

## **Answering the Call of the EU for initial proposals for the year 2006-2007**

**Hashd.. Professor Sari Nusseibeh. Contact person: Dr Munther S Dajani,**

Provide brief background about the project : This project will be the continuation of the project supported by the EU towards dissemination of the ideas of HASHD, an initiative taken by Dr Sari Nusseibeh in order to spread the ideas of free thinking and genuine dialogue on political issues related to the Palestinian cause; to provide academic and educational support to the peace-building process; and to develop a peace culture on the local level as well as in the region. Peace culture and the idea of Reconciliation must be discussed among the Palestinian grass roots in order to prepare a healthy atmosphere for the continuation of the Peace Process not only on the Palestinian level but also to touch on the Psychological preparedness of the other. This is carried out in order to create mutual understanding between the two peoples, and furthermore, it is our conviction that both must make a genuine effort to learn about the values, traditions and culture of the other. To achieve the declared objectives, Hashd will be organizing lectures and workshops, publishing policy papers and brochures, posters and whatever new ideas we can come up with to reach out for the grass roots in order to create a culture of peace replacing a dominating culture of violence and war. Professors and experts in the different fields will be utilized in order to out reach for the maximum of grass roots population.

This type of process is not easy especially when the two nations are in a prolonged conflict (100 years), as is the situation between Israel and Palestine today. Also due to the fact that both sides were not able to build confidence building measures in order to begin a much needed process of trust.

We plan a 12 month long pilot project to highlight specific topics out of the wide scope of the political process.

We will use experts and with the participation of Palestinian student volunteers to organize awareness campaigns that are very much needed on the Palestinian grass roots levels.

Hopefully, by the end of the process we will have reached as many people as possible on the grass root Palestinian level that it will curb the violence and replace it with a dialogue that accepts and tolerates the other.

Furthermore, we will be able to produce handbooks that will be distributed to the public explaining the importance of the proposed process and outlining the negative aspects of the other processes.. We are considering the young Palestinian public on the grass root level our first target. If we are successful, we intend to expand over more issues and wider publics.

Hashd will involve in the project the study and discourse on issues related to society and culture in Palestine. In a nut shell, Hashd will seek to anticipate, identify and develop strategies for responding to social tensions in Palestinian society and promotes Mediterranean regional cooperation with a view towards conflict avoidance, cultural interaction and civil society enhancement.

## **Project description**

This project will be divided into several stages:

**Steering and Preparation:** The project will be steered by an academic committee comprising of lecturers, researchers and a coordinator from Hashd. The researchers will be chosen by the coordinator from the fields of Middle Eastern Studies or the History of the Twentieth Century as one discipline, and the others should be Anthropologists of our region or sociologists who are experts on the Palestinian society.

This committee will be in charge of both contents and logistics. They will chose the topics for discussion and invite the Palestinian lecturers, as well as decide whether any topic should be allotted more than one meeting. The committee will also be engaged in the selection of the areas to be designated where the activity is to take place and there will be three months of preparatory meetings on such subjects.

The steering committee will convene three times during the first stage to ensure everything works according to plan and to make the necessary ad-hoc changes.

Upon completing their tasks the researchers will be entitled to receive a certificate issued by Hashd acknowledging the project activities, topics and assignments.

**Evaluation, Reflection and Conclusions:** The hard work of this stage will be conducted a month after the study activities are over. The steering committee, and the coordinator both will give us indications as to whether we should continue activities in the same manner in the future.

**Publication of Research (booklets and handouts):** Another stage is the production of handbooks in Arabic on several chosen topics relevant to the campaign .

When this process is over the texts will be printed in both languages Arabic and English. After the technical process of publishing and last moment proofreading and corrections are made, the publishing house will produce 1000 copies of each handbook (One thousand). This means that in the end of the process we will have around 10,000 handbooks on ten topics distributed to academic institutes and NGOs. The NGOs' will be selected from those participating in other peace activities from Gaza and the West Bank. The text in the two languages and the illustrations will be identical. When this process is over we will disseminate the handbooks in schools and will open a new and interesting phase in providing challenging educational material to students population in the Palestinian Territories.

## **Implementation results:**

The project will have several outcomes, the most obvious of which is the dialogue conducted between Palestinian and themselves on sensitive topics. The academic discipline will link the groups together and hopefully create the understanding of the other and lead to the shift of the two groups "from confrontation to toleration to co-operation" , which is what our localities and region lacks so much. Working on a common understanding serves as a conflict

resolution methodology. Knowledge and understanding of the other can contribute to the solution of conflicts.

Sustainability will be achieved by the researchers developing and being agents to another way of thinking—"cultural transformation"—in their immediate circles such as family, friends and colleagues. They will also help spread the message of understanding of the needs and different backgrounds of the other trickle down.