



LOCAL CAPACITIES FOR PEACE PROJECT (DO NO HARM)

Case Study

The Jerusalem Link: Women Joined Across Conflict

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This document was developed as part of a collaborative learning project directed by CDA. It is part of a collection of documents that should be considered initial and partial findings of the project. These documents are written to allow for the identification of cross-cutting issues and themes across a range of situations. Each case represents the views and perspectives of a variety of people at the time when it was written.

These documents do not represent a final product of the project. While these documents may be cited, they remain working documents of a collaborative learning effort. Broad generalizations about the project's findings cannot be made from a single case.

CDA would like to acknowledge the generosity of the individuals and agencies involved in donating their time, experience and insights for these reports, and for their willingness to share their experiences.

Not all the documents written for any project have been made public. When people in the area where a report has been done have asked us to protect their anonymity and security, in deference to them and communities involved, we keep those documents private.

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THE JERUSALEM LINK: WOMEN JOINED ACROSS CONFLICT

I. Introduction:

The Jerusalem Link is the coordinating body of two independent women's centers, one Palestinian and one Israeli, located in East and West Jerusalem respectively. It serves as an institutional base for coordination, cooperation, and mutual support between the two centers, while each center maintains its organizational and executive integrity. The process of program development is conducted jointly by Israelis and Palestinians and is part of the process of learning to work together and develop partnership across national and cultural lines.

The goal of the Jerusalem Link is to promote women's political, social and cultural activities and leadership in the service of the realization of peace on the basis of justice and equality. We formulate programs that simultaneously increase the empowerment of women in each community and enable the expression of an orchestrated women's voice on crucial issues on the political agenda. In addition to joint projects, each center initiates independent projects in order to enlarge the circle of women active in advancing the peace process.¹

Wars and inter-group conflicts drive deep wedges between peoples who, very often, live virtually side-by-side. This has been the case for Israelis and Palestinians for decades. As recently as ten to fifteen years ago,² opportunities for interaction between Israelis and Palestinians inside the Middle East were severely limited. Only the boldest of each group took the risks of ostracism and opprobrium by crossing the "divide" for political or social reasons, though many crossed each day to carry out economic activities (Palestinians working for Israelis) or security assignments (Israelis serving in the apparatus of Occupation).

Over the many years of Jewish/Arab separation, individuals and organizations from other countries, who were concerned about helping Middle-easterners achieve peace, arranged conferences and