

CONCLUSIONS | CEMO SEMINAR

**DERECHOS DE LA MUJER
EN EL ÁMBITO RURAL EN PALESTINA**
desde la perspectiva de la cooperación

**WOMEN RIGHTS IN PALESTINE
IN THE RURAL SPHERE**
from the perspective of Cooperation



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Casa Árabe
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WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN RURAL AREAS IN PALESTINE from the perspective of cooperation

CONCLUSIONS

We present below the conclusions of the CEMO Seminar "Women's rights in rural areas in Palestine from the perspective of cooperation", held on Thursday June 28, 2018 in Cara Árabe and organized by the Social Promotion Foundation in the framework of the Convention 14-CO1-244 for sustainable and equitable rural development in the West Bank, and financed by the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID).

In her words of welcome, María Beamonte, General Director of the Social Promotion Foundation, wanted to remember Mrs. Pilar Lara Alén, Founder and for many years President of the Foundation, who died two days earlier and was to be buried throughout in the morning, coinciding with the celebration of this seminar. Musa Odeh, Ambassador of Palestine in Spain, and Pedro Martínez-Avial, General Director of Casa Árabe, expressed their condolences for the death of the one who promoted these seminars and a good friend of many of those present.

In the opening session, Lorena Gamito and Lucía Martínez, responsible for Humanitarian Action, Emergencies, and Development at UNRWA Spain, masterfully analyzed the situation of women in the Middle East in general and in Palestine in particular, under a rights and equality approach. Their analysis concludes with the triple violence to which Palestinian women are subjected: physical and psychological violence, especially in the domestic sphere; structural violence in the public sphere, which hinders their access to economic, social and cultural rights, and cultural violence due to widespread

ignorance (both of society and of women themselves), of their rights and the gaps that exist.

The representatives of UNRWA did not want to finish their exhibition without a positive note, which they discovered in the increase and acceptance that little by little have outdoor sports activities for girls.

Next, the presentation by Mohammed Al Bakri, UAWC Director General in Gaza, opened the session on the challenges and challenges of Palestinian women in rural areas. He summarized the main challenges faced by Palestinian women, paying special attention to the patriarchal nature of Palestinian society, the lack of unity and coordination among women's organizations and the special difficulty women have in accessing or continuing services. of health, education and work in a society where the realization of these rights is not guaranteed for anyone. Overcoming these challenges, concluded Al Bakri, calls for a profound modernization of Palestinian legislation. And that is not possible as long as the Israeli occupation continues, in order to put an end to the situation of women in Palestine.

Gemma Lorente, Associate Professor of the International University of La Rioja and Expert in Women, Gender and Leadership, approached the figure of Palestinian women from an academic and Western perspective, but not cold or distant. After noting the limited impact of the efforts and initiatives promoted since the creation of the United Nations to eradicate poverty and promote equality (70% of the world poor are women), the Professor reaffirmed the idea that peace and Development

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require and presupposes equality: they are three axes that are needed reciprocally.

In order to advance towards equality, it is necessary to identify, denounce and address the abuses and injustices that exclusively or primarily affect women, such as the lack of legal security (sometimes called scathingly "perpetual legal childhood of women"), the difficulties with access to the labor market together with the lack of recognition of all unpaid work and, especially, gender violence, which must be eradicated from three axes: education, awareness and action. However, the promotion of this equality must not ignore, much less demonize, realities and aspects traditionally related to the feminine, such as motherhood, conciliation, and co-responsibility. In short, it is about overcoming both the ethics of justice and the ethics of care and developing a new, more comprehensive theory that reconciles and harmonizes the two visions.

The gender perspective that should guide the progress towards this equality must dispense with ideological budgets and combative attitudes if it is to be effective. And in addition, to be endowed with a reasonable budget, which allows promoting the rights of women in Palestine, with full respect for reality, people, consciences and local culture.

Only thus, concluded Lorente, will the Palestinian woman, the rural woman, every woman in the world, exercise authentic leadership in her own life and in her society. Until this is achieved, global poverty will continue to have the face of a woman, and global discrimination, a scope, space, a place of privilege: the rural world.

Next, Jordi Galbé, Director of Programs of Governance, Gender and Human Rights in the Technical Office of Cooperation of the AECID in Jerusalem, explained the reasons why in Palestine the application of "prefabricated" and standard solutions to problems cannot be applied. of women in the rural world and, by extension, the problems of cooperation and development. Palestine presents a complexity, a wealth, diversity and a problem so varied that it becomes necessary to personalize and adapt the proposals to the concrete case, presenting "ad hoc" solutions. The political and administrative organization, the applicable legislation, the exercise of the judicial power take different forms throughout the Palestinian geography, but also, both the local population (subject to these systems), and the international community (which brings together all holders of responsibilities) are unaware of these circumstances to a greater or lesser extent.

In the second part of her presentation, Galbé wanted to present some of the tools that aim to contribute to improving the complex situation described above and that, beyond their effectiveness, demonstrate an international one. Among these initiatives, which are very varied in nature, including Palestine's accession to the "Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women" (CEDAW), and the imminent trilateral review of the state of women's rights. in Palestine, which will gather in Geneva on July 11 representatives of the United Nations, the Palestinian government and Palestinian civil society.

Gema Talaván, Head of Projects of Palestine in the Social Promotion Foundation and moderator of the table, gave way to the debate, which focused on Sharia courts, which in many Islamic countries judge cases of family, marriage, divorce, and

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woman. Jordi Galbé, of the AECID in Jerusalem, explained the weight they have in Palestine, both in the West Bank and Gaza, although with some distinctive notes in each territory, and pointed out some of the causes of its importance: its abundant presence throughout the territory, which facilitates access for citizens; the speed of their processes; and, although it may surprise the Western mentality, its prestige, and acceptance among Muslim society, both men and women.

The second session, under the title "The future: promotion of equal opportunities in rural areas in Palestine", brought together three Palestinian women who work in this field and who presented the experiences and reflections that have accumulated throughout their prestigious career.

Soraida A. Hussein, Director General of the Technical Committee for Women's Affairs in Palestine, argued in her speech about the permanence and impact of colonialism in Palestine and the need to redefine some central concepts for the debate on the rights of rural women, to end with an exhibition of current initiatives and challenges to better focus on the future.

Colonialism, he explained, is characterized by the occupation of territory and the dispossession of other people's resources. Both circumstances occur in the Palestinian case and are manifested in the administrative, legislative, judicial, military and economic domain of Palestine by Israel. And among the consequences of this colonization appear insecurity, the culture of scarcity and violence and the reinforcement of patriarchy, a patriarchy wounded and surly because of "masculinity in crisis", which fails to interpret the roles that society attributes.

The first concept that should be redefined in this debate is that of women's work. We must change the mentality of Palestinian society, which understands work as something alien to women (who should only exercise it in the absence of a man and in case of need), and present it as it is, a right enjoyed by women and men equally. Self-determination, which is understood in Palestine as an ideal for the people, for the land, must be predicated and pursued first as a condition of the person, of the individual, both of man and woman. Finally, the notion of development must always be understood and explained as something incompatible, contrary to occupation, so that development initiatives that elude the reality of the occupation are not proposed, but rather that every development program seeks, in the first place, eradicate it. The promotion of rural women, the first worker and last owner of Palestinian land, is currently centered and articulated in the constitution of women's cooperatives. These organizations face their own challenges, such as the commercialization of their products or the additional burden that weighs on women who decide to enter the public sphere without being able (or willing) to disregard the responsibilities of their private life. The future is to find creative solutions to overcome these challenges and move towards the constitution of mixed cooperatives where women can have equal access to management positions and executive responsibilities.

Next, Nadia Harb, Director General of the Rural Women's Development Society (RWDS), gave a presentation on the strategy of her organization, which established the objectives and priorities that Palestinian civil society proposes. In the first place, it is necessary to improve the living conditions of rural women in Palestine, encouraging the associative fabric through

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cooperatives, ensuring decent work opportunities and improving access to economic resources for families led by women. Secondly, all forms of gender-based violence in rural areas must be eradicated, for which intense and extensive awareness-raising and training work are required, as well as the establishment of support groups and community services for survivors and people in a situation risky. Finally, the organization aims to promote the social and political participation of women in rural areas.

In the opinion of Macarena Cotelo, Director of the Projects Department of the Social Promotion Foundation and moderator of the table, the organization led by Nadia Harb is an example that this strategy and those objectives can be achieved, since RWDS began as a department within a great generalist organization, until it became independent and constituted autonomously, as a women's organization for women.

The second round of the day closed with the intervention of Basema Shuquir, Project Manager of the Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committee (PARC), and responsible for the Agreement 14-CO1-244 for sustainable and equitable rural development in the West Bank, under which This seminar was held. His presentation began with a detailed report on the achievements of this project aimed specifically and directly at Palestinian rural women: the establishment of 25 home gardens, the promotion of 25 income-generating projects, the establishment of 4 new cooperatives and the organization of 10 training courses, 8 exchange experiences and 3 national fairs, in which the farmers signed annual distribution contracts with several traders. His speech ended with a heartfelt gratitude for and a strong plea for cooperation, in its various meanings: "cooperation" as a sector that contributes to

the development of the people, the "cooperation" between organizations from the north and the south as a process bi-directional in which two organizations and two societies shake hands and advance each other, and "cooperation" as a proper name, one of the many names that the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) receives in Palestine, which with its Financial support has made possible this seminar, this project, and the improvement of the living conditions of all the people who have participated in them.

The President of Social Promotion Foundation, Jumana Trad, closed the Seminar, thanking all the participants for their contributions, as well as Casa Árabe and the Ambassador of Palestine for their support.