



USAID | **WEST BANK/GAZA**
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

ARKAN: SUPPORTING RULE OF LAW REFORM

**SEMI-ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT
OCTOBER 2006 - MARCH 2007**

March 2007

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The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

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ACRONYMS

AAUJ	Arab American University at Jenin
Arkan	Supporting Rule of Law Reform Project
CLE	Continuing Legal Education
CSDS	Civil Society and Democracy Strengthening
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CTO	Cognizant Technical Officer
D&G	Democracy and Governance
EU	European Union
GIS	Geographic Information System
IR	Intermediate Result
LOE	Level of Effort
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MUSAWA	Palestinian Center for the Independence of the Judiciary and Legal Profession
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PA	Palestinian Authority
PBA	Palestinian Bar Association
PLC	Palestinian Legislative Council
PONAT	Participatory Organizational Needs Assessment Tool
SO	Strategic Objective
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Semi-Annual Progress Report (SAPR) covers the technical and administrative activities implemented and accomplished by the Supporting Rule of Law Reform in the West Bank and Gaza – Arkan project for the period of October 2006 – March 2007. It follows the tasks as outlined in the Year 2 and Year 3 work plans.

After receiving the August 24, 2006 task order contract modification incorporating the Special Provision “Prohibition of Direction Assistance to the Palestinian Authority,” Arkan was able to resume its activities after a seven-month suspension following the January 2006 Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) elections. Once the suspension was lifted, we completed tasks outlined in the revised second-year work plan during the first half of this reporting period, and worked closely with USAID to finalize our third-year work plan and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) indicators, which were submitted to USAID for review. Approval of the M&E indicators is still pending.

With the hold on project activities lifted and activities back on track, Arkan made significant progress in all three components over the past 6 months. Specifically, Arkan achieved the following results:

- Based on the University Law School Curriculum Reform Review, Arkan’s partner universities continued to make progress in implementing recommendations for improving legal education. Specifically, Al Quds, An Najah, and Birzeit universities introduced new courses in to their curriculum designed to develop practical skills for real-life practice of law and legal research. Al Azhar University has moved forward in encouraging law student involvement in their education by supporting the formation of the first law student’s association in Palestinian universities. All universities have been successful at integrating and systematizing interactive teaching methodologies in the classroom, which encourage students to think critically, analyze, and gain practical skills.

In addition, we developed a white paper on legal education, which is being reviewed by law school deans. After incorporating feedback from the deans, we will translate the white paper into English and submit it to USAID for review. Arkan also produced three publications that will serve as resources to our partner law schools: a manual on interactive teaching methods, a student survey report, and a legal research manual.

- Legal externship program. Ten students from our partner law schools have been placed in private sector firms and in the legal departments of local and international NGOs.

- MUSAWA improves financial, managerial, and administrative systems and policies. The Ramallah-based civil society advocacy organization MUSAWA continued to make progress in implementing recommended improvements following an April 2006 organizational needs assessment. Improvements included developing new systems and policies to ensure compliance with international accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations and international best practices. Before

having to terminating it's partnership with MUSAWA, Arkan trained seven of its employees in the new financial, managerial, and administration systems and policies that help streamline processes and enable employees to work more efficiently.

- Twenty-five lawyers trained in promoting rule of law. Arkan trained twenty-five lawyers participating in MUSAWA's "Lawyers for Rule of Law" program on rule of law, advocacy, and legal research skills. Lawyers represented eight cities from throughout the West Bank and were charged with engaging lawyers in their communities through public awareness and public defending, promoting the independence of the judiciary and rule of law, and monitoring judicial and legal violations.

- Continuing legal education (CLE) program. We took steps toward implementing the first-ever Palestinian CLE program in cooperation with the Palestinian Bar Association (PBA) in the West Bank and the law school of Al Azhar University in Gaza. Both institutions have developed a list of CLE topics, and have selected experts to deliver the training. The CLE program will be open to all lawyers, including those who are not members of the PBA. During the quarter, we delivered 4 out of 25 sessions in the West Bank, and 3 out of 12 sessions in Gaza. We also helped draft a legislative policy for the West Bank CLE program that will allow the PBA to prepare the CLE program regulations for ratification by its General Assembly.

- PBA capacity building. As part of efforts to build the institutional capacity of the PBA, Arkan implemented two of the three modules of the Participatory Organizational Needs Assessment Tool (PONAT). The final module and PONAT report will be completed in the next quarter.

- Mock-trial program. We implemented 37 mock trials in 7 schools throughout the West Bank and Gaza. More than 245 students between the ages of 13 and 17 participated in the activities. The Arkan team was assisted by five volunteers who were trained as community legal educators.

- Respect for Rule of Law Awareness Program Implemented in Gaza. 944 Gazan students (506 female and 437 male) between the ages of 12 and 15 benefited from learning about the rule of law and Palestinian judiciary through the Arkan-developed Respect for Rule of Law Awareness program. About 300 of the students performed in mock trials as part of the Respect for the Rule of Law Awareness Program in 15 locations throughout the Gaza Strip. The program was implemented by five CSO awarded grants under the USAID-funded Civil Society and Democracy Strengthening project (CSDS). The 41 facilitators teaching the program included 36 CSO activists, 4 Al Azhar University law students, and 1 training-lawyer trained by Arkan in October on how to teach school children about importance of and respect of the rule of law and judiciary this quarter.

- Rule-of-law awareness among schoolchildren. In January 2007, we taught 33 facilitators in the West Bank how to instill respect for the rule of law among schoolchildren. Arkan is in the process of subcontracting two CSOs to implement the program in the northern and southern West Bank with help from these facilitators.

- Rule-of-law awareness among youths. In late March 2007, we held a one-day follow-up training session for 55 facilitators in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The session focused on four new modules that were added to the facilitator’s manual targeting youths. We incorporated feedback from the facilitators into the youth manual before submitting it for USAID review.
- Theater play. Arkan worked with a Palestinian theater troupe to deliver 22 performances of the “Abu Nitham” play across the West Bank and Gaza. The show reached more than 4,470 people, including 3,640 children, and generated many thank-you notes from audience members.

ARKAN BY THE NUMBERS	
Arkan Activities	Results in the past 6 months*
Legal externship program	10 students from the 5 partner law schools are participating in the program
5 universities’ curriculum reviewed and recommendations provided	350 students enrolled in new practical skills and legal research classes
26 professors trained in new teaching methods	1,300 students being taught by professors who are using Arkan-introduced interactive teaching techniques
Reforming legal research courses in the West Bank/Gaza through the introduction of new teaching methodologies	Published a student survey report, a manual on interactive teaching methods, and a legal research manual
Implementation of 7 CLE program sessions (4 in the West Bank and 3 in the Gaza Strip)	210 lawyers attended the CLE sessions
Mock-trial training	245 students participated in 37 mock trials in 7 schools (5 in the West Bank and 2 in the Gaza Strip)
Promoting respect for the rule of law among school children	74 facilitators trained, 41 in Gaza and 33 in West Bank how to impart respect for the rule of law among school children.
Implementation of After School program for school children on the rule of law in Gaza	944 students participate in program; 1600 people participate in final ceremonies and are exposed to rule of law issues
Promoting respect for the rule of law among youths	55 facilitators, including 21 women, learned how to impart respect for the rule of law to Palestinian youths
22 “Abu Nitham” theater play performances across the West Bank and Gaza Strip	3,640 children were exposed to basic rule-of-law concepts through the plays

* This column reflects the results seen in this quarter. The activities listed were not necessarily conducted during this quarter.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Arkan Project Goals

Arkan's objective is to strengthen the informal justice sector in order to promote the rule of law and lay the foundation for a democratic Palestinian state. The project works on multiple fronts to improve legal education, foster public participation in legal and judicial reform, and instill respect for the rule of law. These efforts are designed to create a Palestinian legal culture, increase the effectiveness of legal institutions and processes, and raise the public's trust in the legal and judicial system.

To achieve these goals, Arkan works with the Palestinian Bar Association (PBA), professional and civil society groups, lawyers, and five law schools—Al Azhar, Al Quds, An-Najah, Arab American University at Jenin (AAUJ), and Birzeit.

Arkan supports USAID's SO 3, "more responsive and accountable governance," IR 3.4, "increased adherence to and respect for principles and practices of rule of law," and the following sub-IRs:¹

- IR 3.4.1: Policy change contributes to systemic reform
- IR 3.4.2: Increased professionalism of the legal community
- IR 3.4.4: Improved Palestinian legal education

B. Programmatic Trends: Environment for Rule of Law Reform

The Palestinian state of law and order continued to deteriorate over the past six months as a result of escalating tensions and clashes between Fateh and Hamas, continued restrictions by the international community of aid to the Palestinian Authority (PA), and frequent Israeli incursions into the Gaza Strip.

Following the Hamas victory in the January 2006 Palestinian legislative council elections, the international community (namely the Quartet, the United States and the European Union) placed conditions on aid to the Palestinian Authority. The conditions include disarmament, commitment to non-violence, the recognition of Israel, and the acceptance of previous agreements like the Road Map. The Hamas government has yet to meet these conditions, and thus, restrictions on financial aid and technical assistance to the PA, and US Treasury's freeze on the PA's single treasury account, have continued into this quarter.

Internal violence erupted in December when the three children of the Palestinian General Intelligence Chief and Judge Bassam al-Fara were killed by unknown gunmen in separate incidents in Gaza. Rumors and speculation tie the killings to politics and factional fighting between Hamas and Fateh. The General Intelligence Chief is known to be a Fateh loyal to President Abbas; the judge was a Hamas activist. The killings caused an increase in tensions within the Palestinian public,

¹ This report reflects the results framework as described in the original task order contract. A contract modification, including a revised results framework, is under discussion with USAID.

clans, and amongst the various factions. Some say that the Palestinians are at the brink of a civil war.

Political and financial crisis

A year after Hamas' victory in the PLC elections, the Palestinian Authority (PA) has yet to accept the conditions set by the Quartet of Mideast mediators—the United States, the European Union, Russia, and the United Nations—for receiving aid. The lack of international aid has led to a severe financial and political crisis. Compounding the problem, Arab countries are unable to provide direct funding to the Palestinian government, and Israel has refused to transfer the \$50 million in monthly tax and tariff revenues that it collects on behalf of the PA.

Against this backdrop, public employees went on an open strike to demand their salaries, which had not been paid since the government was formed. After months of negotiations, the government agreed to begin paying the owed wages over four installments and to disburse future salaries on time. Civil servants went back to work in early January 2007, putting an end to a five-month strike that had crippled government services.

Cuts in funding to the PA have dealt a severe blow to the Palestinian economy. Almost two-thirds of all Palestinians live in poverty, and per-capita income is at 60 percent of its 1999 level. Harsh economic conditions have also had a negative impact on security, stability, and the rule of law. Tensions between Fateh and Hamas have led to bloody clashes between armed members of the two factions. Internal fighting reached its peak when more than 20 civilians were killed and tens injured in a single day of clashes in Gaza. Ceasefire agreements typically followed periods of intense fighting, but were rarely respected.

In the meantime, negotiations on the formation of a unity government continued. After several failed attempts, Saudi Arabia brokered an agreement between Fateh and Hamas in Mecca on February 9, 2007. Six days later, the cabinet resigned and President Mahmoud Abbas asked former Prime Minister Ismail Haniyyeh to form the next government. Announced on March 18, the new cabinet is based on the principles of the Mecca accord and includes members of the parties represented in the PLC. It is hoped that the formation of a unity government will bring an end to the crippling economic sanctions that have been in place for over a year.

Increased kidnapping incidents

The Palestinian territories, especially Gaza, have witnessed a dramatic increase in the number of kidnappings. Several foreigners, as well as known Palestinians, have been kidnapped by various groups. Most recently, four masked men abducted BBC reporter Alan Johnston from his home in Gaza. Unlike previous incidents, which lasted only a few days, Mr. Johnston has been held for over a month. His whereabouts and the kidnappers' demands remain unknown. Mr. Johnston's case is particularly troubling because it marks a shift in the kidnappers' tactics, and it underscores the security forces' inability to secure release of the victims.

Public opinion on the rule of law

According to a study conducted by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2006 has witnessed increased deterioration of the rule of law. Over 300 Palestinians were killed in 2006 due to lawlessness and internal fighting. There was a 40 percent increase in robberies, 100 percent increase in kidnapping, 30 percent increase in suicides and the number of murder and attempted murder cases doubled in 2006.

Lack of security, stability, and law and order remain a top priority of the Palestinian public, according to a November 2006 public opinion poll conducted by An Najah University's Center for Opinion Polls and Survey Studies. 42.8 percent of those polled said that their top priority at the present stage is an end to the security mayhem. Poor economic conditions came as a second priority to the security situation in this survey.

When asked what the top priority for the Palestinian government should be, 84.4 percent responded that imposing order on the local security conditions should be top priority for the Palestinian government; 78.7 percent of those polled responded that carrying out court verdicts should be top priority. In the same study, 53.4 percent of those surveyed in the West Bank and Gaza rated the performance of the judiciary as "bad;" 34.3 percent rated the judiciary's performance as "good;" and 12.4 percent responded that they had no opinion or did not know. Interestingly, in the West Bank, the gap between those who rated the judicial apparatus as "bad" vs. "good" was quite wide (58.6 percent vs. 29.3 percent respectively). In Gaza, on the other hand, public opinion was more split down the middle, with 44.4 percent rating the judiciary as "bad" and 42.8 percent rating it as "good." 62 percent of those polled also rate the security apparatuses' performance as "bad." In this survey, the judiciary and security apparatus were ranked lowest among all Palestinian institutions.

With the escalation of factional fighting, Palestinian citizens and civil society organizations (CSOs) became increasingly concerned about the rule of law. An online public opinion poll by the Ma'an News Agency asked visitors whether "reactivating the Palestinian judiciary and court system would guarantee the success of the Mecca agreement by bringing lawbreakers to justice." More than 90 percent of the 8,224 respondents said "yes." Although online surveys are not scientific, the Ma'an poll provides some indication of growing public support for the role of the judiciary and legal system.

Rule of Law Institutions

The restrictions on aid and financial assistance have led to a wide-scale financial crisis in which the PA has been unable to pay government employees in ten months. Last quarter, on September 2, 2006, thousands of Palestinian civil servants went on a general strike, protesting the government's inability to pay salaries. Those on strike included public school teachers, health care workers, ministry workers, and court personnel. The strike continued well into this quarter. In November, teachers returned to work following a deal brokered between the government and teachers' union.

Court personnel continued to strike through the end of the year. The absence of court personnel has resulted in a paralysis of the judicial system and further delays in the

processing of several thousand court cases and hearings. Currently, according to Ramallah-based CSO The Palestinian Independent Committee for Citizen's Rights (PICCR), there is a backlog of about 49,000 court cases, including 5,854 criminal cases in the Palestinian legal system. Since July, when the courts went on their annual vacation, new cases have not been filed, except those related to serious crimes (murder), bail releases, and cases subject to prescriptions (limited by time).

According to Arkan legal experts, many of the 49,000 pending cases were likely filed several years ago, with some dating back to the pre-PA era. Several thousand of those reported cases are minor traffic cases or ones that have been abandoned by the plaintiff. This is a testament to the judiciary's need for improvements in case management.

Civil Society Organizations as well as legal professionals have voiced their dissatisfaction with the PBA while the courts were on strike. For example, the PICCR noted the absence of the PBA while the courts were on strike, and urged the PBA to work with the courts to resume operations. Some legal professionals asserted that the PBA does little to provide services and support to the legal profession. The public's trust in the PA and its judicial and legal systems has traditionally been low. The judiciary's involvement in the strike has undoubtedly furthered the deterioration of the public's faith in the system, and the perceived ineffectiveness of the judiciary has led people to take matters into their own hands and resolve conflicts through alternative means ranging from violence to tribal justice.

Maintaining Civil Peace: Role of the Informal vs. Formal Justice Sector

This quarter, Minister of Interior Said Sayyam issued an order to re-establish committees of social reconciliation, which would operate under the Tribal Justice and Social Reconciliation Office of the Ministry. The stated mission of the social reconciliation committees is to resolve social conflicts and problems, to aid police in restoring security and stability, and to help build the basic blocks of a nation. All districts will host a social reconciliation committee and there will be committee branches established in cities and villages.

These committees are not new to Palestinian society; past experience using social reconciliation committees was negative as the committees were considered detrimental to the formal justice sector, especially in terms of the independence of the judiciary. Therefore, the MOI's announcement evoked debate within the legal community on whether the creation of these committees would interfere in the independence of the judiciary.

However, with violence and lawlessness escalating this quarter in the West Bank and Gaza, and the formal justice sector paralyzed due to the general strike, legal specialists and CSOs have been discussing utilizing parallel mechanisms of justice when the formal justice sector is essentially "frozen." Discussions within the legal community addressing the formal justice sector's inability to perform provide solutions such as encouraging debt collectors to collect debts to keep civil peace in the absence of the judiciary.

New Legislation on the Role and Function of the Judiciary

While the public continues to hold a poor view of the judiciary, the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) issued four orders in the Palestinian Official Gazette aimed towards improving the function of the formal judiciary:

- Internal Regulations for the SJC Technical Office
- Ground Principles for SJC to Assume its Mandate
- Judiciary Code of Conduct
- Regulations for Judicial Inspection

These regulations further define the role of the judiciary, its independence, as well as its responsibilities and obligations. In addition, these regulations set the conditions for service on the bench, including a system for appointment, discipline, review, and dismissal for misconduct, thereby promoting transparency and independence of the judicial process.

The Birzeit University Institute of Law published a research study this quarter, "Tribal Justice, Rule of Law, and Dispute Resolution in Palestine." The researchers concluded that, given the above issues, the tribal justice system and rule of law do not go hand-in-hand. The basic principles of rule of law cannot be maintained in Palestinian society with the existence of the tribal justice system. According to the researchers, trust among the public must be rebuilt in the formal justice system. Rebuilding trust requires the consistent presence of a democratic state that offers an effective formal justice system (including effective courts and an independent judiciary) and demonstrates an effective law enforcement system and officials (police, etc). The researchers affirmed, however, that a strong democratic state that upholds justice and the rule of law could consequently engage the tribal justice system into the formal justice system, by which its use would be limited to civil and commercial disputes.

Legal Debates

Abbas announced his intention to hold early Presidential and PLC elections in a public address in December. According to legal professionals, based on the Palestinian Basic Law, the President does not have the authority to hold early Presidential or PLC elections. The Basic Law does not explicitly give the President the authority to dissolve the PLC, and Arkan legal specialists interpret Article 113 as stating that the PLC cannot be dissolved even during a state of emergency when the executive normally assumes more power. Therefore, the President cannot hold early elections. In addition, according to Article 47 of the Basic Law, "the term of the Legislative Council is four years from the date of its election."

Many legal professionals and law professors were outraged by the President's announcement. Several leading attorneys and scholars noted that calling early elections is unconstitutional, and they opined that this legally demonstrable fact is well-known to the President and his legal advisors. According to these sources, the President's violation of the Basic Law is a violation of the rule of law. Members of the legal community are calling for the formation of a legal coalition to provide the president with professional legal advice and guidance.

In addition to the legal debates centered around holding early elections, heated debates arose on a December 19 High Court decision that the PLC does not have the right to approve or disapprove decisions made by the former PLC. Earlier this year, the PLC annulled the February 16th final session of the former PLC. In response to the annulment, Fateh members petitioned the High Court (sitting as the Constitutional Court) on the basis that both the decision to annul the session and the measures passed during it were illegal. The High Court's recent conclusion that the PLC does not have the right to alter former PLC decisions therefore suggests that the decisions made during the final session of the former PLC remain legal and active. Opponents of the decision, including the Chairman of the PLC, challenge the decision as an unconstitutional violation of Article 103 of the Basic Law, and accuses the High Court of extending itself beyond its mandate. Issa Abu Sharar, President of the Supreme Judicial Council and Chair of the High Court, disagrees with the claims.

B1. Logistical Constraints

Among the continuing logistical constraints impacting project activities are increased travel restrictions within and between the West Bank and Gaza. Travel restrictions often act as a barrier to project partners' participation in various forums, dialogues, workshops, and conferences.

In addition, travel restrictions between the West Bank and Gaza have become more stringent. Carriers of East Jerusalem identity cards now have to use their laissez-passez to enter Gaza, which has complicated procedures for several Arkan employees.

While at times these logistical constraints can hamper the delivery of training and technical assistance and day-to-day oversight of project activities, particularly in Gaza, the staff manages to overcome these challenges with the support of Arkan's local chief of party (COP) and those West Bank staff able to travel to Gaza. To the greatest extent possible, Arkan utilizes alternative solutions when travel is not possible, such as the use of videoconferencing.

B2. Programmatic Challenges

During this quarter, the Arab American University at Jenin (AAUJ) advised Arkan it would not sign the ATC, a requirement to receive procurement of equipment under the contract. At one point over the course of the quarter, the law faculty dean expressed that any future cooperation with Arkan will depend on the project providing AAUJ with the procurement of equipment to furnish the law schools' mock trial hall. Arkan is working to maintain a partnership with AAUJ that would keep AAUJ engaged in Arkan activities, despite not being able to receive the equipment.

In the face of these political, logistical, and programmatic challenges, the Arkan team has responded with flexibility and ingenuity, and has redoubled its efforts to sustain the solid working relationships developed with our partners.

A number of partners raised concerns about USAID branding requirements during the second quarter, particularly the PBA and the Palestinian Center for the Independence of the Judiciary and Legal Profession, also known as MUSAWA. Arkan informed

both organizations that adherence to USAID branding regulations was required and that failure to comply would prevent ongoing or future activities. The project had to terminate its partnership with MUSAWA, due to its refusal to abide by the regulations.

On the other hand, a compromise was reached with the PBA as it headed into a sensitive election period. The bar association asked that the Arkan logo be included on advertisements carrying the PBA and USAID logos to make it clear that assistance was provided through the Arkan project, and not directly from USAID. This solution recognized USAID's efforts without eroding public support for PBA board members; losing public support could have impacted election results. Arkan was thus able to continue working with a crucial partner in improving legal education.

USAID's vetting requirements posed another programmatic challenge. As we approach the end of the project, our team has been unable to work with key organizations due to delays caused by the vetting process. To save time, we are focusing our efforts on organizations that have already been vetted.

II. GENERAL ACTIVITIES

General Activities—Rule of Law Advisory Committee

A. Rule of Law Advisory Committee

Arkan hosted its fourth meeting of the Rule of Law Advisory Committee (RLAC) this quarter in Ramallah and Gaza City. Attendees included three law school deans from Al Quds, Al Azhar, and An Najah universities, the Director of Ramallah-based CSO MUSAWA, the President of Gaza-based CSO Seyada, and USAID representatives. In addition to sharing the draft Year 3 work plan, Arkan presented the committee members with updates on recent project developments, challenges, budget limitations, and the revised anti-terrorism certificate (ATC).

While praising the role of USAID/Arkan in encouraging respect for rule of law, many of the partners voiced concern regarding the planned cuts in project activities. They highlighted the need for further support and assistance to partner institutions, especially since Arkan is the only rule of law project targeting the informal legal sector.

Arkan planned to host the fifth and final meeting of the Rule of Law Advisory Committee in March 2007. However, the meeting was postponed until April to allow enough time for processing a vetting application for one partner and to enable USAID representatives to attend. The meeting will focus on reviewing Arkan achievements over the past three years and assessing the state of the Palestinian legal and judicial sector. All project partners, including those in Gaza, have been invited to attend.

B. Monitoring and Evaluation

In preparation for the upcoming performance monitoring report, our team began collecting M&E data and updating performance indicators to ensure they adequately capture all of our activities. We also held discussions with the Mission's GIS specialist, Tayseer Edeas, on ways to improve the indicators in the GIS system. Mr. Edeas sent us a revised list based on these discussions, but a meeting is scheduled for late April to allow each component team to provide input.

III. COMPONENT 1: ENHANCING LAW FACULTY CONTRIBUTIONS TO LEGAL REFORM

Under Component 1: Enhancing Law Faculty Contributions to Legal Reform, Arkan is focusing on the future generation of Palestinian legal and judicial practitioners and leaders. Working with five faculties of law at Al Azhar, Al Quds, An Najah, AAUJ, and Birzeit Universities, Arkan is helping to improve the quality of legal education in Palestinian law schools, and to empower law faculty and students with the knowledge, skills, and tools, to effectively contribute to legal and judicial reform initiatives.

This quarter, Arkan's partner law schools continued to move forward with several initiatives previously introduced by Arkan. These initiatives included improving course offerings, implementing variations in teaching methodologies, incorporating legal research into the curriculum, and encouraging greater involvement by law faculty and students in the development of their legal education. Al Azhar University law students became more engaged in their communities through participation in Arkan trainings to become community legal educators in the rule of law. Al Azhar University law students were also introduced to new tools for their educational development, including personal action plans and communication tips.

Our team implemented a number of activities with the law schools this quarter, most notably the highly successful legal externship program. We also published a student survey report, a manual on interactive teaching methods, and a legal research manual—all of which will serve as resources for law students and faculty members.

A. Task 1: Establishing Practical Skills Training and Improving Course Offerings

A1. Improving Course Offerings and Curriculum Reform Review

Curriculum Reform Review and Action Plans

Part of Arkan's work with its partner universities has involved analysis of each institution's legal curriculum in order to identify specific areas for improvement in teaching methodology and subject matter. To accomplish this, early on in its program, Arkan commissioned a curriculum review by compiling specific data for each partner university and identifying gaps in the current legal curriculum. Some identified shortcomings included ineffective teaching methods in the classroom, deficient research materials and library services, and poor student/teacher ratios. In addition to analysis of the curriculum, Arkan has also offered recommendations for changes in the way students are currently admitted into the law faculty.

An English draft was submitted to the CTO this quarter; once approved, an Arabic draft will be printed and circulated to the law schools and other interested parties.

Partner universities have been making great progress in addressing many of the areas highlighted in the curriculum reform review report. Below is a summary of progress achieved by each university:

CRR Recommendation	Status as of December 31, 2006
Al Quds University	
Improve and diversify teaching methods	One of Al Quds University's law faculty members, Jihad Al Kiswani, is adapting Arkan's Interactive Teaching and Learning Manual to develop a manual on legal teaching methodologies tailored for Al Quds faculty.
Increase number of courses focusing on legal research and research techniques	3 elective courses added on legal research and writing
Introduce new courses focused on practical skills development and applied subjects	3 credit hour internship course added Clinical legal education course
Birzeit University	
Introduce more courses focused on practical skills development	New academic plan includes courses focused on developing specific skills for lawyers, judges, and prosecutors. BZU is also updating its legal research course, using the Arkan Legal Research Manual
Al Azhar University	
Encourage formation of law students' association and interaction with the community. Develop additional admission criteria for students.	Al Azhar law school was the first to form a law students association.
An Najah University	
Introduce new courses focused on practical skills development	Representatives from the judicial sector conducting guest lectures and seminars on the practical application of the law.
Integrate case studies, simulations, moot courts, and other interactive teaching methods into the classroom	Employment of interactive teaching made a requirement and law faculty is arranging for field visits to courts in the Nablus area.

White paper on legal education.

Building on the curriculum reform review, Arkan is working with the universities to develop targeted plans for curriculum and teaching reform, based on each institution's strengths and weaknesses, and the political will exhibited to implement recommended reforms. Arkan held a workshop with law faculty deans to facilitate the development of curriculum reform action plans.

On February 12, 2007, we met with law school deans (and one dean's representative) to discuss challenges facing Palestinian legal education in six areas:

- Academia
- Administration
- Faculty and teaching staff
- Teaching methodologies
- Library and legal research resources
- Student issues

Arkan also presented a proposed vision for the future of legal education, which included recommendations for improvement of the curriculum and teaching methodologies. The participants first reviewed and prioritized the recommendations, and then assigned responsibilities for actionable items. Based on these discussions, we

drafted an Arabic-language white paper on the status of legal education and shared it with the law schools to solicit feedback. We will translate the draft into English and submit it to the CTO for approval before finalizing the document for official circulation.

We initially planned to prepare separate white papers for each partner law school. Discussions with the deans, however, revealed that the institutions face similar issues and that school-specific white papers would be redundant. Hence, the white paper will serve as a platform for each law faculty to begin developing their targeted action plans for curriculum and teaching reform in their institutions, with an eye towards legal education reform at the sectoral level. Nevertheless, Arkan plans to hold discussions with each law school to assess the need to develop individual reform plans. The assessment will be guided by the white paper on legal education and will take into consideration each institution's strengths and weaknesses, as well as the political will to implement reforms.

A2. Building Interactive Teaching and Learning Skills

To build interactive teaching skills, Arkan has been working with law professors at our partner universities on both an individual and group basis. Arkan has introduced a variety of interactive teaching and learning methodologies to law professors and students—including case studies, simulations and role-playing, and mock trials. Arkan has also produced and distributed two training manuals: *Interactive Teaching and Learning for Trainers* and an *Interacting Teaching and Learning Manual for Trainees*.

Recently, to evaluate work completed thus far, Arkan surveyed 23 law professors and deans who participated in Arkan's interactive teaching and legal research workshops. The survey assessed the impact and effectiveness of Arkan's faculty development activities, the two Arkan-developed manuals, as well as a companion effort manual devoted to legal research and writing. The survey also assesses the impact of efforts to improve law school course offerings.

Arkan received 19 questionnaires back from the 5 partner law schools. Overall, law professors and deans who participated in Arkan workshops are using what they learned to improve their teaching. Likewise, most are using the manuals as guides in class. Generally, the survey revealed the following:

- Sixteen out of 18 (84%) law professors who participated in the interactive teaching trainings are using the teaching methodologies introduced.
- Half of the participants are using interactive teaching methodologies in every class; the other half is using interactive teaching methodologies on a weekly basis.
- Case studies are the most frequently used interactive teaching methodologies in the classroom among participants of Arkan's trainings, followed by the Socratic Method, role playing and in-class simulations, and legal research.
- Almost a third of the respondents who received the *Interactive Teaching and Manual* are using the manual on a monthly basis.
- A little more than half (54%) of the respondents who received the *Legal Research and Writing Manual* are using the manual on a monthly or bi-monthly basis.

In consultation with law school deans, Arkan designed a training-of-trainers program on interactive teaching and learning, which we planned to deliver in March 2007. The training was postponed to April, however, because of scheduling conflicts for the participants.

Each partner law school has nominated one professor to complete the training. The trainees will then transfer their knowledge and skills to other professors, thus improving teaching methodologies at their respective institutions. An additional 15 professors from the 5 partner law schools are expected to benefit from the training provided by their colleagues through workshops, team teaching activities, and one-on-one skills building.

We published an Arabic version of the trainer's edition of the Interactive Teaching and Learning Manual and will distribute it to partner law schools and interested parties in coordination with the Arkan CTO. The manual will serve as the principal training tool in the upcoming training-of-trainers program.

A3. Personal Study Plans

In January 2007, students from four partner law schools were introduced to personal study plans—a tool designed to help them develop their skills and meet their individual goals. A separate meeting was held for AAUJ students the following month as the January session coincided with their semester exams. Arkan will deliver formal training on how to develop personal study plans in the next quarter. In preparation for this, we distributed reading materials and an Arabic-language template to the students.

A4. Engaging Students in Community Education on the Rule of Law through Mock Trials

Mock trials help prepare students for the practice of law. Building on successful training of four Al-Azhar students in October 2006, Arkan trained eight additional students from Al Quds, Birzeit, and An-Najah law schools in January 2007; these students also took part in the Rule of Law Awareness Facilitators workshop that was conducted during the month of January (see B.1 Engaging Law Student in Community Education on Rule of Law below). The trainees are now able to organize mock trials to impart rule-of-law principles to children and to hone their own skills as future lawyers.

“This activity is very important; it teaches children to know their rights and to be aware of the importance of the rule of law,” said Iman Jamous, a law student at An-Najah University. “As a law student and a lawyer-to-be, it helped me better know how the court functions, the roles of various court employees, and how they communicate with each other during the trial.”

Sabah Salama, a law student from Al Quds University, echoed this sentiment. The training, she said, deepened her understanding of “the role of each court employee—the lawyers, prosecutors, and the judge,” adding that she is now more aware of “the role of the lawyer and how a lawyer should prepare for cases.”

Khalil Abu Khadija, who also studies law at Al Quds, emphasized the importance of mock trials in instilling respect for the rule of law in children. “Through the mock trial activity,” he said, “I learned how to introduce children to important rule-of-law concepts.”

A5. Legal Externship Program

Arkan continued to implement the legal externship program during the quarter. This pilot program seeks to place qualified law students in private sector firms and in the legal departments of local and international NGOs. Partner law schools nominated 10 top-performing students (2 from each school), including 4 female students, to participate in the pilot. A law professor at each institution will supervise the work of his or her students.

A total of 18 organizations expressed an interest in hosting student externs, demonstrating the need for such a program. Arkan selected 9 organizations that best match the interests of the participating students. We contracted a legal externship program coordinator in February 2007 to help develop a framework and model for the program, which was then presented to the partner law schools. We also prepared a document outlining the students’ rights and obligations, which will be signed by the students and the hosting institutions. Finally, Arkan developed and signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with each participating organization.

Legal Externship Hosting Institutions

- Palestinian Independent Commission for Citizens’ Rights
- Empowering the Palestinian Judiciary/ Seyada (EU-funded project)
- Palestinian Telecommunications Company
- Palestine Securities Exchange
- Law Institute at Birzeit University
- Al Mizan Center for Human Rights
- Jerusalem Legal Aid and Human Rights Center
- Two private law firms

The program was launched on March 14, 2007, with an orientation for the selected students and their respective supervisors. Participants were introduced to program modalities, including the MOUs with hosting institutions, the students’ rights and obligations, and the role of faculty supervisors in maximizing the benefits of the externships. Arkan also explained the reporting and M&E tools it will use to ensure successful implementation of the program.

Finally, our team encouraged partner law schools to institutionalize the pilot program as-is or to modify it to suit the specific needs of their students. We provided the schools with the full list of organizations interested in hosting student externs so they could follow up with them on their own accord. An-Najah law school has already taken steps in that direction by independently approaching the Palestine Securities Exchange, which agreed to host three additional student externs.

B. Task 2: Engaging Law Students in Educational Outcomes and Preparation for Practice

B1. Student Survey Report

On January 16, 2007, Arkan met with eight students from Al Quds, Birzeit, and An-Najah law schools to discuss ways to increase their involvement in efforts to improve legal education. We shared a draft Arabic translation of the Student Survey Report, which will be distributed to partner law schools and interested parties in coordination with the Arkan CTO; this translation of the CTO summarizes the perceptions and needs expressed by students over an eight-month assessment period in 2005.

The students attending the meeting echoed many of the sentiments highlighted in the report. For example, they expressed frustration with the traditional teaching methods used in the classroom and their schools' lack of initiatives to engage students in educational outcomes. Arkan was planning to hold a training session on interactive teaching for law professors in March, but this was postponed due to some vetting-related issues.

B2. Student Associations

Since its inception, Arkan has encouraged the establishment of student associations focused on specific areas of study. Marking a major milestone, our efforts led to the formation of the first association of law students at Al Azhar University in Gaza.

Law students in the West Bank are taking similar steps. To help them learn from the Al Azhar experience, we organized a meeting in which 19 students from all partner law schools reviewed the association's bylaws, examined the steps necessary for creating a student association, and discussed the challenges faced by Al Azhar students at various stages of the process.

Al Azhar association members described how they established the association with support from Arkan. They also shared lessons learned and explained the tedious work involved in obtaining recognition from the university's governing bodies. Students from the other law schools then briefed their peers on the status of their own efforts. Birzeit law students have already drafted bylaws, which they shared with their peers, and have made significant headway in forming an association called the "Law and Public Administration Students' Club." Unlike the other partner universities, Birzeit has a law school and a separate public administration department.

Al Quds law students have also begun drafting bylaws. However, students at AAUJ and An-Najah have yet to translate their ideas into practical steps.

Although they had not met as a group in over a year, participating students engaged in lively discussions and established good rapport. One idea expressed by Al Azhar students was the need to establish a national law students' association to reflect their independent professional identity. Arkan will continue to support the students' efforts by introducing them to U.S. and European student association models and facilitating discussions on the role of such associations.

B3. Engaging Law Students in Community Education on Rule of Law

Four Al Azhar University law students (along with 36 CSO activists and 1 training lawyer—see also Component 3) participated in an Arkan training on how to teach preparatory school students (ages 12-17) the basic concepts of rule of law and respect for the law using Arkan's Respect for Rule of Law Awareness Manual.

One of the law students, Diana Bashir, was employed as a facilitator by one of the CSOs implementing the Arkan Respect for Rule of Law Awareness Program in Gaza as part of the USAID Civil Society and Democracy Strengthening (CSDS) project's after-school grants program. Mar'i Bashir, another Al Azhar University law student, is implementing the program as a volunteer facilitator for Deir al-Balah Services Center, and is going to implement the modules in other centers in the Central Gaza Strip.

Arkan plans to train 12 law students from West Bank partner law schools in facilitating and implementing the Respect for Rule of Law Awareness Program in January.

C. Task 3: Incorporating Legal Research Skills Development in Legal Curricula

Arkan's Legal Research and Writing Manual was approved by USAID. We have since published an Arabic version of the manual, which will be distributed to law school deans, professors, and students registered in legal research and writing courses.

Using the manual as a guide, the Al Quds law school has developed and added three legal research/writing elective courses, which came into effect in January 2007. Arkan will work with the law faculty to make the courses a permanent feature of the curriculum. Two other universities, An-Najah and Birzeit, have incorporated Arkan's manual into their existing legal research/writing courses. Our team will continue to encourage other law schools to pilot legal research courses, with a view to integrating them into their curricula.

With Arkan support, the Al Quds law school introduced yet another reform into its academic plan. Law Professor Jihad Al Kiswani reported that the University Academic Council adopted a proposal to introduce a new course on legal education methodology. Once the new syllabus for the two-credit course is finalized, it will become a requirement for all law students who enroll in the 2007-2008 school year. The academic council also approved the addition of a legal research course to the LLM program in the next academic year. Dr. Al Kiswani said these developments were a direct result of the reforms proposed by Arkan that encouraged law faculty to explore new ways to enhance legal education, adding that the president of the University Academic Council, Said Zeidani, had commended Arkan's efforts in this regard.

D. Task 4: Providing Legal Reference Materials and Development Assistance

The Arkan team submitted a waiver request for the procurement of computers needed by Al Quds and Al Azhar universities. The project has already procured furniture and

equipment and begun delivering them in coordination with the project's CTO and submitted a final dispossession plan and deeds of donations for USAID's review. Arkan, however, is still waiting for Mission Director waiver for the procurement of computers for to Al Azhar and Al Quds Universities.

While Arkan originally intended to procure equipment for all partner universities, Birzeit, An Najah, and AAUJ universities refused to sign the ATC, a prerequisite to being able to receive procurement assistance.

E. Task 5: Helping Law Faculties Shape the Future of the Palestinian Legal Sector

Arkan conducted the first forum for law faculties on the future of legal education in the West Bank and Gaza. Deans from three partner law schools (Al Quds, Al Azhar, and An Najah universities) participated in a RLAC subcommittee meeting focused on the role of law schools in legal reform efforts in the West Bank and Gaza. At the meeting, the deans concurred that much needs to be done in order to improve and reform legal education in Palestine. Some of those reforms are more challenging than others (e.g. lack of financial resources for infrastructure or staff training outside of the country; obtaining university board approvals to introduce comprehensive changes to the curricula). The deans did voice commitment toward those improvements that are in their control, and to move forward with them rapidly.

Two additional forums will be held in the next quarter in coordination with faculty from partner law schools.

F. Task 6: Incorporating Arab American University in Jenin into Arkan Activities

Arkan has incorporated AAUJ into all of its activities. The university has participated in the curriculum reform assessment, the student survey, and training on legal research and interactive teaching methodologies. Since AAUJ will not sign the ATC, the university will not receive moot-court furniture that had been under discussion prior to the hold on project activities.

G. Task 7: Creating an Exchange Program for Palestinian and Foreign Law Professors

As noted in our annual work plan, no additional Task 7 activities are anticipated in Year 3 due to time and resource constraints.

H. Task 8: Improving the Practical Skills of Legal Practitioners

As with Task 7, no additional activities are planned for Task 8 this year.

IV. COMPONENT 2: BUILDING PUBLIC AND PRIVATE CONSTITUENCIES FOR REFORM

Arkan is working with the PBA, practicing and upcoming lawyers, and legal sector CSOs to promote the independence and effectiveness of the judiciary and the legal profession. Our efforts focus on enhancing the practical skills of lawyers so they can better serve their clients; engaging CSOs, ad-hoc groups, and the public in efforts to promote judicial independence; and strengthening the PBA's capacity to provide member services such as training.

Despite delays caused by a suspension of project activities, which resulted in some frustration for our partners, we were able to resume a fruitful partnership with the PBA once its Board of Directors approved continued cooperation with Arkan. The Board's vote of approval was a clear indication of the need, value and responsiveness of USAID's initiatives. Arkan also worked with schools throughout the West Bank and Gaza to introduce children to rule-of-law concepts and other aspects of the legal system.

A. Task 1: Promoting Continuing Education and Specialized Bar Groups

A1. Continuing Legal Education Training Pilot Program

Arkan marked a major accomplishment with the launch of the first-ever Palestinian Continuing Legal Education (CLE) program. Preparations began in December 2005 with extensive discussions with the previous PBA board. The project also carried out a needs assessment with assistance from CLE specialist Howard DeNike who held focus groups in all major Palestinian cities, and conducted a survey to identify the subjects to be covered by the program. The implementation was delayed due to the suspension of project activities after the January 2006 PLC elections, but got back on track as soon as the suspension was lifted.

As part of efforts to create a legal framework for the CLE program, which may potentially become obligatory in the future, Arkan also commissioned Senior Project Advisor Dr. Ali Khashan to draft a legislative policy that will allow the PBA to prepare the CLE regulations to be presented to its General Assembly. The draft policy allows non-practicing lawyers to participate in the CLE program.

We are implementing the pilot program in coordination with the PBA in the West Bank and the Al Azhar law school in the Gaza Strip because Arkan is not permitted to work with the Gaza branch of the PBA due to the "no contact" policy. The program is free of charge and is open to all legal professionals regardless of PBA membership status. An estimated 3,000 lawyers—2,000 in the West Bank and 1,000 in the Gaza Strip—will have access to the program, which will keep them updated on the latest developments in the Palestinian legal environment.

Arkan and the PBA launched the West Bank portion of the program on March 22, 2007, with a session on capital markets law. Overall, the West Bank program will cover the following topics:

- Capital markets law
- Securities law
- Insurance law
- Taxation law
- International trade (with a focus on money laundering and Internet crimes)
- Civil servants law
- Arbitration law
- Land laws
- Legal research

These topics were selected because they relate to new or complicated laws. Sessions will be held in four cities—Tulkarem, Ramallah, Hebron, and Bethlehem—to ensure coverage across the West Bank.

So far, three sessions were delivered in Ramallah and Bethlehem—two on the capital markets law and one on legal research. More than 60 legal professionals attended, including non-members of the PBA. Their participation demonstrates progress as it provides an opportunity to widen PBA membership to include lawyers working in public and private organizations.

The law school established a CLE advisory committee of prominent legal professionals to select topics, facilitators, and training methodologies. A partial list of suggested topics includes:

- Legal ethics
- Palestinian political system and constitutional law
- Arbitration law
- International arbitration
- Procedural law

As with the West Bank, these topics were chosen because they cover new or complex laws. The advisory committee has yet to provide the project with a complete list of topics for approval.

Al Azhar law school delivered three CLE sessions—one on legal ethics, another on the Palestinian political system and constitutional law, and a third on arbitration law. More than 150 legal professionals attended the 2-hour sessions. During open discussions, participants called for additional CLE sessions and stressed the need to ensure the program's sustainability.

The CLE sessions attracted considerable media attention. A local television station, Watan, filmed the first West Bank session, which was aired later that day. In addition, leading newspapers such as Al Quds and Al Ayyam covered CLE sessions in the Gaza Strip.

For the session on legal research, Arkan produced a DVD featuring a virtual tour of the Montesquieu Library at the Birzeit Institute of Law. The virtual tour—a first in the West Bank and Gaza—exposes students to a specialized law library, which they may be unable to see first-hand. Arkan will distribute the DVD to Palestinian universities and libraries. In addition, the PBA will use the DVD during bar exam preparations for

lawyers-in-training.

A2. Promoting Specialized Bar Groups

Arkan trained 25 MUSAWA “Lawyers for Rule of Law” representatives from Jenin, Tulkarem, Nablus, Jericho, Ramallah, Bethlehem, and Hebron. The participants were trained on rule of law, advocacy, and legal research skills. Formed by MUSAWA, Lawyers for Rule of Law is a group of volunteer lawyers from eight cities throughout the West Bank and Gaza who are charged with engaging lawyers in their communities through public awareness and public defending, promoting the independence of the judiciary and rule of law, and monitoring juridical and legal violations. As part of the training, the trainees engaged in:

- Discussion of how the “Lawyers for Rule of Law” group contributes to MUSAWA’s strategic objectives to monitor the judiciary, the legal profession and legislative activities
- Advocacy tools and brainstorming on developing plans to monitor the judiciary, the legal profession, and the legislator
- Legal research

Participants were provided with electronic copies of the Arkan Legal Research and Writing Manual and CD of legal information developed for the PBA 2006 Rule of Law Diary.

Using the methodologies they learned during the training, including processes for collecting, recording, and following up on complaints of legal violations, the group of lawyers worked in their communities to monitor and record rule of law violations and breaches against the independence of the judiciary and the legal profession. Ultimately, improving their data collection capabilities will improve the objectivity, transparency, and trustworthiness of the data collected and reported on in two of MUSAWA publications: "Eye On Justice" and "Justice and Law."

The second training for participants from Gaza Strip designed to help MUSAWA expand and improve the quality of Lawyers for Rule of Law, was originally scheduled to be held in February 2007 but was cancelled because of MUSAWA’s refusal to abide by USAID branding regulations.

B. Task 2: Supporting Alliances to Promote an Independent, Effective Judiciary

Contributing to Arkan’s coalition-building efforts, the project’s team held two roundtable meetings to foster alliances dedicated to promoting an independent and effective judiciary. The West Bank meeting targeted media professionals, while the Gaza meeting targeted businesspeople.

Media roundtable. Arkan coordinated with the Internews media project to organize a media roundtable in January 2007. The meeting was attended by 23 TV/radio station owners, editors, and journalists from Ramallah. The training focused on three main themes:

- Legal research and writing for media personnel

- Reporting on issues related to the judiciary
- The role of the media in promoting an independent and effective judiciary

Participants received an updated version of Arkan's legal information CD, which was originally produced as a supplement to the 2006 Rule of Law/PBA Diary. The new CD, which provides useful information for journalists on reporting on the judiciary, such as the Palestinian legal system, includes two legal glossaries for laypersons, charts illustrating the organization of the Palestinian judiciary, information on how to read court decisions and find the "story" in court decisions, important contacts for media professionals, freedom of speech vs. personal/collective liberties, Arkan's Legal Research Manual, and Internews materials. It is envisioned that these materials will be compiled into a "Guide on Reporting on the Judiciary for Media Professionals" and will prove very useful to media in the West Bank, Gaza, and elsewhere in Arabic-speaking countries.

During the roundtable, participants put forth a number of recommendations to strengthen the media's role in fighting anarchy and lawlessness in Palestinian society. They called for dedicating more airtime/space to promoting judicial independence and respect for the rule of law. Another idea was for media outlets to establish a legal resource center that would assist journalists covering legal issues.

Arkan and Internews compiled the participants' evaluations, which were generally positive, and reviewed their recommendations. Both agreed that establishing a legal resource center for media professionals is one idea that could easily be implemented. Arkan will organize a follow-up meeting with media representatives in April 2007 to explore the possibility of holding media roundtables in Gaza.

Business roundtable. On March 5, 2005, Arkan held a consultative meeting with private sector representatives to discuss an upcoming roundtable for businesspeople. Four members of the Private Sector Coordination Council attended the meeting, namely the executive managers of Paltrade, the Chambers of Commerce, the Palestinian Union of Industries, and the Palestinian Union of Contractors. Participants developed an agenda for the roundtable scheduled to be held in the next quarter. They agreed on the following topics:

- Review of current business-related laws
- Advocacy tools and mechanisms to influence decision-makers when proposing legal or policy amendments
- Alternative dispute resolution methods, including arbitration and mediation
- Strategies for businesspeople to promote judicial independence and respect for the rule of law

B2. Building Capacity of CSOs to Promote an Independent, Effective Judiciary and Legal Profession

During this quarter, Arkan has been providing MUSAWA with technical assistance in developing its financial, managerial, and administrative systems. Based on the recommendations of the Participatory Organizational Needs Assessment (PONAT) completed in March 2006, Arkan has been reviewing MUSAWA's financial systems and has provided recommendations to ensure that their finances and systems are

transparent, that they comply with international accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations, and that they follow international best practices. Arkan also reviewed MUSAWA's personnel manual and policies and legal department files, and provided suggestions for improving its library of resources and publications.

Arkan also trained seven MUSAWA employees in the new financial, managerial, and administration systems and policies designed to help streamline processes and enable MUSAWA's employees to work more efficiently. The workshop also included an overview of MUSAWA's strategic planning and goals, developmental needs and program activities, the roles and responsibilities of individuals and departments within the organization, work planning and program development, and decision-making processes and policies. By the end of the workshop, the trainees had developed an action plan for an upcoming MUSAWA conference on legal reform. Unfortunately, a follow-up workshop planned for January 2007 was cancelled because MUSAWA did not wish to abide by USAID branding regulations.

In early March 2007, MUSAWA asked Arkan to present PONAT results at a meeting with potential donors, during which the CSO presented its annual report and an update on its activities. The presentation was well-received. A Dutch donor representative, Hein Knecht, said he had seen a remarkable improvement in MUSAWA operations post-PONAT. Mr. Knecht praised the thoroughness of PONAT and of MUSAWA's improved ability to demonstrate the impact of its work on the judiciary.

C. Task 3: Promoting Legal Literacy and Public Support for an Independent Judiciary

Promoting Legal Literacy and an Independent Judiciary through Mock Trials

The mock trial program is part of USAID's effort to increase understanding and knowledge of the Palestinian judiciary, commitment and respect for the rule of law in the West Bank and Gaza, and to help build a future generation of active and law-respecting citizens. Building on the successful mock-trial training held at Al Hayat Al Rasmiyah School last year, Arkan incorporated a Mock Trial activity into its Respect for Rule of Law Awareness Program. The pilot program was implemented by five CSOs through the USAID-funded Civil Society and Democracy Strengthening (CSDS) after-school grants program (see Component 3, B1a "Respect for Rule of Law Awareness Facilitator's Manual, Training, and Program"). The CSO facilitators were trained by Arkan in teaching this age group about the rule of law and how to conduct mock trials. Over 300 students between the ages of 12 and 15 performed a total of 16 mock trials. This program was held in the Northern, Central, and Southern villages, cities, refugee camps, and remote areas of the Gaza Strip. The centers estimate that about 1,600 people (including 600 participating students in the after-school program) watched the mock trials.

In most cases, the Arkan-trained facilitators had the students write the scripts for the mock trials. The accused defendant in most cases was a mischievous student who broke the youth center's internal charter of keeping the center clean and maintaining a workable environment. Those who played the defendants were actually nominated by their classes for most frequently being in violation of the center's code.

Early this year, Arkan began implementing seven mock-trial training sessions—five in the West Bank and two in the Gaza Strip. We are currently implementing mock trials in the following schools:

UNRWA schools:

- Al Amari Girls' School (Ramallah)
- At-Tireh Girls' School (Ramallah)
- Bateer Girls' School (Bethlehem)
- Jenin Camp Girls' School (Jenin)

Private schools:

- Latin Patriarchate Mixed School (Gaza)
- An Naser School (Gaza)
- Arab American School (Jenin), affiliated with the Arab American University

In order to give the students a proper introduction to the mock trial exercise and sufficient background on Palestinian legal and judicial systems, Arkan trained students on the basic concepts of rule of law and the judiciary using at least three of the six modules from the Respect for Rule of Law Awareness Program Manual: 'What Do We Know about Rule of Law in Our Daily Life,' 'Pupil's Duties and Responsibilities,' 'My Rights were Violated: What do I do?', and 'Law and Ethics.'

Following the introduction, teachers were asked to select student participants with a wide range of abilities to participate in the Mock Trial training and presentation. The rest of the students participated in other rule of law activities, including research on the judiciary, essays on rule of law, drawings, model court structures, and other creative activities. However, at At-Tireh school, some of the girls who were not selected took the initiative to prepare their own script with guidance from the project.

According to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) school counselor, the student participants were chosen specifically because they were known to be the "trouble makers" at school; the counselor expressed hope that the program would help improve class behavior and respect for rules and laws. Arkan will work with the school counselor to measure changes in students' behavior, knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions over the course of the program (using the pre- and post-program test also used during the CSDS Gaza After-School Program). The head of UNRWA's Educational Department, Wahid Jurbran, described the mock trials as effective vehicles for imparting practical skills, raising student awareness of rule-of-law concepts, and encouraging critical thinking.

Nablus Lawyers Learn about Mock Trials

Arkan also trained five lawyers from the Nablus area on conducting mock trials for secondary schools. The lawyers were trained in the objectives and purposes of mock trials, on how to select the proper age group and students to participate, on how to work with secondary school children, and on how to introduce the basic concepts of rule of law and the judiciary. Training also included discussion on the importance of field trips to court houses, and the importance of monitoring and evaluation of the mock trial program.

The lawyers will conduct the mock trial under a UNICEF program against verbal violence in high schools. The lawyers will either modify the script Arkan used in Al Hayat Al Rasmieh School, Kufr Aqab, or develop their own mock trial scenarios. Under the UNICEF program, the lawyers will implement the mock trial program in up to seven schools in the Nablus governorate (including refugee camps and villages). It is estimated that the program will reach about 735 students from the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades.

"...As a trainee and as an experienced facilitator I am convinced that mock trials will be a unique and profound technique that will enable me to educate our children to respect rule of law and the independence of the judiciary, while they are having fun doing it....thank you Arkan for such an idea."
-- Firas Jarar, Nablus volunteer lawyers and trainees.

The program is expected to conclude in early May when the students will perform the mock trial for the community during a graduation ceremony. In total, more than 245 students between the ages of 13 and 17 have attended the mock-trial training sessions. Arkan staff and community legal educators conducted a total of 37 training sessions in the 7 schools during the quarter (i.e. one session per week on average).

Five community legal educators who had taken part in Arkan's training program helped us conduct the mock trials—two in Gaza, two in Jenin, and one in Bethlehem. Two of the volunteers were law students at Al Azhar University, two were lawyers-in-training, and one was a practicing lawyer. Engaging community volunteers contributes to sustainable capacity building by creating a cadre of educators able to transfer their knowledge to others well after the project has ended.

Arkan also taught five lawyers from the Nablus area how to conduct mock trials in secondary schools. The lawyers learned to select appropriate age groups and participants, introduce children to basic rule-of-law concepts, organize field trips, and monitor and evaluate mock-trial activities.

The mock-trial program included extracurricular activities, such as field trips to courthouses. On March 13, 2007, 33 students from the UNRWA Al Amari Girls' School visited the First Instance Court in Ramallah. The chief clerk gave them a tour of the court and explained the responsibilities of each department. The students then met with the chief judge, who explained the role of the judiciary, highlighted the challenges facing Palestinian judges, and answered their questions. The teachers who accompanied the students said they were impressed by the intelligent questions they posed.

D. Task 4: Professionalizing the Formal Justice Sector by Designing and Implementing a Bar Exam

In April 2006, Arkan and the PBA cooperated to develop and proctor the first-ever West Bank bar exam. The significance of the successful implementation of this bar exam cannot be overstated. Bar exams serve as an assurance to the public that it is being protected under the law by skilled and competent lawyers. Prior to the bar exam, Palestinian law graduates were not required to pass any tests before they were accepted into the PBA and allowed to practice law. As a result, the level of practical skills and professionalism in the sector has varied widely, and the public's trust in the Palestinian legal system and legal practitioners has been low. Ideally, the bar exam will help raise the level of trust in legal practitioners.

In October 2006, the PBA conducted the second bar exam and training (as a result of the programmatic suspension, without Arkan's assistance). The training and exam went according to schedule. PBA reported to Arkan that the failure rate during the October exam was high, especially in the Tulkarem area, where all lawyers failed the examinations. Arkan and the PBA have reviewed the second bar exam and Arkan has developed a series of recommendations for improving the exam and its logistics. The recommendations include:

- Using multiple choice questions. Arkan is urging the PBA to include only multiple choice questions in the written exam to minimize discretion vested in the

examiners, especially because this is the first bar exam experience. Protests and challenges by exam-takers of the examiners' use of discretion has a detrimental effect on the PBA's efforts to establish a credible exam, especially because the PBA has not yet established clear examination regulations.

- Providing research training for training lawyers. The bar exam includes a written portion, which normally comprises a research paper. After reviewing examples of research papers for the bar exam, Arkan found that the majority of research papers were lacking the basics of legal research and many were obviously plagiarized. Prior to the first exam, with Arkan's help, the PBA held training in Ramallah on legal research, with assistance from Arkan's law librarian and legal research specialist. However, during the hold on project activities, the PBA did not give the legal research training.

- Organizing orientation meeting with training lawyers. The bar exam is a new institution. While its benefits are many, its logistics, procedures, and parameters are not intuitive and need to be explained repeatedly and in detail to its new audiences, which include the judiciary and practicing bar, the aspiring attorneys planning to take the exam, and the public. Arkan has advised the PBA to conduct orientation meetings to explain the bar exam in full detail. In the wake of the second exam, Arkan's review indicated that aspiring lawyers were not aware of how the exam will be conducted, how the legal research papers should be prepared, rules regarding attendance, etc. The PBA conducted one orientation meeting in Ramallah. The orientation became part of the first training session of the bar exam training program.

- Establishing and vocalizing clear 'consequences' for not passing the examination. Arkan recommended that the PBA establish a clear policy as to the consequences to a trainee of a failing score, including the possibility of being retested. The PBA established Bar Exam Regulations, but did not include sufficient specificity with respect to how to handle protests, appeals, and what possible disciplinary or disposition measures will be available. Arkan is working with the PBA in revisiting recommendations with respect to these aspects of the exam discussed prior to the first exam.

- Evaluating the bar exam. Arkan asked the PBA to evaluate the bar exam with trainees.

The PBA will start the bar exam training in February 2007; the next exam is scheduled for May 2007.

Arkan will also work with the PBA next quarter to develop outlines for up to eight subjects of the bar exam's curriculum. The outlines will highlight the most important issues, training methods, and reading materials that bar exam trainers should focus on in order to properly prepare students to sit for the Bar exam. The project contracted five consultants to finalize the course outlines. The consultants were led by Arkan's senior project advisor, Ali Khashan, who designed a module on constitutional law. This module, which is currently under review by our team, will serve as a model for the others. The other four consultants are renowned Palestinian legal professionals:

- Abdel Rhamn Abu Naser, dean of Al Azhar law school

- Amin Al Attrash, dean of the Arab American University
- Ali Naouq, a prominent lawyer from Gaza
- Hatem Abbas, former PBA chairman and current Secretary General of the Arab Union of Lawyers

E. Task 5: PBA Institutional Capacity Assessment and Strengthening

Arkan continues to work with the PBA to develop a strategic plan, build its institutional capacity, raise the quality of its services, promote professional ethics, and improve its operations, including financial and managerial systems, regulatory oversight mechanisms, and public outreach strategies.

Building on our success with MUSAWA, Arkan's PONAT specialist, Waddah Abdussalam, has begun implementing the PONAT process at the PBA. He completed two out of three modules, and will finalize the PONAT results and strategic plan in the next quarter.

F. Task 6: Membership Rules Review and Widening of PBA Membership

Our team helped draft an amendment to the PBA law based on the draft legislative policy prepared by Arkan's senior project advisor, Dr. Khashan. The amendment includes provisions for institutionalizing the CLE program, introducing a code of conduct, and allowing lawyers working in public and private organizations to join the PBA. PBA has also established a committee of local lawyers and the former chairman of the Jordanian Bar Association to draft amendments to the PBA law.

As previously noted, the draft legislative policy, which was endorsed by the PBA board, allows lawyers to participate in the CLE program regardless of their PBA membership status. By allowing non-members to participate, the PBA will reach a wider segment of the legal community, including lawyers working in public and private organizations. Based on the recommendations outlined in the legislative policy paper, the PBA will draft CLE program regulations, which will be presented to its General Assembly for ratification.

V. COMPONENT 3: INCULCATING A CULTURE OF RESPECT FOR THE RULE OF LAW

Component 3 seeks to build public trust in the formal justice system through public awareness campaigns, school programs, and training for CSO facilitators in awareness-building methodologies. Arkan's approach strives to show Palestinian citizens—whether they are laypersons or policy-makers—that respect for the rule of law is in everyone's interest.

Over the past 6 months, Arkan trained 74 community legal educators, 33 in the West Bank and 41 in Gaza, on how to use the facilitator's manual developed to build rule-of-law awareness amongst schoolchildren. We also added four new modules and adapted the manual to target youths (i.e. a higher age group). Fifty-five legal educators—20 from the West Bank and 35 from the Gaza Strip—received training on the new modules. The manual targeting youths was submitted to USAID for approval on March 29, 2007.

Already, the trained legal educators in the Gaza community have educated 944 school children (506 females and 437 males between the ages of 12-15) in rule of law concepts through the USAID-funded Civil Society and Democracy Strengthening (CSDS) grants after-school program. Also under this component, Arkan collaborated with the CSDS project to conduct a study on the role of civil society (including the informal justice sector) in maintaining civil peace.

In addition, Arkan's theater show, "Abu Nitham," reached 3,640 children across the West Bank and Gaza. The show imparts rule-of-law concepts to children and their families.

A. Task 1: Supporting Research and Case Studies from Family Courts and Tribal Judges

Arkan originally intended to conduct a research study to examine possible roles of tribal justice and family courts in enhancing the performance of the formal justice sector. In consultation with USAID, Arkan amended this deliverable to be in line with current realities.

Arkan joined forces with USAID's CSDS project to assess the possible roles of civil society in building and maintaining civil peace in the Palestinian territories. The study examined the possible roles of civil society (including the informal justice sector) in reducing the level of internal violence in the Palestinian territories and in helping to rebuild and further strengthen formal mechanisms of dispute resolution, law enforcement, and justice. To conduct the study, Arkan contracted Walid Salem, Civil Society Specialist, and Dr. Feras Melham, Rule of Law Specialist to work with CSDS' civil society expert Glenn Robinson. The assessment team conducted focus groups and meetings with prominent representatives of civil society as well as the legal and judicial sectors, including tribal judges in Gaza City, Ramallah, Bethlehem, and Nablus.

The study recognizes that CSOs could not replace the role of state institutions in enforcing the rule of law, but proposed a number of steps that could contribute to reducing the level of violence. Recommendations included implementing civil peace projects to build on the core strengths of traditional CSOs, professionalizing the informal justice system, launching a code of ethics program, and galvanizing a citizens' movement similar to Egypt's Kifaya movement.

A second draft of the study was submitted to USAID on March 6, 2007. Our team presented major findings and recommendations to the Mission's Front Office and Democracy and Governance (D&G) team on March 19. Arkan and CSDS are awaiting further instructions from USAID on how to proceed.

B. Task 2: Raising Public Awareness on the Importance of the Rule of Law

B2a. Promoting Respect for Rule of Law Among School Children

In October, Arkan provided a four-day training workshop to 41 facilitators, 36 participants (including 14 women) from 5 CSOs, 4 Al Azhar University law school students, and 1 training-lawyer, on how to teach preparatory school students the basic concepts of rule of law and respect for the law using Arkan's *Respect for Rule of Law Awareness Manual*. The schoolchildren were trained on implementing six modules and exposed to several activities that addressed the importance of law in their daily life. These activities focused on a behavior shift towards greater respect for the rule of law and for using lawful mechanisms, rather than violence, to resolve disputes. Activities also introduced children to basic legal concepts and terminologies, and improved their understanding of and respect for the formal justice sector.

The workshop also included sessions on facilitation, working with school children, designing respect for rule-of-law-awareness activities, and monitoring and evaluation. Interactive and participatory by design, the training required participants to facilitate sessions of the workshop and participate in role-playing exercises, including a mock trial in which they selected one of their peers to stand trial for violating the workshop's code of conduct.

A lively discussion on the role of schools, universities, CSOs, unions, and political parties in promoting respect for rule of law also took place. Participants voiced that rule of law should be integrated into the current civic education curriculum. To encourage continued dialogue amongst the facilitators, as well as to continue to provide support, share ideas, experiences, and lessons learned, Arkan started an email listserv group. One of the facilitators took the listserv a step further and created a "yahoo group" as a forum of discussion for the facilitators.

Following the training, the facilitators implemented the program through CSOs participating in the USAID-funded CSDS project's after-school grants program in Gaza. Approximately 950 students (roughly half of whom are female) between the ages of 12 and 15 participated in the Respect for Rule of Law Program in Gaza in November 2006.

As a follow-up to the after-school program in Gaza, Arkan conducted a focus group meeting with seven schoolchildren who had participated in the CSDS-funded after-school program in Gaza. Facilitators from three of the Gaza CSOs who delivered the training also attended. The goal was to learn from the children themselves how the program had impacted their knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions. The children said they were not only more aware of rule-of-law concepts, but also felt empowered to express themselves more freely and openly. One of the children described how he had organized a mock trial that he performed with his friends in his neighborhood.

In addition to the focus group, Arkan conducted pre- and post-training surveys of all the students who had participated in the after-school program. The survey was designed to measure changes in knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions among the students before and after the training. Arkan contracted Alpha International on February 26, 2007, to capture and analyze survey data. Alpha provided our team with an analysis of survey results in Arabic. Results will be analyzed and distributed next quarter.

There were 707 respondents in the pre-training survey and 813 respondents in the post-training survey. Most of the additional respondents were in the Khan Younis area of Gaza. Respondents to the pre- and post-training surveys were evenly split by gender and three age groups (10 to 12.5 years old, 13 to 13.5 years old, and 14 to 17 years old). Most of the respondents were from Gaza City, with 46.3 percent and 38.3 percent in the pre- and post-surveys, respectively.

Survey results indicated that the training had instilled greater respect for the rule of law among the schoolchildren. For example, the number of children who said they would negotiate with someone who had stolen something from them increased by 7.4 percent. Conversely, the number of children who said they would use violence or give up their rights dropped by 2.3 percent and 3.2 percent, respectively.

In a meeting with the facilitators to solicit feedback on the program, the facilitators indicated that they witnessed a change in their students' behaviors and attitudes in terms of respecting the rules and in the way they handled conflicts.

In addition, the facilitators provided feedback on the Respect for Rule of Law Facilitator's Manual as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the activities. In general, they presented the following comments and suggestions for improvement:

- *More training for the facilitators on the basic principles of the law and rule of law.* Facilitators felt that they would benefit from a stronger grasp of the basic concepts and terms of law.
- *More modules and activities.* Facilitators expressed that six modules were not enough to adequately address the issues related to rule of law within the Gaza context. One suggestion was to add a module on tribal justice and the formal justice sector.
- *Field visits to court and law offices.* Facilitators suggested accompanying the modules with field trips for the students to courts and law offices.

- *Psychological support for the children.* In light of the Israeli military attacks and killings in Gaza occurring at the time, which left the students scarred, facilitators suggested introducing a psychological or therapeutic dimension to the rule of law program. This could either be integrated as part of the training or by inviting a resident psychologist/social worker to deal with the individual problems of the participants.

Arkan addressed these suggestions in its revision of the manual prior to the training of the West Bank facilitators in January 2007. In addition, Arkan developed a facilitator’s training manual targeting youth (aged 18 to 25 years) and the general public. Both of these Arabic training manuals were the first of their kind dedicated to training students and youth in rule of law in the West Bank and Gaza; they could be easily adapted for use throughout the Middle East as part of other USAID initiatives promoting respect for rule of law.

On January 16, 2007, Arkan held a preparatory meeting for West Bank facilitators of its rule-of-law program targeting schoolchildren. Participants received the facilitator’s manual and reading materials, and discussed the objectives of the training. During the meeting, representatives from two CSOs—the Hebron-based Palestinian Center for Communication and Developmental Studies and the Consultative Commission of Jenin Governorate-Based NGOs—shared their own experience in promoting respect for the rule of law among children and youths in the northern and southern West Bank. The Arkan team also described its awareness-building work with schoolchildren across the West Bank and Gaza.

Module Adaptation

Facilitators also reported adapting the manual’s modules to address the issues relevant to their students and in the Gaza context. For example, one facilitator designed a new activity called “Free Village.” In this activity, the facilitator presents a village without any law and order. The children are then tasked to be creative and create a utopia by developing laws for the village.

In another class, two students debated the role of tribal justice and the formal justice sector in resolving disputes. One student defended the use of the tribal justice as the most effective way to resolve disputes based on the perception that the formal justice and court system is slow and inefficient. Another student countered this argument by pointing out that there are no checks to the tribal justice system, and therefore justice is not always served.

The facilitators’ training was subsequently held on January 23-25, 2007. Thirty-three facilitators completed the training, including 10 women. Participants learned how to use Arkan’s manual to teach preparatory school students about basic rule-of-law concepts.

The trainees were required to facilitate some of the training sessions and to participate in role-playing exercises, including a mock trial in which they selected one of their peers to stand trial for violating the workshop’s code of conduct. The workshop incorporated feedback from Gaza facilitators who had completed the training in October 2006 and from schoolchildren who had participated in the CSDS-supported after-school program. Based on their feedback, the January 2007 workshop included new sessions on facilitation techniques, working with schoolchildren, designing awareness-building activities, and M&E.

We also engaged the participants in designing the four new modules that were included in the manual targeting youths. The youth manual now consists of 10 modules. Six of the modules are similar to those used in the schoolchildren's manual, but some were modified to suit a higher age group. The other four modules were developed based on recommendations from the facilitators who had trained for the schoolchildren program. The new modules cover the following topics:

- Independence of the judiciary
- Youths and formal/informal justice sector institutions
- What can I do to increase respect for the rule of law among youths?
- What can I do to increase respect for the rule of law in my neighborhood?

The facilitators training in January 2007 attended a one-day follow-up session that focused on implementation of the four new modules. The session was held in the West Bank on March 22 and in Gaza on March 26. A total of 55 facilitators participated in this follow-up training—20 in the West Bank, including 8 women, and 35 in Gaza, including 13 women. Arkan incorporated the facilitators' feedback into the youth manual before submitting it to USAID for review on March 29. Once approved by USAID, the manual will be used to educate youths about the importance of the law in their daily lives, and to prepare them to become rule-of-law advocates in their communities.

Combating Violence through Rule of Law Education

The *Respect for Rule of Law Awareness Program*, developed by Arkan and implemented through the CSDS grants program, came at a critical time when respect for the rule of law was at an all-time low, especially in Gaza, which has seen a growing amount of internal violence and chaos especially over past several months.

"We must work on students to change their violent behavior; the kind of behavior we see in the street should be dealt with at the after-school centers and they [students] must understand why this behavior is not right," one Arkan-trained Rule of Law facilitator commented.

In Shujiyah, students showed up to the first session of the *Respect for Rule of Law Awareness Program* with knives. One facilitator described this as the "most difficult and violent environment to work in." The facilitator used the session's first activity of creating a code of conduct to put an end to this practice. Under the code, students agreed that knives would not be allowed in the classroom and that anyone in violation of the code would be punished. Since the code of conduct was developed by the students and enforced, students have stopped bringing knives to class.

The code of conduct exercise (part of Module No. 1), according to the facilitators, is essential, especially in the Gaza context where violence and chaos is becoming the norm. The exercise not only succeeds in bringing law and order to the classroom, but also in introducing students to the basic concepts of law and justice. It also instills the understanding that law is a social contract; everyone is equal under the law; even the facilitator is subject to the code of conduct, and if the students find the facilitator in violation of the code, they can also take appropriate (and legal) action.

"I wish we started implementing these [respect for rule of law] types of programs in schools years ago—maybe then we wouldn't be facing all the chaos and lawlessness we are today," commented one trainee.

B2b. Promoting Respect for Rule of Law through Theater: “Abu Nitham”

“Abu Nitham” is a 45-minute interactive and participatory production developed by the Sanabel Theater Company with assistance from Arkan. The actors engage the schoolchildren audience in discussion of rule of law issues following the play. In addition, student members of the audience are called to stage to participate in the play itself.

The play addresses issues related to law and law enforcement, ethics, and citizens’ rights and responsibilities. It was designed to encourage the younger generation to respect and advocate for respect and for rule of law. According to the theater company’s director, during discussions following the performance, children showed an understanding of the main messages of the play, specifically that they should not be influenced by other people’s poor behavior and that police and courts should be used to resolve conflicts rather than satisfy revenge. Adult members of the audience said that they appreciated the timing of the play given the current state of escalating violence in the area.

The play, which has been shown in three locations so far in Jerusalem, Jenin City, and Jenin Refugee Camp, targets school children from underprivileged and marginalized areas throughout the West Bank and Gaza.

A total of 22 shows were performed throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip, reaching a total of 4,470 people, including 3,640 children. The table below shows the breakdown of participants by geographic location.

People Reached by “Abu Nitham” Theater Show

	Total Number of People Reached	Number of Children Reached
West Bank and Jerusalem	3,520	2,780
Gaza Strip	950	860
Total	4,470	3,640

Sanabel and Arkan received many thank-you notes from those who attended the shows. Audience members said the shows provided some relief from daily hardships while educating them about the rule of law. They stressed the need for more shows that promote the use of legal mechanisms to resolve disputes.

Some of the facilitators who attended our March 26 follow-up training in Gaza asked for copies of the “Abu Nitham” transcript so they could incorporate it into youth training. The projects will put the facilitators in touch with Sanabel, the theater troupe that wrote the transcript.

VI. ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITIES

A. Staffing

Arkan welcomed a number of new staff members and bid farewell to others. In our Gaza office, Mr. Farid Hamdan left to take a position with the UN High Commission for Human Rights in Darfur; Mr. Abdelrahman El Assouli joined us as the new Legal Reform Specialist. The Ramallah office has experienced a number of changes, including a new Administrative Coordinator in the West Bank, and a Legal Reform Specialist in Gaza. Knowledge Management and Communications Manager Ms. Maha El-Sheikh's contract was completed at the end of 2006. A new project specialist, Reem Attieh, joined Arkan in early February. Following the resignation of Ruba El Ghoul in early March, Reem Kort was hired as finance and administration manager. Ms. Reem Kort, who has just completed her contract with the CSDS project, joined the Arkan team on April 9, 2007.

B. Contractual Issues

At the end of 2006, Arkan learned that congressional budget negotiations will likely impact its program funding and that it will not receive its full contract value. Chemonics and USAID have collaborated closely to ensure that despite reduced funding the program continues to add value to USAID's mission in the West Bank and Gaza. Following a suspension of project activities for most of 2006, Chemonics and USAID revised the project's work plan to guide the project in its final year of work.

Early this year, Chemonics informed USAID that it had spent 75 percent of the total grant, per regulations. As a result, USAID asked Arkan to begin the closeout planning process to ensure the project is completed on time and within budget. Senior Arkan staff have been working with the Chemonics home office to develop a timeline for closeout. We are making every effort to retain project staff for as long as possible so that all planned activities can be completed. This will also ensure that staff remain available should the project receive the fully obligated contract—i.e. an additional \$1.5 million.

As Arkan begins its final year, it will continue to assess and evaluate the impact of the program in improving legal education, strengthening the legal profession, and increasing respect for the rule of law and will make adjustments in the implementation strategy to maximize results. Arkan will continue to share information about successes and lessons learned with USAID, so that the Mission can benefit from these accomplishments and design new activities to address on-going challenges.

Chemonics submitted a request for a contract modification that would eliminate the semi-annual progress report since quarterly progress reports are required by the IQC contract. A response from USAID is pending.