

CMICOMMISSIONEDREPORT

Review report: Al-Miftah

Are Knudsen
Kjetil Selvik

November 2014

CMI CHR.
MICHELSEN
INSTITUTE

Review report: Al-Miftah

Are Knudsen & Kjetil Selvik

Chr. Michelsen Institute

November 2014

CMI CHR.
MICHELSEN
INSTITUTE

Contents

1. Main findings	1
1.1 Performance	1
1.2 Relevance	1
1.3 Effectiveness	1
1.4 Impact	2
1.5 Sustainability	2
1.6 Risk management	2
1.7 Anti-corruption measures	2
1.8 Efficiency (cost efficiency)	3
1.9 Financial review	3
2. Recommendations	4
2.1 To Norad and the Norwegian Representative Office	4
2.2 To Al- Miftah	4
3. Background to the review	5
3.1 Purpose	5
3.2 Scope and definitions	6
4. Performance	6
5. Relevance	7
6. Effectiveness	9
7. Impact	10
8. Sustainability	12
9. Management setup	13
10. Risk management	14
11. Anti-corruption measures	14
12. Efficiency (cost efficiency)	15
13. Financial review	16
Appendix	17
1. Terms of reference (ToR)	17
2. Interviews	20
3. Organization Chart	21
4. Acronyms and abbreviations	22

1. Main findings

1.1 Performance

- The organisation undertakes a number of activities over a large geographical area; interventions are in some cases based on or supported by official statistics; the number of interventions are high.
- Al-Miftah is a member of relevant networks and coalitions and a founder and co-founder of some of them; civil society integration is good.
- The scope of the project portfolio is very wide, and includes several sub-fields, disciplines and methods that stretches managerial resources and overloads staff.
- The organisation has not completed organizational reform and transition from projects to programs.

1.2 Relevance

- Al-Miftah undertakes a large and diverse portfolio of disparate projects and interventions.
- The projects are planned, managed and directed by Al-Miftah; training and facilitation is outsourced.
- The main projects and interventions are relevant for addressing key gender-issues; legal, social & civic and political.
- Al-Miftah is a leader in promoting UNSCR 1325 in Palestine alone and with donors and partners.

1.3 Effectiveness

- Al-Miftah has contributed to effective leadership on several levels; access to key policy makers allows it to lobby for policy change and legal reform.
- Al-Miftah's combined impact on gender sector is, given the systemic constraints, substantial; it has influenced gender policy and legislation.
- Al-Miftah's has restructured its work and undertaken an organizational reform; the reform has increased efficiency but should be continued towards instituting strategic programs.

1.4 Impact

- Al-Miftah is a highly valued civil society actor and partner; it has founded relevant networks and coalitions and midwifed new NGOs (AMAN); its general civil society impact is strong.
- Al-Miftah is a leader in implementing and institutionalizing UNSCR 1325 in Palestine; the local impact is constrained by the resolution's lack of sanctions.
- Al-Miftah has promoted reform of the Penal law and Family law; the impact of the former is constrained by not yet being signed into law.
- Al-Miftah promotes gender mainstreaming and gender equity; the impact is constrained by a weak and underfunded government sector and lack of proper collaboration and coordination mechanisms.

1.5 Sustainability

- Al-Miftah's fiscal sustainability is medium strong.
- The number of donors is reduced over the period under review.
- The core funding is low, project funding predominates.
- Voluntary staff resignations can pose a longer-term challenge to human resources development.

1.6 Risk management

- Al-Miftah is exposed to changing dollar and interest fluctuations; risk is offset by adequate financial assets and donor support.
- Al-Miftah is exposed to geographic risks (esp. area C), mainly affecting human resources; the short and medium term risk to operations are low.

1.7 Anti-corruption measures

- Al-Miftah's anti-corruption measures are very good and adhere to "best practices".
- Internal fiscal routines are stringent and adequate.

1.8 Efficiency (cost efficiency)

- Al-Miftah's core funding is low (< 40 per cent of total), which constrains long-term planning & programming.
- Al-Miftah's cost level is reasonable, salaries on average consume 40–50 per cent of the annual budget.

1.9 Financial review

- Budget items are relevant to Al-Miftah's activities.
- Al-Miftah's disbursement routines are good.

2. Recommendations

2.1 To Norad and the Norwegian Representative Office

- Uphold the support and consolidate partnership with Al-Miftah.
- Make continued core funding support organizational transformation from projects to programmes.

2.2 To Al- Miftah

- Establish Research and Development Unit and ensure systematic review of projects, make this an integral component in all projects.
- Establish in-house research and advocacy competence on key areas of expertise and concentrate programs around them.
- Reduce the number of interventions and tailor them to the new programs.
- Extend collaboration with PCBS to provide systematic reporting on key gender indicators and publish them in bi-annual newsletter.
- With the PCBS, establish proper indicators for what constitutes “empowerment of women”; use these to guide gender-based interventions under three main programs.
- Extend networking with other CSOs and NGOs to improve reach and impact in fringe areas (Area C and Gaza)
- Extend reach among least developed sector through proper networking; provide tailor-made intervention for this group.
- Appoint in-house representative responsible for PA contact, undertake periodic meetings with PA Gender Units to inform and liaise with relevant departments and units. Establish mechanism to include female councillors.
- Consider establishing local project office in Gaza, centred on the existing field officer.

3. Background to the review

Norad, in cooperation with the Norwegian representative office, contracted the Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI) to carry out this review. The evaluation team, Drs. Are John Knudsen and Kjetil Selvik, conducted interviews in Palestine during 22–27 September 2014.

Al-Miftah was established in Jerusalem in 1998, with Hanan Ashrawi as its Secretary-General. Al-Miftah seeks to promote the principle of democracy and good governance within various components of Palestinian society, and further seeks to engage local and international public opinion and official circles on the Palestinian cause. Al-Miftah's approach includes active and in-depth dialogue, free flow of information and ideas, and works for the establishment of a democratic Palestinian state based on the rule of law, human rights, equality and participatory governance. Al-Miftah is member and co-founder of several civil-society organizations (CSOs) and networks ("coalitions").

The NRO's total budget support for the human-rights sector is NOK 9.5 million, supporting twelve Palestinian organisations. Al-Miftah share of the HR-sector funding is about ten percent (2011–13). Because most of Al-Miftah's work is gender-, rather the HR-related, the organization's funding was from 2014 moved out of the HR-budget. During the period under review (2011–13), the total budget averaged USD 880 000. Norway is one of the largest donors, with a core funding of USD 130 000. In 2014, Al-Miftah received additional budget support due to a fiscal shortfall of NOK 250 000.

3.1 Purpose

The main review purpose is to assess the implementation of Al-Miftah's strategic plan and action plan for the last three years 2011–13 and to what extent it has achieved its objectives in relation to the agreed goal hierarchy and identified indicators.

Al-Miftah's strategic goals for the period under review are as follows (Appendix 1: ToR):

1. Empowered and effective leadership within all components of Palestinian society in order to enhance democracy and good governance and raise public awareness concerning the rights and responsibility of good citizenship.
2. Influence policy and legislation to ensure their safeguarding of civil and social rights for all sectors and their adherence to principles of good governance
3. Al-Miftah's organizational efficiency and effectiveness are increased.

The review team has further assessed;

- the implementation of Al-Miftah's strategic plan and operational /action plans (2011–2013).
- the impact of promoting women's political participation including the institutionalization and sustainability of UNSCR 1325.
- the capacity of developing partners and of models and methods of corporation and implementation used.

3.2 Scope and definitions

The review addresses and is structured around standard evaluation criteria (Appendix 2: Interviews). Besides the instructions that figure in the Terms of Reference, and with reference to the Sida Evaluation Manual, we understand the principal evaluation criteria in the following manner:

- **Relevance.** The extent to which the development intervention conforms to the needs and priorities of target groups and the policies of recipient countries and donors.
- **Effectiveness.** The extent to which the development intervention has achieved its objectives.
- **Impact.** The totality of the effects of a development intervention, positive and negative, intended and unintended.
- **Efficiency.** The extent to which the costs of the development intervention can be justified by its results, taking alternatives into account.
- **Sustainability.** The continuation or longevity of benefits from the development intervention after the cessation of development assistance.

4. Performance

Al-Miftah is a medium sized NGO specialising in the wider gender-field in Palestine. The small core-staff (six persons) manages a large a diverse gender-portfolio aimed at several target groups (Appendix 3: Beneficiaries, donors and stakeholders). Following organization restructuring (2012–13), the organization decided to move from project- to programme-based interventions. Nonetheless, the organization’s main work is still project-related and concentrated around facilitation, training and workshops, with an emphasis on youth, women and prospective leaders. The workshops are held at many different locale and facilities. The organization has a wide reach in both area A and C; Gaza and East Jerusalem in addition to West Bank; Ramallah, Hebron and Nablus. The many projects and locations stretch managerial resources and overload staff.

Al-Miftah’s project interventions are often planned by commissioning official statistics from public-partners, especially the PCBS (Appendix 4: Acronyms and abbreviations). The statistical data in combination with third-party data analysis (commissioned by Al-Miftah) are used to plan interventions and/or provide a baseline for future work. Key planning documents include four-year strategic plans (2008–12; 2012–16) accompanied by annual workplans and activity reports.

The interventions target several segments of the society: politicians, legislators and parties; civil society actors and youth and women. Al-Miftah provides these groups varied training in the form of seminars, workshops and summer camps. The training is mainly done by hired experts and facilitators. Some of them are former staff members, now working as private consultants. Leadership training targeting women and youth use a participatory conflict transformation methodology known as KUMI (meaning “rise up” in both Arabic and Hebrew).

The organisation is member of several coalitions, networks and founder & co-founder of some of them. Al-Miftah functions a think tank and incubator for new initiatives that later became fully-fledged organisations and partners. An example is AMAN which began as an Al-Miftah initiative, later was established as a subsidiary, to finally becoming an independent NGO and coalition partner.

Al-Miftah's reporting is primarily project- and output centred and closely follows annual action plans. The output reporting includes results and outcomes, with an emphasis on the number of beneficiaries and interventions. This reflects both the funding profile (predominantly project funding) and that the two main units function as project management "umbrellas". Hence, there is a link between the funding profile and the output-centred reporting. In 2012, the organisation switched to a more process oriented reporting, but in 2013 again turned to an out-put driven reporting. The organisation lacks a separate monitoring unit, but monitors its work by administering pre- and post-intervention questionnaires (in Arabic). The questionnaires are summarised, translated into English and stored as MS word-files. The summaries are available to all staff. Al-Miftah's media unit (five staff, including volunteers and interns) uses a range of media to reach out to its target audience, in addition to workshops and seminars, this include documentary films, TV (30 televised dialogue meetings), news media and social media (twitter, facebook). The unit publishes bi-lingual (Arabic and English) booklets, brochures and manuals as well as newsletter and newspapers. Gender issues are not easy to market in the newsfield, but the unit makes extra an effort to collect the stories and experiences of rural women and post them on the website.

4.1 Findings

- The organisation undertakes a number of activities over a large geographical area; interventions are in some cases based on, or supported by, official statistics; the number of interventions are high.
- Al-Miftah is member of relevant networks and coalitions and a founder and co-founder of some of them; civil society integration is good.
- The organisation has not completed organizational reform and transition from projects to programs.
- The scope of the project portfolio is very wide, and includes several sub-fields, disciplines and methods that stretches managerial resources and overloads staff.
- The interventions are varied and mostly "one-off" service provisions or training sessions involving field coordinators in part-time positions; training and service delivery is time-limited.
- Al-Miftah reports its activities in a systematic manner; reporting is primarily project- and output centred.
- The media unit uses traditional news media (TV, radio, newspapers) as well social media (facebook, twitter) to reach a younger audience; the output is adequate.
- The quality of in-house (bilingual) publications is high.

5. Relevance

Human Palestine is a patriarchal society where women are mostly found in subordinate roles as family caregivers rather than providers. Palestinian women's participation in the formal economy is the lowest in the Arab world (at 17 per cent). In addition, women face additional hardships due to the Israeli occupation which increase familial tensions released onto women (as gender-based violence). However, Palestinian society also has women leaders in key political, managerial and civil society positions; indeed these roles often overlap. Family background, seniority and "struggle credentials" (resisting occupation, serving time in jail etc.) are also important in Palestinian society and younger

men and women often lack these defining traits, hence are sidelined. The gender-situation is therefore complex and varies over the organization's project domain (area A vs. area C).

Following organizational restructuring in 2012–13, Al-Miftah organizes its work in two main units, managing a large number of diverse projects, interventions and initiatives. The activities are both diverse and specialized; i) topically (gender responsive budgeting); ii) methodologically (KUMI-methodology), or; iii) targets a variety of women sub-sections; poor women (income-generation for marginalized groups), battered women (gender-based violence), or young and aspiring women (leadership training). The main reason Al-Miftah can undertake such a diverse project portfolio is due to outsourcing the training and facilitation component. Al-Miftah's role in these diverse interventions is primarily in their planning, management and reporting.

A. Relevance (social and civic)

Al-Miftah's work on gender responsive budgeting (GRD) aims to ensure that women's needs are better reflected in budgeting at different levels (PA line departments and municipalities). The work is mainly organized as training sessions using hired consultants.

Income-generating activities targeting women in underprivileged communities, using hired consultants for training. Other projects of this type includes improving public services and undertake small-scale construction in marginalized areas.

B. Relevance (political)

Leadership training using KUMI-methodology targeting young men and women, teaching them leadership skills with a view to increase political participation. The training and workshops have also included Israeli and European participants (and until 2009, the Israeli NGO Keshef).

Election support to promote active citizenship in relation to municipal elections targeting men and women: The training sessions included men and women in large number of localities in the West Bank, Jerusalem and Gaza.

C. Relevance (legal)

Al-Miftah early saw the potential of UNSCR 1325 in Palestine and with donors and partners took the lead role in instituting women coalitions and local women's groups.

Combating gender-based violence (GBV) and violence against women (VAW) through strengthening women's legal standing and protection (Penal code, Personal Status Law). Training sessions has targeted PLC-members, party officials and members of government.

Al-Miftah undertakes varied policy work (training, technical support, action plans) especially in relation to UNSCR 1325, as well as lobbying for gender responsive budgeting.

5.1 Findings

- Al-Miftah undertakes a large and diverse portfolio of disparate projects and interventions.
- The projects are planned, managed and directed by Al-Miftah, training and facilitation is outsourced.
- The main projects and interventions are relevant for addressing key gender-issues; legal, social & civic and political.
- Al-Miftah is a leader in promoting UNSCR 1325 in Palestine alone and with donors and partners.

6. Effectiveness

In Effectiveness is assessed along three dimensions (see ToR):

A. Contribute to empowered and effective leadership within all components of Palestinian society

The organisation is involved with several target groups in Palestinian society: public (ministries, parliamentarians etc)), civil society (NGOs, CSOs, parties) and individuals (youth, women) as well as interest-groups and networks. The organisation provides tailored made projects, mostly of short or medium term duration, that teaches, trains and informs a large and diverse target group, with young men and women the main beneficiaries. Al-Miftah's work ranges from awareness-building, facilitation and lobbying in many cases supported by participation in a large and diverse interest group of gender coalitions and networks.

B. Influence policy and legislation to safeguard social and civil rights

Al-Miftah is part of a large and strong civil society sector at the forefront of lobbying for and change and having a watchdog function vis-à-vis the PA. Al-Miftah's policy work include awareness building, training and lobbying for policy change and legal reform among a wide range of public and private actors alone or with coalition partners and donors. Al-Miftah's policy work targets gender-related issues and promotes stronger legal protection for women (Penal Code, Family law). Al-Miftah also lobbies for adherence to existing laws and promulgation of new ones through having direct access to key policy makers and legislators. Legal change and adoption of new laws are often held up in the PA for a variety of reasons, including not convening the PLC since 2007. In other areas, such as international treaties, conventions and resolutions to which the PA is signatory (e.g., CEDAW, UNSCR 1325) Al-Miftah seeks to hold local authorities accountable. Al-Miftah's most consistent work has been in promoting UNSCR 1325 at all levels and its work on election reform, especially in lowering the minimum age of candidates (from 24 to 21) and raising the women quota (to 30 per cent). Despite continuous efforts and lobbying, the new Penal code has not been signed into law by the PA President. One reason that it has not been promulgated (by Presidential decree) is that it bans capital punishment and makes honour killing ("femicide") a punishable crime.

C. Increase Al-Miftah's organizational efficiency

Al-Miftah's initial work was informed by the Oslo Accords and focused on building an independent Palestinian state and help resolve the final-status issues (Jerusalem, borders, refugees). In 2002, the work of Al-Miftah was reoriented towards a development profile with an emphasis on marginalised sectors, women and youth plus policy dialogue with an overall goal of empowerment and advancement of women. This remains the organisations core focus, despite working in related fields such as (good) governance, (gender responsive) finance and (penal & family) law. The teaching of the causes and consequences of the Israeli occupation ("Palestinian narrative") was for several years a key activity and part of the awareness and leadership training.

During 2012–13, the organisation undertook an internal review process followed by restructuring the organisation. The board meets every third month and was an active partner in this process which included meetings and seminars led by trained facilitators. The new strategy included three main points; i) to stop teaching the Palestinian "narrative of occupation"; ii) develop strong programs and; iii) avoid donor-dependent & donor-driven projects. The restructuring was followed by staff resignations (seven employees left, some of them with ten years with the organization) and accounts for the high staff turnover since 2012-13. The organisation now has a total of seventeen staff (thirteen women, four men), in addition to field coordinators (part-time) and a full-time coordinator in Gaza.

6.1 Findings

- Al-Miftah undertakes a wide range of targeted interventions in the gender field.
- Al-Miftah has contributed to effective leadership on several levels; access to key policy makers allows it to lobby for policy change and legal reform.
- Al-Miftah's combined impact on gender sector is, given the systemic constraints, substantial; it has influenced gender policy and legislation.
- Al-Miftah's has restructured its work and undertaken an organizational reform; the reform has increased efficiency but should be continued towards instituting strategic programs.

7. Impact

Two exogenous issues affects the impact of Al-Miftah's programs: i) the Israeli occupation which restricts mobility and increase the overhead costs of all interventions, and; ii) the PA's partial state-function and a weak, underfunded and donor-dependent public sector. In this review (see ToR); impact is assessed along four dimensions: A) Implementation of strategic plans; B) Institutionalization and sustainability of UNSCR 1325; C) Promoting women's political participation; and D) Capacity of developing partners.

A. Implementation of Al-Miftah's strategic plan and operational action

The organization plans, organizes and carries out several projects over a large area; the West Bank, Jerusalem and Gaza. Indeed, Al-Miftah was one of the first NGOs to target area C. Interventions can be needs-based (using statistical data), donor-initiated or, more, rarely self-initiated (UNSCR 1325). The organization is able to plan, organize and complete its activities under what is often difficult or unfavourable conditions. The staff is seen as unbiased, hardworking and proficient; this is especially important to some of the women organizations where members can be politically divided.

Being Ramallah based, the organization experience problems with attracting competent national and international staff, additionally it cannot match international salary levels.

The NGO-sector that Al-Miftah is a part of is seen as more transparent than the government sector and much less prone to favouritism (*wasta*). However, a key international donor finds that Al-Miftah's staff is "*continuously overwhelmed by their workload*". The staff is competent "*project managers ... but they cannot provide training in diverse and specialized topics such as for example water management*". With a small core staff (six persons), most of Al-Miftah's expert training is outsourced, indeed members of the staff complain of "*too much outsourcing*". In order to hire consultants on short-term contracts the organization is required to publicly announce jobs and vet offers. This process takes time and resources and members of staff would rather prefer "*the hiring of full-time-experts ... [...] ... with long-term commitment to the organization.*" Senior managers especially see the need for "*an in-house legal expert with a strong background in gender and advocacy*".

B. Institutionalization and sustainability of UNSCR 1325

Al-Miftah has put great efforts into institutionalizing UNSCR 1325. In strategic partnerships with networks and coalitions, it successfully lobbied for the PA President to sign UNSCR 1325. Passing the law is not enough, however, as there is a need, as Al-Miftah acknowledges, to "*monitor and hold the authorities accountable*". Al-Miftah would like to document all violations of UNSCR 1325, but has "*not yet found time and resources to do so*". However, the impact is uncertain, since 1325 has no direct sanctions or mechanisms for punishing violations. According to a close affiliate and network member (WATC), "*all the local work on UNSCR 1325 means nothing if not linked to international legal institutions such as the ICC*". Despite these caveats, there is a recent agreement to establish a Palestinian national coalition on 1325 that includes eleven PA-ministries and networks of which Al-Miftah is part.

C. Promoting women's political participation (gender mainstreaming)

Al-Miftah is viewed as a professional NGO that delivers quality outputs. Indeed many of the donors and partners met consider Al-Miftah their most important and valued partner. They also receive high marks for having a longer time horizon when implementing projects and interventions and to continue them even when funding dries up. However, the public sector (PA Gender Unit) finds that Al-Miftah provides minimal information on their work, does not consult with the ministry/unit and does not provide them proper and tailored reports and feedback. This example testifies to lopsided situation in Palestine, with a weak state authority (PA), ministries and attached gender units, combined with having a strong NGO sector funded outside their purview by national, regional and international donors. International donors met, find that the PA Gender units "*struggle with their mandate, are short on staff ... yet seek to control the NGO-sector's work on gender*".

The PA-gender platform is weak and underfunded, indeed donors find it "*is not a convincing platform*" and "*not optimal for gender mainstreaming*". The PA Gender units acknowledge these internal problems, yet complain that despite Al-Miftah's "*good work ... they do not share reports, ideas and conclusions with us ... we must call them all the time*". Moreover, they want Al-Miftah to "*utilise our 736 female councillors*" and that the government and NGO-sector "*should coordinate among each other and align strategic planning*". Al-Miftah promotes gender-responsive budgeting through a wide variety of actions, mainly directed towards relevant ministries. According to a staff member in a department gender unit, "*their work on gender-responsive budgeting is very good.*" The overall impact of these initiatives is constrained by the fact that ministries lack money and the general devaluing of women's issues in government.

D. Capacity of developing partners, models and methods

The organization is an important and trusted civil society actor. It has one of the largest women networks in Palestine. According to a long-term partner (PCBS), “*Al-Miftah’s reputation is strong, their name is synonymous with dialogue*”. Al-Miftah is member and co-founder of several coalitions and civil society network (e.g. CEDAW forum, Transparency Palestine - AMAN). Al-Miftah provides leadership and managerial roles to women, hence can be considered a role model in its work. However, the organization is considered elitist in its management and outreach, which constrains its impact among poor and underprivileged women and sectors. On the other hand, it is the political connections what many see as the organization’s asset and the ability to lobby and win support for actions, interventions and projects. International donors and partners are unison in their praise for Al-Miftah, the GIZ-representatives characterize their work and reach among women as “*outstanding*”. Another INGO representative (UNDP), stated that; “*I rank them as our most important partner in the field of gender*”. Local women NGOs, likewise praise their work and especially their ability to “*tailor training*”. Members of Al-Miftah’s senior management also serve as board members in partner organizations (e.g., PCBS, AMAN). In many of the partnerships, collaboration is regulated by a MoU. Coordination with government (PA) and with other NGOs & CSOs remain a challenge in order not duplicate or overlap with the work done by others. There are more than 300 NGOs and CSOs in Palestine and new NGOs are continuously licenced by the government. This in itself is argument for greater donor and NGO coordination.

7.1 Findings

- Al-Miftah is a highly valued civil society actor and partner; it has founded relevant networks and coalitions and midwifed new NGOs (AMAN); its general civil society impact is strong.
- Al-Miftah is a leader in implementing and institutionalizing UNSCR 1325 in Palestine; the local impact is constrained by the resolution’s lack of sanctions.
- Al-Miftah has promoted reform of the Penal law and Family law; the impact of the former is constrained by not yet being signed into law.
- Al-Miftah’s promotes gender mainstreaming and gender equity; the impact is constrained by a weak and underfunded government sector and lack of proper collaboration and coordination mechanisms.

8. Sustainability

The Syrian civil war as well as other regional crises reduce the international funding available to Palestine. Al-Miftah’s fiscal sustainability is characterised by uncertainty and reliance on six-month to one-year contracts for specific projects and interventions. The ability to deliver a range of gender-focussed interventions is a strategic asset, but the budget fluctuations and reduction in the number of donors over the period under study underlines that attracting adequate funding remains a challenge. The funding situation constrains strategic planning and accounts for the dominance of time-limited project deliveries. The use of consultants provide short-term flexibility and limits fixed staff-costs. The permanent staff is well qualified, skilled and motivated but voluntary staff resignations (from 2012–13), can pose a challenge to human resources development. The organisation’s strong reputation, ability to deliver, political connections and can-do attitude are important sustainability assets. However, the volatile political situation in Palestine, a non-functioning PLC unable to meet and govern since 2007, means the new laws are promulgated as presidential decrees and can therefore be rolled back.

8.1 Findings

- Al-Miftah's fiscal sustainability is medium strong.
- The number of donors is reduced over the period under review.
- The core funding is low, project funding predominates.
- Specialising in gender and youth is a strategic asset; as are political connections, professionalism and repute.
- Voluntary staff resignations can pose a longer-term challenge to human resources development.
- The PLC has not met since 2007, new legislation is therefore promulgated by presidential decree and can be annulled.

9. Management setup

The organisation is headed by a ten member Board of Directors (seven men, three women) led by Hanan Ashrawi (Chair), the founder of Al-Miftah. As chairman of the board, Ashrawi was instrumental in formulating Al-Miftah's initial vision and objectives. She has since withdrawn from the daily management of the organization, however, Ashrawi's political and personal connections and networks are important organizational assets, as are the many reputed board members. This is also a reflection of the importance of political connections in Palestine,

The Chief Executive Officer (Lily Feidy) leads a core staff of sixteen persons in senior management positions organised under two main (focus) programs doubling as internal units: Dialogue Enhancement for Policy Formulation Program and Participation Enhancement Program. Together with Admin unit, they form the core management units of the organisation. Consultants on short-term contracts provide training and facilitation and are attached to the CEO's office. Many of them are former staff members, now working in the private sector. The outreach is supervised by field officers (eight) on part-time contracts. They are often well-connected local women who have been with the organisation for a long time. They mostly work in their field areas but pay regular (monthly) visits to the main office in Ramallah.

Al-Miftah's staff mainly manage, coordinate and direct programs, while local training and facilitation is outsourced. The organisation have in-house competence, but not expertise on its core project activities. The organisation is considering adding a research and monitoring unit, but this has not been finalised. This change reflects a general trend towards greater emphasis on monitoring and research in the Palestinian NGO sector.

9.1 Findings

- Al-Miftah's main work falls within three broad fields: policy, gender and youth.
- Projects and activities are administered under two main units doubling as project management umbrellas.
- Al-Miftah's management model is flexible and somewhat cost-efficient (the sum total of consultants' fees are high).
- The reliance on hired consultants and facilitators makes Al-Miftah a service provider, not an expert organisation.
- The organisation lacks a separate monitoring and research unit.

10. Risk management

Running a gender-human rights organization in Palestinian is associated with multiple operational risks. From the dry-up of funds to the breakdown of order in the PA and Israeli attacks, many factors may adversely affect Al-Miftah's activities and increase implementation costs. However, most of Al-Miftah's work is short- and medium term training and delivery using hired and leased facilities; it is not exposed to risk to fixed project installations and infrastructure. The main risk is towards human resources, especially the field staff and beneficiaries' security in area C. From the review team's interviews with board members, CEO and staff we find that Al-Miftah is aware of these risk factors and takes measures to reduce them. The pool of donors is limited but increasing from 2014 as noted earlier. Fluctuating dollar values (foreign currency risk) and interest rates are risk factors but the organization has adequate financial assets to offset them.

10.1 Findings

- Al-Miftah is exposed to changing dollar and interest fluctuations; risk is offset by adequate financial assets and donor support.
- Al-Miftah is exposed to geographic risks (esp. Area C), mainly affecting human resources; the short and medium term risk to operations are low.

11. Anti-corruption measures

Al-Miftah is as a member of the Coalition for Integrity and Accountability (AMAN) and has signed the CSO's code of conduct. Accordingly, all employees when recruited are asked to read it carefully as part of their commitment to the work at the organization. In addition, as part of the financial by-laws, the 11th chapter is related to "Internal Control Procedures" which has guidelines on anti-corruption. The organization has clear and stringent procedures for the payment/disbursement of services and goods.

11.1 Findings

- Al-Miftah’s anti-corruption measures are very good and adhere to “best practices”.
- Internal fiscal routines are stringent and adequate.

12. Efficiency (cost efficiency)

Norway contributes about USD 130,000 annually. In 2012, the Norwegian contribution amounted to 18 per cent of Al-Miftah’s total budget (USD 731 601). Two other donors (NDC, IRI) contributed similar sums. In 2012 Al-Miftah had eleven main funders, two years later, the number was reduced to nine causing a budget shortfall of NOK 250 000 approx. The shortfall was covered by additional budget support from Norad. Al-Miftah’s budget is shared between core and project funding. In 2013 three donors provided core-funding (NRO, IRO, NDC), Norway contributed about 50 per cent of the core funds. The core-funding is provided on consecutive one-year contracts. The one-year contracts add significantly to staff work and reporting duties. From 2014, Al-Miftah secured a new, three-year core-funding contract (2014–16) with a new donor (IC).

In 2013, the staff costs (Group A & B: CEO, office and field staffs, consultants) accounted for about 63 per cent (USD 63 6188) of the estimated total budget (USD 1 076 100). The fees to consultants’ account for about 19 percent of the total salary & fees costs and 36 percent of total if only salaries to the main office staff is included (Group A: Director, coordinators, media/IT/finance). If we exclude the salaries and per diem to field staff and consultants/facilitators (Group B: direct costs), the direct programs costs in 2013 account for about 30 per cent (USD 361 642 approx.) of the estimated total budget. The two biggest direct cost items are workshops (USD 117 970) and accommodation and transportation (USD 88 702).

12.1 Findings

- Al-Miftah’s core funding is low (< 40 per cent of total), which constrains long-term planning & programming.
- The duration of most projects are medium term; 6 to 12 months; this increases the overhead costs for start-up and completion.
- Al-Miftah’s cost level is reasonable, salaries on average consume 40–50 per cent of the annual budget.
- The cost of consultants and facilitators fees are high relative to the costs of staff salaries.
- The large number of projects, interventions and training sessions over a wide area provide good value for money, but increase implementation costs (travel, accommodation, per diems etc. account for about 30 per cent of total).

13. Financial review

The review team did not have auditing competence and have assessed this point in general terms.

13.1 Findings

- Budget items are relevant to Al-Miftah's activities.
- Al-Miftah's disbursement routines are good.

Appendix

1. Terms of reference (ToR)

For Review of The Palestinian Initiative for Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy – MIFTAH

MIFTAH's Background

MIFTAH was established in Jerusalem in 1998, with Hanan Ashrawi as its Secretary- General. MIFTAH seeks to promote the principle of democracy and good governance within various components of Palestinian society, and further seeks to engage local and international public opinion and official circles on the Palestinian cause. MIFTAH's approach includes active and in-depth dialogue, free flow of information and ideas , and works for the establishment of a democratic Palestinian state based on the rule of law, human rights, equality and participatory governance.

MIFTAH's strategic plan 2011-2013 objectives

- Empowered and effective leadership within all components of Palestinian society in order to enhance democracy and good governance and raise public awareness concerning the rights and responsibility of good citizenship.
- Influence policy and legislation to ensure their safeguarding of civil and social rights for all sectors and their adherence to principles of good governance
- MIFTAH's organizational efficiency and effectiveness are increased.

Review responsibility:

NORAD, in cooperation with NRO, will lead the review process, will be responsible for contracting the consultants, and will be covering consultancy cost. The review will take place in coordination with MIFTAH and its partners.

Review Purpose: The review's main purpose is to assess the implementation of MIFTAH's strategic plan and operational /action plans for the last three years 2011-2013 with a view of weighing to what extent MIFTAH achieved its objectives in relation to agreed goal hierarchy and identified indicators.

The review will also consider the impact of MIFTAH's program with a focus on promoting women's political participation program including the institutionalization of UNSCR 1325, and its elements of sustainability, the review will explore the capacity of developing partners and of models and methods of corporation and implementation employed.

The review will document the experiences gained and lessons learnt while identifying and advising on potential areas of improvement.

Scope of Work:

The review should focus on the results achieved and on the process followed or established by putting emphasis on the following aspects:

- Performance: Describe the actual performance of the objective against planning in relation to the achievement of objectives, outcomes and outputs,
- Describe the actual performance of the MIFTAH's programs against planned in relation to delivery of outputs. Describe the actual performance of the projects against planned ones; also, cost effectiveness should be assessed.
- Relevance: What was the relevance of the MIFTAH's programs and the utilization of its results to the Palestinian women legal, social, civic and political participation and status development?
- Effectiveness: What is the assessment of the effectiveness of activities in achieving outputs, objectives and goal?
- Impact: What has been the impact of the MIFTAH's programs and its results?
- Sustainability: To investigate MIFTAH's programs sustainability, when considered from a financial institutional and political level and MIFTAH capacity. .
- Management setup: To assess the current management setup among the various stakeholders and advise on the most appropriate project management and quality management setup and process for the organization.
- Risk Management: to identify MIFTAH's capacity of assessing risk factors.
- Anti- corruption measures: Assess MIFTAH's capacity and policies toward corruption,
- Cost effectiveness: to compare the costs and MIFTAH program intervention to assess the extent to which it can be regarded as providing value for money,
- Financial review: to review sample of MIFTAH 's financial document and procurement policy

Implementation:

The methodology will be based on desk reviews of MIFTAH's strategic plan, action plan of 2011-2012- and 2013, sample of MIFTAH studies , MIFTAH's website and annual report, in addition to field visits focus group and interviews with relevant stakeholders.

Reporting:

Draft report to be submitted to NRO and MIFTAH. The Draft Report should include an executive summary, project and organization description, main findings, conclusions and recommendations. NRO and MIFTAH will provide comments on the draft report within two weeks of its submission. Final revised report to be submitted by the consultant within two days of receiving the comments on the Draft Report.

The Review will take place during **June 2014 (confirmed upon our agreement)**. The total time is estimated at a maximum of two weeks, including finalization of the Final Report.

Consultant qualifications should include:

- Background in working with democracy, good governance and human rights, particularly women's rights.
- Excellent English writing skills
- Experience in monitoring, evaluation and assessment of development assistance programmes, in particular NGO program assessment and performance evaluation;
- Understanding of the social, political and economic situation in Palestine,
- Understanding of issues related to conflict and post conflict environments
- Experience in assessment of the work of civil society organizations and NGOs;
- Preferably a local Arabic speaker to be part of evaluation team.

2. Interviews

Date	Name	Title	Organisation
25.09.14	Briefing; CEO and management team		Al-Miftah
	Hanan Imseeh	Gender coordinator	Ministry of Local Governance
	Isam Haj Hussein	Programs & projects director	AMAN
	Abd al-Qadir Hussayni	Board member	Al-Miftah
	Jehad Shakshir	Program manager	GIZ
	Hiba Tijani	Program coordinator	GIZ
	Mustafa Khawaja	Department director	PCBS
	Representatives		General Union of Palestinian Women
26.09.14	Nader Atta	Programme analyst	UNDP
27.09.14	Dr Lily Feidy	CEO	Al-Miftah
	Dr Hanan Ashrwai	Chairman	Al-Miftah
	Hanan Qaud	Development director	Al-Miftah
	Lamis Shu'aibi-Hantoli	Director (PEP)	Al-Miftah
	Moh Abid Rabbu	Media coordinator	Al-Miftah
	Najwa Yaghi	Project manager	Al-Miftah
	Roula Mozaffar	Director - Administrative and Financial	Al-Miftah
	Sana Assi (by skype)	GBV coordinator	UNFPA
	Suraida A Hussein	General director	WATC

3. Main beneficiaries, donors and stakeholders

Beneficiaries

- Ministry of Labor: National Committee for Women's Employment
- General Union of Palestinian Women: national coalition for implementing UNSCR 1325 and local coalitions at the districts level
- Palestinian political activists
- MIFTAH's Youth Social and Political Active Network (around 55 youth members)
- Ministry of Education: Officials and Parent-Teachers Councils
- Ministry of Local Government: Local Government Units (Local Councils) in the West Bank and Gaza
- Community Leaders in the West Bank and Gaza (i.e. representatives of Community Based Organizations)

Donors

- Government of Ireland
- Government of Norway
- Oxfam
- Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law Secretariat in Palestine
- DFID
- Arab Fund
- UNDP

UNFPA

- Other stakeholders
- Ministerial Cabinet
- Civil Society Organizations working on human rights and women rights
- Ministry of Social Affairs
- Ministry of Women's Affairs
- Ministry of Agriculture
- British Council
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs

4. Acronyms and abbreviations

AL MIFTAH Democracy	Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and
AMAN Palestine)	Coalition for Accountability & Integrity (Transparency Int'l chapter in
CEDAW Women	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GRD	Gender-responsive budgeting
ICC	International Criminal Court
DFID	Department for International Development
IRI	International Republican Institute
IRO	Irish Representative Office
NDC	NGO's Development Center
NRO	Norwegian Representative Office
NGOs	Non-governmental organizations
PA	Palestinian Authority
PLC	Palestinian Legislative Council
PCBS	Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics
RC	Rights Secretariat
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
WATC	Women's Affairs Technical Committee

This report reviews the organisational performance of the Palestinian NGO Al-Miftah over a three period (2011–13). The report is based on field interviews in Ramallah with staff, stakeholders and beneficiaries and includes main findings, recommendations and annexes. The report was commissioned by Norad under CMI's general framework agreement on human rights.