

# CEPAL

Canadian-Palestinian  
Educational Exchange

2009 Annual Report

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CEPAL is a volunteer humanitarian organization, founded in 1996 by Canadian individuals who share a deep commitment to the respect of human dignity and the rights of all people. Our objective is to assist the Palestinian refugees in the pursuit of their basic human rights by increasing their access to education, and by raising public awareness in Canada about their struggle.

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## **Introduction**

CEPAL has been sending volunteers to work on educational initiatives in the refugee camps in Lebanon since 1996 after several Canadians working there recognized the dire situation facing the Palestinians in Lebanon and approached several local non-governmental organizations in order to offer assistance. The organizations expressed a particular need for educational programming for children throughout the summer months since a high percentage of their students were not able to complete secondary school. A major impediment to students, it was noted, came from the fact that children in the camps must follow the Lebanese curriculum and are therefore required to pass a Grade 9 exam that places a heavy emphasis on English language proficiency. In direct response to their request and with assistance from UNIPAL, CEPAL was founded and began offering English language instruction to children and youth in Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon.

Over the years, CEPAL's Summer Program has expanded from English language training, to incorporate French language and computer literacy, in addition to arts courses, such as photography and journalism. These additions were a direct response to the expressed needs of our local partners. CEPAL's Summer Program has to date sent over 65 volunteers to work in the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon.

The return of the Summer Program in 2009 was appreciated by camp residents, with feedback from our partners affirming the importance of CEPAL's presence in the refugee camps. A great deal of time was also dedicated to strengthening and expanding CEPAL's awareness raising activities and base in Canada.

CEPAL continues to be supported by a number of key individuals. Our local Canadian volunteer support has continued to grow this year, and is now located in various cities across the country. With the support of our dedicated volunteers and generous donors, we will continue to focus and expand upon our goals in the areas of education, human rights, and raising awareness about the plight of Palestinian refugees.

## **2009 Board of Directors**

CEPAL is run by an Executive Board of Directors whose objectives are to lead and manage the activities of the organization. Directors are voted in by CEPAL's members every year at the Annual General Meeting.

### **Natalie Zeitoun, President**

Natalie holds a bachelor's degree in sociology and women studies from the University of Toronto. With a background in public engagement and education, her specific skill sets include marketing and event planning, group facilitation and experiential learning, program management and evaluation. She currently works for the provincial government as a marketing planner.

### **Shawn Duthie, Communications Director and Vice President**

Shawn's extensive overseas travels led to a deep interest in world politics and development, culminating in a stint working for a small NGO in northern India. Here he gained valuable experience in the day-to-day running of an NGO, and the recruitment of volunteers. He has considerable experience teaching English as a Foreign Language in South Korea, India and China.

### **Meaghan Johnstone, Overseas Program Director**

Meaghan began her relationship with CEPAL in 2006 as a summer program volunteer in the Bourj-el-Barajneh, Sabra and Shatila refugee camps of Beirut. Though the experience was cut short as a result of the Israeli war, it opened her eyes to the Palestinian cause and had a significant impact on the direction Meaghan's life would take. As a former volunteer, Meaghan has met several key partners and her familiarity with CEPAL's Overseas Program allows her to contribute greatly to the summer program.

### **Shauna Trainor, Fundraising Director and Secretary**

Shauna is a graduate of McGill University where she studied Political Science and Middle Eastern Studies. As a volunteer teacher in CEPAL's 2005 summer program, Shauna is very familiar with CEPAL's work. After graduating from McGill she worked in Washington, DC at The Jerusalem Fund researching and raising awareness about the political situation in the Occupied Territories. Shauna has also volunteered with Amnesty International's refugee network in Toronto and will work with CEPAL to develop new, lasting relationships and strategies that will support the Summer Program for years to come.

## **Awareness-raising Events**

In addition to fundraising dinners, movie nights and rummage sales, the following events were organized in 2009 to raise both funds and awareness:

### **Beats for Palestine**

On June 4th, CEPAL launched the first of what we hope to make an annual benefit and Palestinian solidarity concert in Montreal, *Beats for Palestine*. This event was organized in partnership with Project Hope, a volunteer-driven non-profit organization that provides Palestinian children and youth with educational and recreational activities in Nablus, West Bank. Spoken-word artist Remi Kanazi, reggae master Mark Mahoney (aka Jah Faith), and hip-hop up-and-comers KinZ joined forces at *Le Petit Campus* to make the evening a success.

### **Right of Return Conference**

June 20th marked this year's World Refugee Day. CEPAL participated in this event by holding a conference to spread awareness on the Palestinian Right of Return. The conference was co-hosted with SPHR-Ottawa (Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights). CEPAL and SPHR's goal was to generate a better understanding within the Ottawa community of the challenges facing Palestinians refugees barred from re-entering Palestine. The Palestinian Right of Return refers to the legal and moral right for Palestinian refugees and their descendants to return to their homeland. This is an often overlooked issue in the on-going Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and one that is of utmost importance. The conference began with a "Right of Return 101" workshop presented by Samah Sabawi. Ms. Sabawi's workshop gave an in-depth overview of the history of the Palestinian conflict. The presentation focused on the legal and moral issues surrounding Palestinian refugees' right to return to Palestine. Ms. Sabawi also screened a documentary outlining the issues of forming a government for Palestinians within the occupied territories. There were two guest speakers featured in the conference, including CEPAL's Shauna Trainor. Ms. Trainor presented her experiences as a volunteer within the Bourj al-Barajneh camp in Lebanon in 2006. She explained many of the hardships faced by the inhabitants of the camp and offered an interesting insight into the experiences of international volunteers. The other speaker was Mr. Monzer Zimmo, a Palestinian refugee and respected member of the Ottawa Palestinian community. He focused his lecture on the realities of Palestinian community within and outside of the occupied territories, as well as shared some of his personal experiences as a refugee. His passion and knowledge pertaining to Palestine and the Palestinian Right of Return was inspirational. It was a sincere pleasure to listen and learn from Monzer Zimmo.

## **Awareness-raising Communication**

### **Website**

CEPAL continued to post events and announcements on its website at [www.cepal.ca](http://www.cepal.ca). The website includes stories and pictures from our volunteers who lived and worked in the refugee camps, testimonies from refugee camp residents, and CEPAL publications—such as our bi-annual newsletter. Powered by a content management system (CMS), the website is user friendly, making it feasible for all Directors, even with limited computer knowledge, to update content. A CMS takes the complexity out of maintaining a website. Even non-programmers can create and publish content online and the time to publish content has been significantly reduced.

### **Newsletters**

As with every year, this year CEPAL published the *Arch*, a bi-annual newsletter that is distributed by mail to all CEPAL Sustaining Members, as well as local organizations that support CEPAL and our programs. In addition, the *Arch* is posted on CEPAL's website to maximize its reach. This year's newsletters, as well as past newsletters, can be accessed at [www.cepal.ca](http://www.cepal.ca).

## **Facebook**

CEPAL recently joined the rest of the world on Facebook! As the year progresses and we hold more events, we're hoping to reach a wider audience. You can become a member at:  
<http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#/group.php?gid=10899262027>

## **2009 Summer Program**

The 2009 Summer program was a success; 4 volunteers were sent to Bourj El-Barajneh and Sabra/Shatila Palestinian refugee camps to assist with local educational initiatives for 8 weeks. Although the CEPAL Board of Directors was forced to make the difficult decision to scale back its Summer Program by not sending volunteers to the Wavel camp for the entire summer, the entire team spent three days there at the beginning of the summer and conducted lessons and activities with partner organizations.

## **CEPAL's Main Areas of Operation**

CEPAL works in three camps in Lebanon: Bourj el-Barajneh, Shatila and Wavel. All 12 official refugee camps in Lebanon suffer from serious problems. The camps do not have proper infrastructure, they are overcrowded, and many Palestinian refugees living in the camps suffer unemployment and extreme poverty. Moreover, employment and ownership restrictions for Palestinians living in Lebanon mean that most refugees cannot afford to live outside of the camps. UNRWA-registered refugee camps in Lebanon remain home to over half of the Palestinian refugee population there. Furthermore, over forty thousand refugees live in camps not recognized by UNRWA, while some 35,000 Palestinians remain housed in makeshift shelters, a result of their displacement during the Lebanon civil war.

### **Bourj el-Barajneh**

Bourj el-Barajneh was one of the first camps established in Lebanon and is located in the southern suburbs of Beirut. As a highly politicised camp in a central location, it suffered extensive property damage and displacement of nearly a quarter of its population during the civil war. Several sieges between 1985 and 1987 occurred on the camp and while the residents never relinquished control, many human lives were lost and much infrastructure damaged. With a population of approximately 15 000 in an area a little over one square kilometre, the camp consists of a series of very narrow alleyways with residents being forced to build upwards and inwards with population growth. Compared with other camps in the country, Bourj el-Barajneh is one of the better serviced in terms of access to health clinics, sanitary staff, waste management, NGO service provision and secondary school education. Many of the men living in Bourj el-Barajneh work as casual labourers or manual workers, and many women work in sewing factories and as cleaners. CEPAL has been working in Bourj-el-Barajneh since 1997.

### **Sabra/Shatila**

Shatila is situated in southern Beirut and was established in 1949 by the International Committee of the Red Cross in order to provide shelter for the hundreds of refugees fleeing northern Palestine. It is located near Beirut and Bourj el-Barajneh camp and was the site of severe devastation during the civil war. Heavy bombardment and numerous raids resulted in severe destruction of lives and property, internal displacement and a siege. Most devastating was the 1982 massacre that killed up to 3500 people. Approximately 8000 persons currently live in the approximately one square kilometre that is Shatila. Sabra is a slum and market area that surrounds Shatila camp and has a high population of Palestinian refugees and is also serviced by several Palestinian NGOs. The infrastructure of the camp is in disrepair with open drains, damp shelters, poor sewage and unreliable potable water. CEPAL has been working in Shatila since 1997.

## **Wavel**

Wavel camp, also referred to as 'Al-Jaleel,' is situated near the city of Ba'albek, 90 km east of Beirut in the Beqa'a Valley and near the Syrian border. Originally a French army barracks, in 1948 it was designated a camp for Palestinian refugees by the League of Red Cross Societies. It is one of the smallest camps in Lebanon at a size of approximately 42 000 square meters and with an estimated population of around 3000. It resides in a part of the country that has historically been tightly controlled by Syria, although that has decreased to a certain extent since the Syrian withdrawal in 2005. The relationship between the camp residents and the surrounding Lebanese is significantly less hostile than in other regions of the country. Although the camp suffered less structural damage than other camps during the years of civil conflict, living conditions in Wavel are particularly severe. Extremely low employment rates have led to high rates of emigration and a decline in the camp's population. While Wavel camp has wider streets, fewer-storied housing and more daylight and ventilation within the camp, overcrowding within homes is much more acute with many families sharing one or two rooms. The climate in the region is also more severe than in other parts of the country making for challenging winters when money for diesel fuel heaters is scarce. Wavel is one of the least serviced camps in Lebanon. While UNRWA provides schooling, water, health clinic, sewerage and solid waste services, NGO services providing educational services are significantly limited. CEPAL has been working in Wavel since 2001.

## **CEPAL's Partner Organizations**

In 2009, CEPAL worked with the following partner organizations in Lebanon:

### **Association Najdeh**

Najdeh was founded in 1976 and works primarily to empower disadvantaged women to become positive contributors to the Palestinian refugee community in Lebanon. Its programs include vocational training, popular education and tutorial programs, mother and child programs, social affairs, domestic violence programs, micro-credit projects and embroidery. It also works on educational initiatives related to reproductive health, women's rights and child rights. Najdeh operates in 26 centres in and around refugee camps in Lebanon and reaches over 10 000 refugees through its programs.

<http://association-najdeh.org/index.html>

### **Children and Youth Centre (CYC)**

The Children and Youth Centre was founded in 1997 to serve the Shatila community and to provide a place for children and youth to develop their education, abilities and imagination. It is an organization that places a great deal of importance on community work and strives to make its members sensitive to social justice issues, by empowering them as youth with a variety of skills. Its aim is to develop an aware and responsible generation that is able and determined to positively contribute to the community around it. CYC works in the following areas: child and human rights by emphasizing gender equality, religious tolerance and non-discriminative right to literacy; follows a child-to-child method of education through intensive external workshops and continuous committed internal practice; aims to confirm Palestinian history and identity; runs training workshops, children's activities, recreational and educational trips, after-school classes in academic subjects, arts activities, sports activities, journalism workshops, summer camp activities, cultural events and community wellness seminars. <http://www.cycshatila.org/>

### **United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA)**

UNRWA was established by the United Nations General Assembly resolution 302 (IV) of December 8th, 1949. The purpose of UNRWA is to carry out direct relief and human development programs for Palestine refugees after the expulsion of Palestinians from their land following the creation of Israel in 1948. Currently, UNRWA provides education, health,

relief and social services to over 4.6 million registered Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. It staffs more than 29 000 people, the majority of whom are refugees, and comprises the largest UN operation in the Middle East. UNRWA has been the main provider of basic education to Palestinian refugees over the past five decades and operates one of the largest school systems in the Middle East. UNRWA provides primary and junior secondary schooling, vocational and technical training courses, teacher-training programmes and scholarships to qualified refugee youth.

<http://www.un.org/unrwa/english.html>

### **Women's Humanitarian Organization (WHO)**

The Women's Humanitarian Organization was founded in 1993 to serve women and children living in Bourj el-Barajneh refugee camp. Its objectives are as follows: to provide necessary care for women and children; habilitating and training women socially and vocationally; establishing various centres of rehabilitation and training in order to achieve the purposes and aims of the Association; establishing special centres for women and children care; conducting habilitating training programs. The organization currently works to provide early childhood education (nursery), kindergarten (three-six years old), vocational training (computer literacy, handicrafts, sewing), an elderly care program, a day-care program for the children of working mothers, an after-school tutorial program, a summer activities program for children and youth, physiotherapy and a community disability project.

### **The Way Forward**

In 2008, a Needs Assessment was conducted which involved interviews with the heads of partner organizations, local staff of organizations, community members and former CEPAL students regarding CEPAL's work, community needs and program development. Overwhelmingly, the response from the interviews indicated that there continues to be a significant need for the kinds of educational initiatives that CEPAL provides in the camp, namely English language and arts instruction.

Our partners noted that most students who are unable to continue on to high school fail their exams as a result of weak English scores. Volunteers capable of breathing life into the English language for students by providing them the opportunity to improve their communication abilities were seen as integral to helping students succeed beyond primary school. There was also a strong desire by many organizations that CEPAL extend its work into the fall months to assist with remedial after-school and weekend programming.

Furthermore, a strong desire for volunteers skilled in the arts was noted. Resource constraints facing UNRWA schools have meant cuts to arts programming at the primary and secondary school level. The lack of opportunity for students to harness their own creativity and generate self-confidence and motivation through the arts was felt to be a significant deficit for the community.

Many of our partners also felt that educational initiatives provided by foreigners were essential to generating a sense of hopefulness within the community and granting children and youth opportunities to mature into well-rounded community members with a sense of connectedness to the world outside the refugee camp. This Needs Assessment report is available at [www.cepal.ca](http://www.cepal.ca) for your review.

Rather than hiring volunteers that are generally capable of teaching language skills through the arts, as CEPAL has done in the past, greater emphasis will be placed on hiring volunteers with more specialized skills in the arts such as music, photography, drama and painting. These teachers will be hired bearing in mind the specific skills that our partners have requested for that particular year. Better communication between the Board of Directors during the year and our partners in Lebanon

will ensure that we are better meeting the needs of our partners during the recruitment and hiring process. Furthermore, CEPAL will work towards extending our programs into the fall months. Several of the Summer Program volunteers will be recruited to remain in Lebanon after the conclusion of the Summer Program to assist organizations with remedial classes for students. It is therefore imperative that CEPAL achieve the funding necessary to be able to better meet the needs of our partner organizations and create sustainable programs for the Palestinian community we support.

## **Outlook for 2010**

The Needs Assessment has been and will continue to be used as one of the primary resources for CEPAL program planning. In 2010 volunteers will be hired for placements lasting up to 5 months in direct response to partner requests.

## **How You Can Help**

There are many ways to contribute to CEPAL's work and every bit helps. Whether you volunteer your time or generously donate funds, you are providing the gift of education to those who need it the most.

### **Volunteer**

CEPAL is always looking for volunteers to help run the organization in Canada. Whether it be in desktop publishing, book keeping, content contributing, or event organizing, your time and skills can be put to use for the benefit of CEPAL's programs. Please visit [www.cepal.ca](http://www.cepal.ca) for information on how to volunteer in Canada or email [info@cepal.ca](mailto:info@cepal.ca).

### **Make a Donation**

There are three ways in which individuals can donate to CEPAL:

1. Individuals can use a credit card to make a donation through the secure CanadaHelps.org website, located on CEPAL's website using the "Donate Now" option.
2. Individuals can mail a cheque to CEPAL's office in Ottawa. Cheques must be made payable to Canadian-Palestinian Educational Exchange, and must be forwarded to:

CEPAL, third floor  
323 Chapel St,  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1N 7Z2

3. Individuals can donate through the United Way Payroll Deduction Program. The annual Government of Canada Workplace Charitable Campaign supports Canadian charities and is managed by the United Way. Government employees can give donations through either cheque or payroll deductions, and can choose to donate to organizations such as CEPAL, who are not members of the United Way. To donate to CEPAL through this campaign, list the name Canadian-Palestinian Educational Exchange and its charitable number 862761418 RR 0001 on the donation form. Please note that the United Way will deduct an administrative fee of 11% for the donation, and an additional 4% if the donation is designated as a payroll deduction.

## Financial Statement

### The Canadian Palestinian Educational Exchange

Date Range: January 1, 2009 - December 31, 2009

#### Ordinary Income/Expense

##### Income

<b>UN Day of Solidarity</b>	
Book Sales	78.64
<b>Total UN Day of Solidarity</b>	<b>78.64</b>
<b>4032 - Donations Income</b>	
4032 - Donations Income - Other	808.04
General Membership	780.65
4040 – Classmate \$5-24	58.65
4041 – Friend \$25-99	400.33
4042 – Prefect \$100-249	1280.95
4043 – Teacher \$250-499	250.00
4044 – Professor \$500-999	1911.00
4045 – Sustaining Membership Fees	1485.00
4047 – Principal - \$2500+	4000.00
4060 – Summer Program Donations	1,944.74
<b>Total 4032 - Donations Income</b>	<b>22,919.36</b>
<b>4110 - Events</b>	
4110 – Events – Other	693.50
4111 – Ticket Sales	66.70
<b>Total 4110 – Events</b>	<b>760.20</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>23,758.20</b>
<b>Gross Profit</b>	<b>23,758.20</b>

##### Expense

<b>6000 - Advertising &amp; Promotion</b>	
6000 – Advertising & Promotion	22.60
6015 – Marketing & Printed Materials	15.24
<b>Total 6000 - Advertising &amp; Promotion</b>	<b>37.84</b>
<b>6600 - Outreach Program</b>	
6640 – Transportation	199.50
<b>Total 6600 - Outreach Program</b>	<b>199.50</b>
<b>7000 - Board Expenses</b>	
7100 - Meals & Entertainment	300.00
7725 - Transportation	65.92
<b>Total 7000 - Board Expenses</b>	<b>365.92</b>
<b>8000 - Summer Program</b>	

8000 - Summer Program - Other	14,585.63
8100 - Travel Expense (Summer Program)	4,363.68
<b>Total 8000 - Summer Program</b>	<b>18,949.31</b>
<b>9000 - Administrative Expenses</b>	
9000 – Administrative Expenses	30.00
9100 - Internet	1092.70
9300 - Telephone	402.85
9400 - Office Supplies	41.29
9500 - Postage & Delivery	135.98
9600 - Banking Service Charge	40.23
9700 - Rent	3,865.00
<b>Total 9000 - Administrative Expenses</b>	<b>5,608.05</b>
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>25,160.62</b>
<b>Net Ordinary Income</b>	<b>(1,402.42)</b>
<b>Other Income/Expense</b>	
<b>Other Expense</b>	
8190 - Misc. Expenses	(1,931.85)
<b>Total Other Expense</b>	<b>(1,931.85)</b>
<b>Net Other Income</b>	<b>1,931.85</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>529.43</b>