



KAYAN - FEMINIST ORGANIZATION
ANNUAL REPORT 2010

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Vision

The women of Kayan-Feminist Organization envision a secure and just society, in which Arab women in Israel enjoy full and equitable opportunities for self-expression and self-actualization. We invest in the development of grassroots leadership to catalyze social change grounded in the elimination of gender disparity.

Kayan values pragmatism in the democratization of the public sphere, fosters genuine agency among Arab women and brings their influence directly to bear upon the realization of their rights.



“No Democracy without Equality”

Dear Friends,

As we reflect upon another year gone by, we do so upon a tide of turmoil, hope and revolution sweeping across the Arab Middle East. In recent months, women have taken to the streets demanding change beyond the overthrow of despotic regimes. Yet from Tunisia to Bahrain, from Tahrir to Twitter, the voices of Arab women struggle to resound amidst the enthusiastic din of popular politic.

Though we cannot foretell what may yet come of this occasion, as Arab women, we are oft reminded of an enduring marginalization. Not a single woman was to be found on the committee tasked with drafting the new constitution of Egypt. A conspicuous lack of women in that body and within the interim government of the country belie any belief that with revolution will come the automatic and earnest uprooting of entrenched gender hierarchies.

For women to enjoy the fruits of revolution, they must mobilize to secure their rights before, during and after the transition itself. Gender parity is not given; at every stage, it must be asserted. It is from this perspective, standing in solidarity with women struggling for equality throughout the world, that the women of Kayan and the burgeoning Arab feminist movement in Israel have striven in 2010 for a social and political transformation of our own.

The name Kayan comes from the Arabic word for “being.” It reflects our guiding belief that social change can be achieved when women are empowered as decisions makers both within their personal lives and throughout society as a whole. Genuine transformation is not just about conditions and structures, but also about internal processes of consciousness, language and creativity that equip women with their own agency.

"As coordinator of Kayan's Department of Community Work, it is important to keep in touch with the women in the field, the leaders, both women and men. We can't make the change from outside. We are and we have to be part of the field, and make the change where the people are... I can't just come from the outside as a professional, bring what I think and expect that the women will take all that I bring. Most of the people in the Arab society don't expect women to do something different.

They expect us as women to remain in the private sphere, not to take a positive role in the community, leadership or decision-making. My role is to help people in our society – and in general, in the world – to live in a more equal situation, to give everyone the opportunity to do what they can do, do what they believe, to live and to make their own decisions about their own lives."

***Rafah Anabtawi,
Empowerment and Community Organizing Coordinator***

In 2010, Kayan reiterated its commitment to women's empowerment and gender equality. We continued to invest in the development, activation and support of grassroots Arab women's leaders. We fought for the democratization of the public sphere in order to catalyze social change grounded in the elimination of gender disparity. We worked with Arab women in order to achieve gender equality within our communities, before the law and at all levels of policy-making.

We fostered meaningful connections between these women and enabled them to find cooperative solutions to common challenges. Kayan forged new spaces in the domain of economic decision-making and helped Arab women take active responsibility for their long-term, personal financial security.

We provided guidance and legal representation for disadvantaged Arab women, educated them about their rights and advocated their equal treatment before the law.

To our friends and contributors who supported our work in 2010, we express our most heartfelt thanks. To those who would like to join our efforts in the years ahead – you are very welcome! With your help, Kayan will continue its work to enhance the lives and vitality of Arab women in Israel.

With hope and persistence,
The Staff and Board of Kayan – Feminist Organization



About Kayan Feminist Organization

History

Twenty years ago, feminist Arab women in Haifa and the north of Israel were working in shelters for battered women and providing assistance in crisis centers for women who had been sexually assaulted. These pioneers facilitated programs, support meetings, workshops and crisis-services specifically for Arab women.

Over time, these activities evolved into a space for Arab women activists to work together and discuss common concerns. The idea emerged to establish an organization by and for Arab women in Israel and in 1999, Kayan was officially registered as a non-profit organization. This dynamic group of feminists has been responding to the distinct needs of Arab women in Israel ever since.



Arab Women in Israel

Palestinian women in Israel face multiple layers of discrimination both as members of the marginalized Palestinian national minority and as women within a characteristically patriarchic society. They remain the poorest, least paid and least educated segment of the community and are subject to wide-ranging social and institutional discrimination. Their situation is made worse by their lack of political representation and access to public decision-making.

Since 1948, only one woman has been nominated as Head of an Arab local council, and of the 120 elected representatives of the Knesset, Hanin Zoabi remains the only Arab woman. Endemic barriers to equal participation in the public sphere have threatened the personal status and security of Palestinian women in Israel and led to widespread economic stagnation among this group.

According to the 2007 Socio-economic Survey of the Rikaz Databank of the Galilee Society, less than 19% of Arab women participate in the workforce (compared to over 56% of Jewish women); furthermore, of Palestinian women active in the labor force, nearly 14% are unemployed. With limited opportunity to participate in the workforce, four in five Palestinian women in Israel continue to fulfill a domestic role.

Yet women who aim to challenge this traditional model and seek novel opportunities for self-realization encounter an environment that is ill prepared to support such a step. Requisites of adequate transportation, employment opportunities and forums of exchange with women in similar situations go largely unfulfilled. Palestinian women in Israel have scant access to public decision-making processes and assert little influence within the local and regional political spheres.

Our Goals



We strive to promote and defend the social, economic, and civil rights of Arab women throughout Israel;

contest inequality in Israel by addressing the root causes of social exclusion and gender disparity;

empower Arab women to set their own agenda of self-actualization;

and provide tools to strengthen Arab women's leadership in decision-making processes at the grassroots

Strategy of Change



Kayan is an association of Arab women with diverse backgrounds, affiliations and experiences who share the aim of increasing the influence and power of all Arab women in Israel. Driven by feminist ideals of equality and empowerment, Kayan gives expression to the compelling voices of Arab women who are systematically excluded from the public arena. Through our unique programs, we offer women new ways to view themselves and their society.

Durable approaches to the realization of the social, economic and civil rights of Palestinian-Arab women require an essential recognition of the interconnectedness of myriad factors. Sustainable solutions must address social – as well as political – impediments to development. Support of grassroots community organizing in Arab villages is a key element of Kayan’s work, a tool that empowers women to overcome imbalances and improve their own lives in tangible ways. Our experience has shown that the journey toward self-realization begins within the individual, spreads as cooperative action across a community of women, ushers new leaders into the halls of influence and fundamentally redefines the role of women in society. At each stage, Kayan provides the infrastructure, know-how and support to bring these visions to fruition.

Kayan’s Department of Community Work empowers women to set their own agenda of self-actualization and participate actively in decision-making processes through long-term investments in the development of Arab women’s leadership at the grassroots. We strengthen civil society institution building among Palestinian women with human, technical and financial resources; ongoing professional development support; and access to frameworks for inter-organizational networking and collaboration.

Kayan’s Legal Department works to promote and defend the social, economic, and civil rights of Arab women throughout Israel. Through a series of lectures, seminars and publications, Kayan’s legal team informs Palestinian women in Israel about their rights as citizens to social security, fair employment, personal status equality and active participation in legal proceedings as victims of crime. We also provide free legal consultation and representation to Arab women in need, advocating on their behalf vis-à-vis the courts, local authorities and national government.

The Department of Community Work 2010

JUSUR



For nearly thirteen years, Kayan has implemented personal empowerment programs with women's groups in Northern and Central Israel, reaching hundreds of women in dozens of communities.

In 2008, Kayan launched its flagship project "Jusur," bringing an important institutional framework to its empowerment work and ensuring the durability of myriad initiatives for social change. Support of grassroots community organizing in Arab villages has emerged as a key element of Kayan's work, a tool that empowers women to overcome imbalances and improve their lives in tangible ways.

Through this multi-year, intensive approach to empowerment and leadership training, Kayan educates emerging Arab women leaders about activism and community work for social change; laws and rights through a prism of gender; women, power and politics; group dynamics; and effective leadership.

We strengthen civil society institution building among Arab women with: human, technical and financial resources; ongoing professional development support; and access to the Jusur Forum, Kayan's platform for networking and collaboration. In the past three years, "Jusur" has provided a foundation for Kayan's program of professional counseling, training and exchange, which has grown to include 33 leaders of 15 individual, sustaining community projects.



Individual Village Projects of 2010

- Nahef rebuilt a local women's NGO and refocused on women's issues. The women organized "Women's Day" with 50 participants, including activities in education and women's rights.
- Majd al-Krum started a needs survey among local women and established a women's center in cooperation with the local community center. Participants have recently begun a spoken Hebrew course offered to the women in the village. They are also planning to set up a class on First Aid.
- Ma'ale Eron organized a family counseling course for single women, as well as Hebrew and computer courses.
- Arabeh cooperated with other local organizations and the local authority in social activities and cultural events, as well as a demonstration calling for an end to violence against women. The group organized Hebrew and computer courses for women and encouraged six women to join Kayan's economic empowerment course.
- Ein Mahel set up Hebrew and computer courses for women. The group takes courses on the theory and practice of environmental community work, facilitated by Aziza Qweikas-Moa'di, Mghar community project leader.
- Mghar designed a traffic roundabout with eco-friendly materials in order to raise environmental awareness, organized a course about environmental work for the community project in Ein Mahel and took part in the economic empowerment course of Kayan.
- Haifa defined goals and designed activity plans and met with the mayor to garner municipal support.
- Karmiel organized cultural celebrations for the Arab population of Karmiel and the surrounding area – with up to 200 participants per event – and lobbied the municipality to open a local kindergarten for Arab children.
- Deir Hanna planned various activities for local women organized by the elected local women's council.



Impact

Leaders from **11** villages independently managed and sustained community projects with the help of **50** local activists for the benefit of nearly **900** participants.

16 participants from **9** localities graduated from the theoretical stage of our women's leadership and community organizing course "Women's Activism for Social Change"

22 leaders of **15** community projects exchanged knowledge, encouraged one another, evaluated their progress and advanced the Arab women's movement the "Jusur Forum"

7 grassroots projects received support through Kayan's small grants program

230 participants of community programs sponsored by Kayan attended our annual conference in Yaft An-Nassriyye

“I think what we’re trying to do here is change the roles that women usually take in our society... We’re trying to...foster the space for [women] to come out, to be more effective, to have their voice heard, and to be part of decision making at the local and national level. That’s why we’re saying ‘movement.’ We want their voices to be heard outside their secure environment and to have a better opportunity to become decision makers themselves.”

Reem Zoabi,
Kayan’s Empowerment and Community Organizer

Personal Narrative of Change

Forum of Arab Leaders:

The Forum of Arab Leaders was born from the women participating in Kayan’s JUSUR project. These women met bi-monthly in 2010 to discuss working relationships, requisites for success in the community, the impact of local associations on their work, and a vision of stronger partnerships with other organizations and authorities.

Through this forum, the participants also articulated challenges they have encountered in order to apply lessons from their personal experiences working with Arab local authorities.

Project for the Advancement of Women at the University of Haifa

A collaboration between Kayan and Kidma formed in May 2010, this course explores the social construction of identity, feminist legal perspectives on family, employment and sexual harassment law, gender and equality, non-violent conflict resolution, patriarchy, social structure and the status of women. The course emphasized community leadership, the strength and power of women to catalyze social change, and the importance of building relationships between women for cooperative work.

In the ongoing practical segment of the course, participants are applying the knowledge they have gained by implementing local projects in their communities. Kayan’s community organizers provide professional support and help the women develop their ideas into sustainable community programs.

An Active Approach to Personal Economy

Arab women often do not take their own needs into proper consideration when making economic decisions for their families. Many perceive economics and financial planning as male domains and maintain a passive approach towards these issues. Most Arab women do not have forthcoming pensions or adequate savings; they face futures of economic hardship, personal insecurity and retirement-age poverty.

Since 2007, Kayan has worked to empower Palestinian women in Israel to become actively involved in matters of personal economic preparedness and security through our "Active Approach to Personal Economy" initiative. Through this program, Kayan strives to engender a sense of place and personal responsibility for financial management and preparedness among Arab women in Israel, challenge women's attitudes on work outside of the home and foster awareness of the importance of securing personal income and contributing to the family income.

This program helps to increase women's knowledge of their economic, social and cultural rights, poverty, gender-responsive public budgeting and requisites of social change. We also educate women about pension laws, financial precautions (public and private), allocations from the National Insurance Institute, employment laws, and taxation.

Furthermore, we lend practical tools that improve women's skills in handling issues of personal economy, including applying for allocations and tax deductions, taking financial precautions, managing budgets and filing a tax return. In 2010, we expanded the reach of this program significantly through a nationwide awareness-raising campaign of the importance of financial planning and preparedness.

4 economic empowerment workshops with **42** women participants to improve women's awareness, knowledge and skills in personal economy and financial precautions

Publications



Economic Security for the Pension Age
(Arabic)



Women's Entitlements from the National Insurance Institute
(Arabic)

The Legal Department

In Israel, a highly complex legal system – comprised of civil and religious traditions, overlapping jurisdictions and characteristic ambiguity – leaves marginalized members of society at great disadvantage. Arab women are particularly vulnerable; many cannot read Hebrew, lack access to legal resources and remain unaware of their rights. Unable to defend and actualize their rights, these women are often forced to accept intolerable conditions of abuse, inequality and despair.

Kayan helps Arab women in Israel actualize their rights to personal and social status equality, social security, fair employment, protection from sexual harassment in the workplace, equitable treatment within the domain of family law and active participation in legal proceedings as victims of crime. We provide free, timely and comprehensive legal aid to vulnerable Palestinian women in Israel, offer Arabic-language rights education and promote national-level policy change through strategic advocacy. This mutually-reinforcing approach allows us to address the most pressing needs of women in our community, share the lessons gleaned from their experiences and promote the rights of Arab women in Israel with a unified voice.

Kayan works not merely to supplement inadequate state services, but rather to equip Palestinian women with the tools they need to actualize their civil and human rights within the private sector and vis-à-vis public institutions. We aim to strengthen institutional mechanisms that serve Arab women in Israel, and advocate earnest enforcement of laws designed to protect women in our community. Our goal is not to relieve state actors of their responsibilities, but rather to empower Arab women to realize their potential as equals within society.





Legal Aid

In 2010, the Legal Department handled

96 consultations

71 cases:

60 in the domain of family law

5 concerning the National Insurance Institute

3 involving labor rights

2 regarding the rights of victims of crime

1 unclassified special case.

33 cases remain open.

Case Study: Race of the Authorities Challenging the Authority of the Sharia Court



Background:

When our client and her husband were divorced six years ago, the civil family court granted her custody over their children. However, her re-marriage to another man prompted her ex-husband to file a claim with the Sharia court that she was unfit to raise them. Characterizing the case as an issue of child welfare, the Sharia court demonstrated a willingness to challenge the authority of the civil court in this domain.

Update:

For its part, the High Court of Justice declined to impose the injunction we requested, forcing Kayan to participate in religious court proceedings in which the burden of proof falls to the accused – violating of a key principle of civil law. In this case, our client was compelled to present evidence as to why it is in the best interests of the children to remain with her. Though such criteria had already been defined by the civil court – and to which it is not contested she has scrupulously adhered – she remains at real risk of losing her children.

Analysis:

This case is a striking example of the duality of the Israeli justice system. With neither clear boundaries of jurisdiction nor requirements for mutual agreement between parties, Arab women face institutionalized barriers to realizing justice. Even in cases in which the civil court has already ruled with appropriate legal jurisdiction, women being drawn into a religious court system within which they are at a distinct disadvantage.



5 Year Study

Through free legal counseling and representation of disadvantaged Arab women, Kayan works to improve legal access for the most vulnerable and marginalized of our community, as well as leverage the benefits of gender-responsive litigation as a tool for social change. Kayan's legal services in the field of family law enable women to actualize new rights afforded them through the Reform in the Law and assists women in their applications to the civil Family Court.

Kayan conducted a comprehensive analysis of the Legal Aid program over the preceding four years in order to document the number of consultations given, cases opened, case categorization, client profiles and case outcomes. Kayan will use this information to identify long-term trends concerning the legal challenges facing Arab women in Israel and to tailor strategic responses.

From 2006-2010, the Legal Department handled 189 family law files divided into various issues, including child custody, alimony, divorce, restraining orders, paternity claims, and so on. The two principal issues (constituting the highest number of files) were child custody and alimony (child and spousal support payments). The third largest issue handled was divorce and thereafter restraining orders, various obedience claims and others.

*Five Years of Legal Aid:
Summary and Analysis, 2011 (published in English and Hebrew)*

Rights Education

Kayan took part in 28 educational events, reaching over 2,100 beneficiaries and informing a diverse range of Arab women in Israel about their rights as citizens to social security, fair employment, protection from sexual harassment, personal status equality and active participation in legal proceedings as victims of crime.

4 Rights Education Publications:

Insurance and Savings

Rights and Obligations of Women as to National Security Insurance Contributions

Civil and Mixed Marriage

Dismissal Compensation



“Insurance and Savings: Planning for a Better Future” (Arabic)



“Rights and Obligations of Women as to National Security Insurance Contributions” (Arabic)



“Civil and Mixed Marriage” (Arabic)



“Dismissal Compensation” (Arabic)

Position Papers



“Sexual Harassment in the Workplace - Responsibility of Employers”
(Arabic, Hebrew)

Prevention of Sexual Harassment at the Workplace:

Since 2008, Kayan has successfully advocated the mandatory appointment of liaisons for the prevention of sexual harassment in the workplace. Due in large part to Kayan’s intervention, 60% of Arab local authorities now adhere to the letter of this law.

Beyond formal implementation however, Kayan is working to ensure its spirit is also realized by urging local authorities to provide appointees critical training and approve their participation in Kayan’s Forum of Appointees for Sexual Harassment Prevention.

Through this program, Alhan Nahas-Daoud of Kayan’s Legal Department, aims to bring theoretical tools of awareness-raising and prevention of sexual harassment to bear in the practical realm of the workplace.



“Spousal Obedience in the Religious Courts”
(Arabic, Hebrew)

Ending Discrimination against Women in the Religious Courts:

The prevalence religious court systems in Israel has implications for the equal treatment of women.

As Israel does not recognize civil unions, matters of marriage and divorce remain the province of the religious court system. Kayan works as a member of the Coalition for Equality in Personal Status Issues in Israel to catalyze court reform and protect the rights of women in this domain. Of particular concern is the issue of ‘obedience,’ an antiquated provision that allows for a man to demand his spouse return to him in cases of separation.

Though such orders are no longer practically enforced, a fact of which many Arab women are not aware, successful obedience claims can have repercussions, including the loss of alimony. More importantly though, obedience laws constitute a discriminatory procedural tool for subjecting women to humiliating processes and terminology.



Legal Advocacy

In 2010, Kayan educated women about their rights, raised awareness, and advocated local authorities' compliance with the law obligating employers to appoint and support a liaison for the prevention of sexual harassment in the workplace.

We contacted 50 employers who had received a poster produced by Kayan detailing the law of Minimum Wage, reminding them of their legal obligation to inform employees about the law and changes to the minimum wage.

Kayan continued to work for stronger protections for women against violence. In February 2010, Kayan co-organized a high profile demonstration in Nazareth to protest the violent abuse and murder of Arab women. Kayan submitted requests for updates, information and reports to the Committee for the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence, responsible for the timely collection of data and formulation of strategic recommendations to the government, as well as to the governmental forum for the prevention of domestic murder of Arab women.

Much of Kayan's individual casework bears opportunity to set legal precedents that respect and defend the rights of Arab women in Israel. In this sense, Kayan's legal aid services constitute an important tool in our efforts to catalyze system-wide court reform through issue-based legal advocacy, in depth research and strategic outreach.

Elimination of the Race of Authorities:



In Israel, two overlapping, and in some cases competing, family court systems exist side by side. Where these court systems have overlapping authority regarding marriage-related matters, jurisdiction falls to the first court in which the case is filed.

This so-called "race of authorities" is problematic for several reasons. Firstly, the court that "captures" the case will maintain jurisdiction should it be reopened in the future. Therefore, even though the parties may not be in conflict at the outset, should a woman later decide to pursue legal recourse, she may find herself with asymmetric rights in the religious system.

Furthermore, to avoid the possibility of having to stand before the religious court, a woman may be compelled to open a case in the civil court before it is otherwise warranted as a precautionary measure. Such pressures complicate a woman's ability to work through problems independent of the courts and can have lasting negative consequences.

Enforcement of the Minimum Wage Law

Kayan actively campaigns to improve compliance with the Minimum Wage Law by Arab employers in the private sector. We remain in close contact with employers, reminding them of their legal obligation to inform employees about the law and changes to the minimum wage.

In addition, Kayan is working to collect and publish data regarding compliance with minimum wage laws and advocate improved enforcement vis-à-vis the Knesset and other governmental institutions.

THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO SUPPORTED KAYAN IN 2010

Cdf The Feminist Peace Organization

Open Society Institute

HEKS-EPER Swiss Interchurch Aid

Mama Cash

The Global Fund for Women

Heinrich Böll Foundation

Middle East Partnership Initiatives (MEPI)

Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund

Euro-Mediterranean Foundation of Support to Human Rights

Defenders (EMHRF)

Women's World Day of Prayer - German Committee

Mediterranean Women's Fund

Haifa City Council

Levi Lassen

Human Rights Award Recipient - New Israel Fund, Mira Awad

About the Artist

We would like to thank Maya Mihindou for her voluntary artistic contribution to the Annual Report. Maya is a Gabonese freelance illustrator living in Paris. She studied socio/ethnology and works as an illustrator, mostly for kids. She has published "Sabine," her first graphic novel printed at Venusdea's label, and is currently working as a microeditor with exhibitions in France, Rome and Tokyo. Maya is interested in exploring questions of identity through a gendered perspective.



Five Ways to Get Involved

Do you believe in feminist ideals and would you like to promote them within the Arab society in Israel? Do you believe that disadvantaged women should be empowered to gain their rights and improve their status in society? Do you like what Kayan is doing and would you like to contribute to our work? There are many ways for you to become an active part of Kayan-Feminist Organization, no matter who or where you are.

Here are just five of them:

Donate to Kayan!

In order to continue our work, we need your support. Even a small amount will help.

To donate online by credit card:
www.kayan.org.il/donate

To donate by check:
Mail your check to Kayan – Feminist Organization,
118 Arlozorov St., 33276 Haifa, Israel

To donate by bank transfer:

The First International Bank of Israel, 20 Herzl Street, Haifa 33121, Israel
Account name: Kayan - Feminist Organization
Bank # 031, Branch # 007, Account # 105-552836
Swift Code: FIRBILITXXX IBAN: IL 280 310 070 000 000 552 836
For the U.S.: CHPS 06163720

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Tax-deductible donations may be made the following ways:

In the U.S.:

New Israel Fund, PO Box 91588, Washington DC 20090-1588
US/Israel Women-to-Women, 45 West 36th St., New York NY 10018

In Canada:

New Israel Fund, 801 Eglinton Ave. West, Suite 401,
Toronto, Ontario M5N 1E3, Canada

In Europe:

New Israel Fund, St. James House,
10 Rosebery Ave., London, EC1R 4TD, UK

.....
Neuer Israel Fonds, P.O. Box 425, CH-4010 Basel, Switzerland
Cfd Christlicher Friedensdienst, Falkenhöheweg 8,
Postfach 5761, CH 3001 Bern, Switzerland

Five Ways to Get Involved

Volunteer for Kayan!

A great way to support Kayan is to give of your time, your skills and your ideas. Kayan welcomes volunteers and interns all year round, from all over the world, in all our projects and activities.

For details and open positions, please visit:
www.kayan.org.il/en/inner.php?ID=31

Stay informed!

Kayan publishes a newsletter to inform our friends and supporters about our latest activities, publications and campaigns.

To learning more about Arab women in Israel and spread awareness about our projects, please subscribe online at: www.kayan.org.il



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