



Nafs for Empowerment

Strategic Plan 2025-2023

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Through the strategic planning process, Nafs for Empowerment (hereof referred to as Nafs or the Society, or the organization), seeks exploring the future with clear vision to develop precise interventions that accords with the strategic tendencies of the Palestinian community. Nafs believes that strategic planning is an essential process to empower the staff and the various bodies of the organization in order to understand the situation and transfer the challenges that face the community into strategic objectives and results around which the various interventions could be built. Nafs seeks developing interventions that might respond to tangible needs of the community and fill the gaps emerging within the daily life of people on the social level. Furthermore, strategic planning process will enable the staff to contribute in designing the various programs and projects and then to feel ownership of the organization and more commitment to the activities.

On a related level, the strategic planning as comprehensive process, will enable the Society to better determine its vision, mission, and strategic objectives for the future. Based on that, improvement within the performance of the organization would be gained, undoubtedly, alongside with developing the institutional structure and capacity of the various actors in order to be capable to fulfill the tasks and missions associated with them. Nafs for Empowerment id aware of the necessity to improve the work environment on the level of networking and coordinating with the various stakeholders and actors while maintaining the good connections with the current partners including maintaining good relations with the target groups.

The plan was developed in coordination between all the actors inside the organization including board of directors, general assembly, staff, volunteers, and target groups. Participatory approach in planning was adopted and special attention was given to the involvement of the target groups in addition to the involvement of some representatives of CSOs and counterpart organizations.

The plan stands for the frame and fields of intervention of Nafs for the coming three years where it includes internal and external context analysis in which the organization is operating in addition to the vision, mission, and strategic objectives.

Board of Directors.

The Start Point

It goes without saying that human beings are in need for ongoing mental health care, where mental health of individuals is the base for the development of the community in general. Through mental health care, it is possible to figure out the positive and negative aspects within the person aiming at reinforcing positive aspects and working on the negative aspects to transfer them into positive. It is clear that the positive balanced behavior of individuals would be reflected automatically on the community positively and similarly the instable negative behavior. Individual might be a tool to damage the community rather being a tool of building and developing. It should be confirmed that psychological disorders spread widely in Palestine and stand for an alarming phenomenon that requires immediate intervention. The spread of psycho- social disorders is a result to the overall circumstances imposed on the various Palestinian community sectors. There are variety of reasons that undermine such phenomenon; and we at Nafs, as one of the actors that have moral responsibility towards the community, we realize the great

responsibility imposed on our shoulders to contribute in improving the overall life of the community through focusing on improving the quality of psycho- social services. Thus, there was a need to recruit and gather efforts to establish an organization that is involved in providing psycho- social services and connect mental health with the various aspects of life and works side by side with other and counterpart organizations that provide similar services. Nafs is aware for the important role and professional interventions of the counterpart organizations but realizes the inadequacy of these interventions due to the limitation of resources and the increasingly need for support. Since its establishment, Nafs associated itself with providing distinguished professional mental health care services for individuals to help overcome the psycho- social difficulties and challenges imposed due to the unstable overall situation in Palestine. The organization is aware of the necessity to contribute in decreasing the impact of the difficult overall circumstances imposed on Palestinians. Nafs is aware that Palestinians are living under difficult social, political, and economic circumstances that lead to pressure on people's life.

Nafs for Empowerment was established by a group of psychologists and academics who realized the necessity to interfere with the community and provide mental health services. Additionally, the proposed intervention aimed at transferring individuals into active agents and agents of change within the public life of the community. The Society works to access the various social segments, with special attention given to marginalized and less advantaged groups (youth, women, Persons with Disability, children...). Through its interventions, Nafs for Empowerment seeks achieving case of balance between the individual and him/ herself and between him/ her and the community. The end to day objective is to reach a case of a balanced community that enjoys mental health and able to be creative. Nafs considers community collective creativity as accumulation and reflection of creativity among individuals. For that, working with individuals is the spinal cord of the interventions of the organization. Likewise, Nafs seeks utilizing mental health and psycho- social services as a tool to develop the capacity of individuals and transfer them into active actors who will contribute effectively within the public life of the community. The given objective stands as compass that leads the performance and justifies existence.

Nafs for Empowerment would like to extend its gratitude to all organizations and bodies that supported the organization believing in the importance of its existence and role. Great thanks are extended to those who opened the door in the face of the founders of Nafs to start work and enroll in the field of serving the community including local and international actors.

Nafs for Empowerment was officially registered by the Palestinian ministry of interior during 2010 under registration number **(RA-22692-C)**

Context Analysis:

The overall circumstances in Palestine were characterized of a case of instability on the political, social, and cultural levels. Since long decades, Palestine has been facing a series of challenges and accelerating changes that affect the daily life of people and bans Palestinians tendency to lead normal life alike the rest of the nations in the world. The conflict with the Israeli occupation that has been there since over than half a century, affected the life of Palestinians in general and its impact affected nearly touched each individual.

During the previous years, priority was given to the conflict with the occupation and national liberation from occupation with less focus on the social issues. Working on the mental health of

individuals was not given adequate interest where similar to many other issues, the mental health care was postponed for unknown time. Therefore, several social troubles and disorders emerged to the surface and affected the entire community. Furthermore, psycho- social services were stigmatized within the popular culture and such services were associated with those suffering mental retardation while normal persons are not in need for mental health services. The result was accumulating the psycho- social troubles and disorders that affected the structure of the community in general and created lots of troubles. Neglecting the psycho- social services lead to accumulate the psycho- social disorders among individuals and affected the overall rhythm of life negatively without realizing the actual reasons that undermined such case.

However, within the emergence of Palestinian National Authority towards the mid of the last decade of the previous century, attention to the importance of mental health and psycho- social services became seen within the Palestinian context and became one of the themes of work of the civil Society Organizations in Palestine. CSOs took the responsibility of providing such services where space was available to work on the various social issues including psycho- social and mental health services and interventions. The period prior to the emergence of PA, witnessed involvement of CSOs, directly or indirectly, in the national work and relief activities to support resilience and sustain people's life. However, as PA monopolized political work and squeezed the space for political work within CSOs, then the latest find space to focus mainly on the social issues. Mental health and psycho- social services were among the major areas of focus of the intervention of the CSOs. The intervention of CSOs and the provided services, contributed in disfiguring out the community traditional perception of the psycho- social and mental health services.

The work of CSOs in providing mental health and psycho- social services was controlled by several factors where recruiting financial support to cover the costs of the services was one of these major factors. The interventions of the CSOs took the form of reaction in many times to respond to some actions and major issues but were not designed as strategic interventions to contribute in changing the overall situation in Palestine towards better. Most of the mental health programs and interventions came as reaction to major events and developments and targeted specific groups (women, children, youth...). Here, CSOs could not transfer mental health and psycho- social services to be among the major fields of intervention within the Palestinian community and target the various social segments. On a related level, PA failed in institutionalizing mental health services within the Palestinian community. For instance, the ministry of education employs psycho- social counselor in each school but the number of counselors is limited where the counselor works in more than one school leading to narrow the space available to provide qualified services for students. Moreover, counsellors in schools work mainly with students who portray behavioral and psycho- social disorders but not working with all students in general. Such practice contributed once again to stereotyping mental health services to be associated with individuals who suffer from specific problems and psycho- social disorders.

Taking into consideration the previous mentioned issues, it becomes clear that mental health in Palestine witnessed deterioration on more than one level. Violence, including gender- based violence, spread widely within the Palestinian community where women are the most vulnerable group for violence. Despite the noticeable efforts of women organizations to combat violence against women, yet, the phenomenon is still noticed in the community and varies from time to

another and from a group to another as well as, from an area to another. Women in Palestine are still killed on the so- called family honor background while GBV keeps increasing and women being the victims of such phenomenon. During 2020, as example, and within the spread of Corona Pandemic, the Palestinian community witnessed a horrible increase in the number of killed women comparing to previous years, where 35 women were killed during the given year¹. Additionally, violence in the community in general increased and the number of killing crimes increased as well, due to the spread of internal conflicts.

Within the analysis that Nafs conducted to explore the reasons that undermine violence in the Palestinian community², it was indicated that there are two reasons behind the phenomenon. Firstly, the psycho- social pressure imposed on individuals; and secondly, the absence of legal set and just judiciary procedures to protect individuals against violence. The absence of active just judiciary system and judiciary procedures, pushed people to take law to their hands and solve their conflicts in violence way. Furthermore, the culture of tolerance within the community disappeared due to the pressure imposed on the entire population. Consequently, violence increased and kept increasing during the previous years.

Among the other challenges and difficulties addressed within the strategic planning process, the exclusion of wide social segments from the public life of the community. Within the dominant of the patriarchal mentality on the community, then the space available for some social segments to participate in the public life of the community, is narrowed. Youth and women are excluded from the decision- making circles where their participation is only decoration to legalize the electoral lists once there are elections. Thus, an increasingly gap emerged between the community and these segments and their role is determined by the dominating powers and mentality of the community but not the actual need for their role. Youth started feeling alienated from the community and passive towards what is going on around them. Such case is clear within the fact that youth are not intentioned to be enrolled in voluntary works to serve the community, though this was one of the main characteristics of the Palestinian community in the past and contributed to the Palestinians resistance and resilience.

Based on that and within its current strategic plan, Nafs for Empowerment and in the light of the internal discussion, decided to focus on the following issues during the coming three years. The Society will continue providing psycho- social services for all demanders utilizing modern and advanced techniques in individual, family, and group counselling. Alongside with that and in order to achieve the objective of improving the quality of the psycho- social services, then the Society will pursue providing the trainings and capacity building for newly graduated counsellors and those working in the field of counseling. Nafs will work on another program, Community Work Program that is designed to contribute to decreasing tension and violence and contribute to improving the quality of life of the community in general and promote tolerance and alternative to violence tools among the various social groups. In this regard, Nafs will form and train youth groups in order to lead community initiatives to contribute in improving the quality of life of the entire community. Youth will be trained within the Community Work Program to conduct advocacy campaigns to lobby decision- makers and policy designers to fulfill their legal and moral responsibilities towards the community. Youth will be trained to lead the change

¹ <https://www.maannews.net/news/2015762.html>

² Workshop conducted with a group of volunteers

within the community where in this regard, Nafs will apply the international theory of change and the Empowerment theory. The base will be to empower individuals to achieve empowered groups that are capable of leading the community. By this, youth will take the responsibility of executing the third program of Nafs, which is the Advocacy Program.

Target Groups and Fields of Intervention

Through its various programs and intervention, Nafs seeks targeting variety of social segments in the various residential areas. The Society is aware that the Palestinian community was a victim of systemized process of disfiguring on the demographical and geographical levels. Thus, Nafs seeks providing package of services that responds to the needs of the various social segments in their residential areas. In addition to psycho- social care services, Nafs is aware of the importance of maintaining the Palestinian national identity and so, works to recruit efforts of all, specially youth, to the process of building a community that respects the values of collective work and humanity values. In this regard and within the process of developing performance, Nafs started recently a series of dialogue and discussion sessions with youth groups (West Bank including Jerusalem, Gaza Strip, and 1948 territory) to identify the challenges and difficulties that face the process of unifying the Palestinian national identity. Furthermore, Nafs seeks developing Palestinian progressive youth discourse to face the extremism trends regardless of their background.

Programs

Through a series of activities and programs, Nafs for Empowerment tends to provide its services to the community. In specific, the organization is working through three complementary programs: Psycho- Social Counseling Program, Community Awareness Program, and Advocacy Program. A group of activities are implemented under each program with flexibility to suit the needs of the target groups and the organization utilizes a package of tools to implement the activities:

1. **Psycho- Social Support Program:** Nafs executes a program for psycho- social support aiming at helping individuals to overcome trauma and the post trauma symptoms and the impacts resulting from that. The program was designed to conduct interventions with youth, women, and children and target groups that live in vulnerable areas such as refugee camps and the villages close to the settlements and the annexation wall as these areas are classified (c) areas according to Oslo Accords and under full Israeli control with limited access by the Palestinian Authority and the CSOs. Through the program, Nafs seeks providing the beneficiaries with space to debrief pressure imposed on them to achieve a case of balance and mental health. During the sessions, counsellors apply counselling techniques such as drama therapy, duo drama, art, and role playing as techniques to improve the mental health of beneficiaries. The organization keeps working with the beneficiary till he or she is back to the case prior to the problem faced and adapts with the emerging situation. Through a qualified team of counsellors, Nafs conducts a group of activities under the umbrella of this program as follows:
 - Identify psycho- social troubles and disorders
 - Conduct series of workshops for psycho- social debrief and identify challenges and problems that individuals face
 - Conduct art therapy sessions with groups
 - Therapy through music and other expressive art techniques (drama, painting,...)

- Individual, group, and family counselling sessions implemented through a group of qualified counsellors. The counselling sessions are conducted inside the headquarter of the organization. Beneficiaries in need for further intervention (not available by the organization) are referred to specialized counterpart organization within the coordination and networking relations that Nafs enjoys.
 - Train counsellors and newly graduated students on the new counselling techniques and skills to be applied within their future work. Trainings are commenced in intensified meetings (sequence days depending on the topic) or through training workshops implemented based on need. Usually, Nafs for Empowerment coordinates with counterpart organizations to nominate members of their staff to participate in the trainings. Trainings are conducted free of charge and the objective behind them is to contribute to improving the quality of the psycho- social services available for beneficiaries.
2. **Community Awareness Program:** The program was designed to increase the involvement of individuals in the public life of the community through planning and commencing local initiatives and participating in the public activities. The activities include raising awareness about the public issues of the community as well as enhancing the role of the various social segments (mainly youth) in the public life and lead the community work. To execute the activities, Nafs for Empowerment organizes youth groups in the various targeted localities, especially (c) areas. A program of raising awareness is designed for each group based on need alongside with capacity building program. The capacity building program tackle topics like time management, need assessment in participatory approach, plan and conduct community initiatives, networking, coordination, debate, communication, advocacy, and campaigning. The organization encourages targeted youth to identify the emerging community issues that require immediate intervention in order to design initiatives to address such issues. Within the initiatives, groups usually arrange inquiry sessions, open workshops with decision- makers, conduct voluntary work campaigns, and so on.
 3. **Lobbying and Advocacy Program:** Advocacy represents one of the major themes of the work of the Society on all levels. Nafs believes in the ongoing advocacy to lobby decision- makers to respect their legal and moral responsibilities to improve the quality of life of the community in general. Furthermore, the activities implemented by Nafs and targets individuals, are designed to prepare them to be involved in the advocacy activities in the future on local, regional, and international levels. Trough advocacy, Nafs seeks providing space for Palestinian youth groups from the various areas to meet and discuss their role in the public life of the community as well unifying the Palestinian national identity. In coordination with counterpart organizations in the region, Nafs seeks arranging virtual meetings for Palestinian youth groups on the base of progressive discourse to unify youth's vision regarding the future of the Palestinian community. Nafs started arranging virtual meetings for youth from the previous areas of existence (West Bank/ Jerusalem, Gaza Strip, 1948 territory, and Diaspora) to unify the vision of youth work in the community. Furthermore, dialogue between youth groups from the West Bank/ Jerusalem and Gaza Strip was launched to brain storm about the youth's role in eliminating the destructive impacts of political division on the community. The dialogue conducted in this regard was to create a block in the face of smuggling the division among people and keep it limited to the political leaderships only.

SWOT Analysis

Strength	Weakness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well- structured organization and harmony among the various actors in the organization (general assembly, BoD, staff, and volunteers) in addition to availability of equipped easily accessed headquarter • Clear vision, mission, and strategic objectives with high flexibility in the applied strategies to facilitate achieving the mission, vision, and strategic objectives. • Proven experience among staff members that facilitates commencing tasks associated with them. Good relations with counterpart organizations and strong connections with decision-makers and official institutions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to respond to the needs of all the target groups and demanders of services • The need to develop the capacities of the staff to maximize the utilization of available resources, especially in the field of raising fund and recruiting new resources. • Weak awareness among the community for the importance of mental health care and services • Weak focus on mental health and psycho- social counselling among donor agencies
Opportunities	Threatens
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the need for the psycho- social services and mental health care within the Palestinian community • Technology revolution that enables Nafs to involve the maximum possible number of beneficiaries in the activities in addition to networking with counterpart organizations in all the areas where Palestinians live. • Increase awareness among Palestinian youth about their national identity and their role within the public life of the community. • Strong connections and relations with interested organizations including duty bearers - High level of satisfaction among beneficiaries regarding the services provided by the organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The instable political circumstances and the impacts of the occupation and the political division on the performance of the CSOs. • Community stereotyping of the mental health services, especially in remote and less educated areas • Conservative culture in some regions that do not allow mixing males and females in the same activity • The weak technology infrastructure that affects negatively implementing some activities in Palestine - The feeling of helpless among some youth groups and realization that they are not allowed to participate in the public life due to the domination of patriarchal mentality.

Vision

Empowered Palestinian community that enjoys mental health and social justice

Mission

Nafs for Empowerment seeks to create a case of mental health within the Palestinian community through providing psycho- social services and increasing the involvement of the marginalized groups in the public life of the community through capacity building and provide space for targeted groups to express themselves and take part in the process of building the community and designing its future.

Strategic Objectives:

Within the current strategic plan, Nafs seeks achieving the following strategic objectives taking into consideration that each objective will be distributed on specific objectives and outcomes:

1. Contribute to improve mental health within the Palestinian community and combat exclusion and discrimination especially against youth
2. Contribute to empower youth groups and reinforce their role within the public life of the community on all levels.
3. Develop the institutional structure of the organization and improve its capacity to facilitate implementing the tasks and achieve the vision, mission, and strategic objectives.

Values

Nafs for Empowerment, adopts a group of values in its work where these values represent major component of the organization's identity:

- Respect of Human Rights
- Respect and bear of responsibility
- Transparency
- Accountability
- Justice
- Equality
- Gender sensitivity

Intervention Strategies

Nafs will apply a group of intervention strategies in its work with flexibility to harmonize with the needs and circumstances of the target groups:

- Build local, regional, and international coalitions to ensure providing comprehensive package of services for beneficiaries
- Enhance coordination and networking with counterpart local organizations to provide mental health care services for target groups as well as facilitate implementing the activities of Nafs and access the target groups in their localities but not to accumulate activities in the same localities in addition to ensure providing qualified services for target groups
- Reinforce networking and coordination with international organizations to recruit resources to fund the activities of Nafs.
- Recruit local support from social responsibility funds of the private sector
- Support youth groups wherever they are active to contribute in the public life of the community on the political, social, economic, and cultural levels in addition to develop youth capacity to lead change within the community
- Reinforce values that accord with the progressive discourse such as voluntary work and execute community initiatives

Log frame Work

Objective	Results	Indicators	Outputs	Activities	Means of Verification
1. Contribute to improve mental health within the Palestinian community and combat exclusion and discrimination especially against youth	1.1 Target groups are more aware of their inner power resources and capable of facing psycho- social pressure	1.1.1 Formed Supportive Groups	1.1.1.1 Professional individual, group, and family counselling services for demanders	- Individual, group, and family counselling sessions that apply art therapy, music therapy, drama therapy, and other counselling techniques	Cases files (secret files available only for the supervisor as external)
	1.2 Beneficiaries are put on the road to solve their problems on their own and achieve self-assertiveness	1.1.2 Beneficiaries are committed to the scheduled counselling sessions	1.1.1.2 Beneficiaries are capable to cope up with the psychological pressure and surrounding environment		
	1.3 A case of balance with the self and surrounding was created among beneficiaries	1.1.3 New cases are referred from other beneficiaries	1.1.1.3 Beneficiaries are more aware of their needs and more involved in public life	- Training courses for counsellors about modern counselling techniques (introduce counsellors to modern counselling techniques and skills)	Manual trainings Attendance sheets Photos Media reports
	1.4 The capacity of counsellors was developed and they were trained and provided with supervision to improve their performance with beneficiaries	1.1.4 Positive tendency among counsellors to support beneficiaries	1.1.1.4 Availability of qualified trained cadre of counsellors to provide qualified services for beneficiaries		
2. Contribute to	2.1 Youth (males and	2.1.1 Youth groups	2.1.1.1 Availability of	- Educational activities	- Educational material

empower youth groups and reinforce their role within the public life of the community on all levels.	females) are organized in groups and committed to the community issues and well equipped to lead change within the community	formed by Nafs became a reference for other organizations interested in conducting activities in the same targeted localities	organized youth groups connected with the organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Capacity Building - Dialogue and inquiry sessions with duty bearers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attendance sheets - Photos - Media coverage
	2.2 Youth are more aware of their rights and roles within the community	2.1.2 Campaigns have been arranged to press on duty bearers to respect youth's rights.	2.1.1.2 Bylaws and laws had been amended to protect youth's rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advocacy campaigns 	
	2.3 Local community and decision- makers sensitivity regarding youth's role in public life has been increased.	2.1.3 Programs and activities that target youth had been increased by official and civil parties.	2.1.1.3 A community friend of youth and accepts endorsing youth's needs within the plans, had been developed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Voluntary Work Initiatives - Conduct community activities 	
	2.4 Youth's access to resources has been increased	2.1.4 Initiatives to serve youth and the community had been planned and implemented by the youth groups	2.1.1.4 Part of the budgets within official and civil bodies had been assigned to implement activities and programs that address youth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Arrange debates with active actors - Arrange walk Paths - Art Activities 	
	2.5 Youth are more capable of advocating their political, social, and cultural rights	2.1.5 Respond by duty bearers and insert changes and amendments within existing structures to enable youth's involvement in public	2.1.1.5 A youth cadre capable of advocating youth's rights, had been trained and prepared to work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Entertainment activities - Summer Camps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Amended plans and structures of the organizations - Photos - Media Coverage

		activities, had been increased.			
3. Develop the institutional structure of the organization and develop its capacity to facilitate implementing the tasks and achieve the vision and strategic objectives.	3.1 Nafs had been a reference for workers in the field of mental health and a well-known address for demanders of services	3.1.1 Increase the demand to conduct trainings for the counsellors working for counterpart organizations and for university students in addition to increase in the services demanders	3.1.1.1 Strong organization with clear vision, mission, and strategic objectives.	- Develop three years strategic plan - Develop financial and administrative manuals - Develop staff capacity	- Agreements to conduct trainings - Training manuals - Attendance sheets - Photos
	3.2 Nafs had been more presence on the map of civil work in Palestine	3.1.2 Increase participation in the various related coalitions and networks on the local, regional, and international levels.	3.1.1.2 An organization that stands as reference for the work in the mental health field for counterpart organizations and beneficiaries	- Activate media work with the organization	Bylaws of the various coalitions
	3.3 Financial and administrative manuals and strategic plans had been developed	3.1.3 Regularity in the administrative tasks of the organizations and regularity in the reporting system	3.1.1.3 Availability of administrative and financial references for the organization.	- Activate the website and the social media websites	Organization's documents
	3.4 The capacity of the administrative staff to fulfill administrative tasks had been developed	3.1.4 Noticeable development in the staff's capacity to conduct activities and widen the base of target groups	3.1.1.4 Availability of qualified and trained administrative and financial cadre	- Develop work with volunteers	Training manuals and periodical reports.

