Diyar

Cultural Practices of the Palestinian Youth

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First Edition

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Forward

The International Center of Bethlehem and the Diyar Consortium is pleased to present this study to the reader and to those interested in the affairs of the Palestinian youth, where we present the results of the research and study which we conducted at the International Center of Bethlehem about the cultural practices of the Palestinian youth.

Some may wonder: Another study about the Palestinian youth?

In fact and despite the many studies about the youth in general, and the Palestinian youth in particular, not a single study has, up until now, concentrated on the cultural practices of the Palestinian youth. That is why this study comes as enrichment to the Palestinian library in particular and the Arab library in general. The objective of this study was not to produce a new literary work, but to study a social state of affairs and variables that may help us understand what is happening to a central age group, which might assist the various cultural and youth associations, including us, to draw plans that suit the needs and expectations of this broad sector.

The youth group is one of the central groups in the programs of the International Center of Bethlehem, just as the cultural programs are at the core of our interests. The program "Bright Stars" seeks the child, searches for his/her identity

and talent, to discover and develop it, whether it is dancing or art or music or sports. From the many and diverse Diyar cultural youth groups, ranging from Diyar Dance Theater to Diyar for Women Sports, passing through the youth leadership programs and ending with Dar al-Kalima College, we see a strategic interest in the cultural development of the Palestinian youth.

However, and before we draw our strategic plan for the coming years 2012-2015 at the International Center of Bethlehem, we deemed it appropriate to carry out this study as a tool to help us in reading the changing reality of the youth and their cultural needs. S/He who follows up the Palestinian cultural movement will inevitably see a series of developments worthy of attention and analysis. Since the outbreak of the second uprising, we have seen atrophy and languor in the Palestinian cultural movement as a result of the Israeli closure policy and invasions which pushed culture to the bottom of the Palestinian society priority scale. But, since the middle of the first decade of this century, interest in culture was restored and occupied the priority in the work of a large group of the Palestinian youth and cultural organizations. As well, one who follows up the developments finds that the political factions no longer attract many Palestinian youth; and this is what the study has confirmed too. Thirdly, we see a case of religious polarization that affects the Palestinian society, including its youth so that religion plays a central role among one segment of the Palestinian youth, while the other part abstains from it.

In face of these developments, we wanted to clarify through this study whether culture can form the creative space between the religious and political areas, since it is a factor that gathers people rather than divides them, a tool of self-expression that might also become a new instrument for wider community participation and a path for peaceful and social change. The youth uprising that is taking place on the streets of Egypt these days confirms an unlimited youth yearning for change and bears a promise for a new tomorrow, while at the same time it also carries the risks of a setback the consequences of which are not known. The question hence that we are dealing with in this study remains: Can culture be a youth connecting tool, a tool of peaceful expression and a means of social political change?

Only history, in which we believe we are not merely spectators but actors, will respond to this question.

At the end of this introduction, I extend my deep gratitude to the researcher Yahya Hijazi, who prepared and executed this study and all its contents in record time, with scientific and practical dimensions. I also thank the members of the advisory committee who accompanied the phases of the study and enriched the discussion around it, including Mr. Khalil Nijem, who is a member of the board of directors of Diyar, Mr. Mazen Ja'abari, Ms. Abeer Musleh, Ms. Haneen Aweis and Ms. Rana Khoury. I cannot but extend special thanks to Ms. Rana Khoury who directly and continually supervised each and every step of the study.

What characterizes this study is the participation of a considerable number of young people from the different Palestinian governorates in drawing up the questionnaire and helping to fill it out, in addition to their contribution in analyzing it through small focus groups. I also extend my gratitude to each and every one of those youth, who were close to one hundred. Last, but not least, I extend my deepest gratitude to the Swedish Olof Palme International Center for its moral and financial support for this study, and for being the best partner in the civil society work programs.

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Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb
President
Diyar Consortium
31/12/2010

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Introduction

We tried through this study to shed light on the cultural practices of the Palestinian youth and the relationship between forming their values and what activities of the cultural and youth facilities and centers are available in their community, in comparison with the rest of the sources existing in the youth enviroment in general.The study also aimed at identifying the difficulties that the Palestinian youth face and hinder their participation in the cultural events or activities of the youth centers.

This study covered five geographical areas in the West Bank (Jenin, Nablus, Ramallah, Jerusalem and Bethlehem) from which youth representatives were selected to conduct all the stages of this study, in cooperation with them. The study targeted 537 young men and women from these areas, ages 18 to 28 years old. In order to collect the necessary data for the study, a questionnaire was developed to examine the different variables, and focus groups of young people were formulated to give feedback to the researcher and the study committee throughout the various stages of the study. (See app. 2)

This study supported the results of some of the few studies that examined the youth cultural consumption, while at the same time it highlighted variables that were not deeply dealt with in those studies such as the youth's perspective on culture as a factor in forming social change, and its status among other sources in the formation of the values of the young people. In this study, some cultural consumption habits were also explained in a more precise and clearer method, in comparison with what was examined in previous studies.

The study showed that most of the activities carried out by the youth are internal rather than external, and that about 50% of the youth who participated in the study did not define hobbies that they would like to develop. Reading and visiting public libraries are not widespread habits among the youth, and the same is true with consuming different cultural

activities. In return, the study illustrated an extensive youth consumption of the Internet, particularly for the purpose of social communication, in addition to its great impact on their lives and in shaping their attitudes towards life issues. In exchange, the youth showed a clear entertainment pattern when watching television and reading magazines.

As for the influence of culture on changing the society and the role of the youth centers in developing the individual skills, the results showed positive attitudes towards them. Even the definition that the participating youth in the study gave to youth leadership and the goals that the youth centers must achieve through their programs were not very far from the results of other studies, neither were they very far from what some of those centers do.

This study serves the workers in the youth sector in gaining a deeper understanding of the needs of the youth and emphasizes the role of culture on the one hand and the role of youth centers on the other in forming the cognition and the attitudes of the young people. Therefore, at the end of the study we will offer recommendations that deal with how to motivate the youth to take advantage from those facilities and to direct their free time is such a way that contributes to their development on the personal level on the one hand, and helps them to integrate in their communities on the other, as well as minimizes their staying at home and enhances their participation in external social activities.

Literature of the Study

What can we say about the youth stage that is not already mentioned in the literature. The youth stage is a phase full of constructive human energy which, if properly utilized and guided would bring prosperity and development to the individual and the community at large.

For the needs of the study, we had to clarify some of the definitions given by the authorities and researchers in this field to the term «Youth Stage». The use of this term varies depending on its purpose and the theoretical frames of references for it. It also depends on the social and economical context in which it is discussed. Many are the studies that adopt the definition of youth based on the generation as a reference to study the subject (Angel, 1095; The Ministry of Youth and Sport, 2008; Abu Afifeh, 2004). But the trend most acceptable to us is defining this stage as a phase in which the utmost human potentials and tremendous activity which characterizes it, as well as the ambitions and aspirations for the future are clearly reflected (Arab League, 2005).

According to generally accepted psychological theories, this stage is not a developmental one -for although it includes two basic stages of socio-psychological development, namely adolescence and adulthood- but it is rather a stage which the societies set and named to determine their aspirations and expectations from its members in a certain generation, and a phase which these societies specify according to their needs. Al Nashashibi (2002) mentions that during the second half of the nineteenth century, and amidst the development of the concept of the state, there was a need for those societies to define the social, political and cultural role of those young adults. Therefore, since that time, we began to get accustomed to hearing the term being increasingly used. This classification is closer to being procedural, conditional to what the youth offer to their societies including their social maturity to be able to form families, capable to vote and have political influence, to run for office and so on (Ni'meh, 2004). The need to invest in the Palestinian youth can be

الهرم السكاني في الأراضي الفلسطينية ، منتصف العام ٢٠٠٨
Population Pyramid in the Palestinian Territory, Mid Year 2008

Population in thousands

Number of population
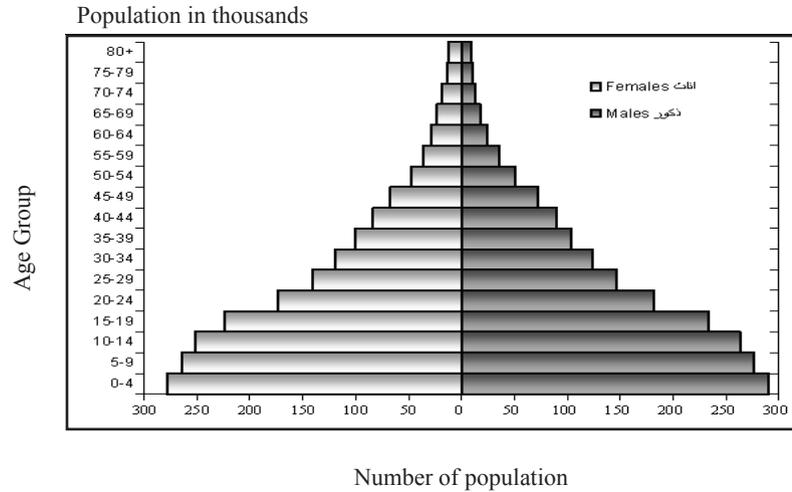
explained if we look at the population pyramid in the Palestinian territories (2008), which clearly demonstrates that this group will be the largest category within the next twenty years. The demographic window requires that we are prepared to deal with it through the creation of opportunities for the young people, and this means that we need to start working hard now and invest in the potential of youth in the various fields, so as not to have this window turn into an ominous problem.

In this study we defined the youth group according to the free (not obligatory) cultural and academic consumption generation, i.e. after completing age 18 and until age 28. This category was selected due to the fact that the International Center of Bethlehem targets in its programs and services this group of young people more than others.

The forms of studies that addressed the youth sector in the Arab countries, including Palestine, focused on the problems faced by this group in comparison with the other age groups and proposed solutions on both the governmental and non-governmental levels (Abdul Mu'ti, 2004). Another collection of youth studies concentrated on understanding the issues of the Arab youth through dealing with their legal and social rights that the state must uphold (Ni'meh, 2004) and the services that must be provided in order to enhance their ability to build their present and to set the appropriate policies to plan for their personal and professional future (Ma'aytah, 2005). Yet, as a whole there were very few youth studies that dealt with the cultural dimension, and if so they were divided into two sections: a conservative division which focused on the harms caused by opening up to globalization and the impact of the Internet, satellites and mobile phones on the Arab cultural or religious identity of the youth, and a section of studies that addressed the phenomenon from a sociological communications perspective. In this study, we dealt with the issue of the cultural consumption among the Palestinian youth as a social phenomenon, trying to understand the consumption practices in order to propose programs that can help the youth and cultural centers in guiding these practices.

The Environmental Circles that Affect the Formation of the Youth's Knowledge and Attitudes:

There are several sources that contribute to the formation of the individual's personal, cultural and social identity. According to the Systems Ecological Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), the circle that affects the values of the individual and his/her attitudes is not limited only to his/her personal experiences, personal attributes, or the family in which he/she grew up. The effect exceeds that and extends to much wider circles beginning with the near external area represented by the neighborhood including friends and the various social institutions such as the cultural, youth and political parties, and expanding even much further whether through the local and global mass communication tools, or the output of the changes that occur at the global level.

The individual's knowledge and attitudes are formed by being in contact with the various aforementioned sources of influence, or through little or no contact whatsoever with them. Watching television or not, reading books or not, visiting theatres regularly or partially ultimately form the entirety of the individual's knowledge and his/her cognitive and cultural attitudes, because those sources play a key role in the process of upbringing, normalization and social growth, and eventually in crystallizing the personal identity (Yasin,1981), which was defined by Erikson (Erikson, 1986) as the individual's self-awareness that guides his/her choices and ultimately his/her behavior.
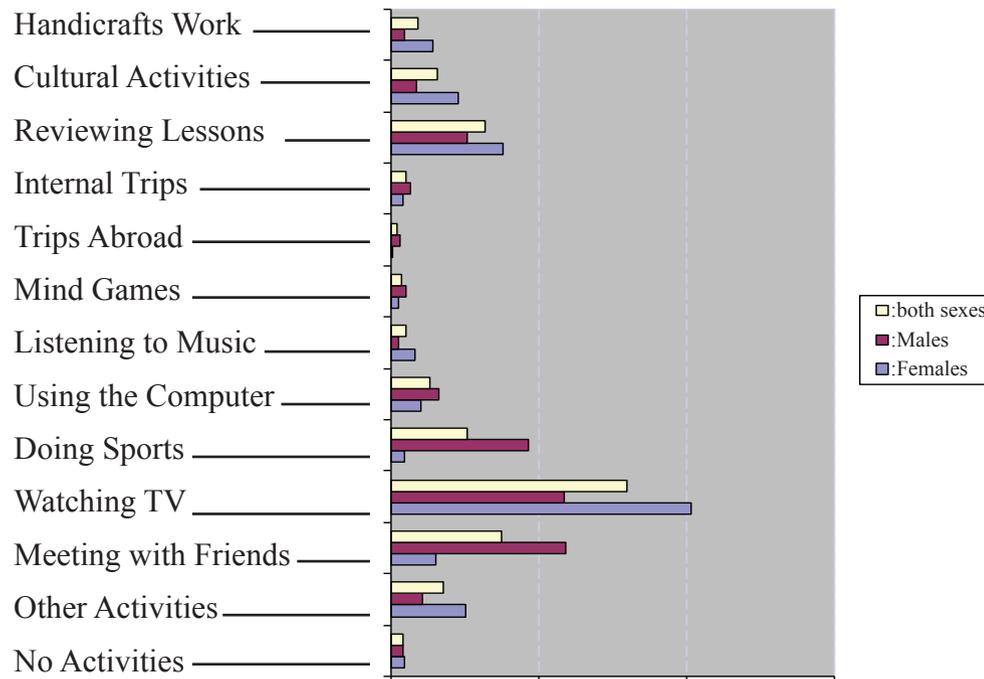
The youth contact with those sources in the various circles is often influenced by the expectations of the state represented by its ministries and institutions, including its ideologies and culture, or by the agendas directed towards some of the non-governmental centers and organizations as in our case, which sometimes do not take into consideration the genuine cultural and social needs of the youth or their individual aspirations. Such a matter may create in many cases a clear conflict in the individual's feeling of belonging to the society and to the values of the institutions that are expected to provide him/her with those services. (Abdul Mu'ti, 2004).

In this study, we will try to understand the cultural practice of the Palestinian youth in several Palestinian areas in the West Bank (the habit of reading, watching television, the Internet, the cultural activities that are offered by the cultural centers, the participation in the youth activities that are offered by the youth centers.)

But before we embark on delineating the statistics of the cultural sources used by the young people, it is important to know in general how the Palestinian youth spends his/her free time, i.e. what are the aspects that occupy most of his/her free time. According to Al-Dureidi and Al-Omari (2005), the Palestinian youth often spends his/her free time at home, whether to study, watch television, use the computer, or even for meetings among friends, much more than spending time in external activities such as sports, cultural activities, trips etc. The following table also incorporates the differences between the sexes with regards to practicing some activities such as sports, meeting with friends, using the computer or even watching television, so that we find that young men participate and benefit more from these sources than their female counterpart.

1. The Cultural Centers

There is no doubt that the cultural centers have a prominent place in all civilized societies.
They have been the arena of a number of social and political changes in many countries throughout history, and also the

source or station that hosted the best innovators in those societies; this is on the global level. As for Palestine, statistics of the Palestinian Center for Statistics for the year 2009 present a grim picture of the cultural situation in Palestine, a picture that falls apart in some respects and stagnant in others. While in the year 2000 there were ten museums visited by 118,000 visitors, its number dropped in 2007 to six museums visited by 4,300 visitors only. The numbers of theatres and cinemas likewise dropped during the same period despite the fact that the number of visitors increased rapidly, although when compared to other countries, it is not a large number. What seems positive and encouraging in the same statistics though is the increase in the number of cultural centers during the same period from 66 to 227.

In general, the proportion of young people who benefit from the various cultural and sports centers in Palestine is very low, as reflected in the numbers of attendees going to theatres, cinemas and museums etc. The following table shows the percentage of the individuals who go to the cultural centers and take part in the cultural activities. It was calculated in 2007 (The Palestinian Center for Statistics, 2009)

Generation	Rec- reational Activities	Public Libraries	Sports Clubs	Places of Worship	Exhibi- tions	Musical Concerts	Others	Grand Total
19-25	15.5	16.7	15.1	45.1	3.8	3.5	0.3	100%
20-29	2.2	8.2	9.2	54.3	3.7	3.9	0.5	100%

It is worth mentioning that the results calculated in this way do not accurately calculate the total events and activities in which the individual takes part, i.e. that the method of calculation does not take into consideration the multiplicity of hobbies and interests. Despite that, the results reveal that the recreational/cultural activities are the most common among the youth after spending time in places of worship. It is also noted that the category of young people who visit the libraries is relatively low.

2. The Youth Centers

There might not be a single clear cut definition to the nature of the youth organizations since many institutions offer programs for youth but their work is not confined to that category only or their staff to begin with are often not from the young people, which somehow is inconsistent with the definition of youth organizations. But regardless of the definitions, the organizations that offer services to the youth as a central group and work towards activating them, as defined by Smith (Smith, 2001) as the total events and activities aimed at influencing the young people, developing them personally and socially and benefiting from their energies are those organizations that our study will shed light on. The existence of such organizations is extremely crucial since they contribute to the crystallization of the personal, political, cultural and social identity of the youth, and through their programs they can offer the young people counseling and assistance in different issues, and help them make sound decisions regarding their personal, educational and professional future (Hijazi et al, 2004). This role of the youth centers is what makes the occupation, for example, seeks to close some of them for long periods, as in the case of Jerusalem and Hebron and other cities that lie under the direct administration of the occupation, and to arrest their staff and subject them to interrogation in many cases. The importance of these youth centers in the community is also made clear through the increased willingness of foreign donors to invest in them. The national strategy for the young people also follows the same approach, for it considers the work of putting forward national policies that promote culture and empower the youth, media-wise, is essential. It also conceives a role for the institutions working with the youth groups in achieving their vision of empowering the Palestinian youth. (The Ministry of Youth and Sports, 2010)

There is no concordance in the statistics on the number of active youth organizations in Palestine, and that may be due to several reasons, most importantly are the different sources that carry out these statistics, the lack of clear criteria when defining the youth organizations, in addition to that some of those institutions are not officially registered. Rahhal

(2007) was able to monitor 710 youth organizations and centers in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip that offer different services to the youth, be it in the field of sports, culture, etc… including women youth centers. Yet, the statistics of the Palestinian Ministry of Youth and Sports count 91 youth organizations in the West Bank alone, in addition to 80 sports clubs in the West Bank governorates, registered in the Ministry's website (The website was visited on January 9, 2011). Note: The clubs in the Bethlehem governorate were not mentioned in the website of the Ministry, and it is clear that the website has not been updated since a long while.

As for the expectations of the young people from the youth centers in Palestine, Hanani (2007) explained in a research conducted on the youth and the organizations that provide services for them that the most important service offered by these centers is through the activities and programs that concentrate on character building, self-development and supporting the individual capacities of youth, to be followed by developing their leadership skills. The percentage of youth who gave this aspect the greatest importance is about 77% of the respondents. There was a convergence of perceptions between the administration and staff of these centers with the expectations of the young people.

3. Means of Mass Communication and the Formation of the Cultural Identity

Mass communication, and through various media means used to deliver different messages to the recipient, has become inevitable. The traditional institutions of socialization are no longer capable of regaining control of what forms the cognition and attitudes of individuals. The effect of media on the individuals accelerates with the acceleration of the technological development of those means (Mohammad, 2002) and with the number of hours spent by the individuals watching television, listening to the radio, reading books and magazines, or communicating through the Internet and the mobile phone and other available means of communication. The effect of the global values that are prevailing nowadays, which are transmitted through satellite channels and Internet sites, reinforced among the individuals the individual salvation tendency more than enhanced the feelings of belonging and collective salvation (Ismail, 2004).

The effect of the open mass communication also increases in as much as the individual feels that his/her personal freedoms are restricted and that the community values do not match his/her orientations and inclinations, and therefore increasing his/her feelings of alienation (Abdul Mu'ti, 2004; Wheeler, 2003; Hofheinz, 2005). Perhaps this explains why in a lot of cases many people throughout the world abstain from watching local stations or reading newspapers and so on, for if the individual for example felt that all the available newspapers in the market are replica of each other in terms of content and analysis, and do not reflect the different views on a particular issue of concern to the public, and far from the political and social realities and the hardships experienced by the people, then these newspapers will have no impact whatsoever on readers, and this situation applies to the rest of the cultural sources in general such as the television, radio, etc... (Yasin, 1981)

3.1 Sources of Paper Culture (Newspapers, Magazines, Books)

The statistics of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (2009) reflect an image that is not different from the previous one; while we had 16 newspapers and 16 magazines in the year 2000, the number dropped to 11 newspapers and 6 magazines in 2007. The decline is not limited to the number of newspapers and magazines, for the very same national statistics point out that 55.4% of the Palestinians over ten years of age do not read the daily newspapers. As for those who do not read the newspapers among the target group in this study (young people 15-29 years old), the statistics did not differ significantly from the overall rate, amounting to 52% among those surveyed. This percentage is higher than the percentage obtained by Muhammad (2002) in his study which he conducted on a group of young people aged between18-24 in the Ramallah area. He found that 42% of them read the local newspapers regularly whereas we see that the same percentage read the newspapers irregularly. The reader is often interested in the political news, and then pays attention to cultural and sports issues, followed by art. As such, the percentage of non-readers of newspapers in that study was only about 16%. As for reading magazines, 17.6% of the youth explained that they read periodicals and magazines on a regular basis while the percentage of those who do not read them regularly was about 48%. The results

show that the topics that the readers read in the magazines are general topics followed by issues related to youth and sports.

It is worth mentioning that the budget for the production of books in the Arab world is very small to the extent that it is not even worth comparing to the budget set for producing books in the Western world. This is also reflected in the number of publishing houses in the Arab countries when compared to other countries. The average reading rate in the Arab world, according to the second report of the Arab Thought Foundation for Cultural Development (2009), did not exceed 4% of that in England. The same report also mentions that one book is produced in the Arab world for every 12000 citizens, in exchange for one book for 500 British citizens. There could be an explanation for this, which is connected to the number of existing publishing houses in England and the quality of the consumers of those books who are the English readers, and who are spread all over the world and are not necessarily British only.

3.2 Sources of Audio/Visual Culture:

There is no doubt that what stimulates the senses ultimately settles in the brain and forms a collection of cognitions and trends that shape the human behavior, actions, thoughts and beliefs later on. There is no need for the individual to exercise everything in order to learn new behaviors, but he/she needs to see symbolical examples in television, cinema, and theatre or even on the street, etc… (Bandura, 1977).

Muhammad (2002) found in his study that the Palestinian youth prefer the private television stations to local ones, and that is because of the nature of the programs offered by those stations. The results of his study do not differ from those of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (2009), which showed that 53.1% of the respondents do not watch local television stations and prefer instead to watch entertainment and private channels.
But this situation is not limited to Palestine only. The Turks, for example, abstained during the nineties from watching

the government television stations in favor of the private and foreign stations, and that is with the dawn of globalization and the proliferation of communication tools in such a way that it was no longer possible to control (Sahin & Aksoy, 1993). In 1992, the private stations in Turkey were able to attract more than 70% of viewers, leaving behind 24% of loyal viewers of the local government stations (AGB, 1992). We believe that this picture is identical to that in many countries in the Arab World, and even in the Western world which is characterized by activating the government channels for the benefit of the different political parties.

In his study on the type of satellite stations that are watched by the Palestinian youth from the Gaza Strip, Abu Shanab (2003) showed that 35% of the youth in Gaza watch music channels as their favorite, while a third of the young people who were surveyed do not watch television at all, in most cases for religious ideological reasons, and that only 27% of the youth watch television for more than an hour a day.

As for owning a computer at home, Muhammad's study (2002) showed that the percentage of the youth who own a personal computer is about 63.4% of the participants, and that more than half are connected to local and Israeli Internet networks. With regards to the pattern of Internet use, 24% of the participants made it clear that their use of the Internet is limited to the chat, 18.2% use it to send and receive e-mail, and 37.2% use it for different purposes.

In the report of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics 2009, more than 46% of the youth confirmed being connected to and using the Internet, compared to only 20% in the year 2003 (Palestine, Manbar al-Qadiyya al-Filistiniyya, 2010).

Wheeler (Wheeler, 2003) summarized in her article a collection of studies carried out in Kuwait which examined the relationship between the youth and the Internet, and concluded that more than 75% of the Kuwaitis at the end of the nineties of last century and the beginning of this century were Internet users, and one can speculate that these numbers

have increased since then. Also, if we look at the changes in the consumption of the computerized data, we see that more than half of the young people in the United Arab Emirates between 14-24 years old, and more than half of the women in the country have been using the Internet even since five years ago (Hofheinz, 2005).

Many youth nowadays are attached to their cellular phones, which have also become a central source of knowledge and entertainment. There are daily new contents that can be added and activated on the small communication gadget whether in the form of rings tone, prayers, movies and so on. The statistics of 2008 indicate that the Palestinian mobile phone holders were 85,000 subscribers in the year 2000, to jump to 1,300,000 subscribers in 2007. At the same time, the landlines increased during the same period by 80,000 lines (The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2009).

Difficulties that Adversely Affect the Use of Cultural Facilities and the Access to Youth Centers

1. The Economic Situation: According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (2009), the poverty rate in 2007 reached 23.6% in the West Bank and 55.7% in the Gaza Strip. In the city of Jerusalem, the percentage of households that are considered economically distressed is more than 66.8% according to the statistics of the Jerusalem Center for Israel Studies (2008). Consequently, the scale of needs, in this case, places the cultural and recreational events and activities as the last priority. One of the major tributaries of the dire economic situation is the high unemployment rate among the youth in the West Bank, where 25% of the economically active are unemployed (The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2009). As for women, they are the most marginalized in terms of getting job opportunities, for their participation in the work force is 15.4% compared to 66.9% of males and that is because the majority of women are either students or housewives (Ibid).

2. The Israeli Military Checkpoints and the Wall: The number of checkpoints and barriers in Palestinian territories increases every time Israel claims that it has removed some of them. In reality, there are more than 626 barriers, 93 of which are checkpoints run by soldiers while the remaining 533 are without soldiers (OCHA-oPt, 2009). The hindering of people's movement, insulting and humiliating them on occasions and keeping them at the checkpoints for hours at other times (UNDP, 2009) makes it difficult for them to reach the cultural facilities and activities on the one hand and increases the costs of travel on the other (Study Focus Group, December 2010), which constitutes an additional economical burden on the individuals. This difficulty is quite apparent in the remote villages and small towns, such as in the villages of Ramallah (Euromed Youth III Program, in: Sharek Youth Forum, 2009). In addition to the military check points, the wall and the military gates impose two additional obstacles that prevent hundreds of thousands of Palestinians to move freely and travel between Jerusalem and the other Palestinian cities (B'Tselem, 2008). The celebrations in Jerusalem as the capital of Arab culture in 2009, for example, witnessed a deliberate closure of the cultural centers in the city, the forcing of youth and cultural organizations to cancel their events in the city and to transfer them to other cities in the West Bank, in addition to the legal prosecution of the individuals and institutions who, despite the ban, took it upon themselves to carry out some activities. Many artists and art organizations were also prevented from presenting their performances in Jerusalem because of the occupational ban. This strangulation imposed on the organizations did not begin in 2009; it was a continuation of a harassment policy practiced on the youth organizations which led, in many cases, to the arrest of their employees or the closing down of the centers. (Centers of Bisan, Ma'an and the Popular Art, 2006)

3. Traditional Thinking: Customs, traditions and cultural norms play a negative role in the participation of girls and women, especially in cultural events and activities, and particularly if their participation includes travel and are far from their place of residence. As well, many of the cultural activities are mixed, which often makes it difficult for girls to take part in them (Hart, 2007). The customs and traditions also play a key role from the outset in forming the cognition, inclinations and hobbies of boys and girls, to be followed by kindergartens and schools which do not find the

time to develop the different intelligences of their students, including musical, social and others. Therefore, generally speaking, we find that a small percentage of the gifted and the geniuses, who can make their way into the light in spite of all attempts and policy to eclipse and write off their hobbies (Hijazi, 2009). The family and school do not play an intermediary role between the individual's capacities and his/her environment through providing the necessary space for the cognitive, perceptive, emotional, moral, physical, artistic and spiritual development of the individual (Hindi et al, 1995). Rather, their major concern is to develop their children and students educationally and socially. The inherited traditional social thinking makes in many cases the expression of the innermost free spiritual and creative tendencies a taboo (Waddah, 2004), stifles freedoms and expects from its members to behave like camels, bearing the burden of their communities and acting like mature adults so that in specific stages they kill the child person that is within, which is the symbol of creativity, improvisation and free thinking. Fataftah (2007) sees that the only way out to this social predicament is in providing the individuals an opportunity to freely express their innermost feelings, opinions and stances, which requires a necessary change in the norms and values of the traditional society and to diminish its fears.

4. The Linkage of Some Youth Organizations with Political Parties: Hence the abstention of young people from participating in their recruiting activities. The current political situation and inter-factional schism brought the level of confidence between the political parties and the Palestinian citizens to its lowest level in the last year, for 70% of the respondents stated that they do not trust any party or political group (UNDP, 2009). This is related, in many cases, to the fear of the young people (18-24 years old) to express themselves and their opinions on issues that have nationalistic and political dimensions for fear of risking themselves to interrogation or even incarceration (Ibid; Sharek Youth Forum, 2009).

The young people also expressed their disappointment in the political movements, which failed in achieving their aspirations and continually exhibited lack of interest in their issues and concerns (Ibid).

The youth refraining from political action or interest in political awareness is also the result of a defeatist culture and values that do not encourage resistance and taking initiative, in addition to difficult economic and social conditions. (Al Haddad 2007)

The Importance of the Study

The importance of this study stems from its field of specialty. It seeks to understand the effect of cultural sources on the Palestinian youth, and simultaneously tries to shed light on their cultural practices on the one hand, and the difficulties they encounter to get to cultural events and activities in their areas on the other. There is no doubt that the last thirty years have witnessed a revolution in the world of cultural consumption as a result of mass media, which did not allow room for the traditional institutions to confront and prevent from entering every home and organization.

The local studies show that the time spent by the young people in their homes is much more than the time spent in social and cultural circles that are outside the house which, in many cases, are within reach. Yet for several reasons, the youth prefer being isolated and indoors or spending time with family and friends, rather than being away from the vicinity of their homes.

Objectives of the Study

1. Identify the cultural practices of the Palestinian youth
2. Identify the circles that help in the formation of the personal values of the Palestinian youth
3. Clarify the role of the youth centers that work with the young people according to the study outcome
4. Identify the importance that the youth attach to culture
5. Have a deeper understanding of the youth needs and hear their voices and suggestions for the sake of developing programs that meet the reality of these needs

The Study Will Attempt to Answer the Following Questions

1. How do the Palestinian youth spend their free time and to what degree are they aware of the existence of youth and cultural centers in their area?
2. To what extent is the effect of the cultural institutions on the formation of the individual's values compared to the political institutions?
3. What are the opinions of young people regarding youth centers and what is their definition of youth leadership (youth development programs)?
4. What are the difficulties that prevent young people from taking part in the youth and cultural events and activities?
5. What are the suggestions proposed by the young people for the youth and cultural centers that may improve the services provided to them and increase their participation in the centers' activities?

Hypotheses of the Study

The study seeks to verify the validity of following hypotheses:

1. The majority of young people do not consume the written cultural material in comparison with the visual.
2. The majority of youth do not participate in the cultural events and activities in their areas, in spite of being aware of their existence in these areas.
3. The youth value the role and contribution of culture as an important factor in societal change.
4. The youth attach more importance to family and culture in shaping the social values than they give to the political party and party mobilization.

5. A vast majority of young people did not and do not take part in activities offered by youth centers.
6. The attitudes of the youth towards the youth centers are not encouraging and they do not deem them important in the achievement of societal change.
7. There is a difference in the definition of the young people who were surveyed of the term (Youth Leadership) and its goals, for their definition will be more complex and comprehensive, and focuses on the developmental aspect as well as the personal, individual side.
8. The economic situation and the Israeli military checkpoints hinder taking part in the cultural events and activities.

Limitations of the Study

The results of the current study were limited to the young men and women from five geographical areas in Palestine (Jenin, Nablus, Ramallah, Jerusalem and Bethlehem), and that includes the city, villages and refugee camps in each area.

Methodology of the Study

The researcher used the analytic descriptive method in this study, which attempts to highlight the description of the nature of the phenomenon in question. It includes analyzing the apparent structure of the phenomenon and illustrating the relationship between its components and the different variables that affect it (Abu Hatab & Sadek, 1991). The study also used the participatory approach since the stakeholders, who are the youth, contributed to the conceptualization of the study, the distribution of questionnaires, the discussion of the results and drafting the final report.

Tools of the Study

1. *Questionnaire* comprised of 13 pages, including some closed and other open questions divided into several sections, each containing a series of queries that examine:

- Socio-demographic variables such as: place of residence, gender, generation, marital status and economic situation.
- Impediments that deny the youth access to the cultural events and activities.
- Individual inclinations and hobbies.
- The pattern of consumption of the young people to the written and visual cultural materials.
- The attitudes of the participants towards the influence of culture on the societal change.
- Sources and topics that form the individual values of the youth.
- Perceptions of the young people of the youth centers and their assessment of their impact.
- Recommendations of the young men and women to the youth and cultural centers.

2. *Focus Groups* of young people, gathered during the stages of the research. The focus group is a form of tools used in qualitative research in the humanities, through which knowledge, opinions and attitudes of the participants in that group concerning a particular social issue are elicited. Three focus groups were formed during the various stages of the research:

-The first group was formed in order to think together of the mechanism of distributing the questionnaires in the different areas, and to identify the challenges that may encounter them while doing so.

-The second group was composed in order to discuss the preliminary results of the study and try to understand them in a way that is closer to the reality of the young people, for such a framework allows for an insight that is not possible to achieve in closed rooms and without interaction among members of the group (Lindlof & Taylor 2002), and also

ensures the participation of the largest possible number of stakeholders in giving their opinions on the results and suggestions of the study. (Tracey, Lutgen-Sanvik, & Alberts, 2006)

-The third group was formed for the purpose of discussing the final draft of the study.

1. Sample, Method of Drawing the Sample and Its Characteristics:

Seeing that the International Center of Bethlehem targets in all its programs young men and women who have completed their secondary education, it was important for us in this study to define the category that we want to study, and that is the category that the Center particularly connects with (young people from 18 to 28 years old). And since the mentioned localities are areas of interest for developing future programs of the Center, therefore the geographical area was determined accordingly.

Sample selection was intentional; it was identified on the basis of selecting 100 persons to be surveyed from each of the targeted areas, and then a collection of questionnaires were added to the Bethlehem area as the youth in first focus group recommended distributing additional questionnaires in the refugee camps of the area to give a clearer image, and that was taken into consideration. The number of young people in the selected sample was 537 young men and women, distributed across the five geographical areas as shown in Table (1)

Table No. (1): The Distribution of Youth by Geographical Area and Sex

Geographical Area	Sex		Grand Total
	Male	Female	
Jenin	54	57	111
Nablus	52	38	90
Ramallah Villages	28	32	60
Jerusalem	53	46	99
Bethlehem	92	85	177
Total	279	258	537

The respondents who were randomly selected were balanced in terms of the sexes, for the young men comprised 52% and the young women 48% from the different areas. The reason for the decline in the number of participants in the Ramallah area is due to the fact that not all the distributed questionnaires in that area were returned. As for the social status, as shown in Table (2), they were distributed according to the following table, where the vast majority of males and females are unmarried.

Table No. (2): The Distribution of Youth by Social Status and Sex

Social Status	Sex		Grand Total
	Male	Female	
Single	241	197	438
Married	38	53	91
Divorced	0	4	4
Undefined	0	4	4
Total	279	258	537

In terms of sample distribution according to the highest level of education completed, a high percentage of the young people are holders of BA degrees, amounting to 69% of the respondents. As for work status, the results showed that 65% among those surveyed are unemployed (have not worked for at least a year). This ratio is high compared to the official statistics of the total population. Through t-Test of the independent variables, the results showed significant differences between the sexes in as far as work is concerned, where the results illustrate a clear difference in favor of males than females as shown in Table (3).

*Table No. (3): *t-Test Results to Examine the Difference Work Status Averages between Males and Females*

Gender	Number	Average	Standard Deviation	dF	t-test	Sig
Males	266	1.80	.92	503	-7.12	.00
Females	239	2.36	.85			

*The t-Test determines the degree of difference between males and females in the work status variable. If the value of t is large and the value of sig is less than 0.05, we can say that there is a significant difference between males and females in the variable that was examined

As for the sample characteristics in relation to their economic situation a personal phenomenological question was asked, which is "How do you classify your economic level?", and that is because the subject of poverty and wealth, besides being a standard that might be statistically and objectively determined, at the same time it is a personal variable that individuals differ in its assessment based on their needs, values and how they perceive matters. Figure (1) shows that the youth in the areas of Nablus and Bethlehem expressed a medium economic level on a scale of 5 degrees, in

comparison with the rest of the young people from the other geographical areas. The young people of Jerusalem and Ramallah estimated their economic status as the highest among cities.

Fig (1): The Evaluation of Youth of Their Economic Level by the Geographical Area
(The value of 5 means a good economic situation and the value of one means a bad economic situation)

| جنين | نابلس | رام الله | القدس | بيت لحم |
| Jenin | Nablus | Ramallah | Jerusalem | Bethlehem |
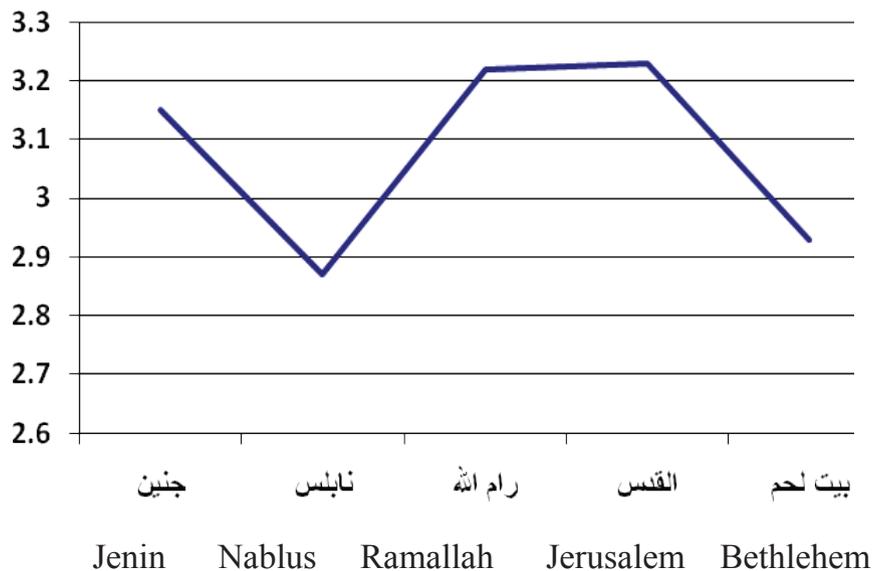
Procedures of the Study

At the initial stage of the study, and following a meeting between the researcher and the study committee consisting of youth representatives, specialists in the field of youth work and the administration of the International Center of Bethlehem, the research questionnaire was developed and later on reviewed by the committee. Following the review, the questionnaire was amended according to the given feedback and notes. Subsequently, 72 young men and women from the five geographical areas (the study borders) were invited, who afterwards distributed the questionnaire to young men and women in their areas. The questionnaire and the mechanisms of its distribution were explained to them, after which every young man and woman distributed 6-15 copies of the questionnaire in return for a small monetary grant to reward them but also to ensure as much as possible their commitment in filling out the questionnaires. After that, the forms were collected and sent back to the study's headquarters, which communicated with all the participants and retrieved the now-filled out forms. All in all, 600 forms were distributed, and 537 questionnaires were returned and used for the study.

After the collection of questionnaires, data was entered into the statistical software system SPSS and the initial results were calculated which were discussed later with the youth focus group from the different areas. The focus group participants commented on the results and gave explanations for some of them and debated on others. Their responses were very important in shedding light on some of the results based on their own experiences as young people, and as consumers of cultural and youth programs.

Following the modification of the primary results according to the clarifications and responses of the young people who participated in the focus group, the results were presented to the study committee whose comments, recommendations and explanations were heard, which will be used later when discussing the results.

After writing the draft of the final report, the study committee and youth representatives were invited to discuss it, which they read in advance and gave their final remarks, to assist in guiding the final report and drafting the study in its final form.

Results of the Study

1. To examine the hypothesis that the majority of young people do not consume the written cultural materials in comparison with the visual, the extent of which the youth use written sources was calculated according to the following steps:

- The time the youth allot for reading books and the category of books read.
- The time the youth allot for reading magazines and the type of magazines read.
- The time the youth allot for reading newspapers.
- The awareness of the youth of the existence of public libraries in their area and the use of them.
- The awareness of the youth of the bookshops in their area and the use of them.

After that, the extent of which the youth use the audio/visual sources was examined according to the following steps:

- The time spent by the youth watching television and the type of channels that are watched.
- The time spent by the youth on the Internet and their basic uses of it.
- The extent of influence of the Internet on the person's life according to his/her own evaluation.

Public Libraries and Bookstores: Before presenting the results of the reading habit, the youth were asked whether they knew of the existence of public libraries or bookstores in their areas. Table (4) shows the respondents' answers to those questions. The table reveals a high proportion of the youth from the Jenin, Nablus and Bethlehem

areas do not have any idea, or may not know of the existence of public libraries in their areas, compared to the youth from Ramallah and Nablus. On the other hand, the very low response to the existence of bookstores in Ramallah may reflect the fact that most respondents in that area are from distant villages. But in any case, about half of the young people said that there are no public libraries or bookstores in their area.

Table No. (4): The Rates of Knowledge among the Youth of the Existence of Public Libraries and Bookstores by Geographical Area

Geographical Area	Is there a public library in your area?		Are there bookstores in your area?	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Jenin	64.9%	35.1%	53.6%	46.4%
Nablus	56.2%	43.8%	51.7%	48.3%
Ramallah	80.0%	20.0%	13.6%	86.4%
Jerusalem	59.0%	41.0%	53.1%	46.9%
Bethlehem	41.0%	59.0%	51.4%	48.6%

After examining the young people's knowledge of the existence of public or private libraries, and to examine whether there were significant differences among the geographical areas regarding the use of the public libraries by the young people who have been surveyed, ANOVA test showed that there were no significant differences. Table (5) shows that 42.8% of the young people do not use public libraries, and this somehow corresponds with the percentage of the young people's knowledge of the existence of those libraries in their area of residence.

Table No. (5): The Averages of Youth Use of Public Libraries

Usage of the Public Library	Percentage of All Respondents %
Yes	21.1
Sometimes	36.1
Never	14.8
No Response	28.0
Total	100%

When asked about the reasons behind the abstention of the youth from using the public libraries, the answers, given by the youth, were arranged from the most to the least recurrences:

• Lack of public libraries in the area in which they live, and this corresponds with their knowledge of the existence of those libraries.
• The existence of alternative sources for public libraries, so that the youth can obtain the information he/she wants and needs from them, such as the Internet and private libraries.
• The inappropriateness of the libraries and the books found there with modern times and readers needs, and book are not continuously renewed.
• Lack of time among the respondents to visit the libraries and spend time there.

Reading Books: 7.9% of the youth stated that they read books on a daily basis, 18.5% read them on a weekly basis, while 73.5 % said that they rarely, or never, read books.

Reading Newspapers: 43% of the youth said that they read the newspapers on a daily basis compared with 35.6% who read newspapers on a weekly basis, whether in paper form or through the Internet, while 30.4% of the youth do

not read the newspapers. It must be noted here that the vast majority of the young people are those who have completed their secondary education and that the majority of them have completed their bachelor's degree, and are Internet users as described in previous results.

Reading Magazines: 10% of the youth said that they read magazines on a daily basis, compared with 40.9% on a weekly basis, whether in paper form or through the Internet, while 49.1% of them do not read magazines at all.

Regarding the categories of books and magazines that the young people read, whether in paper form on through the Internet, the highest recurrences of the answers of the respondents who read books and magazines were calculated and arranged as is shown in table (6). It is clear that the majority of the young people tend to read for pleasure, whether in their reading of books or magazines, and then reading for the purpose of culture.

Table No. (6): The Category of Books and Magazines That Youth Read
Note: (The books and magazines are arranged from top to bottom according to the most read to the least read)

Books The Youth Read	Magazines the Youth Read
Stories and Novels	Entertainment and Celebrities
Cultural, Religious and Artistic	Women's
Political, Logic, Philosophy and Economics	Cultural and Specialized
Specialized (Computer, Engineering, etc..)	Sports
Literary, Language and Poetry	Political and Youth

Watching Television: As for the time the youth spend watching television and as demonstrated in table (7), 62.1% of the respondents spend more than one hour a day watching television while 37.9% spend less than an hour a day.

Table No. (7): The Time Spent by the Respondent Watching Television

Time Spent Watching Television	Percentage
I never watch television	8.1%
I watch television up to 1 hour daily	29.8%
I watch television from 1-2 hours daily	38.1%
I watch television from 2-3 hours daily	18.2%
More than 3 hours daily	5.8%
Total	100%

With regard to the most watched channels, the scores given to each channel were calculated and arranged according to what the youth watch. Table (8) displays the channels visited by the youth, arranged from the most watched to the least watched. We also see the same pattern here, for just as the majority of the young people read for amusement and pleasure, they also watch television primarily for entertainment purposes and not for culture sake.

Table No. (8): Channels Watched by Youth According to Frequency

Type of Channel
1. Drama and Foreign Films
2. Drama and Arabic Films
3. Light Programs and Comedy
4. Cultural Films and Documentaries
5. Turkish Drama Series
6. Modern Music

7. News and Political Programs
8. Sports Programs
9. Music "Tarab"
10. Nature and Animals Programs

The Internet: Before commenting on the pattern of the young people's use of the Internet, we have to point out that 80.2% of the respondents indicated that they have Internet at home. As for those who do not have Internet connection at home, more than 14% of them use the Internet in different locations such as Internet cafes in the various centers, Internet of family members or at university.

The results also show that 20% of the respondents use the Internet interactively (in the sense they are adding and up-loading contents on the Internet). There was no clear pattern in the kind of material uploads made by the respondents, as it varied from poems to documentary films, computer programs, various articles, participation in different forums through cultural, political and social contributions, or work-related material.

As for the density of Internet usage among the youth respondents (the number of hours per day they spend using the computer), the results showed heavy use of the web. Table (9) shows the use of the Internet by the young people, meas-ured by the hours. The difference in the number of hours that the youth spend watching television and the hours they spend using the computer is noticed here, for the percentage of the those who use the Internet for a period of more than three hours is 29.3%, compared with those who watch television for the same period of time. This high percentage might include the use of Internet for work purposes and not just for recreation. The average use of those who use the Internet for long periods (6 hours), and with a range of 4 to 18 hours a day with a relatively high standard deviation (SD= 2.34).

Table No. (9): The Time Spent by Youth on the Internet

Period	Percentage
I do not use the Internet at all	5.6%
I use the Internet up to 1 hour a day only	22.8%
I use the Internet 1-2 hours a day	22.3%
I use the Internet 2- 3 hours a day	19.9%
More than 3 hours a day	29.4%
Total	100%

In terms of the sites where the youth spend most of their time, a calculation was made by adding up the recurrences for more than 2 sites visited by each person, and then they were arranged according to the percentage of recurrence. Table (10) displays the sites most visited, in the order of first and second place given by the respondents. The table clearly shows that a large number of respondents use Facebook, for the percentage of young people who use it as a primary site (whether as a first or a second choice) amounted to 61.3%, followed by the Internet use as a means of correspondence by 51.5%, and then the use of Internet for study purposes as a first choice by 20.7%. It is clear from the results that the highest use of the Internet is for social networking from within the home (which probably has become a substitute for the external social networking). Also, the interest in the news, whether at the local or global level, is weak, and that corresponds with the results obtained earlier regarding the habit of reading newspapers.

Table No. (10): Sites Visited by Youth on the Internet

First Choice	Percentage	Second Choice	Percentage
Facebook	40.8%	E-Mail	27.7%
E-Mail	23.8%	Facebook	20.5%
Study	12.6%	News	11.0%
News	5.9%	Study	8.1%
Chat Programs	2.4%	Chatting	6.2%
Forums	1.8%	Games	4.0%
Sports	0.9%	Forums	3.8%
Others	11.8%	Others	18.8%
Total	100%	Total	100%

As for the self-evaluation of the respondents regarding the degree they are affected by the Internet, as is shown in table (11), the effect of the Internet on the lives of the youth, according to their responses, was high. About half of the respondents explained that there is either a very large, or a large influence on their personal lives, and more than one third said that the effect of the Internet on them is medium. To examine whether there were significant differences between the sexes in the variable of the effect of the Internet on them, a t-Test for independent samples was made, which showed a clear difference in the averages between the sexes (t (537)=-2.21, P> 0.05), so that the effect of the internet on the male youth was larger (M=3.51,SD=1.14) in comparison with the effect of the Internet on the female youth (M=3.30, SD=1.02).

Table No. (11): The Degree of Internet Effect on Youth

Degree of Internet Effect on the Personal Life	Percentage of Respondents
Very Large	17.8%
Large	28.9%
Medium	34.6%
Weak	13.4%
There is No Effect	5.3%
Total	100%

Based on the previous results, we can say that the majority of young men and women, regardless of their place of residence, spend more time watching television and on the Internet in comparison with the time they spend reading books, newspapers or magazines, or visiting the public or private libraries.

2. To examine the hypothesis that the majority of the young people do not participate in the cultural events and activities in their areas despite their knowledge of their existence, the extent of their knowledge of the existence of such centers in their areas was examined first, and then the extent of their participation, in general, in these activities provided by the centers was considered as well. The young people's habit of going to the cinema and theatre was also investigated. The inclination of the hypothesis was negative, for the assumption was that the majority of the respondents are aware of the existence of these centers but they do not participate in their cultural activities.

The results showed that 66.8% of the respondents know of the existence of the cultural centers, and this corresponds partially with the hypothesis since more than one third does not know of the existence of such centers in their areas.

For a deeper look into this given, the Anova test for the independent variables in one direction was carried out to check whether there were differences in knowledge according to the different geographical areas. However, the results did not show any significant differences among the areas in the level of knowledge $(F (4,524)= 1.31, NS)$.

As for the extent of participation of the young people in the activities of those centers, the results showed that 41.6% do not participate in the cultural activities at all, as shown in table (12). But, after a more thorough examination to that result, the Anova test for variables in one direction showed significant differences among the different areas concerning the participation variable $(F (4,520)= 7.59, p>.01)$. Also, the LSD test was used to monitor the points of differences among the areas, which showed that the Ramallah area was the most fortunate of all the areas in terms of participation in the cultural events and activities, followed by Jerusalem. As for the area that is considered the least in terms of use of cultural facilities was the Jenin area.

Table No. (12): The Level of Youth Participation in Cultural Events and Activities in General

Level of Participation	Percentage of Respondents
Yes I Usually Participate	28.8%
Yes I Occasionally Participate	29.6%
No I Do Not Participate	41.6%
Total	100%

The young people were particularly asked about their going to the cinema or attending theatre performances in their areas, and the results were in accordance with the hypothesis, as shown in table (13) where 64.2% of the respondents do not go to the cinema while 59.3% of them do not attend theatre performances.

Table No. (13): The Percentage of Youth Who Go to Cinemas and Attend Theatre Performances

	Percentage of Respondents Who Answered "Yes"	Percentage of Respondents Who Answered "No"	Total
Going to the Cinema	35.8%	64.2%	100%
Attending Theatre Performances	40.7%	59.3%	100%

Table (14) shows the extent of young people's going to the cinema or the theatre, among those who made it clear that they visit these cultural centers. The visible results show that about 50% of the youth visit these facilities at distant intervals.

Table No. (14): The Habit of Visiting the Cinema and Theatre among the Youth Who Go

	Once a Month	Up to Once Every Six Months	Distant Intervals	Total
Going to the Cinema	31.5%	22.6%	45.9%	100%
Attending Theatre Performances	32.1%	15.2%	52.7%	100%

To determine whether there were differences in the participation of cinema and theatre activities according to the areas, the results of the Anova test for independent variables showed differences among the areas with regard to going to the

cinema ($F_{(4,524)}$= 7.91, p<0.01), and the areas of Jenin and Bethlehem were the least that benefit from the cinema activities when compared to the rest of the areas. As for theatre performances, the Anova test made it clear that there are also differences in this aspect ($F_{(4,524)}$=9.80, p<0.01), and the Jenin area, followed by Nablus were the least fortunate in benefiting from the theatre and theatre activities in comparison with the other areas, whereas there were no clear significant differences between males and females in visiting these cultural facilities.

3. The importance that young people attach to culture: As for the importance attached by the youth to culture and its role in cultural change, the results showed positive attitudes towards the effectiveness of culture in issues that have a social dimension, as shown in table (15). Also, with respect to the statement related to the expressionism arts, it revealed tolerant and civilized attitudes among the respondents towards these kinds of arts. Although the attitude of the respondents towards the role of the intellectuals in boycotting the Israeli products was positive, yet the large standard deviation and the low average, in comparison with other averages, indicate a great variance among the respondents regarding this issue and their disagreement around it. The same hold true regarding cultural awareness and community-based public participation, as though this variable, i.e. the cultural awareness, is not enough in itself, and its status as a variable that might be disputed is predictive of the extent of the intellectual's contribution to a society and his/her social participation.

Table No. (15): *Averages of Youth Attitudes towards the Roles of Culture and Intellectuals*
Note (value 5 reflects the highest level of agreement, value 1 reflects the rejection to the statement)

Statements	Average Degree of Agreement with the Statement	Standard Deviation
Expressionism arts (such as dance, theatre, music festivals, painting exhibitions and photography) are arts that should be seen and engaged in	4.39	1.04
There is a strong correlation between the individual's cultural awareness and the quality of his/her life	3.93	.910
Culture is an essential tool for communication among the Palestinian people	3.93	.94
There is a link between cultural awareness and community-based public participation	3.76	1.02
Intellectuals in general are the most influential in their communities	3.71	.945
There is a relationship between cultural awareness and boycotting of Israeli products	3.56	1.33

4. Regarding the formation of personal values among young people and whether there is a place for culture as a source in the formation of those values and the level of importance the youth attach to culture compared to other issues was examined at three levels:
Every young person was asked to determine the importance he/she attaches to several issues and values, and then was asked about the different circles that affect the formation of those values, and afterwards was asked about the figures who, in his/her opinion, contributed to the formation of his personal values. Table (16) shows the degree of importance that the youth respondents attached to the different topics in a sequence of important to the least important.

Table No. (16): The Rate of Importance Youth Attach to Various Topics and Values
Note (value 5 reflects the highest level of importance, value 1 reflects the least level of importance)
The standard deviation here determines the distribution of the participants around the rate, so that the larger its value the greater the differences are among the participants regarding the statement

Subject	Rate of Importance	Standard Deviation
Family	4.62	.68
Peace and Stability	4.39	.87
Freedom of Expression	4.37	.87
Work	4.34	.77
National Liberation	4.28	.97
Tolerance	4.22	.91
Private Property	4.17	.86
Cultural Awareness	4.12	.88
Environmental Preservation	4.12	.94

Democracy	4.03	1.66
Hobbies and Personal Interests	3.98	.93
Research and Study	3.93	1.01
The State	3.83	1.07
Friends and Peers	3.79	.88
Voluntary Work	3.75	1.08
Nationalism	3.60	2.50
The City and the Village	3.57	1.14
The Sect and the Religious Group	3.56	1.25
Pluralism	3.40	1.15
Current World Events	3.33	1.12
Political Party	2.77	1.27

As for when the young people were asked about the forces they consider to have had an impact in shaping their personal values, their answers were as shown in table (17). The results confirm the hypothesis that the youth and cultural organizations are more influential in forming the personal values of the young people (M=3.25, SD= 1.12) than the partisan and political institutions (M=2.71, SD=1.22). Also as expected, the influence of personal experience and then the family had the greatest effect in shaping the values of the young people, regardless of their geographical locations.

Table No. (17): The Rates of the Effect Given by the Respondents to the Various Axes in the Formation of their Personal Values
Note (value 5 reflects the highest level of effect, value 1 reflects that there is no effect)
The standard deviation here determines the distribution of the participants around the average, so that the larger its value the greater the differences are among the participants regarding the statement

	Degree of Contribution	Standard Deviation
Effect of the Means of Communication (Television Programs, Internet)	3.67	1.10
Effect of the Global Values that Speak about the Rights of Individuals and Groups	3.01	1.12
Effect of the Society Values	3.69	.98
Effect of the Religious Values	3.90	1.13
Effect of the Political Parties	2.71	1.22
Effect of Peers and Friends	3.62	1.06
Effect of the Family	4.44	.85
Effect of the Youth and Cultural Organizations	3.25	1.12
Effect of the Personal Experience	4.45	.86

It was interesting to see differences among the areas regarding the figures who the young people considered to have had a big effect in shaping their personal values. Table (18) lists these personalities according to the areas, based on the recurrences that were given to each personality, whether this personality was their first choice or their second option. The respondents freely chose these personalities, whether from their close, regional or global setting, and only the first five characters were chosen out of a very large collection of personalities who were mentioned in the questionnaires. What is interesting is that the respondents did not mention female figures in the first and most leading ranks in terms of affecting the development of their personal values and their perception of life. The well-known female personalities who were mentioned more than others by the respondents were very few: Oprah, Fadwa Touqan, Dalal Al-Mughrabi and Ahlam Mustanghanmi.

If we look carefully, the majority of the personalities who were selected are those who called for liberation, be it in the religious, political or social sense, and all of them are deceased, if we exclude the parents as characters that influence the formation of personal values.

Table No. (18): The Personalities that have Influenced the Formation of the Personal Values of Youth by Recurrences and Geographical Areas

City	Jenin	Nablus	Ramallah	Jerusalem	Bethlehem
1st Personality	Yasser Arafat	Yasser Arafat	Yasser Arafat	Yasser Arafat	Yasser Arafat
2nd Personality	Prophet Muhammad	Prophet Muhammad	Mahmoud Darwish	One of the Parents	Mahmoud Darwish
3rd Personality	Saddam Hussein	Mahmoud Darwish	Ghandi	Ghassan Kanafani	Che Guevara
4th Personality	Ahmad Shawqi	Saddam Hussein	Ghassan Kanafani	Che Guevara	Jesus Christ/ Prophet Muhammad
5th Personality	Mahmoud Darwish	Nizar Kabbani	One of the Parents	George Habash	Saddam Hussein

5. As for the extent of participation of the young people in the activities of the youth centers,

the results supported our hypothesis. According to the answers of the respondents, only 45.8% of the young people participated or participate in activities held by youth centers in their areas, whether through voluntary work, attending different cultural and awareness-raising activities and events, the scouts, club members, participating in sports activities, participating in youth exchange programs, and so on. Also, 47.5% of the respondents pointed out that there is no youth center in their area where they can participate in its activities and programs. The results showed that there are no

significant differences in the level of knowledge about these centers and the participation in their activities, whether according to sex or the geographical area.

6. When those who participated in the events and activities were asked to evaluate the events and activities of those centers, their answers were positive towards the centers and encouraging, contrary to what was our assumption in this study. As demonstrated in table (19), their evaluation of those centers ranged between very good and good.

In order to determine whether there were any differences in the evaluation of the youth centers, the Anova test for the independent variables showed differences among the areas in the level of evaluation by the area (F (4,239)= 3.31, p<0.05), and in the LSD test, the results showed that the youth respondents from the Jenin area gave the lowest evaluations to the youth centers in comparison to the cities of the north, followed in order by the city of Jerusalem in comparison with Nablus and Ramallah.

Table No. (19): Degree of Satisfaction of Youth with the Goals of the Youth Centers

Level	Percentage of Respondents
Excellent	21.8%
Very Good	43.1%
Good	26.2%
Average	6.1%
Bad	2.8%
Total	100%

When the participants were particularly asked whether the youth centers achieve their social goals, their responses were similar, in that generally-speaking they strongly agreed with the statements mentioned in table (20). When the Anova test for the independent variables was done, it became clear that the youth of Ramallah and Bethlehem gave the best evaluations to their youth centers in comparison with the other youth centers in the remaining areas.

Table No. (20): Rates of Youth Attitudes towards the Youth Centers

Note (value 5 reflects the highest level of agreement with the statement, value 1 reflects the rejection to the statement) The standard deviation here determines the distribution of the participants around the average, so that the larger its value the greater the differences are among the participants regarding the statement

Statement	Rate	Standard Deviation
Youth centers increase the young people's awareness of what is happening around them	3.88	.81
Youth centers increase the sense of belonging of the young people to their community and their issues	3.93	.74
Youth centers help the young people gain positive attitudes towards their society	3.84	.81
Youth centers enhance the capacity of youth participants to crystallize a personal, social and national identity	3.87	.85
Youth centers increase the ability of youth participants to have a positive impact on other young people	3.79	.80
Youth centers recognize and meet the needs of the young people through the programs	3.73	.84
Youth centers help the young people to be involved in their communities	3.85	.84

7. The satisfaction level of the young people with the youth centers may have been reflected in their definition of the concept of youth leadership, which many of these centers are working on, and therefore our assumption, which states that the young people will give a more sophisticated and complex and perhaps different definition from the conventional one was inaccurate. After calculating the recurrences of the statements that the young people gave to the concept of youth leadership, and arranging them according to most recurrent, the definition was as follows: **"*The youth leader is the empowered, competent young person who has personal skills* (269 recurrences)*, a contributor to the building of his/her society* (101)*, supports his/her community* (34)*, aware of what is happening around him/her* (22)*, creative and innovative* (11)"**.

This definition is not much different from the customary definitions and the mechanisms used in the youth centers, which focus on developing the skills of the individual first, and then try to find the connection between all the personal skills that the youth learn and develop, and the social work and public benefit later on. This definition was practically and clearly reflected when the young people were asked about the activities and events that the youth centers have to implement, which were as follows (after calculating the total recurrences):

The development of personal capacities of the young people, and this includes various skills such as self-confidence, communication, different workshops, conflict resolution… (163 recurrences), *artistic, educational and sports activities* (159), *a variety of awareness-raising social activities which include healthy lifestyle, youth issues, and community development…* (88), *leadership and encouraging volunteerism on the local and national levels* (22), *political awareness-raising and education* (11).

When asked about the hobbies that the young people would like to develop through the programs of these centers, table (21) shows the hobbies that were mentioned by the participants, arranged according to the type of hobbies:

Table No. (21): The Hobbies Mentioned by the Respondents Arranged by Recurrence

Hobby	Percentage of Respondents
Handicrafts and Design	23.3%
Sports of All Kinds	21.7%
Literature and Languages	18.8%
Music and Singing	17.5%
Development of social and personal skills	8.3%
Technology and Communications	5.0%
Travel and Youth exchanges	3.8%
Acting	0 .8%
Political Awareness	0 .8%
Total	100.0%

Interestingly, almost 56% of those who filled out the questionnaire did not indicate any hobby they would like to develop, as seen in table (22). The youth of the Jenin and Jerusalem areas were the least to mention their hobbies in comparison with the remaining areas, taking into consideration that a high percentage of the youth in the remaining areas did not mention their hobbies.

Table No. (22): Distribution of Mentioned Hobbies by Geographical Areas

Area	Percentage of Those Who Mentioned Hobbies	Percentage of Those Who Did Not Mention Any Hobby	Total
Jenin	38.7%	61.3%	100%
Nablus	55.6%	44.4%	100%
Ramallah	51.7%	48.3%	100%
Jerusalem	34.0%	66.0%	100%
Bethlehem	44.3%	55.7%	100%

8. To examine the hypothesis that the economic situation and military checkpoints more or less hinder the participation in the cultural events and activities, an inquiry was made into whether military checkpoints and other possible obstacles that may deny the young people access to these activities exist, including the economic situation, lack of transportation between the place of residence and the cultural facilities and so on.

Israeli Military Checkpoints: 25% of the young people who were surveyed explained that they pass through military checkpoints when they go to cultural centers; the most affected were from the areas of Ramallah (38.3%), and Jerusalem (49%), compared to the other areas.

As for whether these checkpoints hinder or prevent the access of youth to these facilities, the t-Test for independent variables showed that there is no difference between the sexes with regards to the access because of the barriers. Table (23) shows that the majority of the respondents who pass through military checkpoints have made it clear that these checkpoints impede but do not prevent them from access to the cultural facilities.

Table No. (23): The Military Checkpoints and Movement between the Cultural Centers and the Place of Residence

The Extent of Effect of the Checkpoints on the Individuals	Percentage of Respondents
Hinder and prevent access	19.7%
Hinder but do not prevent access	74.6%
Does not hinder or prevent access	5.7%
Total	100%

Transportations and Travel Costs: The percentage of youth respondents who own cars was small (12.3%) in all the geographical areas, and the percentage of car ownership was connected with the economic situation of the young people according to their self-assessment of their situation. As for public transportation, 82% of the respondents said that there is public transportation that connects them to the cultural facilities.

As for the travel costs, they ranged between several to tens of shekels. Table (24) shows the rates of travel expenses from places of residence to the cultural facilities according to the geographical areas, which clearly demonstrates that the Ramallah area is the most expensive, compared to the other areas, while the Bethlehem and Jerusalem areas are most fortunate.

Table No. (24): Rates of Travel Costs to the Cultural Facilities according to the Geographical Areas

Geographical Area	Up to 5 Shekels (NIS)	6-10 Shekels (NIS)	11-15 Shekels (NIS)	16-20 Shekels (NIS)	More than 20 Shekels (NIS)	Total
Jenin	20.7%	45.0%	21.6%	4.5%	8.2%	100%
Nablus	66.7%	13.8%	11.5%	6.9%	1.1%	100%
Ramallah	20.0%	20.0%	53.3%	3.4%	3.3%	100%
Jerusalem	19.2%	64.6%	11.1%	3.0%	2.1%	100%
Bethlehem	59.0%	28.3%	5.8%	4.0%	2.9%	100%

However, an important point was made clear by the youth focus group, namely the incompatibility of the times of the availability of public transportation with the times during which the cultural activities are held, i.e. during the evening. As such, the variable of public transportation becomes an insufficient variable to measure the extent of use of the cultural facilities, since the results of the study and the observations of the youth made it clear that public transportation stops during the early evening hours (between 4:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.) in most areas. The participants also clarified that the unit cost of travel by public transportation is also inadequate as it is connected to the obstacle of the lack of public transportation in the evening; and therefore, the cost of travel in the evening more than doubles, which increases the price of cultural entertainment if we add to that the ticket prices for the events.

The additional obstacles cited by the respondents: The calculation results of the recurrences of the obstacles showed that there are additional reasons that hinder the access of the youth to the cultural facilities. They are listed by the most influential according to the young people as in table (25)

Table No. 25: The Additional Difficulties that Hinder the Access of the Youth to the Cultural Facilities

The Obstacle	Percentage of Answers
No spare time	26.0%
Absence of transportation	25.2%
Busy with work	14.2%
Customs, traditions, social and family restrictions	13.4%
Cost of the activity	13.4%
Studying	3.9%
No services available	3.9%
Total	100%

Discussion and Recommendations

The discussion will be built according to the questions that we have determined for this study:

The Pattern of Spending Leisure Time and Personal Hobbies

The results of this study were similar to those of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (2009), which showed a clear pattern in that the Palestinian youth prefer to spend their time at home watching television or at their personal computer rather than communicating with the outside community through active participation in activities and programs. Perhaps this confirms what Isma'il (2004) referred to, that the effect of the accelerating globalization tools have increased the value of individualism on the one hand and enhanced the individual's sense that these technologies give him/her the feeling of salvation, comfort and finding what he/she is searching for, of course at the expense of collective salvation.

Yet, what is interesting to note is that about 40% and more of the youth who participated in this research did not refer to the knowledge of the existence of public libraries or bookshops, and the same is true with the cinema and theatre. It may be due to reasons related to not reading the daily newspapers by many young people, as indicated by the results of this study, and which concur with the results of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (2009) and differ from the results of the study conducted by Muhammad on the youth of the Ramallah area. The cultural institutions often rely on the newspapers to publish their programs and activities, and therefore very few young people get information through this medium. As well, some centers publish their events and activities on their own websites, and this information, as the results of the study made clear, does not reach to the young people since they use the Internet for social networking as a main objective, and then for study purposes, and much later for getting information on the events and activities of the centers, which was not mentioned at all by any of the young people who were asked about it. Therefore, there is a need to ask an important question here about the effectiveness of using newspapers by the cultural and youth organiza-

tion as the essential media for disseminating information on and marketing their events and activities, and also about their ability to compete with the alternative media. This also applies to public libraries, since for example a young woman in the focus group (December 2010) said in this respect,

"I do not need to go to the public library. I can get all I need today through the Internet, and anyways I have my own private library at home. In case I need specialized books for my studies, I can always use the university library to get what I want from there."

The private, entertainment satellite channels received the highest number of viewership, and the result we obtained contradict somehow the result obtained by Abu Shanab (2003), which indicated that the young people in Gaza do not watch drama satellite channels, and that a percentage of more than 20% do not watch television compared with 8% in this study. One quarter of the youth surveyed in this study watch television for more than two hours a day. The channels most watched were the foreign drama channels, followed by the Arabic drama channels, then comedy and light programs channels, and finally the Turkish drama and modern music. After all those, the news channels were mentioned. One of the young men in the focus group raised an important question and in his own words: "*Was there a need to mention the channels in details in the questionnaire, since all of the satellite channels broadcasted in our country, with the exception of the news channels, aim at entertainment and nothing else. All the channels included by the young people are entertainment channels. Do we expect from television, as a media tool, to give us something other than that?*" Perhaps this young man was right, for it is interesting that many Palestinian studies recommended in their last pages within the recommendations section that television media should be with a purpose and should address the youth and their genuine problems. Here, an important question and a big challenge are raised: How can that be achieved through private commercial channels, since those who watch government stations are few among the viewers, and the young people's attitudes towards those stations are not positive in most cases (Muhammad, 2002; Abu Shanab, 2003; Isma'il, 2004; Sahin & Askoy, 1993), since they do not encourage freedom of the press, do not reflect the genuine reality of the young people and do not allow them to freely express their innermost feelings and thoughts, as pointed out by Isma'il (2004).

The results showed that the authentic Arabic music and the specialized channels of nature and animals also did not get high ranking in comparison with the drama satellite channels, and this also reflects what the Palestinian youth is seeking from this device, which may only be entertainment and nothing else, and this is what the companies of private channels realized very well and therefore, during the last decades, they directed their programs towards entertainment, especially with the revolution of modern technology.

As for using the Internet as an essential tool in extracting information, knowledge and attitudes, and connecting the individuals with the outside world, and even connecting the young people among themselves in worlds we never knew before (the second and third worlds), it has become clear that the Internet is an important source that significantly affects their lives, attitudes and knowledge. About 50% of the youth in this study stated that the Internet affects them greatly, while about one third said medium effect, and only 5.5% of the respondents do not use the Internet in their lives, and this percentage is much higher than the percentage referred to by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics 2009 (Palestine, Manbar al-Qadiyya al-Filistiniyya, 2010), while it is similar to the data available in the Gulf states (Wheeler 2003; Hofheinz, 2005).

The use of the Internet by the young people is often considered a negative usage, as it became clear from those who were asked about their contributions or uploads to the Internet that they were typical traditional input (adding poems, participating in open forums, uploading movies on YouTube, and transferring software applications that they did not develop themselves but only to be used by other users).

The most use of the Internet was for Facebook, e-mail, chat sites, and then for study purposes and getting the news. These results relatively correspond with the results obtained by Muhammad (2002). If the need for social networking, which many sociologists and psychologists spoke about in the last century, is an indispensable one, the young people nowadays can meet that need with the least physical effort possible. A generation ago, a person needed to walk on foot to search for his/her friends, but today he/she can look for them through the facebook and other programs. Consequently, the feet were replaced by the fingertips.

This phenomenon, regardless of its health consequences, made the values that the previous generation was raised with questionable, such as the value of privacy and confidentiality of information, which began to acquire a different meaning nowadays with the cultural openness and the unprecedented technological development. The concept of friendship also began to take on another meaning, different from the one that the previous generation was brought up on; today, a young person has hundreds of friends all over the world that he/she calls friends, but does not know much about them. There are other values that need to have in-depth study as well.

At first glance, we were surprised that more than 50% of the youth do not have any hobby (they did not mention any hobbies), and this is consistent with the explanations given by Isma'il (2004), Fataftah (2007) and Waddah (2004) in that it is impossible for creativity to be nurtured in the shadow of tyranny and repression of freedoms, and we cannot raise children on universal principles within military, demagogic, controlled institutions. Sadly, we are talking not only about 50% of the young respondents who have no hobby or clear interests, but also about 50% of the elderly (i.e. these same young people but thirty years from now) who will wait for their death without filling their time with something useful after the age of retirement. The image presented might be a bit grim, but if we study the reality of the elderly in Palestine, we come out with the result that the activities of the vast majority of the elderly are limited to social and religious duties at best.

The Effect of the Cultural Institutions and Culture on the Formation of the Values of the Young People Compared to Political Institutions

It is interesting to consider that the totals of the results of this study were not central with respect to the status of the political institutions, as a value reference for the Palestinian youth, compared to the other cultural and social institutions that have replaced the political ones in recent years. The results showed that the values of freedom of expression, peace and stability ranked second after the family in terms of their importance to the youth, while the youth showed super-

ficial interest in the political party. This position was also clearly reflected when the youth were asked about the most influential institutions in the formation of their attitudes and life perspectives, where the political party, in terms of priority, came at the end of the list. These results correspond with the results of other studies which encountered the same phenomenon, and that is the lack of credibility of the institutions of the political parties among the Palestinian youth (UNDP, 2009; Sharek Youth Forum, 2009; al-Haddad, 2007). The role of youth in political work became distorted and unclear, compared to former times. One of the participants articulated such views regarding the political work and the youth involvement in it with these words: *"Politics has grave consequences. It is presented nowadays to the youth with its narrow, controlled concept and not the free one, and preferably, in this case, to stay away from it."* Another girl said, *"What distinguishes the youth centers from the political parties' institutions is that the former gives importance to the development of the youth capacities whereas the latter offers the youth nothing but trouble and exploitation."* This voice was not the only one heard in the focus group, for another different voice tried to recover the responsibility for the youth, *"You only see the political role of the young people in its narrow sense. Politics is greater than party affiliation and so on. Also we, as youth, have to take the initiative in changing a reality that has been set for us by the adults, and not to stand silent. The political role of the young people is to be up to the responsibility in changing their reality and to be the initiators, as is the case in the rest of the free and oppressed countries of the world."*

There might be an explanation of the change that has occurred in the past twenty years in the discouraged attitudes of the young people towards the institutions of the political parties, which is demonstrated by the withdrawal of the young people from cultural events that the political party institutions organize and sponsor, such as arts and Dabke events and so on, for the benefit of specialized cultural centers that have started during the same period to work and provide quality activities for young people, which led the work of the political parties' institutions to be confined to only political party mobilization.

The results of the study also indicated a positive outlook towards the role of culture in the societal change in comparison with the political parties. The youth see that the intellectuals in their societies can play an effective role in improving the Palestinian situation on the ground on the one hand, and also they see the connection between cultural awareness and the quality of life on the other.

In return, we see that the status of the cultural institutions and the means of mass communication received high averages in comparison with the political parties, and this reflects the level of credibility that the youth attach to the different sources of culture, although they do not use or benefit from these sources very much. The values of freedom, tolerance and democracy are values that the services and programs of the cultural facilities encourage, and which have been warmly received and appreciated by the young people, compared with other values including the importance of the sect, place of residence and political party as mentioned earlier. The youth also pointed out that there is an average role for culture in shaping their values and attitudes, and this status was higher than the ranking that the youth gave to the political parties. In contrast, it was noted that the people whom the youth pointed out as individuals who contributed to the formation of their attitudes and values were among the politicians, prophets and Palestinian intellectuals, who represent as a whole symbols of collective salvation for the Palestinian people. Placing the intellectuals in this order demonstrates the importance of culture in forming the individual and collective consciousness on the one side, and their contribution in defining the salvation outlets for the sons and daughters of their communities to which they belong on the other. What was clear in the results of the study is the lack of women in the first ranks among the personalities who contributed to the formation of this awareness, but among the women who were mentioned were Oprah and Ahlam Mustanghanmi, each considered an important figure in culture and liberation, whether at the global or the Arab level.

Youth Centers and Their Role in Youth Development

Those who participated in the youth activities evaluated the programs offered at these centers as excellent to good, and they determined the role that these centers should play, starting with the development of the individual's skills and

capacities to societal and leadership work. These results are similar to other results obtained by Hanani (2007). Even when the youth participants were asked to give a definition of the youth leadership, they initially focused on the skills that the individual has to master, which help him/her in connecting with others and in resolving conflicts, and then work to build the society, including voluntary service.

This fact is in line with the tendencies of the individuals to find salvation on the individual level first, and actually it creates a debate about the social role of the youth centers. If the awareness of the young people to the work of the youth centers and the youth leadership programs corresponds with the objectives of those organizations that are supported, in most cases, by foreign institutions that have their own agendas and may resemble sometimes the national agendas or may differ in other times, the question that remain here then is this: does this pattern of thinking ultimately strengthen the bond between the youth and their society or not, and does the individual development find an expression in voluntary community work, or does it remain an individual competency that helps the individual himself/herself in his/her life regardless of its deficiencies and societal implications?

The results of this research show that the young people see that the youth leadership programs work to enhance the individual's relationship to his/her society and his/her sense of belonging to it. However, the same results also show that community work and volunteering is of a low priority compared to the individual personal skills. This contradiction between the individual needs and group affiliation is the common denominator that is repeated in this context and in other social frameworks, and it must be addressed and studied more thoroughly.

Difficulties that Young People Face in Connecting with the Youth and Cultural Programs

- The results showed that the problem of transportation is the main problem that prevents many young people from reaching to the cultural events, as one of the female participants explained: *"I need about 25 Shekels (NIS) to*

travel back and forth to Ramallah, and this is not the main problem…the main problem is that public transportation stops working in our village at four thirty or five in the evening, and any cultural activity takes place usually after then, and frankly, I cannot go back late at night to my village." Another young man said, *"Every time I participate in a cultural event in Ramallah, I make arrangements to spend the night at one of my friends' house because of my inability to return home that night."*

- The distressed economic situation in the West Bank (The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2009) is reflected here in the high travel costs, particularly in the Ramallah area compared to the other cities, and especially when we talk about the costs of travel in the late hours of the night, which multiply greatly according to what a number of participants in the focus group had said.

- Motivation and setting the participation in youth and cultural activities as a priority for the youth: The results reflect a high proportion of those who do not take part in the events and activities. When they are asked about the reason for that, they attribute it to the lack of time, when in fact the majority of them spend hours on the Internet or watching television, according to the results, and so it does not reflect precisely the reality. From analyzing the opinions of the participants in the focus group, the results show that the non-participation is connected to two main factors: the first is the lack of conviction of the importance of those events. One of the participants, for example, explained this in his own words *"What do I benefit from going to the cinema? I can sit with my friends, talk and smoke the Nargileh (water pipe) together."* Another reason that the participants spoke about is related to the technological development, in that if a person wants to see a movie, he/she can download it from the Internet or buy it for 10 Shekels (NIS) and watch it at home, and is therefore not obliged to keep track of the latest versions from a source outside the home.

- The Israeli military checkpoints and the Separation Wall had a clear impact on the lack of benefit from the activities, and this situation applied mainly to the Jerusalem and Ramallah areas, since more than 80% of the young people in the

different areas confirmed that they do not need to go through a military checkpoint to get to the cultural facilities. Also, the majority of those who do cross the checkpoints said that these barriers may hinder their access but do not necessarily prevent them from getting to the facilities, which can be interpreted according to the salutogenic model, which looks at the obstacles in total as stressful factors that do not necessarily cause distress for everyone (Antonovsky, 1998).

Recommendations:

The recommendations put forward are a joint collection of the youth suggestions and the researcher's recommendations, based on content analysis and conclusions of the discussion.

Recommendations on the Level of Theoretical Research:

-   Conducting a deeper study that examines aspects of the Internet effect on the formation of the awareness of the Palestinian youth, since the current study did not deal with this aspect in depth, but the initial data in this study strengthen the argument for a more profound study on this subject.

-   The area that deals with the impact of the youth and cultural centers on the extent of societal participation among the youth and bearing the burdens and responsibilities at the community level has not been studied thoroughly and methodically, due to the difficulty of measurement, which requires a long period of time and follow-up with the participating institutions, programs and youth for several years. Therefore, it is necessary to develop tools that are suitable for evaluating such programs.

-   Carrying out an in-depth study to examine the new values that have evolved among the young people as a result of the open communication with the world, and whether there is a difference between the value system that we were brought up with and the emerging and evolving values among the young people.

Recommendations on the Practical Level:

-   Raising the awareness of the community whereby the Ministry of Culture takes on an important role in this process, in an attempt to change the public attitudes towards culture and to enhance their consumption of it. This direction is a

long-term one that needs a long time to work on and execute. Therefore, the group of cultural centers, in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture, has to develop a long-term concept that contributes to the changing of the negative attitudes towards the cultural output and helps to involve the largest possible number of people in the programs.

- If it is not possible to change the prevailing system of education in many of the schools, it is possible to continue providing cultural services and discovering and cultivating the talents in the same schools and in childhood years, in cooperation with the nearby youth and cultural centers, in addition to the blessings and support of the Ministry of Culture. It is also necessary to raise awareness in relation to the participation of females in the cultural sphere as consumers and contributors.
- It is clear that the region of the northern West Bank, especially the Jenin area, is in utmost need for the development of cultural and youth centers. Therefore, it is important to seriously consider taking this region into account as an area that must be invested in and developed in the next five years by the working and funding organizations in this field.

- It is important to deliver the cultural services to the people, either through the provision of services in the different areas (through schools and clubs), or by facilitating the access to the youth and cultural facilities. This requires a joint consideration from the Ministry of Transportation and the Ministry of Culture. As of the participants noted, "We, as youth, do not have to find solutions for everything. Let the ministries assume the responsibility of finding a solution to this problem. This is their role."

- The study put forward a structure of the total hobbies that the youth who participated in the study wish to develop. The results of this study and other studies could be relied upon to build programs for that category that fit their interests and preferences to ensure that the need has been filled. Also, it is necessary to take into account the gender structure of the communities in which we want to develop the services.

-   It is possible to create and support a network of young men and women from the different areas who are culturally active, similar to the focus groups who participated in the study, to promote the cultural movement and create a "scene" that can be employed later on to discuss the variables that affect the cultural practices of the young people since the impact of culture, as demonstrated by the results of the study, is much greater than the impact of institutions that historically had major effect, such as the political party, on the evolution of the value system for the young people.

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Annex (1): The Questionnaire

Diyar Consortium: The International Center of Bethlehem

Dear Young Man/Woman
Greetings,

The attached questionnaire aims to identify the extent of knowledge among young people of the youth programs in their areas and the cultural opportunities available in their near surroundings, and whether they benefit from and participate in them, in order to help us in building a realistic plan for our programs in those areas. The study targets the Palestinian youth aged 18-27 years old.

There are no right or wrong answers. The answers to the questions are subjective and reflect your personal opinion, and that is precisely what we would like to know and hear.

Please answer all the questions, and in the absence of clarity of any question, you may ask for clarification. You do not need to register your name on the form because the answers are confidential.

The questionnaire is formulated in the masculine form, but it is intended for both young men and women.

Thank you for your contribution and for taking the time to fill out the questionnaire

<div align="right">

The Research Team
Diyar Consortium/The International Center of Bethlehem

</div>

Part One: Personal Information

1. The City/Village/Refugee Camp you live in: _____

2. Sex: Male   /   Female

3. Age: _____

4. Educational Level: 1. Elementary   2. Preparatory   3. Secondary
                      4. Technical College (Diploma)   5. First University Title (BA)
                      6. Second University Title and higher (MA or PhD)

5. If you are a student, who covers the cost of study:
         1. You Personally   2. The Family   3. Others, Specify: _____

6. Marital Status: 1. Single   2. Married   3. Divorced   4.Widowed

7. Do you have children?   1. Yes   2. No

8. Number of children: _____

9. Do you work?   1. Yes   2. I do not work in the last year   3. I do not work since a long time

10. What is your profession: _____?

11. If you are married, what is the educational level of your husband/wife?

                        1. Elementary   2. Preparatory   3. Secondary

                        4. Technical College (Diploma)   5. First University Title (BA)

                        6. Second University Title and higher (MA or PhD)

12. Does your husband/wife work: 1. Yes   2. I do not work in the last year

                        3. I do not work since a long time

13. What is the profession of your husband/wife? _____

14. How do you evaluate your economic level?   1. Excellent   2. Good.   3. Medium

                        4. Fair   5. Bad

15. Do you have a private car?   1. Yes   2. No

16. Is there transportation to and from the area where you live which connects you to
   the youth and cultural centers?   1. Yes   2. No

17. At what time in the evening does transportation to your area stop? _____

18. To reach the city center, you need to pay _____ Shekels (NIS) for a round trip.

19. Are there military checkpoints or wall that separate your place of residence from the different youth and cultural centers?   1. Yes   2. No

20. If your answer is yes: Do these barriers hinder you from reaching the cultural events and taking part in them?

                             1. They hinder and prevent me from reaching
                             2. They hinder but do not prevent me from reaching
                             3. They do not hinder or prevent me from reaching

21. Are there other factors that hinder your access or participation in the cultural activities?
                1. Yes   2. No

22. If your answer is yes, what are these factors? _____

23. Do you have hobbies that you really would like to develop but you do not know how?
                1. Yes   2. No

24. If you have hobbies, interests or skills that you really want to develop, then what are they? And what are your suggest in order to achieve that? _____
_____

Part Two

This section deals with the extent of your use of the different communication tools. There is no ideal or imperfect situation here. Only give answers that reflect your real situation after reading each of the following statements:

25. How many hours on average do you spend your time watching television every day?
      1. Never   2. Up to 1 hour   3. From 1 to 2 hours 4. From 2 to 3 hours

5. More than 3 hours. How many hours approximately? _____

26. What are the programs you watch the most? (Arrange the answers from the most watched by giving it number (1) to the least watched by giving it the highest number. You can also add a channel that was not mentioned in the list):
a.   News and political programs _____
b.   Turkish films and drama _____
c.   Arabic films and drama _____
d.   Cultural and documentary films and programs _____
e.   Light programs and comedy_____
f.   Drama and foreign films _____
g.   Modern music channels _____
h.   Tarab music channels _____
i.   Sports channels_____
j.   Nature and geography channels_____
k.   Other (what is it) _____

27. Do you have Internet connection at home?   1. Yes   2. No

28. If the answer is no, then where do you use the Internet? _____

29. How many hours on average do you spend your time on the Internet every day?
     1. Never   2. Up to 1 hour on average   3. From 1 to 2 hours
     4. From 2 to 3 hours   5. More than 3 hours. How many hours approximately? _____

30. What are the Internet programs most commonly used by you, for example: email, chat and meeting others, forums, shopping, Facebook, study, news, second world games, a variety of games, etc... Write 6 personal uses (at the

most) of the Internet, and give number (1) to the most use and number (6) to the least use from you:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

31. There are people who use the Internet as a means by which they get acquainted with the output of others. Have you ever used the Internet in a participatory manner, i.e. have you ever uploaded educational or artistic material… on the web?

     1. Yes   2. No

32. If your answer is yes, what are the areas in which you have participated?

_____

_____

33. How do I evaluate the impact of the Internet in my life:

     1. Very Large   2. Large   3. Medium   4. Weak   5. Non-existent

34. The questionnaire will be given to a big group of youth participants. Try to guess the percentage of young people who will answer the previous statement similarly to your response:

10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%	100%

35. Are there any public libraries in your community?   1. Yes   2. No

36. If there is a public library, do you benefit from its services? 1. Yes   2. Sometimes   3. Never

37. If you do not use the public library or if you visit it in times far apart, what is the main reason for this?_____
_____
_____

38. Are there bookstores in your area?   1. Yes   2. No

39. I read books:
1. On a daily basis   2. On a weekly basis   3. At distant intervals   4. Generally I do not read

40. What kind of books do you generally read? _____

41. I read the newspapers or browse through them on the Internet:
1. On a daily basis   2. On average of once a week   3. Generally I do not read

42. I read the magazines or browse through them on the Internet:
1. On a daily basis   2. On average of once a week   3. Generally I do not read

43. If you read the magazines, what magazines do you read the most? _____

Part Three: Read the following statements and set the extent of your agreement with them

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
44. There is a strong correlation between the individual's cultural awareness and the quality of his/her life	1	2	3	4	5
45. Intellectuals in general are the most influential in their communities	1	2	3	4	5
46. Culture is an essential tool for communication among the Palestinian people	1	2	3	4	5
47. There is no relationship between cultural awareness and boycotting of Israeli products	1	2	3	4	5
48. The existence of the military checkpoints and the wall prevents cultural synergy among the Palestinians	1	2	3	4	5
49. I do not see a link between cultural awareness and community-based public participation	1	2	3	4	5
50. Expressionism arts (such as dance, theatre, music festivals, painting exhibitions and photography) are arts that should not be seen and engaged in	1	2	3	4	5

Part Four:

We disagree among ourselves in our priorities and our estimation of the importance of the various issues in our lives. How much importance do you give to the following issues? At the end of the table you can add two issues that concern you and determine the level of importance you attach to them

	There is No Importance	Little Importance	Somewhat Important	Great Importance	Utmost Importance
51. Family	1	2	3	4	5
52. Friends and Peers	1	2	3	4	5
53. Hobbies and My Personal Interests	1	2	3	4	5
54. The State	1	2	3	4	5
55. The Sect/Religious Group	1	2	3	4	5
56. Nationalism	1	2	3	4	5
57. The City/Village	1	2	3	4	5
58. Private Property	1	2	3	4	5
59. Democracy	1	2	3	4	5
60. Freedom of Expression	1	2	3	4	5
61. Environmental Preservation	1	2	3	4	5
62. National Liberation	1	2	3	4	5

	1	2	3	4	5
63. Work	1	2	3	4	5
64. Peace and Stability	1	2	3	4	5
65. Pluralism	1	2	3	4	5
66. Political Party	1	2	3	4	5
67. Current World Events	1	2	3	4	5
68. Research and Study	1	2	3	4	5
69. Cultural Awareness	1	2	3	4	5
70. Voluntary Work	1	2	3	4	5
71. Tolerance	1	2	3	4	5
72. Add_____	1	2	3	4	5
73. Add_____	1	2	3	4	5

How do you evaluate the effect of the following forces on the formation of your personal values? (Answer between 1 to 5) where number 1 indicates no effect and number 5 means a very large effect. You can also add something extra if you wish that affected the formation of you personal values:

	1 There is No Effect	2 There is Little Effect	3 Medium Effect	4 Clear Effect	5 Great Effect
74. Effect of the Means of Communication (Television Programs, Internet….)					
75. Effect of the Global Values that Speak about the Rights of Individuals and Groups					
76. Effect of the Society Values					
77. Effect of the Religious Values					
78. Effect of the Political Parties					
79. Effect of Peers and Friends					
80. Effect of the Family					
81. Effect of the Youth and Cultural Organizations					
82. Effect of the Personal Experience					
83. Other _____					

84. Name 5 figures, whether from Palestine, the Arab world or globally who had an impact on the formation of your personal and social values and your understanding of the issues that are taking place around you:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Part Five:

The following questions/statements are related to how you perceive the community to which you belong. Read every question/statement and specify the extent of your approval with it by putting a circle around the appropriate number:

85. To what extent do you feel that the young people in the Palestinian society influence what is going on around them? In political, social or cultural terms or community leadership?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all						very large

86. Belonging to one of the community/political/religious/or youth groups gives a meaning and a purpose to your life, unlike many others who do not belong to such groups.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all						certainly

87. To what degree do you feel that the Palestinian youth are ready to face the future challenges both professionally and personally?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not ready at all						greatly ready

88. Do you think that the rights of the Palestinian youth are neglected in the Palestinian society?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I do not think						I think that
that at all						their rights are completely
						neglected

89. Do you think that the young people are indifferent and do not care about what is happening to their fellow citizens?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I do not think so						I greatly think so

90. Compared with other communities, the situation of the Palestinian Arab youth is:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very bad						Very good

Part Six:

This section deals with the youth cultural and art centers that are available in your area, and how much do you benefit from them.

91. In my area there are cultural and art centers that offer services for the young people:
     1. Yes   2. No

92. I personally participate in some of the cultural and art events in those centers:
     1. Yes   2. Sometimes   3. No

93. If your answer is yes, what kind of participation: _____

94. Do you go to the cinema to watch movies?   1. Yes   2. No

95. If the answer is yes: 1. Once a month   2. Once every six months
                              3. At distant intervals

96. Do you go to the theatre to see the performances: 1. Yes   2. No

97. If the answer is yes: 1. Once a month   2. Once every six months
                              3. At distant intervals

98. How do you generally spend your free time? _____

99. In my area there are youth centers that offer youth leadership programs:

              1. Yes   2. No

100. Many development and youth institutions are based on providing capacity building projects for young people through youth leadership projects. Have you ever participated in such projects?

              1. Yes   2. No

101. If your answer is yes, what is your assessment of these projects?

              1. Excellent   2. Very Good   3. Good   4. Medium   5. Bad

102. If your answer is no: what is the reason for this? _____

How do you evaluate the youth programs according to the following points: read every statement and then identify the level of your agreement with it:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somehow Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
103. They increase young people's awareness of what is happening around them	1	2	3	4	5
104. They increase the sense of belonging of the young people to their community and their issues	1	2	3	4	5
105. They help the young people gain positive attitudes towards their society	1	2	3	4	5
106. They enhance the capacity of youth participants to crystallize a personal, social and national identity	1	2	3	4	5

107. They increase the ability of youth participants to have a positive impact on other young people	1	2	3	4	5
108. They recognize and meet the needs of the young people through the programs	1	2	3	4	5
109. They help the young people to be involved in their communities	1	2	3	4	5

110. In your opinion, what are the programs and activities that the youth leadership programs have to work on in order to develop the capacities of the young people?

_____

111. In your own words, how would you define the concept of youth leadership?

_____

_____

112. In your opinion, what could increase the use of male youth of the cultural and art resources (such as art courses, theatre and exhibitions…) and their participation in them?

_____

_____

 113. In your opinion, what could increase the use of female youth of the cultural and art resources (such as art courses, theatre and exhibitions..) and their participation in them?

_____

_____

We will form a focus group to discuss the results of the questionnaire during the month of December, 2010. If you would like to share with us your opinion regarding the findings and help us in explaining them, as well as giving suggestions, you can add your information on the form and we will contact you (this section is optional)

Name: _____

Telephone Number: _____

E-mail: _____

Thank you again for your cooperation with us and for your time
The Study Team - Diyar Consortium/The International Center of Bethlehem

Annex (2):

With our deepest thanks, the young men and women (the focus groups) who participated in giving feedback to the researcher and the study committee at various stages of the study in addition to the distributing the questionnaire forms, namely:

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