emphasizing on UNSCR 1325 through Al-Quds TV, where they presented this resolution in a clever way, as if it talks about the Palestinian woman. They talked about the absence of women in conflict resolution, and the great need of involving women to achieve peace.

Candidacy to Elected Positions

One of the hopes for the graduates of the Board Trainee Program was to increase the candidacy to elected positions in Operation 1325 and other CSOs. After five years of enabling young women and providing guidance this has not had the desired effect since the board trainees have not approached member organizations with their candidacy. The young women are not nominated to elected positions representing the member organizations of Operation 1325. The reasons for this expressed by board trainees during evaluations is that they lack the time and the capacity to plan ahead. They often have many engagements and need to stay flexible to move to other cities within Sweden and abroad for work. There is no indication that diminishes the relevance of the organization or the program. The election commission of Operation 1325 has tried to promote young candidates to chairmanship. This has been a welcomed effort and encouraged. However, experience and networks have in the end weighed heavier than bringing in new perspectives and knowledge. It is also considered a too great risk to engage an unknown person for a key position if she has not been an active member before.

The trainees of PCDP have stated during evaluation sessions that they want to run for the election of the local governments, which is expected to take place in the summer of 2021. They experience that they have high confidence, as well as feel like this is their rights and they have a responsibility towards the need to change and develop the work of these local governments, to be more responsive to the needs of the citizens in general and the needs of women in particular. However, one of the conditions to run for the local elections is an age limit of a minimum of 25 years, and in the parliamentary elections the candidates need to be 28 years or

older. This a big difficulty since most of the trainees are under the age limit and unable to run as candidates. Although the trainees are not able to run for the elections, they have still showed interest to join a project on the importance of the electoral process at the PCDP. The project, Your Voice Counts, demand the holding of legislative and presidential elections in the summer of 2020 and aims to increase the percentage of the youth who register to vote in the elections.

Study Trips

The Board Trainee Program at Operation 1325 have organized study trips to meet partner organizations abroad twice. The first time it was an effort done by the trainees independently from the program coordinator with much individual initiative and leadership. Only later in the process were the roles and responsibilities clarified which was important in order for funds to be managed correctly, the name of Operation 1325 and any association with the organization and its partner organizations to be used correctly and the responsibility for the use of the grant be managed. The study trip was an opportunity to exposure and learning which was not possible to replace with any other opportunity. The trainees remained actively volunteering and collaborating with Operation 1325 for years afterwards. The second time the writing of the application was done in a collective effort but still independently for the coordinator. Participants in the study trip were invited from different year groups and the coordinator also joined. A very well-organized plan of meetings with both new and old partner organizations was carried out. Afterwards the trainees shared information about the trip, about the partner organizations' issues and about Operation 1325's aims.

Trainees were also invited to take part in a conference abroad about UNSCR 2250 but at that opportunity nobody had the possibility to take leave from studies and work. The trainee program is not a full-time commitment and cannot take top priority in the trainee's life.

The trainees of the Board Trainee Program at the PCDP have joined the PCDP to mark the 8th of March. The trainees joined the group who planned to visit factories and talk to the women laborers and get to know more about their working conditions. In addition, they have planned a session themselves to conduct workshops on UNSCR 1325 to students at schools, thus marking International Women's Day and giving special attention to equality. The PCDP have also invited some of the trainees to a planning session for 2020, where they contributed by putting their recommendations and suggestions for the work of the organization in the upcoming years, where the UNSCR 1325 will be a main topic. Some of the participants at the project "Women's Mediation School", supported by Operation 1325, took part in the TV sessions that the PCPD is implementing through the local TV channels; where they prepared researches and scenarios to lead sessions. They talked frankly about the situation of the Palestinian women and how they are marginalized. These TV sessions were considered as a media forum to spread and to disseminate UNSCR 1325 to the community, where the youth asked for the ending of the patriarchal domination and ending the marginalization of women.

Mentorship Program

At Operation 1325 the experiences of mentorship vary among the mentors. Some of the mentors have a previous experience of mentoring, while for others this is the first time. Similarly, some mentors have expertise in the topics that Operation 1325 work with, while others have a more general CSO engagement. The mentorship program has therefore been supported with information to the mentors on how to carry out the mentorship. The following written information has been handed out to the mentors:

The mentor has an experience, perspective or network that the trainee wants to take advantage of.

The mentor wants to share with the trainee, be a support, a source of inspiration or a partner.

Mentor gives of himself and his time through conversation. The conversations must be planned and regular, and the conversations are a mutual commitment and responsibility.

The calls can be made e.g. by phone, at meetings in a café or in conjunction with association meetings. It is planned and arranged by the mentor and trainee. It is up to the mentor and trainee to decide how often they talk. It is up to them if it results in a joint activity, e.g. participation or arrangement on the International women's day or at the Book and Library Fair.

Mentoring can mean that:

- *define a goal and a plan for board trainees and mentorship together*
- *attend any event together*
- *telephone*
- *give constructive comments on any*

project or writing she is involved in

- *hold any information meeting*
- *sit with her at a suitable board meeting*
- *Encourage her to run for office or be a young representative*

Mentoring can be designed as you see fit, goals as individuals or in groups. Board trainees are invited to find ways to get involved in Operation 1325, become a member of one of the member organizations, hold information, represent at events, etc. It is different for each individual. You have complete freedom to design your mentorship according to your circumstances.

To strengthen the relationship and the effect of a mentoring, it is advisable to make an initial contact as soon as possible after matching, to plan for the following contact sessions. An end date can also provide energy for mentoring.

At the PCDP, however, the trainees had the complete freedom to choose their own mentors and plan their own programs. The PCDP did not interfere with the mentoring process. Counselling as understood by the trainees is to get to know the activism of the mentors and to have the chance to discuss their experiences, and to learn. The experiences of the trainees are different. Some have an experience of four years or more, while others did not have any experience at all. The trainees asked the mentors to raise their voices and demands to have a chance to be part of reinforcing internal peace and to solve conflicts. Since the trainees are members at community-based organizations in their locations, it is easy for them to affect their organizations and their targeted groups, in addition to work to reach to the decision making process in these organizations.

Learning from Women Mediation School with PCPD.

The trainees at Operation 1325 have had great expectations on the mentorship program and expressed that the mentoring is a main reason for them to apply to the program. The trainees have also been interested in meeting with the board members. Throughout the years the Board Trainee Program has been developed to provide the trainees with more clarity and opportunities for participation in the planning. The program has reached out to a group of women that Operation 1325 has not engaged with before. It has given opportunities for young women to take the lead in the Women, Peace and Security work and implemented a trans-generational approach where diverse experiences and expertise have been put into practice.

The trainees at the PCDP have been satisfied from the training process and the level they have reached to, and they have declared that they will continue their activism in their local communities after the project ends. Through the mentorship program the trainees get the opportunity to be involved, reinforced and supported. The program gives them an experience that they will always be proud of. The Board Trainee Program has allowed the PCDP to reach out to new sectors. The experience of the mentorship has served the widening of the organization's relationship with mentors that support equality and encourage the young women to get rid of the marginalizing structures in society. The PCDP experience that the trainees are a golden bridge between the Centre and the mentors, which is one of the most important outcomes of the project and guarantee its sustainability.

To further improve the Board Trainee Program the board trainees regularly do evaluations of their experiences during their year in the program.

recommendations

- *Present a curriculum or educational outline in the start of the Program so that there is one part which is strengthening the capacity of the board trainee and a following part of the program which is about deepening engagement in the organization.*
- *Clearly inform about the content of each session in advance in order to have time to read up and prepare before the meeting.*
- *Disseminate notes afterwards so that no trainee must worry about missing out.*
- *Have short time between meetings, less than one month, to stay in contact with group members.*
- *Be included in the work of the board and be invited to attend board meetings.*
- *Have concrete tools to work with and possibly also concrete tasks. Since the trainees were empowered and they have the capacity to train other, then they have to be ready to get into further advanced training and be able to prepare the training package in a professional way.*
- *Encourage peers to join the trainees to spread 1325, acquire more leaderships skills that will empower the trainees to be like the mentors and trainers.*



Operation 1325 is a Swedish civil society organization working for the implementation of UN's Resolution 1325. Founded by several Swedish women's and peace organizations in 2003, the organizations objective is to increase women's influence at all levels of peace processes and in conflict resolution. The UN Security Council adopted the groundbreaking Resolution 1325, about Women, Peace and Security, in 2000. The resolution's aim is to reaffirm the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace building. Operation 1325 advocates, informs, educates and creates platforms for debate and dialogue to influence decision makers, civil society and the general public with the aim of implementing Resolution 1325. Since its founding, Operation 1325 has carried out capacity-building projects with partner organizations in the Balkans, Central Africa, Middle East and North Africa.

The Palestinian Centre for Peace and Democracy PCPD is a civil society non-for-profit Palestinian, non-governmental organization that was established in 1992. PCPD forges a feminist perspective to achieve gender equality, social justice, freedoms, and to build a vibrant and tolerant Palestinian state that enjoys peace and security, a state that is accountable, committed to the rule of law and is open to the participation of all despite sex, religion, color or political thoughts.

PCPD is committed to the culture that promotes women's and youth's political empowerment, participation and representation in all spheres of their lives; a culture that increases women's opportunities to have leadership roles, their voices heard, and where they have the safe space that enables them to participate in the political and public life as well as in the decision-making processes; a culture that is committed to gender equality, empowerment of women and girls, and to eliminate violence against women as well as sexual and gender based violence.

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