



**Cultural Policy in the Arab Region Programme  
Al Mawred Al Thaqafy**

**Summary Updates to the Compendium Profile  
On Cultural Policy in Palestine 2015**

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## Introduction

The cultural sector in Palestine has witnessed some changes since the completion of the exploratory research on cultural policy in Palestine, accomplished in 2009 by Faten Farhat, a researcher on cultural affairs, and updated twice in 2011 and 2015, by the researchers Sally Abu Bakr and Faten Farhat. The following pages summarize the most significant changes on the Palestinian cultural scene or the political and social changes that influenced it, which had been extensively presented in the updated research of 2015.

Perhaps the most prominent Palestinian changes, with an international political dimension and a direct impact on the cultural sector in Palestine, was Palestine full membership reception in UNESCO end of 2011. In addition to upgrading Palestine to non-member observer state status in the United Nations by end of 2012.

At the level of external political influences, the most notable of which was the instability of the Arab World and the rapid developments taking place in the Arab region and around the world. Deterioration of the political situations in many Arab countries impacted the position of the Palestinian case in the International Community list of priorities, consequently impacting many issues, including financing in general, and funding culture in particular, due to the decline of its importance in favor of relief funding.

Among the internal changes was the Council of Ministers ratification of some draft legislations related to culture, and the establishment of networks, coalitions and museums, as well as introducing a number of awards...etc.

The summary below also includes numerous detailed figures related to budgets and expenditures on culture through a number of actors and influential in the Palestinian cultural sector.

### **Political events of an international dimension**

Perhaps the most significant changes that had an international dimension and effect on the cultural scene in Palestine was the membership in the international institutions; where Palestine won full membership in UNESCO on the first of November 2011, two months after Palestine had applied for the status of a state in the United Nations, and got the status as a non-member observer on 29 November, 2012. This was followed by a great movement of symbolic recognitions of the Palestinian state by various European parliaments. As of 14 September, 2015, there were 136 countries out of 193 UN member states officially recognize the state of Palestine, even if this has not given it the full membership in the United Nations.

Despite the formation of the first Government of National Unity by mid-2014, aiming to put an end to the crisis of the Palestinian political divide on the ground. However, the political divide between the West Bank and Gaza Strip has continued to exist since 2007. It became clear that it is not possible to ignore the existence of the de facto entities in Gaza, embodied in sovereign official institutions, including the Ministry of Culture that operates in accordance with objectives consistent with the policy and the general orientations of the government there, promoting specific ideology and a different cultural reality. In 2014, a national strategy for culture had been discussed with civic society institutions, and concluded to put a unified national plan to elevate the cultural reality, activate the role of media, create and develop the work of libraries, activate the archive, lift the level of arts and artists, allocate governmental budget and provide adequate logistical support.

### **Objectives and General Principles of Cultural Policy**

#### **Main elements of the current cultural policy**

The Palestinian cultural policy model can be described as an unorganized model that tends mainly to replace the official authority with the nonprofit sector. Despite this trend towards non-profiting in the civilian sector, this model achieved limited success in establishing a solid base. Unfortunately, this model prevails only in the central part of Palestine and its major cities, in the light of the public sector weakness. Since this model is limited to a small part of the country, large parts of it remain deprived of any form of cultural policies and activities.

Cultural policies in Palestine rely on what is known as the "mixed system", although it does not have all the features of this system which is based on coordination and exchange of expertise in a decentralized framework. It was not formed through the institution consciousness, but its formation was rather controlled by the political reality (the conditions of occupation and the reality of dispersion). This system consists of the civil, official and semi-official cultural institution, as well as the individual initiative. These components do not integrate into a broad coalition framed by a national strategy that organizes its orientations, activities and programs, but each institution or group maintains its own peculiarities, identity and role.

Moreover, this model prevails only in the central area of the West Bank and the main cities. In light of the weakness of the public cultural work, large parts of the country remain deprived of any form of cultural policies and activities.

### **Cultural Policy Objectives**

Further to the completion of the exploratory search of the cultural policy in Palestine in 2009, one of the developments occurred in the cultural sector there was the completion of two strategic plans for the cultural sector 2011 - 2013 and 2014 - 2016.

In 2010, the Ministry of Culture accomplished the Culture Sector Strategic Plan of 2011 – 2013. The ministry defined the plan as “the first plan of its kind in terms of comprehensiveness and development approach. It covers all subsectors that compose culture in its broader sense, and participation in the plan development was not restricted to the Ministry of Culture, as an official body, but it also involved artistic and cultural institutions. Hence, it is a comprehensive plan articulating the trends of the majority of the cultural and artistic fields”.

The ministry has identified the objectives of the plan as it aims to deepen and enhance the pluralistic and open cultural awareness, invest in purposeful educational curricula in order to establish the values of pluralism, democracy, belonging and citizenship, activate the cultural movement in a systematized and accumulated manner, boost and expand the scope of communication between Palestinians in the homeland and the Diaspora, foster and expand the scope of communication and cultural exchange with Arab and foreign peoples, invest in protecting

and maintaining the cultural heritage and identity, encourage and support the traditional industries and handicrafts, invest in (material and immaterial) culture infrastructure, promote the level and quality of cultural productions, and expand the scope of artistic events throughout the geographical areas.

The new plan is featured with elements that were not addressed in the previous plans: In addition to the general objectives, the plan details special policies, and suggests the detailed interventions. It also mentions the estimated costs necessary for the sectorial strategy, according to policies, and lists the expected results.

Still, the main fault of the cultural strategy plans in Palestine is the lack of continuity, being unrealistic and far from the realistic capacities of the Ministry staff.

**The Strategic Plan of the cultural sector and Heritage 2014 – 2016**, it was launched by the Ministry of Culture end of 2013 under the title of: The Sector of Culture and Heritage Plan, and under a sub-motto "culture is life and practice,". The plan is built depending on the one before, and according to an analytical reading of a reality that was marked by decisive events, most notably: recognition of Palestine as a state member in UNESCO on the first of November 2011, and recognition of the state of Palestine as a member of the United Nations on 29 November 2012, and considering Jerusalem as the permanent Arab Capital of Culture, and the twinning of Jerusalem with every Arab Capital of Culture. In addition to an unstable Arabic surrounding, and remarkable international developments related to funding priorities with its overall effects. Adding to that the impact of a weak Palestinian economy (2011 - 2013) which was in a dangerous situation, indicated in the reports of the World Bank Fund, where we find the slowdown in economic growth and the rising unemployment and its effects on the Palestinian cultural activity.

The plan included two main objectives: first, to create a more enabling environment for the Palestinian culture that would contribute to the dissemination of a national pluralistic culture, to promote unity and communication between the Palestinian people living in their homeland and the diaspora, as well as exchanges with the Arab and foreign peoples, and to support and stimulate innovation materially and immaterially, to improve the degree of participation of the public, raise

the level of the public cultural taste and increase the interest with Jerusalem and the marginalized areas. Second, more protected and renewed cultural heritage of the Palestinian people, forming a cultural inventory that unites the cultural identity, and promotes the sense of belonging of the Palestinian citizen. Both of these objectives are implemented through two programs: "Culture for All" program and the "Cultural Heritage" program.

### **Merits and demerits of the cultural sector strategic plan**

The plan is characterized as a positive step toward the formation of a national cultural policy through which culture is discussed from a comprehensive perspective. It was consulted about with different actors in the cultural field. The plan diagnoses the problems of the cultural sector in Palestine, and identifies them by: the government policies and legislations for culture are not possible for the cultural development process (Low budgets dedicated to cultural matters from the public spending budget, multiplicity of the relevant law and legislation references related to culture, scarcity of legislations and laws related to culture, not taking the cultural dimension into account in other laws, weakness of the societal awareness with the role of laws and legislations in the development process, inability of cultural policies and legislations in protecting the cultural identity and national unity, and maintaining pluralism and reinforcing the social fabric. In addition to another set of obstacles.

Perhaps, one of the controversial subjects for the workers in the culture sector, is "lacking the mechanisms of practical implementation of the strategic framework that unifies the cultural vision, and forms a reference to the effort of the cultural institution, with all its various official, non-governmental and individual initiatives. What is specifically intended here is the continued lack of practical, operational and evaluation mechanisms in the strategic plan, like the previous plans.

The plan also falls in the bump of confusingly intensifying the strategic objectives. Despite of drafting interventions to implement the goals, some of them are without indicators, and the formulation of interventions and objectives related to gender are intercalated and not smooth, as if they are required to reflect the government public national plan, only because the later focuses on the subject. Also, there are no accurate statistics on which the plan can be based in analyzing

the reality of cultural action problems. In addition to that, the plan, like its precedent, does not comply with the reality of the financial allocations of the ministry, or the size of its executive staff, and Gaza Strip is not clearly apparent in the culture sector plan. Finally, the roles set for the partners of the Ministry of Culture to implement interventions show the role of the local government sector, but with absence of many tasks or information it owns and the possibility of benefiting from them.

For deeper analysis, it seems that part of the failure of the Ministry of Culture plan is a reflection of the national strategic plan for development set by the government for the same period, where the culture sector strategic goal appears as a detail of the protection and social development sector as follows: more accessible cultural spaces for Palestinians, promoting a pluralistic, open and innovative national culture, which denounces all forms of discrimination, but preserves and renews the cultural heritage.

By reviewing the Strategic Development Plan (2014 - 2016), it is pointed out that the direct budgets allocated for the culture and heritage sector continues to stagnate and does not exceed 0.003 of the general budget ratio, and 0.001 of the total development budget, which never reflect the requirements of the culture and heritage sector plan, in terms of development or interim objectives. Allocations related to some other elements of culture in the national plan, specifically the tourism and cultural heritage sector, indicate a state no better than the culture sector; its budget also does not exceed 0.001 of the general budget. The indicators that measure the direct strategic goal of the cultural and heritage sector are all quantitative indicators, and do not qualitatively measure the achievement of the objectives. The plan does not refer to the government's intention to approve relevant culture and heritage laws within its national priorities as possible laws for this sector, although in the economic, employment, infrastructure and good governance sectors it gives the relevant possible laws the priority, whether to prepare drafts or process laws. The plan also does not give signals about the implementation of sovereign cultural infrastructure projects (national museums, national archive, national library, etc.) The plan does not also refer to an investment in human cultural infrastructure in a strategic way and consistent methodology. The national plan, which built under the slogan of "state-building and embodiment of sovereignty" lacks the local and

international political realism, due to the internal political divide between the two authorities in the West Bank and Gaza, reinforced by the Israeli occupation and divisive geography, and because of the lack of a political horizon for the Palestinian Authority to extend authority and sovereignty over areas C, the Valleys and East Quds, the matter that will not be resolved without a just and comprehensive political solution, unseen in the near horizon, amid proceedings imposed on the ground by Israel, hot Arabic surrounding, and International Community busy with new issues.

### **Legislations relevant to culture**

There are no draft laws, submitted by the Palestinian Ministry of Culture, and were officially approved. Due to the continued absence of the Palestinian Legislative Council, and until the formation of an elected one, the draft laws are submitted to the Council of Ministers, which hands the laws over, if ratified, to the Office of the Palestinian Authority President for endorsement. Throughout the last years, some draft laws were ratified while some others were not, as follows:

- In 2013, the Council of Ministers approved, the law of copyright and related rights of 2012, which consists of 62 items, but until today, it has not been approved by the President of the Palestinian National Authority.
- In 2015, the Palestinian Council of Ministers approved a draft Law of the State of Palestine awards in literature, arts and Humanities. The draft law had been submitted to the Legislative Council and was not approved in the first reading in 2008. It was amended and submitted to the Council of Ministers in 2010, and was approved in 2015.
- In 2013, the Council of Ministers approved the Cultural Development Fund draft law, and submitted it to the Palestinian Authority President, for approval, but it was not approved as of the date of preparing this research.
- The Ministry of Culture works on preparing the immaterial heritage draft law, which has not been completed as of this date.
- The Ministry of Culture has recently submitted the Palestinian National Library draft project to the Palestinian Council of Ministers.



## **Legislations relevant to some sectors**

### **Visual and Applied Arts**

These are covered by the Copyright and Related Rights draft law, which has not been approved to date. The draft law also covered them in the final modified version in more than one article scattered in the law, which provides protection laws for the author, or whoever takes the author's copyright via contracting between them. At the same time, the draft law suggests penalties in case of breaching the intellectual property protection laws.

### **World Heritage**

According to the international law, there is a Jordanian guardianship on East Jerusalem which is not legally waived by the existence of the Israeli occupation. This gave Jordan the right to apply for the inclusion of the Old City of Jerusalem and its walls on the World Heritage List in 1981, and was included in the following year in the World Heritage in Danger List. Nevertheless, the Israeli practices on the ground create new facts, including the excavations taking place under Al-Aqsa mosque, and reaching the neighborhoods of Silwan and Sheikh Jarrah, threatening of the collapse of these human ruins any moment.

Since 1974, Palestine has succeeded to be an observer member in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), but in 2011 it got the full membership, enabling it to prepare the preliminary list of natural and cultural heritage sites of high special value, which includes 12 locations in preparation for inclusion on World Heritage List. In 2012, Palestine succeeded to include the Church of the Nativity and Pilgrimage Route on the list of World Heritage and World Heritage in danger. Besides the Church of the Nativity, which was built in 339 AD, the area includes Greek, Latin, Orthodox, Franciscan and Armenians churches and monasteries, as well as bells, various gardens and the Pilgrimage Route. Also, Battir Terraces were inscribed on World Heritage List, in February 2014, under the name of "Palestine: the land of Olives and Vines", as well as on List of World Heritage in Danger, immediately after registration.

It is noteworthy in this context the Resolution No. 5 issued by the Council of Ministers in 2013 to form the Palestinian National Committee for the World Heritage, which one of its responsibilities is to establish logs for the Palestinian heritage sites, and is headed by the Palestinian Minister of Tourism and Antiquities, and includes senior representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs , Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Environmental Affairs, Ministry of Local Government, Ministry of Jerusalem Affairs, the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs, and the Palestinian National Committee for Education Culture and Science, as well as a representative of the institutions working on heritage preservation alternately, a representative of the Palestinian universities and an independent expert both designated by the President of the Committee. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for registering the sites on UNESCO World Heritage list.

### **Freedom of opinion and mass media**

Palestinian areas have witnessed a sharp and flagrant decline of public freedoms, and the enforcement of human rights laws in a way inconsistent with the accession of the State of Palestine to 20 international treaties and conventions by end of 2014, obliging Palestine to submit initial and periodic reports on the situations, covered by those international conventions to which Palestine has acceded, and on the status of human rights and the administrative and legislative procedures and steps taken in this regard and in accordance with periods of time specified in the conventions. In 2015, reports were submitted with respect to the International Covenant on the Civil and Political Rights, and the Convention against Torture, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination.

In Palestine, media outlets face unique challenges because of the environment they operate in, due to polarization and the surrounding risks. Journalists and media face imposed restrictions on

movement, and they are also exposed to risks that could threaten their safety, and to breaches of the freedom of press on multiple fronts.<sup>1</sup>

Although, in Palestine, there is a number of laws and regulations that guarantee freedom of expression (individuals and Media) such as the Declaration of Independence, announced on 15.11.1988, and guarantees freedom of opinion, the third revised version of the Constitution, Article 19, and the Press and Publications Law, issued on 26.6.1995, which is the first law issued by the National Authority and which importance stems from being a replacement to the previous regulations, though it lacks articles related to the work of the audio-visual and electronic media, hence, seemed frustrating for those working in media domain. However, in its annual reports on the status of human rights in Palestine, the Independent Commission for Human Rights monitors the violations against journalists and media outlets by the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank and the authority of Hamas government in the Gaza Strip, on the one hand, and the practices of the Occupying Power on the other hand. Its reports, issued respectively in 2012, 2013 and 2014, showed complaints presented to the Commission documenting 48, 52 and 48<sup>2</sup> violation cases of freedom of expression and freedom of media and access to information. The main breaches and violations in the West Bank and Gaza are summarized as follows: reventing the coverage of certain events, closure of media institutions, confiscation of equipment, arrests of journalists or calls for investigation, travel ban, prevention of publication of articles and reports, prevention of filming events, confiscation of informational materials or cameras and sometimes destroying them, arrest, investigation, physical assaults on journalists in some cases, hitting journalists and media personnel, threats sent to journalists, attacks on media institutions and property belonging to journalists.

This also includes violations against ordinary people with regard to freedom of opinion and expression, and violations regarding the peaceful public assemblies guaranteed by the law, and

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<sup>1</sup> <http://bit.ly/2fQOd6G>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.madacenter.org/images/text\\_editor/ar2012.pdf](http://www.madacenter.org/images/text_editor/ar2012.pdf)

handled against the law by the political authorities in both of West Bank and Gaza Strip, where often include beating, arresting and brutal dispersing of peaceful assemblies.

The Israeli violations against journalists in 2014 for example, can be summarized in committing bloody crimes coinciding with the aggression on Gaza, where 17 martyrs of journalists, including one Italian, were killed, aside from targeting and destroying some media institutions and homes of journalists, injuring about 20 people from the global crews, some of them with serious injuries. Warplanes targeted houses of dozens of journalists, which led to a complete destruction of about 42 houses and partial destruction of another 61, and resulted in the displacement of 140 journalists' families from their houses. Moreover, some media institutions were bombed, jammed and their broadcasts were hacked, and about 19 media institutions were completely or partially destroyed. The same year, 338 Israelis violations against Palestinian journalists in various cities of the West Bank were recorded, where 42 journalists were arrested in different districts for varying periods, where some were interrogated for their professional background. 115 different assaults were recorded during the clashes and demonstrations coverage in the city of Jerusalem and the areas of contact in the West Bank. Aside from depriving 67 journalists from fulfilling their duties in covering the events taking place in different parts of the West Bank and Jerusalem. Also, 23 cases of hacking broadcast and jamming of some local radio and satellite channels. The Israeli occupation forces continued their violations and suppression of the peaceful demonstrations against the Anti-Apartheid Wall, expansion and use of excessive force against demonstrators.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to all of the above, 2014 and 2015 witnessed a number of changes in the boards of directors of major media institutions such as Wafa agency, Palestinian Authority Broadcasting, as well as Mahmoud Darwish Foundation, through decrees issued by the President of the Palestinian Authority and met with loud displeasure by citizens and in media and cultural circles in particular.

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<sup>3</sup> Previous reference

## **Financing of culture**

### **General trends on funding the cultural sector in Palestine**

Lack of funding constitutes, today more than ever, the biggest concern in the work of the independent cultural institutions for the following reasons:

Decline of the international supporting institutions interest in Palestine due to their focus on the Arab Spring countries.

- The deteriorating economic situation in Palestine, and the reprioritization at the official level, which puts culture again at the bottom of the state's priorities.
- Decline in the funds allocated for cultural projects by the municipalities due to poor municipal tax collection, as a result of the deteriorating economic situation.
- The withdrawal of Ford Foundation from supporting the cultural institutions in Palestine.
- Reducing the support allocated by the public sector institutions for the cultural sector.
- Limited support from the General Institution of Cultural Events (institutional and individual).
- Directing part of the support towards relief works, due to the Israeli occupation successive aggression on Gaza.
- Concentration of some public grants for culture through Palestinian civil institutions.

### **Public spending on culture per person**

"Available data shows that the Palestinian National Authority annual budgets allocate low amounts to the cultural sector – not exceeding 0.003% of the Public Budget. This can be construed as a perpetuation of old traditions prevailed in the Palestine Liberation Organization budgets, which reflects a mentality unable to fathom the role of culture in providing the Palestinian people with potential morale energy that builds its capacity and develops its cultural project. Besides, in

previous budgets – known as low – nothing was allocated to support the cultural activity in Diaspora and to broaden the cultural relation with the Palestinian Arab minority in 1948 territory<sup>4</sup>

The table below<sup>5</sup> shows the allocations of the Ministry of Culture (amounts in thousands Shekel) for 2014 - 2015.

Year	Workers' indemnifications		Use of goods and services	Social assistance benefits	Total	Non-financial assets	Total development expenditure	
	Salaries & wages	Social contributions	Operational costs	Transfer costs	Total	Total capital expenditure		General total
2014	11,270	960	6,280	0	18510	250		18760
2015	12500	1157	7460	0	21117	350		21467

## Palestinian Culture Fund

In 2013, the Norwegian government renewed the agreement signed with the Palestinian Ministry of Culture for the third time, to continue its support to the cultural institutions through the Palestinian Culture Fund- which began in 2004- with a general budget of 2 million USD, distributed over three years (compared to 1392050 USD grant value in 2004, and 1562650 USD in addition to 183000 USD as a contribution from the Palestinian Ministry of Culture in 2010). It is worth mentioning that the Council of Ministers approved, in its meeting No. 37 of 15 January 2013, the Cultural Development Fund draft law which aims to activate and develop the culture sector, and it is currently before the President of the Palestinian Authority for approval.

During 2014, a strategic plan for the fund was developed and priorities were set through workshops, meetings and field visits with the cultural actors. The outcome of the first round

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<sup>4</sup> Culture Sector Strategic Plan Summary 2011-2013, The Ministry of Culture (PNA).

<sup>5</sup> Department of Finance of the Palestinian Ministry of Culture, Mohammad Qasim

launched in 2015 was 27 projects and activities, identified in the areas of: developing of the cultural infrastructure outside the cultural action center, and supporting travelling shows, in addition to partial support for productions, specifically in the field of visual and performing arts, and supporting individual innovations.

Among the Ministry achievements was the rehabilitation of six theaters, in partnership with some of its local government institutions, in Sidon - Tulkarm, Al-Yamun - Jenin, Dura - Hebron, Bani Na'im - Hebron, Beit Anan - the villages of Jerusalem, the municipal theater - Jericho, as well as qualifying technicians to work in these theaters, and training eight cultural activators on the subject of cultural media, at a total cost up to 360000 USD. The trend in the second round of the fund grant, in 2015, was more for production, where the production of 4 theatrical performances and 8 movies was supported. Also travelling shows were supported with an estimated total cost of 350000 USD, for the second round.<sup>6</sup>

### **Civil sector expenditure**

Palestinian non-governmental cultural organizations depend almost totally on foreign support, which clearly affects their independence in planning for their projects.

In addition, and as a result of the scarcity of the financial resources, the non-governmental organizations compete for those resources, while securing the administrative expenses for the management of the artistic and cultural centers remains the first concern of their admins.

The Palestinian capital invested in the establishment of few institutions that offer services in the cultural field, such as Welfare Association, founded in 1983, working on empowering the Palestinians, promoting their identity, and the values of freedom, democracy and other human values, preserving their cultural heritage highlighting its unique position, and releasing the creativity of young people, women and children, with the provision of equal opportunities for all

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<sup>6</sup> Interview with Mr. Maaouya Tahboub - Palestinian Culture Fund Manager

segments of the Palestinian society to activate these capabilities distinctively and creatively, and to overcome the obstacles set by the Israeli occupation against all aspects of life. The AM Qattan Foundation, founded in 1993, aiming at developing the culture and education in Palestine and the Arab world, with a particular focus on children, teachers and young creative people. Shortly after the commencement of its work, Qattan Foundation has become a key player in determining the cultural policy, as well as in the level of performance.

### **Welfare Association**

Welfare Association completed the draft strategic plan of the culture sector (2014-2016), which covers the West Bank, Gaza Strip, the 48th areas and Lebanon, allocating the following amounts:

- 17 million USD for the Palestinian Museum project
- 5 million USD for Ta'bir project<sup>7</sup> ( 1 Gaza Strip, 2.9 West Bank, 0.4 1948 Areas, 0.7 Lebanon)<sup>7</sup>
- 12 million USD for the restoration and rehabilitation projects.

The scope of the cultural work of the Institution was determined in three main tracks through the plan; to maintain the Palestinian culture and identity, to empower the Palestinian institutions, and to develop the human resources by nurturing, enhancing and developing the cultural creativity, by touching it wherever it is found, particularly at schools, universities and community institutions in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, 1948 areas, and the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon.

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<sup>7</sup> Ta'bir" project is concerned with expanding intervention in the component of arts entry in the educational process, focusing on libraries whether school or public libraries, focusing on theatre whether school, university or community, giving importance to social gender and women empowerment, supporting creativity and distinguished cultural initiatives, allocating 200 thousand dollars for them, achieving the Millennium development goals, integrating the working programs of the cultural, educational and youth foundation, networking among the active institutions in the sector, as well as among the Palestinian community groups in Palestine and Diaspora.

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.qattanfoundation.org/ar/annual\\_reports](http://www.qattanfoundation.org/ar/annual_reports)



Welfare Association expenditure in 2014 reached a total of 12.1 million USD, distributed at a ratio of 96% to projects in the West Bank, 0.3% in Lebanon, 1% in 1948 Palestine, through the programs of Ta'bir: Releasing the Self, the Reconstruction of the Old City of Jerusalem and Nablus, (Ibhaj): Protection of the Cultural Heritage and the Palestinian Museum.

### **A.M. Qattan Foundation**

Since the start of its official work in 1998, the A.M. Qattan Foundation has developed its programs and annually increased its budget, in line with the needs of the sectors it operates in. The following table shows the A.M. Qattan Foundation expenditures (2013-2014) in sterling.<sup>8</sup>

<b>Year</b>	<b>Administration</b>	<b>Qattan Centre for Research</b>	<b>Qattan Center for Children</b>	<b>Culture and Arts Program</b>	<b>Mosaic Hall</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>March 2014</b>	549110	1255108	1098219	666776	353000	3922212
<b>March 2013</b>	305372	1641376	916117	954288	326367	4143520

### **Expenditure of foreign bodies**

Generally, foreign bodies that support the cultural sector in Palestine are European institutions. This is due to rooting historical relationships between the Arab region and Europe due to the geographical location and some political considerations related to Palestine in recent history, due to the strong relationship of the Palestine Liberation Organization with the European leftist parties, which clearly supported the Palestinian people justice and fight for liberation from the Israeli occupation during the seventies and eighties, and due to more recent political interventions to end the Palestinian-Israeli conflict since the start of the Palestinian - Israel peace negotiations, which had an impact on the flood of financial support focused on the cultural sector, as well as other different sectors. Adding to that, the vast majority of Palestinian institutions and independent artists do not apply for grants from the US Agency for International development (USAID) due to a Palestinian national attitude represented by the civil cultural sector, and the public attitude related to the funding conditions set by USAID, including signing the renunciation of terrorism, a document

that classifies some of the Palestinian fighting political movements as terroristic organizations. Also, it is impossible to cooperate or work with Israeli institutions as they are part of the occupation system, and in accordance with the standards of the Campaign for the Academic & Cultural Boycott of Israel.

**Forms of foreign support<sup>8</sup>:** Direct financial support, training inside or outside Palestine, cultural exchange and scholarships, institutional presence, partnerships with local cultural institutions. It also provides many services to the cultural sector such as providing opportunities to learn languages, scholarships, organizing cultural and artistic projects, and supporting and backing the emerging youth initiatives of some artists. Among these institutions are: the Franco-German Cultural Center, Spanish Cooperation, Belgian Cooperation, the Danish House, etc.

For example, international bodies focus on the promotion and exchange in the fields of (cinema, literature, visual arts, festivals, design, theater) and on development topics including cultural elements.

The support coming from international institutions, organizations and consulates is an essential part of the volume of budgets invested in cultural activity in Palestine. The largest part of this support directly assist the cultural events, by supporting civil society institutions acting in the cultural domain and based in the center of the West Bank.

Among the international institutions that provide support to the cultural sector in Palestine: UNESCO, the European Union, the Anna Lindh Foundation for Intercultural Dialogue, SIDA (Sweden), Diakonia , Heinrich Boll, the European Cultural Foundation, Prince Claus Foundation, Culture Resource, the Arab Fund for Art and Culture / AFAC, Mophradat (The Young Arab Theatre Fund (YATF) previously), Euromed, Drosos Foundation (Switzerland), the Swiss Agency and others.

According to a report published by the European Union in 2014<sup>9</sup> which monitored a set of elements that make up the Palestinian cultural scene, including cultural policies in Palestine, and prepared in order to evaluate and analyze the EU intervention in the cultural field in the future, either through theoretical information or through interviews and meetings with cultural actors, in order to build a strategic intervention plan in the field of culture, it had been pointed out that the total expenditure in the field of cultural cooperation between the EU and Palestine in 2013 reached 734901.8 Euros

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<sup>8</sup> <http://cultureinexternalrelations.eu/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/country-report-Palestine-26.02.2014.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> <http://cultureinexternalrelations.eu/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/country-report-Palestine-26.02.2014.pdf>

(compared to 400000 Euros in 2012, 387288 Euros in 2011, 59369 Euros in 2010, and 150000 Euros in 2009). The budget of 2013 included supporting festivals, production of music and films, promotion of folk tales of nomads, supporting the establishment of arts school in Anabta, supporting the establishment of mobile libraries in addition to supporting theatrical production that highlights gender issues, and a festival for children.

At the same time, international institutions such as the Swiss Agency for Development proposed new interventions in the cultural sector and discussed them with actors and interested parties during April 2014, in order to put pressure on the Swiss government to allocate more effective amounts to support the cultural sector in Palestine. Also, the Danish consulate is currently working on evaluating its previous grants in preparation for a new cycle.

### **Supporting creativity and participation: financial grants, awards and scholarships**

The return of Palestine Prize for Literature, Arts and Humanities in 2015 via a decision of the Palestinian Council of Ministers, after its suspension in 2000 following the Israeli invasion to Ramallah and taking over the Ministry of Culture premises to make it a military base for the occupation army, and destroying its properties including the Ministry's archives. Also, Mahmoud Darwish Foundation launched a literary prize in 2010 with his name, and the provision of hundreds of production and scholarship grants and awards offered by AM Qattan Foundation since its establishment. **Since 2014, Dar Al-Kalima University for Arts and Culture** in Bethlehem, specialized in the fields of performing and visual arts, cultural heritage and tourism studies, grants bachelor degree in Contemporary Arts Program. **Artist Ismail Shammout Fine Art annual prize** that targets artists specialized in its field through a contest carrying his name.

Also, Welfare Association has been regulating the Late Abdulaziz Shakhshir Achievement Award for years. Yasser Arafat Foundation launched the Yasser Arafat Achievement Award in 2008, where it grants the award to an individual, an institution, or a working team in recognition of its achievement in the field of national, cultural, social, economic, scientific or academic domain. Despite the fact that culture is one of other sectors targeted by the award, it is one of the cultural stimulus at the cultural level.

There is also Palestine National Award for Excellence and Creativity, launched by PalTel Group Foundation for Community Development, which identifies three categories: excellence project, excellence foundation and excellence category for those with special needs. This prize had been awarded, since its launch, to many institutions or cultural and artistic initiatives.

Also, local government institutions use their international relations to secure scholarships for students in the field of culture or arts, both at the level of the first university education, or the master level, including, for example, the Municipality of Ramallah.

Mahmoud Darwish Foundation announced the results of its Culture and Creativity prize in its sixth round for 2015, which went to the Palestinian cinema director Hany Abu-Assad, and Mahmoud Darwish Award for Arab Creativity went to the Arab Syrian writer Zakaria Tamer.

Palestine State Appreciation Prize for Literature, Arts and Humanities returned, after fourteen years, and was awarded to writer Mohammad Ali Taha, storyteller Ziad Khadsh, while in art, to Trio Joubran, and the State Award for the overall works went to Dr. Hussam Al-Khatib.

Welfare Association organized the Late Abdulaziz Shakhshir Achievement Award, Yasser Arafat Award, and Award for Excellence and Creativity- PalTel Group. At the popular culture level, the young musician Mohammed Assaf won the title of Arab Idol in the Arab competition version of 2013.

## **Cultural institutions**

## **Government decisions**

The inactivity of the Palestinian Legislative Council since 2006 led to a delayed ratification of the various laws and regulations formulated by the independent cultural sector which put pressure to implement them aiming to empower itself. The inactivity of the Legislative Council gave the offices of President and Prime Minister more powers and authorities which affected the freedom of civil society organizations. During the past two years, the Prime Minister's Office issued decisions

aiming to control the work of civil society organizations, where funding of local and international non-profit organizations became subject to prior approval of the Office, and CSOs were under observation and continuous investigation. These actions have raised, ipso facto, the concerns of these organizations.

**Coalitions and formal and informal networks**, in the framework of the Palestinian cultural institutions orientation toward uniting their efforts and expertise, many of these institutions have worked on the formation of coalitions and formal and informal networks during the past few years, the most prominent coalitions are:

- **Launching International Biennial Qalandiya in 2012:** It has been launched by a group of cultural institutions working on visual arts to shed light on the contemporary Palestinian visual cultural production, and promote and link it with both local community and international context through collective efforts of these institutions. This coalition brings together multiple professional experiences, various human energies, joint financing sources, and the intention of joint work. This coalition expanded during 2014 and 2016 to include a wide range of institutions: Abdul Mohsen Al-Qattan Foundation, Riwaq Center, Palestinian Art Court, Al Ma'mal Foundation, Khalil Sakakini Cultural Center, the International Academy of Contemporary Art - Palestine, Palestinian Museum, and Municipality of Ramallah. New institutions join the coalition every year, according to the idea adopted for the Qalandiya International Project.
- **The Palestinian Performing Arts Network** was officially established and registered in the Palestinian Ministry of Interior in early 2015. This achievement was the outcome of several years of intensive collaboration among a group of art institutions specialized in Palestine in the field of performing arts such as dance, music, circus and theater, aiming to have a collective voice, be able to influence the official plans and policies, get more funding to support arts and culture, promote cultural identity and freedom of self-expression, and

increase the performing arts accessibility to different groups and communities, with focus on women, children and youth.

- **Establishment of (Shafaq) Network by the initiative of the Jerusalem institutions during 2015:** through (Shafaq), the partner institutions seek to organize work projects and co-financing in an attempt to overcome the obstacles of cultural work in Jerusalem, that has a special nature but lacks funding which threatens part of this city. These institutions are: Al Ma'mal Foundation for Contemporary Art, Palestinian Art Court – Al Hoash, Yabous Center, and Edward Said National Conservatory of Music. Alhkwyat Theater recently joined the network, where, since mid-2015, it has faced, the risk of closure due to Israel's systematic judaization of Jerusalem and emptying it from the active and influential cultural and civic institutions. It is noteworthy that this network is still under the establishment phase

## **Museums and Archives**

In 2014, Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics showed an increase in the number of Palestinian museums, reaching 21 museums divided between 16 in the West Bank and five in Gaza<sup>10</sup>. The total number of visitors to these museums reached 185284, including 161473 Palestinians, and the rest were visitors and tourists of other nationalities (comparing to 2011, 2012 and 2013, as the number of museums operating in Palestine, based on the same source, was 14 museums, including 10 in the West Bank and 4 in Gaza Strip, while the number of museum visitors was respectively: 45 thousand, 44 thousand, and 44 thousand visitors, 94% of them were Palestinians. It should be noted here that the growth in the number of museum visitors is evident, but without any available analytical information about the reasons.

In the same context, **Mahmoud Darwish Foundation took the initiative to establish a museum bearing the name of the late poet in the city of Ramallah**, containing his personal belongings and writings. Currently, Yasser Arafat Foundation is establishing a museum bearing the name of the late President Yasser Arafat.

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<sup>10</sup> [http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/\\_Rainbow/Documents/cult-2014-04a.htm](http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/_Rainbow/Documents/cult-2014-04a.htm)

The museum will contain some of the late President's belongings, and a library on the publications wrote about him, as well as collections of photographs and documents. In addition to the establishment of (the Bedouin village) museum, funded by the Ministry of Culture in Bethlehem district. Moreover, the Heritage Museum (of Inash Alusra Association) was officially opened containing, basically, the Palestinian folkloric clothes and fashion, as well as some aspects and instruments of folk life. The establishment of the city of Ramallah Museum is underway by an initiative of the Municipality of Ramallah, and is expected to be opened in 2017. Adding to all that, the Welfare Association opened the Palestinian Museum in mid-2016.<sup>10</sup>

### **Topics on cultural policy**

The continued absence of integration and coordination between the pedagogical and educational institution, in all its stages, and the contemporary Palestinian cultural achievement, and the lack of a distinctive role of the Palestinian universities in the cultural, artistic and research production and promotion. This gap is newly reflected in the Ministry of Education plan of (2014 - 2019), where it tried to show some purposive interventions to insert arts in education or in extracurricular activities that stimulate creativity, pluralism and diversity, yet, in its definition of the individual personality whom it aims to build, it contradicts with the definition of the national culture, which focuses on building an Arab-Islamic character, denying pluralism, divergence and diversity in the Palestinian society, as individuals and groups, and contradicts the goals of the extracurricular activities it sets.

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<sup>10</sup> The first museum that was established in Palestine in 1923 was the Islamic Museum in the Temple Mount, followed by the establishment of the Palestinian Archaeological Museum in 1936. Since 1994, a number of small museums were established but have remained ineffective until today.

The subject of cultural normalization with "Israel" continues to represent a controversy at the local level and among local intellectuals and cultural institutions, and at the level of the neighboring Arab countries.

The Global Campaign for the Boycott of Israel has made a lot of achievements, which raises Israel's concerns about the growing international campaigns<sup>11</sup>. As in addition to the achievements carried out by the campaign since its establishment, the pace of achievements has recently expanded, and among these achievements, especially at the academic and cultural level, was the declaration of more than a thousand artists from Ireland, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Belgium to support the cultural boycott of "Israel". Also, both of the famous American singer Lauryn Hill and artist Terstn Moore responded to the appeal of the boycott campaign by not singing in Israel. More than 500 academics in the United Kingdom, 450 Belgian academics, 1600 Spanish academics and more than 200 South African academics signed statements confirming their support and commitment to the call of academic boycott to (Israel ), launched by the Palestinian intellectuals and academics in 2014.

### **Palestinian international cultural presence**

In recent years, Palestine has achieved an international cultural presence through the receipt of an elite group of its artists, writers and institutions to important international awards in recognition of the Palestinian cultural achievement in homeland and diaspora, including:

- The Wanted 18, a film directed by Amer Shomali/ nominated for Oscar List (2015).
- "Hail Mary" film directed by Basil Khalil/ best short feature movie at Dubai International Film Festival (2015).
- "Degrade" a film directed by Arabs and Tarzan/ won the first prize, the "Golden Jujube", in Annaba Mediterranean Festival, Algeria.

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.sheraatv.com/?p=76327>



- "Sarah" a film directed by Khalil al-Mozayen, won the first prize in the Arab long feature film in Alexandria Film Festival edition 31.
- Novelist Osama Alaysa won Sheikh Zayed Book Award -Arts Branch for his novel Majaneen bait lahem (The fools of Bethlehem).
- The novel of Atef Abu Saif "A Suspended Life" to the short list for the International Prize for Arabic Fiction - Poker.
- Nominating novelist Akram Musallam for his novel "Iltabas al-amr ala al-laqlaq" (Confusing the Stork) among seven novels translated to French, to compete on the prize of the Arab World Institute for Arabic Fiction of 2015.
- Poet Dr. Ziad Mdawekh, Head of the French Language Department in Aqsa University in Gaza, and writes poetry in French, won the award for excellence in the International Poetry Contest, organized by the European Poetry Foundation.
- Raedah Saadah - Bronze Award - Biennale Arezzo in Italy.
- Ghassan Zaqtan – Griffin Poetry Prize (2014).
- Khaled Hourani - Creative Time Prize for Visual Arts (2013).
- Riwaq Foundation- Aga Khan Award for Architecture (2013) for the revival of the historic center of Birzeit project, Palestine.
- Qattan Foundation / Tarqem Award for creativity in Education (2013).
- Hany Abu-Assad for "Omar" movie - Jury Prize (Cannes Film Festival), and the "Golden Tanit" Award in Carthage Film Festival - Long Film Competition at the twenty-fifth edition of the festival (2014).
- Condom Lead movie - Brothers Tarzan- Cannes Film Festival (2014).