



July 16, 2007, Nablus. The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung and the Women's Affairs Technical Committee conducted the first in a series of trainings dedicated to empowering women serving in local councils. The seminars are a product of cooperation to increase women's participation in democracy and follow up on the campaign training given to women in the period before taking office. FES and WATC have cooperated in extensive training programs over time aimed at encouraging women to participate in democratic structures.



Local councils are the smallest units of government and the most basic level of representation. Community politics is the backbone of democracy and the incorporation of women at the most fundamental level presents a chance to create tailored approaches to local women's needs.

The seminar was entitled *Gender Reading of Budgets* and took place in Nablus. The trainer, Dr. Ghassan Daas, professor of Accounting and Information Systems at An-Najah University a finance expert and familiar with the areas in which the council women serve.

Participants came from various local councils and different political parties. Elected in the 2005 they have been serving in addition to their professional work, families, social engagement and university studies. Since the introduction of a 20% quota for women in government in the Palestinian Territories there has been an increase in female participation. With this opportunity, women council members are positioned to contribute more to fulfilling the needs of Palestinian women and entire communities.



During the opening day, participants identified ways that local councils can incorporate women's needs into budgets. The interactive seminar encouraged participants to identify ways for councils to meet the needs of women, and equipped leaders with practice in arguing for women's needs in a group setting. The council women identified education, child care, economics and leadership skills among the areas in which local councils can support women. As a result of adding budgetary expenditures for women's programs, the councils are making an investment in the future of their communities.

The *Gender Reading of Budgets* training is the first in a series of three seminars. The second four-day training will cover lobbying and advocacy and the third training will take place over six days in Ramallah and focus on proposal writing and fundraising.

1st Photo- Local Council Women at work in training

2d Photo- WATC Staffer Narmeen Fayyaleh and WATC-Advocacy Project Peace Fellow Tatsiana Hulko

3d Photo- Dr. Ghassan Daas, training facilitator and professor