



تجمع المكتبات ومراكز المعلومات الفلسطينية



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Palestinian Libraries Under Occupation

Libraries **i**n **P**alestine **f**rom **t**he **A**cademic **L**ibraries
Perspective/ **M**embers **o**f **t**he **P**alestinian
Consortium “**P**ALICO” :
Challenges **a**nd **F**uture **P**rospects

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**Sponsored jointly by the ALA Social Responsibilities Round
Table and Librarians and Archivists with Palestine.**

Agenda

- **Historical Background: Libraries and occupation**
- **Palestinian Libraries & Information Consortium “PALICO” timeline**
- **PALICO’s mission and objectives**
- **Strategic and business planning**
- **Funding, budget, sustainability**
- **Communications**
- **Challenges and problems**
- **Solutions to overcome some of the encountered problems**
- **Needs and support from other Library Associations and librarians**
- **Questions and answers**

Historical Background

Libraries:

- Libraries in Palestine go back to the Ottoman period since **1826**. Mosques and Personal libraries were dominant at that time.
- Few Governmental libraries hosted in the different departments were established till **1948**
- Confiscation of Palestinian Archives, books, manuscripts...etc. took place following the **1948** war.

Historical Background

Continued

More than **4.1** million items have been stolen, and confiscated from public, government and personal libraries. Some have been hosted in the Israel National Library and the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. **30%** are available for Israeli Researchers under the section “**Islamic and Middle East Collection**” to include books, manuscripts and archives. The other **70%** were stored on three underground floors in the National Library labeled as “**Abandoned Property**”.

Historical Background

Continued

- After **1967** war, acts continue. Selling books was prohibited. Around **5410** titles were confiscated in an argument that they were written against Israel.
- **1982**: The Palestine Research Center in Beirut was invaded and all content was moved to the Hebrew University.
- **1983**: The Jordanian Book Distribution and Services company in Jerusalem was burnt.

Historical Background

Continued

- **1984** There was a raid against Birzeit University; few of its documents, books, and maps were confiscated.
- **1987** during the first Intifada: Books were confiscated at the checkpoints.
- **1994** after Oslo and during the Palestinian Authority few libraries were established (Public, Children, School...etc.).
Annual International Book fairs were organized in an attempt to advance the Educational and Cultural movements.

PALICO HISTORY

The following slides will focus more on the Academic Libraries as a major type, and the activities planned and run by its consortium “**PALICO**”.

PALICO Timeline:

29/4/1985

A group of interested librarians called for the first meeting to lay the foundation for a committee of academic libraries and research centers and met regularly and independently

18/3/1987

University library directors were nominated officially as the members of the academic committee to work under the umbrella of the Higher Education Council at that time after the approval of the Council Director

PALICO Timeline

Continued

1987-1993

The first Intifada. Meetings stopped.

July 2005

National Workshops on consortium building were held in Gaza and Ramallah by eifl (Electronic Information for Libraries) to help building PALICO.

September 2005

The Palestinian Consortium PALICO was formed to replace the Academic Committee and started with 11 member institutions.

PALICO Timeline

Continued

2006-2008

Meetings were frozen due to the political situation.

2009

Intensive meetings with PALICO members were held to set up the laws and Bylaws and to officially register the consortium locally, and with eFL (Not registered officially yet due to the local political situation).

PALICO Timeline

Continued

2009

More members joined from universities and colleges (14 institutions) and the official website was established.

2012

PALICO members reached 16 institutions, and up to 18 member institutions in 2016.

PALICO's Mission:

- To focus on the academic library's role as an educational center, and to continue promoting academic development and bringing about cultural awareness for the local community that the libraries serve.
- To improve the contribution of both the personnel and resources by upgrading the educational objectives of library services and developing the professional status of the librarians in order to provide better service for the users.

PALICO's Objectives:

- To increase the cooperation between the academic libraries and research centers in Palestine.
- To consolidate the efforts of the librarians in improving and developing library services
- To improve the professional status of the librarians.
- To establish cooperation between Arabic and international institutions and library organizations.

PALICO's Objectives:

Continued

- To share information and documents (Interlibrary loan) and to facilitate library services for users and researchers.
- To coordinate the utilization and linkage (when applicable) of all relevant means of technology in libraries.
- To utilize the education and experience of certain academic librarians to advance the professional skills of other librarians and staff.

Strategic and business planning

- Development of electronic resources.
- Marketing of e-resources and services to students & researchers.
- Capacity building of library staff.
- Raise awareness (emails, meetings).
- Sponsor a definite law and by-laws for libraries and librarians through the Palestinian Legislative Council.
- Develop a specialized program in library and information science at the university level.

Strategic and business planning

Continued

- Encourage the creation of local content and archive
- Develop an electronic network connecting all academic libraries.
- Advance the system of collaboration in order to promote cooperation and to consolidate and share resources in addition to exchanging information and knowledge.
- Create websites and online catalogs for all Palestinian academic libraries
- Partnership with International & local organizations
- Building up a national institutional repository

Funding, budget, sustainability

- **Membership fees.**
- **Government contribution
(Subscription to EBSCO)**
- **Fund raising from other organizations.**
- **Possible generated revenue from some
specific training courses.**

Communications:

- **Meetings**
- **Video Conference**
- **Email**
- **Phone calls and faxes when necessary**
- **Website and Facebook**

Challenges and problems

- ❖ Severe problems reflected by occupation: Like all occupiers, culture and education are the main targets.
 - Psychologically affected by the political situation not living a free life like other people all over the world.
 - Restrictions on movement (West bank, Gaza, 1948 area) and even within the same city.



Students Protesting against the siege



Everyday walks between Ramallah and Birzeit Passing Surda checkpoint about 1.5 KM



Bypass paths though the mountains

Challenges and problems

Continued

- Military Checkpoints all over is a burden to students and researchers. In April **2015** the # of checkpoints as registered by B'tselem (The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights) reached **96** checkpoints among which **39** at the borders with the Israeli and **1948** areas, and **17** in Hebron area only (South)



Bypass Paths along the Wall



Qalandiya checkpoint Bars



Qalandiya checkpoint

Challenges and problems

Continued

- Confiscation of books, manuscripts from Palestinian personal Libraries. **Examples of stolen libraries:**
 - **Asa'ad Shukeiri (Akko)**
 - **Ragheb Khaldi (Jaffa)**
 - **Aref Dabbagh (Jaffa) 30.000 volumes**
 - **Ajaj Nweihed (Jerusalem)**
 - **Khalil Sakakini (Jerusalem- all content to the Hebrew University)**
 - **Ishaq Huseini / Jerusalem- 400 Bks. And manuscripts**
 - **Is'af Nashashibi/ Jerusalem**
 - **Abdalla Maqdisi, and others**

Challenges and problems

Continued

- Closure of few research centers and libraries in Jerusalem like “The Association for Arab Studies Library”
- Closure of campuses during the two Intifadas (1987 and 2006)



University Community Protesting against the siege



Surda Checkpoint: student prevented from reaching the University

Challenges and problems

Continued

- Problems in importing books from the Arab countries/ customs/ confiscation, clearance... etc.
- **In 2000/** the 2nd Intifada (Al Aqsa Intifada): few libraries sections were destroyed during the cities invasion- Al-Haq, the Legislative Council, Public libraries in Ramallah and Nablus and AlQuds University in Jerusalem.
- **In 2008-2009:** War against Gaza. Few libraries were attacked

The Islamic University- Al Azhar University- Al Quds Open University.



Libraries' Attacks in Gaza (2009)



Libraries' Attacks in Gaza (2009)



Libraries' Attacks in Gaza (2009)



Libraries' Attacks in Gaza (2009)

Challenges and problems

Continued

- ❖ The lack of professionals in the field (Professional Librarians), we have around **82** staff with a professional degree (**3** PHD, **19** Masters, **30** Bachelor, **30** with two years diploma in all **18** member universities). At the PHD and Masters level **80%** are close to the retirement age over the age of **55**.
- ❖ Lack of training due to the absence of any kind of library schools and library programs at the country level.

Challenges and problems

Continued

- ❖ English language barrier.
- ❖ Shortage in equipment (computers, scanners, printers...etc.) in almost most of the libraries to help them cope with the new technological developments and the change in types of services and information delivery.
- ❖ Lack of infrastructure in certain libraries, esp. in Gaza.
- ❖ Cuts in budgets which stand as an obstacle sometimes when there is a need to develop the collection, train the staff and purchase the necessary and needed equipment to end users.

Challenges and problems

continued

- ❖ The absence of a Union catalog.
- ❖ No interlibrary loan programs although several attempts have been made but with no implementation due to:
 - Restrictions on movement between the different cities,
 - Confiscation of books at the checkpoints,
 - Lack of fund,
 - Technical issues,
 - Shortage in IT experience in some institutions. Plus,
 - The different library automation systems in use among all universities which are not compatible.

Solutions adopted to overcome some of the encountered problems:

- Partnership and Involvement with National & International Organizations and bodies like: IFLA (International Conference in 2006), eifl, British Council, American Consulate, LAP starting 2013, Qatar Studies & Research Center, AFLI, BAI, USAID, AED, ALA recently ...etc.
 - **In 1997:** Gift books received from several sources as a result of the Gaza Library Project.
 - **1999-2002:** Acquired free database subscriptions from Bielefeld University and Springer publishers (**German Gov.**)
 - **2001:** Classic literature books were distributed to all university libraries as a result of a free donation from the British Council.

Solutions adopted to overcome some of the encountered problems:

continued

- **2004:** Ensured subscription for all Palestinian Universities to access EBSCO database in 2004 through the Academy of Educational Development (AED) following result of a survey and a study assessing the need of Palestinian higher education institutions to electronic databases.
- **2005:** USAID fund of approx. \$500,000 is arranged to the 11 Palestinian universities to purchase books, the project was managed by AED. Plus procuring 5 workstations to each university library.

Solutions adopted to overcome some of the encountered problems:

continued

- **2005:** University Libraries started to get **free access** to few databases through **eIFL**, these are:
Cambridge Journals, Bio One, IOP (Institute of Physics), Oxford Reference and Oxford Dictionary Online, IMF Library, Royal Society, Intellect, Duke University Journals, Edward Elgar...etc.) which are still run for the 12th year in a row.
Others at a **discounted price** (Sage, Emerald, Wiley...etc.).

Solutions adopted to overcome some of the encountered problems:

continued

- **2008:** SABRE Foundation from USA sponsored a book donation campaign to all Palestinian universities. The project was coordinated by Al-Quds University.
- Subscription to more e-resources, with a focus on the Arabic ones (Archives, books, journals) to help researchers with a consortium price.
- Start to work on digitizing local contents.

Solutions adopted to overcome some of the encountered problems:

continued

- Attempts have been made to get visiting scholars to do trainings.
- Encourage Remote service to help faculty members and researchers by providing them with the needed information up to 30 pages at a time via email or fax or on site.
- Ship the donated books through Foreign embassies and Consulates like the British Council for **BAI “Book Aid International”**, and through dealers carrying the Jerusalem ID to avoid clearance fees at customs.

Solutions adopted to overcome some of the encountered problems:

continued

- Hold video conferencing meetings and workshops with our colleagues in Gaza, but sometimes things fail due to the sudden cuts of electricity.
- Websites and online catalogs have been created to help users.
- Recommended pursuing scholarships for librarians to continue their educational ambitions in library and information science and to improve their qualifications.

Solutions adopted to overcome some of the encountered problems:

- Started to create Institutional Repositories in some universities to include local theses, newsletters, journals...etc.) and local archival databases like: Awrak in Birzeit to include almost all available resources on Palestinian archives, newspapers, oral history and so forth.

**Needs and support: what can other
Library Associations and librarians do
to support the Development of
Palestinian Libraries?**

- Access to more free e-resources.
- Capacity building: training the trainers on different aspects related to the modern trends in Librarianship and Users' services using the new applications and models.
- Exchange programs among librarians to gain new experience.
- Visiting librarians to Palestine for a short period.
- Enrollment in full scholarship to attend various courses, workshops, and conferences to keep up-to-date with the new developments in the field.
- Webinars on different topics of interest.

continued

- Help with Fund to support Digitization Projects such as the rare books to enrich the local archives.
- ALA resolutions and statements of solidarity with Palestinian libraries, and towards freedom of movement and expression.
- Strengthen the partnerships and corporations with National and International Associations and Organizations, like: LAP, eifl, ALA, IFLA, AFLI ...etc.
- Book donation campaigns.
- Fundraising (e.g. e-resources fees, equipment).

THANKS FOR YOUR ATTENTION!!!!



ANY QUESTIONS??