

Annexe B

Documents Distributed During Meetings



Annexe B

Documents Distributed During Meetings

DOCUMENT I

Project Description

Civitas

Foundations for Participation: Civic Structures for the Palestinian Refugee Camps and Exile Communities. Nuffield College, Oxford University

Aims

This collective research project, based at the University of Oxford, will assess how Palestinian refugee communities living in exile in the Middle East, Europe, and further afield can build civic structures and mechanisms to enable better communication with their national representative and institutions, the humanitarian agencies that serve them, and other refugee communities, both inside and outside of Palestine. It is almost entirely a volunteer project, run by the communities themselves, and is facilitated by a very small team who are co-ordinating the activities in order to carry forward the voices of the refugees themselves to the relevant bodies, and bring the urgent needs of the Palestinian refugees to the attention of the international community. This project will restore the vital links between all tiers of Palestinian civil society, and reconnect them with their national representative the PLO and national institutions that have suffered fragmentation in the past decade.

The Background

This research project was initiated following a recommendation by the British Parliamentary Commission of Enquiry's Report on Refugees in March 2001 entitled "Right of Return", which recommended its establishment. The Report was aimed at encouraging the British Government and the European Union to take a stronger position on the representation of refugee rights, and was written after British MPs from the Middle East Councils went to the region in 1999 and talked to the Palestinian refugees themselves about their own views. The Report made a number of recommendations, urging the EU to strengthen UNRWA, to make sure the refugees were included in any process that concerns them, and help reconnect them to their legitimate representation in ways they choose for themselves. The Civitas project was proposed and developed based on the findings of this Parliamentary Report (the project director of Civitas, Dr Karma Nabulsi, Research Fellow at Nuffield, was its Specialist Advisor and originator), and relies upon oral evidence given by the refugees themselves. This research project will use a similar methodology to the original Commission Report (now in its 3rd edition 2004), by being based upon the voices of the refugee communities themselves, albeit on a much more comprehensive and inclusive scale.

The Approach

This project gives the Palestinian refugee and exile communities the chance to specify the structures and mechanisms for communication with concerned parties and identify their own priorities. This initiative does not seek to limit or specify the structures, mechanisms, and priorities articulated by the refugees. It provides a practical service to those communities, through which members of those communities can define their own needs, in their own voices. The task of the project team is to bring those voices forward. The project is based on the belief that opinion polls and surveys are not the most authentic way to discover the real needs and choices of Palestinian refugees. Participatory involvement where people are allowed to speak for themselves is a more valuable and trustworthy methodology. The Civitas project will run over the next 10 months until the summer of 2005, and will establish the precise types of channels needed by Palestinian refugees and exile communities outside the West Bank and Gaza in order that they might participate effectively, and contribute democratically, to the shaping of their future. When the project ends in August 2005 and the opinions, expectations and needs are gathered together into a Report, these findings will be brought to their national representative and its institutions, to the international community, as well as all concerned parties and international institutions in order to present the needs of the refugees to relevant bodies.

Millions of Palestinians across several generations live in refugee camps and exile communities outside of the West Bank and Gaza. Under the political

arrangements of the mid 1990s, these communities were excluded from the elections that took place inside the West Bank and Gaza, as well as from playing a part in the establishment of civic and institutional structures, all of which were largely funded by the European Union. The role of the refugees was left to be determined in 'final status' negotiations, which in the end never took place. The refugees outside the West Bank and Gaza have, so far, been systematically excluded from all political and civic aspects of both the state-building process and the civic society of which they are a part.

The Structure of the Project

The first crucial step - over July, August, September, and October 2004 - has been the establishment of a database map to gather information about the size, location, and structure of Palestinian communities across the world who will participate in making their voices heard, in order to better facilitate the needs assessment process. During the debates each community will run their own needs-assessment exercise through public meetings and workshops, where they will determine for themselves which structures and mechanisms they would like in order to engage more effectively with their political leaders, the host countries, other agencies, and other Palestinian refugee communities - for example by regular newsletters, delegations, monthly meetings, visits, organisations, and other means of communication, and thus ensure a more democratic involvement. These structures will be decided by series of publicly convened debates, each lasting two to three weeks, and will run within a period of three months within the communities and refugee camps, between March and May 2005.

The overall purpose of these civic structures and processes is to facilitate the involvement of Palestinian refugees and exile communities in the main issues that concern them. This project creates the steps required for an inclusion of the refugee voices in the decision making process according to democratic models of participation and consultation. By asking the refugee communities to design their own civic structures, mechanisms, and processes, this project conforms to best democratic practice, and will be run by the communities involved through popular participation. We hope that this project will provide the Palestinian refugee communities with the practical means in which to address, in a positive and constructive form, their rights and needs.

Key Questions for the Refugee Communities

The project takes into consideration that Palestinian refugee communities across the Arab world and further afield have extremely different conditions, expectations, and priorities. This project is based on the premise that it is the refugees themselves who are the best experts on what their needs are, not outside experts.

The needs and priorities of the refugee camps and exile communities will be established by introducing four questions on civic structures and processes which will be discussed by them, as communities. These questions will be disseminated to all communities between November 2004 and February 2005, and then debated between March and May 2005 through a series of public meetings and workshops.

1) As a refugee community, what structures and channels of communication would you like in order to communicate with the following bodies:

- i) Your national representative.
- ii) The host country where you currently reside.
- iii) Humanitarian agencies and other international institutions that provide services.
- iv) Other Palestinian refugee communities, including those inside Palestine
- v) Structures inside your own refugee community?

2) As a refugee community what are the civic structures and mechanisms you currently use to communicate with these various bodies?

3) What are the civic, legal, social, economic, and political issues that you would like to raise with these bodies?

Annexe B

Documents Distributed During Meetings

4) As a community, what are your most urgent needs and priorities while you are refugees?

The small Civitas team will ensure the dissemination of the questions to the refugee communities. This will be done through the delegates and local partners, associations and institutions, and through other means, such as electronic email, website, and ordinary post. There will be a series of consultations and preparations to be convened by those organising the discussions on the ground, and the Civitas team will do everything to facilitate and assist these preparations. The discussions in the camps will be enacted through a variety of public events: meetings, discussion groups, distribution of the questions throughout community centres, and in areas of common association. These will rely largely upon grass-roots methods of debate and communication particular to each community, although some more formal meetings will be arranged at the beginning and the end of the two week long process in order to set out the questions, and at the end in order to record and transcribe the answers. This is a voluntary exercise, will be run by the communities for the communities themselves, and is inclusive of all strands of Palestinian political and civic society. All measures will be taken to ensure inclusivity of the political, social, and civic spectrum of Palestinian life.

Results

The results of the debates will be gathered together and then turned into two reports. The first report details the types of structures and mechanisms decided by the refugees, and presents the communities needs and priorities as they stated them. It will demonstrate how the project was carried out, and the discussions that went into choosing the structures and mechanisms needed, and the priorities of the communities. It will show the methods used to ensure inclusivity of all sectors of society, and the political and geographical challenges that were faced. This report will be for the benefit of the Palestinian communities themselves, their national representative the PLO and its institutions, for the wider international donor community and agencies, and the countries that host them. The second report will be written specifically for the international donor community in order to encourage the creation of the recommended civic structures and process at the end of this 18 month project, and bring the precise needs of the various communities to the attention of the relevant bodies.

The Future of the Project

Phase two establishes the necessary channels of communication for the Palestinian refugee communities outside of the West Bank and Gaza, in the host countries of Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon, the Arab world, and in the large refugee and exile communities elsewhere, such as Europe and Latin America. The international donor community will be engaged in the project at the end of Phase One for the purposes of providing the funding for the structures recommended by the two reports for the refugee communities. The project's team will lobby the international community in order to obtain the specified structures and mechanisms that were requested by the Palestinian refugee communities, but can not guarantee these can be secured.

The most important feature of this project is that it has no means or ambition to limit or specify the type of structures for the refugees. It is left entirely to them to discuss and determine what their needs are. We hope that this project can for the first time reach all of the refugee communities in the camps and exile communities outside of the West Bank and Gaza – over half the entire population of the Palestinians – and begin to link them together by a process of participatory deliberation within the Palestinian framework. It will be entirely democratic, and let the refugees speak for themselves about the issues and needs that most concern them. They can begin to participate more fully in their own future in ways that they determine for themselves, contribute to their common national goals, and provide assistance and support while they are engaged in this work.

Contact

For information about the project, please contact the Project Director, Dr Karma Nabulsi at: director:civitas@nuffield.ox.ac.uk, or the Project Team and the Project Coordinator Dr Sufyan Alissa at: office.civitas@nuffield.ox.ac.uk. The website www.civitas-online.org is interactive in Arabic and English.

DOCUMENT 2

PRINCIPLES AND PURPOSES OF THE CIVITAS PROJECT

The Civitas project is at an advanced stage as Palestinian refugees in large numbers have participated in series of meetings in the Arab world, Europe and further afield during the past months thanks to the hard work on the ground of Palestinian activists who serve in their communities. In these debates in many countries, Palestinian refugees have publicly raised the key issues of concern in a democratic fashion, foremost of which is the primacy and centrality of the right of return, and that the PLO is their sole legitimate representative. Further, they recommend methods and channels to improve the advancement of their rights and needs, as well as connections with their national leadership, international bodies, and other refugee communities, inside and outside of Palestine.

As many hundreds of Palestinians have been, and still are, working and participating in this project on the ground, and see it as an important tool to advance their rights and that of their people by raising their voices everywhere, the Civitas project would like to reaffirm and highlight the following principles of the project:

1. The Civitas project is based entirely on the central principle that the Palestine Liberation Organisation is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. The project description says this clearly in written form, and has said this from its very beginning. The Civitas project reaffirms that this project is to strengthen the PLO, not suggest alternatives to it.

2. All of the international legal rights of the Palestinian people are affirmed through this project, by the work and in the outcomes of this project, and these basic rights are not contested in this project. The project aims to incorporate all of the rights of the Palestinian people. The sole purpose of this project is to affirm the rights of the people through the voices of the people speaking for themselves in public and open debate. Foremost of all these inalienable rights is the Palestinian refugees' right of return, as enshrined in UN General Assembly Resolution 194 of 1948.

This project goes further, as it also affirms all of the rights of the Palestinian people wherever they are: their right to self determination, their social, economic, and political rights, as expressed through the UN Declaration of Human Rights, countless UN security council and General Assembly Resolutions, as well as by the national will of the Palestinian people as expressed through their sole legitimate representative the PLO. This project will enhance the struggle for these rights.

3. This project provides a service to the refugee and exile communities all over the world wherever they are: in the Arab world, Europe and America, by providing facilitation to them so that they may raise their rights and their needs as refugees to the international community, through a true and accurate record of their voices, as expressed in public meetings. The purpose of this project is to also bring these rights and needs to the attention of the international community, so that the international community can take up their responsibilities to the Palestinian people and the Palestinian refugees under international law. It is also a means to strengthen connections between refugee communities, inside and outside of Palestine.

4. This project is not an institution, party, faction, or NGO. Civitas is purely a facilitation service which has a limited mandate and limited time period, and relies entirely on the recommendations made by existing associations, activists, and ordinary people on the ground, raised through open discussion. These recommendations are accurately reflected through recorded transcription, and provide a platform to bring the rights and issues that concern Palestinians wherever they are to the urgent attention of the international community and other relevant bodies.

Annexe B

Documents Distributed During Meetings

Annexe B

Documents Distributed During Meetings

5. The basic principle of this project is to strengthen and enhance all existing institutions and associations on the ground which serve Palestinian refugee and exile communities, providing them with additional platforms and ways to connect to each other. It does not aim to replace existing grass-roots associations and other channels and structures that serve Palestinian civic and political society. The project itself is run by community activists, both in the right of return movement, and in other associational bodies.

6. This project asks Palestinians to suggest for themselves whether they need extra channels of communication to the ones they currently have. This question is as a result of the refugees' own request, given the serious fragmentation in exile for decades. It is based upon the "Right of Return Report" of 2001 which was issued by the British Joint Parliamentary Middle East Councils Commission of Enquiry, after their visit to the Palestinian refugee camps and communities in Palestine, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon (the details of the report can be found on the project's website). In it, the refugees recommended enhancing channels of communication with the bodies that represent and serve them, especially the PLO, the host countries, and the humanitarian agencies. It is up to the communities to voice their needs and assert their rights. In many of the Palestinian refugee communities, such as in Iraq, channels of communication have weakened and new ones are needed. In the discussions there, all refugees recommended the creation of channels of communication to the PLO and humanitarian agencies with great urgency.

7. The project extends to Palestinian refugee and exile communities outside of Palestine in around 25 countries, whatever their legal or civil status. The project seeks to empower the ongoing work of grass-roots Palestinian associations to strengthen the connection between refugee communities outside Palestine, and those within Palestine. Based on their own recommendations, it is for these communities, both inside and outside of Palestine, to decide on the ways to continue strengthening the connections themselves.

For further information about the project and the progress of the debates, all documentation can be found on the Civitas website www.cicitias-online.org

DOCUMENT 3

Existing channels of communication in Palestinian refugee and exile communities

This is a brief overview of civic structures that already exist in Palestinian refugee and exile communities in order to help the moderators and participants in the open debates to think about the channels of communication that serve their community. The desire may be to revive or strengthen existing structures - especially in countries where there are active Palestinian associations and unions - while in other areas these structures have broken down, become inactive, or have never existed, as Palestinian refugee communities move and change. Channels and structures may exist to communicate with certain bodies and institutes, and not to others.

To assist the discussions, below you will find examples which are already serving Palestinian refugee and exile communities in different ways. These examples are not recommendations, but illustrations from a wide range of existing structures in Palestinian refugee and exile communities in order to assist deliberations. Some of these examples might not be possible, practical, or desirable due to the local political, geographic and resource constraints of various communities. These examples provide basic information on the role and purpose of different structures, and provide a tool for discussion in the debates.

Examples of civic structures provided in this guide are divided into the following categories:

1. Delegations.
2. Committees and Unions.
3. Twinning and Linking.
4. Regular meetings and Conventions.
5. Magazines, newsletters, websites, email lists & e-newsletters
6. Activities and commemorative events.
7. Spaces for the community: centres and offices.
8. Media: Radio/TV programs and stations, press conferences and press releases.

The civic structures in question relate to the establishment of links to the following bodies:

- i. Your national representative.
- ii. The host country where you currently reside.
- iii. Humanitarian agencies and other international institutions that provide services.
- iv. Other Palestinian refugee communities, including those inside Palestine.
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Annexe B

Documents Distributed During Meetings

Annexe B

Documents Distributed During Meetings

1. Delegations

Delegations are made up of community members in order to carry the will of that community forward in a formal or informal manner, on a single issue or on a variety of issues. Delegations can be mandated to reflect particular views, decisions or needs, as expressed by that community or a sector of that community, to national representatives, host countries, humanitarian agencies, and other bodies or communities that need to be reached. Delegations can be mandated in a variety of ways: through elections, volunteering, specialisation or through a profession that is relevant to the delegation in question.

For example, students, doctors, lawyers, women, human rights activists who may be serving legal, health, or other civic concerns of the community may form delegations to raise issues with the various bodies that need to be reached on a national and international level. Delegations are often formed for one meeting or purpose and dissolve as soon as the task is achieved.

2. Committees and Unions

Committees can be formed for single events, such as to prepare for an event or a large meeting, or it can be set up to serve on a more lasting basis. Committees exist in Palestinian refugee communities to provide a range of services, such as legal committees, media committees, political and civic rights committees, to work on twinning with other communities, or to raise money for students and for Palestinians in need, inside and outside of Palestine. In refugee camps inside Palestine and in exile there are camp committees - such as the popular committees, regional committees, local committees and specialized committees (economic, cultural, educational, social, financial, etc.) - that meet for a number of purposes, on a broad range of concerns. In some places these are elected and in others they are appointed.

Unions form a long tradition in Palestinian political life, and some were established before the creation of the PLO, which is itself partly composed of labour unions, student unions, teachers' unions, women's unions, workers' unions, doctors' unions, engineers' unions, etc. However, in many countries unions have become inactive, and in others unions have never been formed. In some places unions have stopped functioning simply due to insufficient numbers - for example when there is no longer a strong student population in a host country for a variety of reasons, GUPS, the General Union of Palestinian Students, is no longer active. Unions can provide a central forum to regularly assist Palestinian civic society in a large variety of ways: social welfare, professional, political platforms and declarations, advocacy work, and serving the needs and reflecting the views of their members.

3. Twinning and Linking

Twinning can be established between refugee communities all over the world, to the refugee camps inside Palestine and to refugee communities in the Arab world and farther afield – in Europe, North America, Latin America. Twinning provides support and solidarity, and a networking of activities, including sharing of ideas and resources. Through twinning, regular associations can be developed and maintained between schools, hospitals, unions, youth summer camps, and other activities. As such, refugee and exile communities can support one another in a variety of ways: through fundraising, visits, donation of books and materials, inviting students and professionals, inviting public speakers, sharing resources to raise awareness on issues of concern, and through other means. Some European cities are twinned with Palestinian towns - such as Glasgow in Scotland to Nablus. But there are only a few towns linked to refugee communities - such as Oxford City in the United Kingdom with El-Amari refugee camp in Ramallah - or between the Palestinian refugee and exile communities themselves, inside and outside the refugee camps.

Linking is a more informal network which connects several refugee communities on certain issues common to them all, such as civic and political rights. Linking can also provide information and news on events, campaigns and projects to the communities and help them build strong coalitions. For instance, inside Palestine, the refugee camp committees and other refugee camp associations regularly organise platforms, declarations, and position papers on issues of common concern.

4. Regular meetings and Conventions

A number of community members and associations meet regularly, on a monthly or bi-monthly basis. Many associations possess a set of rules about elections for the board of the association, the time-length of such posts, and other organisational agreements. There are charters for these various exile community associations, with laws and by-laws, which can be made available to examine different examples of organisational development that might be suitable. Regular meetings are where discussions and debates occur, information is shared, decisions are made and actions are planned. Such regular Palestinian association meetings are predominant in Europe, with most European countries having elected boards, and which are run on formal or informal systems of organisation. Events are planned at such meetings, and regular speakers and guests are invited. Other types of meetings are held by different Palestinian groups within the community – youth, support, solidarity organisations, and organisations advocating for Palestine and Palestinian refugee rights. As a channel of communication, regular meetings also provide a way to receive various community representatives as well as national and international institutional representatives to speak and listen to the communities on a range of issues that concern them.

Conventions and conferences - some of which are organised on an annual basis on specific or general issues - are formal meetings that bring together members, representatives, or delegates, as well as members of communities, unions, institutions and associations for consultation or discussion, to exchange views, and in some cases take decisions on issues of common concern to the community as a whole, which could be expressed in the form of closing declarations or resolutions.

5. Magazines, newsletters, websites, email lists and email newsletters

Print material as a medium of communication: Magazines and Newsletters

Palestinian associations around the world use print material in the form of newsletters and magazines as a central method of communication and outreach, both within their community and outside it. Many are primarily used as a service within their community and not for communicating directly with humanitarian agencies, national representatives, host countries, or other refugee communities, although some magazines cover several countries, like in Latin America. Magazines and newsletters are used for one or all of the following objectives:

- To publicize upcoming community events and activities and to update the community on past activities and events.
- To inform community members of services and activities that may assist them.
- To build bridges and network with other communities in the same country or abroad by informing the local community of activities and services provided in other regions.
- To provide a public space for members, unions, and other groups in the community.
- To raise awareness on issues of concern (both locally in the host country and internationally), regarding the Palestinian cause and any social, political and economic issues.
- To raise awareness of members of the local Palestinian community about the situation of their own community.

One of the advantages of using print material as a mechanism of communication is that it is easier to read, and to manage and maintain compared to internet-based material. It also provides a more effective way of measuring the extent of its reach by assessing the distribution of the print material.

Electronic mediums of communication: Website, Email lists & E-newsletters

Sectors of the Palestinian refugee communities utilize the internet vary extensively in the form of websites, email lists and email newsletters (or E-newsletters). Email lists are lists on which people can subscribe in order to receive regular emails from a specific group or on a wide-variety of issues; or as a space for active members to discuss issues and organise events, activities and campaigns. E-Newsletters are web-based newsletters sent in the form of emails and formatted in a similar fashion as print magazines or newsletters. Many of the communities use these means more as a way to mobilise inside their community than to communicate directly with particular bodies or institutions.

Annexe B

Documents Distributed During Meetings

Websites, Email lists and E-Newsletters are used for similar objectives to printed newsletters and magazines with the added advantage of ease of dissemination, without having to deal with the burdens attached to costs of printing and distribution. The drawback of these internet-based mechanisms, however, is the lack of human interaction, and the fact that in most countries only a small section of the communities use the internet on a regular basis, as the majority has limited access. Some advanced Websites may also be used as an interactive web-based mean of providing services to communities, towns, villages and camps.

6. Activities and commemorative events

Activities and commemorative events are commonly used in Palestinian refugee and exile communities as occasions to raise awareness of the Palestinian issue in the host country, advocate for issues of concern, bring community members together, network and build solidarity with other communities and associations. Such activities and commemorative events provide opportunities of communicating with national representatives, host countries, humanitarian agencies, and other refugee communities.

There are a wide variety of activities that take place in Palestinian refugee and exile communities around the world, such as: public meetings, cultural performances, vigils, demonstrations, panel discussions, guest speakers, etc. Such activities held on commemorative dates - such as Nakba day, commemoration of the Sabra and Shatila massacres, Declaration of Independence, the Deir Yassin massacre, Land Day, etc. - regularly take place all over the world where there are Palestinians in exile.

7. Creating a space for the community: centres and offices

Centres and offices for the Palestinian refugee and exile communities provide a public space for members, unions, and other groups in the community where meetings are held, activities are organised, social, cultural, and political programs and services are provided and a sense of unity for community members given. Additionally, maintaining a space provides a point of reference for community members and is an effective way to direct new members to the community at large. For example, in Europe and North America, many such centres provide a space, workshops, services and programs, which serve the local Palestinian community. In the refugee camps in the Middle East, centres and offices - such as youth centres, women's centres, union offices, NGO offices, etc. - provide a space, services and programs, for specific sectors of the Palestinian refugee community.

8. Media: Radio/TV programs and stations, Press conferences and press releases.

Radio/TV programs and stations are an effective mean for reaching out to the community and the general public, publicize activities and events, raise awareness on a wide variety of issues, advocate for issues of concern, as well as indirectly communicate with other refugee communities. In organizing and running Radio/TV programs and stations, the Palestinian refugee and exile communities bring together many sectors of their communities by creating a regular space for promoting discussion and debate within their own community and in the public arena on issues of concern to them. For example, in certain Arab countries, the Palestinian refugee communities have been able to run, at varying degrees in the past decades, their own Radio/TV programs as a way to reach out to their community and the public at large, and in some cases, have been able to start their own Radio or TV station. Some Palestinian exile communities in Europe and North America have their own regular weekly program on a specific radio station or TV station, generally on community-run or alternative radio and TV outlets.

Palestinian refugee and exile communities also often utilize existing Radio/TV programs and stations to get media coverage on issues that concern them as a mean of informing and raising the awareness of their own community and the public at large. This is usually done by organizing press conferences and/or sending press releases to the mainstream and alternative media programs and stations. Press releases and press conferences also create a space for the different Palestinian refugee and exile communities to come together and express their common concerns, and to invite guests and guest speakers for discussion programs.

DOCUMENT 4

Guidelines for Running the Debates:

Based on the Recommendation of Participants in Cyprus Consultation Meeting

AIMS

The objective of the debates is to establish how Palestinian refugee communities living in exile in the Middle East, Europe and further afield can build civic structures and mechanisms to enable better communication with their national representative the PLO, refugee communities, and agencies that serve their needs. These structures will be decided by a series of publicly convened debates run over a period of two months within the large Palestinian exile communities and refugee camps. Their needs and priorities will be determined by introducing four questions on civic structures and processes which will be discussed by them. These questions will be disseminated to all communities between November 2004 and February 2005, and then debated between March and May 2005 through a series of public meetings and workshops (in Latin America these will be done in June 2005).

1) As a refugee community, what structures and channels of communication would you like in order to communicate with the following bodies?

- i. Your national representative.
- ii. The host country where you currently reside.
- iii. Humanitarian agencies and other international institutions that provide services.
- iv. Other Palestinian refugee communities, including those inside Palestine.
- v. Structures inside your own refugee community?

2) As a refugee community what are the civic structures and mechanisms you currently use to communicate with these various bodies?

3) What are the civic, legal, social, economic, and political issues that you would like to raise with these bodies?

4) As a community, what are your most urgent needs and priorities while you are refugees?

- The small Civitas team will ensure the dissemination of the questions to the communities. This will be done through the facilitators, association heads, and refugee camp community leaders that attended the Cyprus meeting, through the web, email, and ordinary post.
- The deliberations in the camps and exile communities will be enacted through a variety of public events: meetings, syndicated or focus groups and workshops, and the distribution of these questions and information about the project throughout community centres and areas of common association.

Given the fact that the Palestinian refugee communities across the Arab world and further afield have extremely different conditions, expectations, and priorities, two models for running the debates have been recommended by the participants at the Cyprus consultation meeting held in November 2004: the "Maximum model" and the "Minimum model". The Maximum model is the structure of debates and workshops that have been designed to be most participatory. It provides every means to be inclusive of all sectors and strands of the refugee community before addressing certain geographic and political challenges. The Minimum model takes into consideration these factors and challenges, and highlights the most important features of the debates that need to be used to obtain consistency in procedures and responses from the refugees' voices.

Annexe B

Documents Distributed During Meetings

MAXIMUM MODEL

In the absence of political and geographical constraints in the communities, the maximum model should ideally be used during the debate. This constitutes a set of two public meetings and a minimum of 3 syndicate or focus group meetings or workshops for each debate held. These set of meetings are to be run within a period of two to three weeks (in some communities it might need more than two or three weeks – the time over which the entire process is held is eight weeks at the outside).

The case of Lebanon can serve to explain the type and number of meetings needed for the debate within the maximum model. In general the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon are concentrated in four main areas: the South, North, Beqa' and Beirut areas. In every area a set of meetings will be held over the period of three weeks in March and April 2005.

- It is important to announce these meetings: the aims, the time, and the place where they will be held, and ensure this information is disseminated and promoted. This information will also need to be repeated at the end of each of the syndicate meetings
- The first should be a public meeting made up of a broad cross-section of refugees, to include workers and unemployed, those with political affiliations and those without, educated and non-educated, youth, women, and the elderly. The number of participants in this meeting should be unlimited, and as inclusive as possible.
- Following the public meeting, three to four syndicate meetings should be held. The number of participants in each meeting should be at least 25 people. The purpose of these are to explain, discuss, and talk through the four types of questions and ensure people have a good understanding of the possibilities of choice for structures. The meetings should be comprised of the following categories:-
 - Meeting number 1 is for women. A suitable time should be chosen to make sure that women are able to attend. For example, in some areas morning meetings might be better for women than an afternoon or evening meeting.
 - Meeting number 2 is for young people, especially students.
 - Meeting number 3 is for political elites, activists, and intellectuals. This includes people from popular committees, political parties, unions, clubs, refugee activists and representatives of institutions that serve the people in the camp.
 - Meeting number 4 is a workshop for all interested to discuss the questions and choices before the community.
- Following the syndicate meeting, another public meeting should be held for all participants in order to record their answers.
 - At this meeting people will already have had the chance to think about the issues discussed and questions asked at the first meeting. They will have articulated their views, needs and expectations and recommended possible structures. They will have had a chance to read literature about the project and structures of communication that might suit their community, and have been able to discuss these with each other and the facilitators of the project.
 - The number of participants at this final meeting should be unlimited. It should be taken into consideration that the number of participants who will attend this meeting might be higher or less than the first one. It might be the case that more people will know about the project or some of the people who have already attended but have not participated in the discussion or expressed their views in the first one will be more familiar with the project, and want to participate in the final one. Likewise, those that have put their views, ideas and recommendations to the syndicate meetings might not feel it important to attend the last meetings, as their views will be carried forward there.

MINIMUM MODEL

In the presence of certain political or geographical constraints in the community, a minimum model is to be applied. This model consists of a number of

syndicate or focus group meetings to be held in the communities. The number of the meetings is to be decided by the communities themselves in close coordination with the project team after discussing the challenges and ways to address them. It is important that these meetings include all strands of the society as in the maximum model. The number of participants at each meeting should be around 25 people. These meetings are also to be held within a period of two or three weeks - some communities might need more than two or three weeks. If there are political constraints in holding public meetings, then an adequate system of notification to the refugees are to be introduced so as to ensure maximum participation, and these guidelines will be devised in consultation with the project team and local conditions. It might be necessary to hold smaller sets of meetings in this case.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- All meetings (whether using the maximum or minimum) must be recorded with a simple cassette recorder. In addition, two note-takers should write the details of the debates in a very comprehensive way. There will be a form for them to use in order to organise the notes and the recommendations of the refugees.
- The tapes and notes must be sent directly after the meeting to the project team at Oxford.
- The capacity (size) and accessibility of the place where meetings will be held should be taken into consideration during the preparation for the meetings. They should be large enough to accommodate the expected number of participants and should be easily reached by the public.
- The handbook of the project description and a list of the questions should be available and distributed to the people before and during these meetings. The handbook of examples of existing structures of communication currently used by various Palestinian refugee communities across the world, and the handbook of examples of different types of structures and possibilities, should also be made available, to help the community think of recommendations that might suit their own needs.
- The moderators should promote, engage, and give equal chance to all the participants at the meetings, especially ordinary people, women, and youth.
- The project should be explained by the moderator in a very simple and clear way. Answers to the people's inquiries should also be made in a very patient, simple manner. Materials will be provided to assist the moderators in this task of moderating. Overhead slides, posters, and frequently asked question sheets (with answers) will be provided to all the moderators.
- The programme and timing of the meetings should be explained by the moderator at the beginning of the meeting.
- It is advisable that the duration of the meeting should not exceed 3 hours. However, this is subject to the moderator's assessment at every meeting.
- The meetings should be as inclusive and as democratic as possible. Therefore, the moderator should ensure ordinary people from a wide cross-section of the society – particularly at the public meetings – are attending, and more importantly, that they are given the chance to express their views and recommendations, and encouraged to do so.

PREPARING FOR THE DEBATES

- Preparations for the debates: Those facilitating the process of preparing the communities for the debates and moderating them will use an action plan they devise with the project team. They will be able to rely upon advice and experience of the moderators and plans being used in other regions and areas. In the weeks leading up to the debates, and during the debates themselves, the moderators and note-takers must keep careful notes of the issues that need

Annexe B

Documents Distributed During Meetings

to be included in the final Report, to show the methods of inclusion that were used in every place, and the challenges to inclusion that were faced and how they were addressed.

1. How are the moderators engaging the community? Have they put ads in the local paper, an email list system, or other local means such as community events, and have they started to distribute the questions to various local institutions that are involved in Palestinian life? Have they approached all sectors of that society, especially Palestinian NGOs, unions, party leaders, institutional and charity heads, in order to ensure that the questions and ideas of the project are disseminated and understood before the first public meeting? Have they listened to community activists and other relevant people, and taken into account any concerns or ideas about the timings and place for the meetings, as well as explained the project to them? Have they engaged members of the community to think about ways to involve the different sectors of society to ensure inclusion of the Palestinian society as a whole?
2. During the debates the moderators and facilitators will need to keep a record of the ways in which the people were informed of the meetings, the numbers of people that attended, the practical and logistical challenges they had faced in getting attendance, and the ways that they promoted the meetings during the three week period from the first meeting to the last one.
3. If the meetings could be videoed this would add a unique historical record of the Palestinian refugee community, and would be welcomed by the project. However, the moderators need to take local concerns into account, and in certain countries consider voting for this procedure at the first public meeting, in order to ensure comfort and participation of the most people possible.

DOCUMENT 5:**The Main Findings from the Refugees' Testimony****British Joint Parliamentary Middle East Councils****Commission of Enquiry – Palestinian Refugees****The Main Findings from the Refugees' Testimony**

The Commission of Enquiry asked the refugees several general questions as to how they viewed their past and their present situation, as well as what aspirations they had for a future settlement. We were particularly struck by several recurring themes, all of which emerged from the oral and written testimonies of the refugees themselves, and we would like to draw attention to them here. The examples given below are illustrative of views that were found throughout the trip.

The Commission finds these seven themes to be of some significance, since they were mentioned consistently by all of the refugees with whom we spoke. We believe this to have further relevance given the diffuse, difficult and diverse nature of the Palestinian refugees' predicament. Physical locations, generational gaps, financial and social situations, and host relations in various Arab countries are all exceptionally dissimilar. Yet in spite of these variations, the following themes were constantly and consistently raised as central issues by all Palestinian refugees we met.

I. Core of the Conflict

The first common opinion voiced was the understanding that the issue of the refugees themselves was the core of the conflict between the Arabs and Israel. Evaluating the refugee issue as the most relevant and urgent may seem an obvious point to those directly victimised; however, the delegation feels that this simple fact has often been overlooked by those parties involved in resolving the conflict.

The manner in which this is understood by refugees is extremely important. As Muhammad Nawfal (Saffuria, north Palestine), from Ain al-Hilwa Refugee Camp, told us:

The major issue for our Palestinian people is the issue of refugees. It is more sacred than the issue of Jerusalem, and if the issue of the refugees' return to their lands and properties of 1948 is not solved, the Palestinian issue is not solved, the Palestinian issue will never be solved. We are now addressing Palestinian representatives, Arab representatives and Arab countries, asking them not to manipulate the issue of the Palestinian refugees. There is no substitute for return to Palestine, neither compensation and staying here, nor resettlement. We refuse the whole issue of emigration as well. There is no substitute for return.

This understanding of refugees as the core of the conflict comes for reasons of the length of the problem, and because of its complexity. According to Bassam Naim (Yazur, Jaffa):

Annexe B

Documents Distributed During Meetings

The issue of the refugees is significant because it is the only issue that started in consequence of the war of 1948, whereas the issue of Jerusalem started after the war of 1967. The issues of water, borders, etc., started after 1967. Since the issue of the refugees is the only one that started in consequence of 1948, it is the most complicated one and the one to insist on the most strongly...

Yet this view is not restricted to those who suffered directly as refugees. In our conversations with Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza who were not themselves refugees, the same point was made continually. One such typical remark was made by Muhammad Jaradat:

I am the coordinator of this programme, specialising in fieldwork. I am not a refugee, and this is an important point. I believe 100% that the Palestine question is mainly a refugee question. If you look at the program of the Palestinian liberation movement, it was return, liberation, and then Jerusalem. This has not changed. Seventy two percent of the Palestinian people are refugees. And if you make peace, then according to democratic values and universal values you must make peace with the majority and not the minority. As a resident of Bethlehem or Hebron, it means that for me I cannot live in peace and security if my own people do not return and have their free choice as well as the international guarantee to return, for those who chose return.

II. Danger of Exclusion

All refugees, without exception, wanted to communicate directly with us the fact that they felt completely excluded from the peace process. They also wanted us to understand that a peaceful solution could only emerge with the inclusion of the refugee issue, as well as the refugees' participation in some manner. Finally, they told us that unless the refugees' concerns were incorporated into the process of decision-making on a final settlement, they were convinced that this agreement would not have the capacity to bring peace. These three distinct concerns were clearly articulated.

On exclusion from the peace process, Haifa Jamal told us in Beirut:

I don't feel that it is a peace process. Myself, I am eager to live in peace. We hope to live in peace. But real peace. Not what is happening now. When we follow and listen to what they are discussing about our situation and our rights in the negotiations, we don't consider this to be a peace process.

They were thus deeply suspicious about Oslo and the Camp David meetings that had taken place in July 2000. "I feel that this peace process has been enforced upon us," said Hussein Qasem, also in Beirut. All the refugees we spoke to were unanimous about the implications of this exclusion from the peace process: no peace would be attainable without their legitimate concerns being addressed. In a Gaza refugee centre, Khamis al-Turk (Bir al-Sab'a) told us:

We, the people of Palestine, want to bring peace and security again into the world. However, there will be no peace without giving the sacred right of return to the people of Palestine.

This last comment was reiterated, in many formulations, by all those we met at the various refugee camps in the region.

III. Representativeness

There were several distinct aspects concerning the complex subject of representation. This issue is the most complicated of all, but it is also perhaps the most understudied and misunderstood part of Palestinian refugee life.

We learnt that over different sets of rights and concerns there were different responses to the question of representativeness. The Commission learnt that representation involves different understandings depending on the issue at hand: individual property rights, civil rights and collective rights as a people to self-determination. For the collective will, and as to the rights of the Palestinian people as a people, the Commission was told without exception that their representative was the PLO. Khaled Mansur (Um al-Zaynat) put it quite simply, as did all Palestinians when this issue was raised:

As a Palestinian, I consider the PLO to be the only legitimate representative of the Palestinians and the leadership of our struggle to achieve the right of return. The strategy of the PLO is to push the international community and the United Nations to work for an implementation of the right of return through diplomatic and political channels.

Refugees repeatedly told us, however, that representation was needed at several levels, not just one: political, legal, individual and civil. However, all were explicit about the limits of national representation over individual rights. In Gaza, we were told that it was the refugees' right to make decisions about their individual claims to their property. Abdullah Arabid (Hirbiya, Gaza) said:

My personal private rights state that nobody, whoever he is, is entitled to take a decision on my behalf. I am from the occupied village of Hirbiya. Nobody is entitled to sell, to let, to rent or to relinquish Hirbiya to anybody, on my behalf.

They all believed popular sovereignty and democracy was crucial to a representation over their rights, and that "no group has the right to challenge" the right of return. "Furthermore," Arabid said, "we consider any bargain or concession concerning these national essentials, which were ratified by international law, to be treason. The main authority to decide on such issues is people themselves, not some individuals."

The Commission notes that there was wide disparity between those who were fortunate in having active representation at a grassroots level in the camps, and places where there was no such adequate representation. Finally, the Commission noted that the groups able to make direct representations to their elected leadership were only those refugees in close physical proximity to them; those living in the Occupied Territories. Indeed the only group that the Commission met who mentioned petitioning the leadership were in Gaza. There was a deep concern amongst refugees in the Arab countries that they were not in a physical position or situation which would allow their voices to be heard by their chosen representatives, the Palestine Liberation Organisation, and they were seeking for means to correct this. This problem had developed, in their eyes, as a result of a protracted period of dispossession and dislocation, which indeed they are still suffering at this time. This was reflected in the then current negotiations. Musa Abu Hashash of Fawwar Camp told us:

We as refugees feel that the right of return is underestimated against the issue of Jerusalem. This is what we feel when we listen to the media, and to the official visitors who come to the region. We feel that they will apply some bizarre solution that will disregard the right of return and all the Palestinian fundamentals, including the issue of Jerusalem. However, we are certain that they are going to disregard the right of return.

Annexe B

Documents Distributed During Meetings

IV. Land and People

One of the features we learnt most quickly about the refugees was their direct and profound identification and attachment to land, and their self-identification with it as a people. This relationship was multi-tiered and multi-dimensional. The most obvious way it manifested itself was in how every Palestinian refugee we met introduced themselves to us as being from a specific village or locale. According to Dr. Adnan Shahada (Yasur, Gaza).

For some of you, or for European logic in general, it is difficult to understand why some people have this strong attachment to a certain place. In Western culture, people move from one country to another, where they settle down and live their life. However, homeland has a great significance in Arab culture. It means belonging, self-esteem and history for the generations who live in that part of the earth."

Many of the refugees know about the homes they lived in and have managed to visit them, and taken their children to see them. In Bethlehem, at Aida refugee camp, we met Isa Qaraq'a (al-Biqa'). He, like many of the refugees we met, came from a village that was nearby, in his case not 7km away:

We went back to our villages one or two months ago. In one return visit to some Palestinian villages we met Israelis living in our houses, the houses of our fathers and grandfathers. We were shocked to discover that some Israelis still keep some belongings of our fathers and grandfathers. And they had to admit: "This is your house". The features of the house were still as they were. In one of the houses there was still an amount of olive oil that was kept for more than 50 years in a well inside the house."

We remarked on the number of refugees who had their property records with them. They also showed us their identity cards, and other documents some had thought to carry with them on what they had believed would be a short absence from their homes during the heat of the fighting, 52 years ago. Ismail Abu Hashash (Iraq al-Manshiya, Gaza) told us about the closeness to the land even now:

There are five million Palestinian refugees in exile but not far from their land (the majority of them are living in countries neighbouring their homeland). They left and their dream was to go back when the war was over after two or three weeks. Yet a week became more than 50 years. More than 80% of Palestinians are still living in the region, a fact that speaks for itself. This is the biggest referendum confirming that their preference is the right of return

V. British Role, Israeli and International Responsibility

From the start of the Commission's trip to the region, it quickly became apparent that being British had a special resonance amongst all refugees.

In Lebanon, Jamal Khaddura (Suhmata, Acre) said:

The main responsibility for our catastrophe lies with the British Mandate... I think that it is not difficult for you to understand the main root of Palestine's problem... Ten years after Balfour's promise in 1917, in 1927, the King sent a committee to go to Palestine to investigate the reasons for the disturbances there. The committee came to Palestine and met Arabs and Jews. They wrote a report on the main causes of the disturbances. So Britain knew what was happening in Palestine. You must convey our opinion that the British are responsible for the Palestinian Catastrophe. And you should call for another conference to help Palestinians to return to their homeland and live with Israelis peacefully.

Annexe B

Documents Distributed During Meetings

They would begin with something like this, as put by Isa al-Azza (Tal al-Safi, Hebron):

The first point I want to make concerns the concept of this committee, which is the investigation of facts, and about this committee being British. If Britain, after 52 years, is still forming committees to investigate the crime of the expulsion of a whole people from their country, then what is there to say?

They also had a very detailed knowledge and understanding of the historical role Britain had played in the lead-up to the creation of the refugees' plight, even including specific dates of treaties, White Papers and Commissions of the Mandate Era. Al-Azza went on to say here:

I think if the world wants to investigate facts, then the world should be referred to the files of Britain; to the men who investigated facts in 1936, 1939, 1942 and 1945; to the White Book in Britain which Britain used to issue; to all committees that have been established in Britain; and to the round-table conferences that took place in London. They should be referred to the board of arbitration that was established between 1948 and 1950.

Thus we were seen to have both a special role and a special responsibility by Palestinian refugees; yet we were welcomed with a generosity of spirit considering the strength of feeling. Taysir Nasrallah (Qaqun) said to us:

Regardless of this revival of the Palestinian memory now in front of a British parliamentary delegation — about the tragedy which Britain created for the people of Palestine when it contributed effectively to what happened in that period — regardless of that, I would like to welcome this delegation, who came here in order to conduct an enquiry into Resolution 194.

Key to the subject of responsibility for refugees for their situation was the unqualified conviction that nothing of substance could be discussed, or negotiated, or agreed, before an essential step was taken by the State of Israel. This was a recognition of the right of return of Palestinian refugees, and of their responsibility in the creation of what is commonly referred to as the "Catastrophe". This was expressed by virtually every Palestinian refugee group and individual met, from Nablus to Beirut to Damascus.

Isa Qaraq'a again:

Before we speak about compensation and things related, we speak of the right of return. We have to speak about it in an emotional way, and, moreover we have to speak about it as part of the Palestinian identity and the Palestinian existence. There is the starting point. Do not try to wipe out our memory by pretending we are starting here only. We have gone through much pain and a long history.

Shaher Badawi of Balata camp said:

The first step is recognition of the right of return, by Israel and the international community, as the right of Palestinian refugees. When this is accomplished, then I can begin to look at the details, then it would not be a problem.

Annexe B

Documents Distributed During Meetings

Ismail Abu Hashash said:

I would like to mention that acknowledging historical responsibility is an essential condition and starting point of this matter. The Israelis should admit what they have done, and the British should admit that they smoothed the way to this catastrophe.

However, the refugees also believed that, such was the international balance of power, the overall situation of the refugees' rights and their future was not to be left to the parties to the conflict themselves, as their rights would be ignored. The refugees also expressed the belief that this was important since the responsibility for their situation was international in character. One said to us:

With regard to international credibility, we consider international law as our point of reference and we want to prove that the law is fair and to stop breaches of the law with respect to our problem. We need more active involvement from the world, particularly from the UK, as it was aware of all the issues before the occupation.

The framework for a viable solution had to be international in structure, an international body, which was based on a system of laws, and that there needed to be a number of states involved as well.

VI. UNRWA

There was a real fear amongst Palestinian refugees that the legitimate role of UNRWA as a basic defender of the minimal rights of refugees was being undermined. UNRWA's identity was perceived to be threatened and its international legal character challenged by the current peace process, with no replacement as to its function on the horizon. Pressure of change to both its function and its role is seen by refugees as reflecting a receding commitment to the basic political, civil and social requirements of refugees. The mandate of UNRWA is understood by Palestinian refugees to cover merely part of their urgent problems, and it was well understood by the refugees we spoke to that this humanitarian relief organisation was not created to resolve the larger substantive political and civil issues of self-determination, sovereignty, or political and civil rights.

Ismail Abu Hashash told us:

First I want to mention that UNRWA was established on the basis of the legitimacy and the worthiness of the Palestinian refugees' issue in the first place. The Palestinian refugees' issue is a political reality and not only a humanitarian situation.

Others spoke to us of the changing role of UNRWA. Haifa Jamal said:

The international community established UNRWA to support the Palestinians with basic services. Now UNRWA has started to reduce these services. We are suffering more and more... since Oslo, all the European countries, all the donor countries, have reduced their contributions, and sometimes they don't make their contributions at all. We are afraid now that UNRWA may leave.

Haifa Jamal went on to make another point that was often mentioned by refugees concerning UNRWA: its special place for refugees in the absence of any political resolution to their situation. "UNRWA doesn't just mean the services we need, but UNRWA is also related to our right of return." Thus the distinction between the humanitarian and limited aspect of UNRWA's role and their larger political plight in no way diminishes its importance in refugees' eyes. Indeed, given the lack of movement over these political rights, refugees saw UNRWA as having an increased symbolic importance.

Ismail Abu Hashash again:

We insist on the continuation of UNRWA — not because we like UNRWA, but because it represents the recognition of the international community for the issue of the Palestinian refugees."

VII. Cohesion and Consistency amongst Refugees Views.

Most remarkable was the cohesion and consistency amongst refugees. Given the prominence certain refugees (like those of Lebanon) had been given over others in both the media, among experts and by those involved in the Oslo peace process, as well as the wide diversity of situations Palestinians found themselves in, the Commission was surprised and impressed by the unity of views on almost every issue of note for the refugees. Certain positions that could be seen to divide the refugees, since they involved a possible enhancement of their personal interests over other groups of refugees, were confronted outright by the refugees themselves.

Refugees all saw this commitment extending from generation to generation:

Camps were called shelters, and refugees still call them shelters until the right of return is achieved. I am holding on to my homeland for which there is no substitute. This right is inherited, from one generation to another. Therefore, I teach my children the geography and history of Palestine, and encourage them continuously to visit their home village...The right of return is an individual and a collective right.

Everywhere we went, refugees shared the view that the right of return must apply to all refugees, no matter what their current physical or financial position, wherever they were. Now living in Ain al-Hilwa camp in Lebanon, Hassan Abu Ali Hassan (al-Khalisa, Safad), said:

A few months ago some Palestinians, people of Palestinian origin living in Canada, came to see what was happening on the border, in the south of Lebanon (Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon in May 2000). This reflects the adherence of the Palestinians, wherever they exist, to their right of return to Palestine.

The Palestinians are suffering since more than 50 years.

Further, the refugees all described their tragedy in the same way: it had a humanitarian dimension, but it was political in nature. They spoke of and understood themselves as a people, no matter where they were now living, and showed an intense solidarity with the Palestinian refugees elsewhere.

Annexe B

Documents Distributed During Meetings

Khalid al-Azza:

The main principle is that all Palestinians want this resolution to be implemented; that is the resolution of the right of refugees to return and to compensation for the 52 years passed since they left their land, houses and factories.

Isa al-Azza added:

I would like to tell the British team here that the right of return is not a dream, we are not dreaming. It is a right which is held by 5.6 million Palestinians.

Commission Secretariat

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*Distributed by: **Civitas***

Foundations for Participation: Civic Structures for the Palestinian Refugee Camps and Exile Communities.

Nuffield College, University of Oxford

Documents To Be Completed by Moderators

DOCUMENT I

Annexe B

ACTION PLAN FORM	
COUNTRY:	

*Documents To Be Completed
by Moderators*

City/Town/Camp: (State/Province)			
Meeting # :			
Meeting Type:	<input type="radio"/> Public	<input type="radio"/> Syndicate	<input type="radio"/> Focus Group
If a Syndicate or Focus Group: what will be the make-up of the meeting?			
<input type="radio"/> Women	<input type="radio"/> Youth/Students	<input type="radio"/> Ordinary Citizens	<input type="radio"/> Prominent Individuals in Community
<input type="radio"/> Other: _____			
Meeting Date:		Meeting Time:	

Annexe B

*Documents To Be Completed
by Moderators*

DOCUMENT 2

Notes on the Debate Procedures and Arrangements

To be completed by the Moderator with the assistance of the Note-takers.

Section one

General information to be completed before the meeting takes place. This should be done by the moderator with the assistance of one or two associates, in order to ensure that all the information is as complete as possible.

Country:		City/Town/Camp: (State/ Province)	
Moderator:			
Note Taker 1:		Note Taker 2:	
Type of Meeting:	<input type="radio"/> Public	<input type="radio"/> Syndicate	<input type="radio"/> Focus Group
If a Syndicate or Focus Group: what was the make-up of the meeting:			
<input type="radio"/> Women	<input type="radio"/> Youth/Students	<input type="radio"/> Ordinary Citizens	<input type="radio"/> Prominent Individuals in Community
<input type="radio"/> Other: _____			
Meeting Location:			
Meeting Date:		Meeting Time:	

Section two

The procedures that were carried out to publicise the project and the meeting to the public, and to secure the participation and inclusiveness of all strands of society. To be completed by the moderator before the meeting takes place. Please explain all issues in details.

2.1 - What procedures were followed to publicise the project, both in the community and the area where the meeting to be held? What was done to prepare the community for the debates?

2.2 - What procedures were followed to announce the meeting and to invite people to it?

2.3 - What was done to ensure that the place where the meeting is held is accessible to people, and that the size of the room is enough to accommodate the expected number of people?

2.4 - What procedures were made to ensure people's access to the project description and other project literature before and during the meeting? Did you set up the tape recorder and inform people that the meetings would be taped? Did you ask if people mind if the meetings are videoed? (and vote on it)

2.5 - Have you faced any political, geographical, and logistical problems and constraints during the preparation for the meeting?

- a) Political problems and constraints:
- b) Geographical problems and constraints
- c) Logistical and practical problems and constraints:
- d) Other issues that should be mentioned:

Annexe B

Section three

Process of the meetings and the outcomes of the discussions. To be completed by the moderator after the meeting takes place. Please be as detailed as possible.

3.1 - How many people attended the meeting?

3.2 - How did the meeting progress in general? Was it dominated by a few people? Did everyone get a chance to speak that wanted to? Was more time needed?

3.3 - Did people understand the main objectives of the project and the issues that have been discussed in the meeting? Were they able to discuss their needs fully?

3.4 - Did they identify the important issues to be raised with relevant bodies? Did they distinguish between the different bodies they might want to communicate with, and what these bodies can do for them? Did they understand all the different types of channels possible to communicate with these bodies?

3.5 - Did you feel any constraints on peoples' ability to discuss certain issues?

3.6 - What procedures did you take in order to ensure an equal chance for people to participate in the discussion and express their views? Did you put posters up that list the questions for discussions so that people can refer to them during the meeting?

3.7 - Other notes and comments:

*Documents To Be Completed
by Moderators*

Roles of Moderator and Note-takers

The role of the moderator in facilitating the debates and discussions

During the debate period, once a meeting has been arranged (whether it is public, syndicate, or focus group meeting), the role of moderator becomes essential. It is to be able to provide clear explanations of the purpose of the project, run the meetings properly, help people feel at ease, and facilitate discussion and interaction between the participants in the meeting so they can make the decisions of what they need after discussing the issues fully. The role of the moderator is a demanding and challenging one. Many issues need to be taken in consideration before and during the meetings, and here are some points to assist you. In addition, the moderator should always remember qualities that are crucial for running the debate effectively, and lead to a truly open debate. These qualities help in promoting the participants' trust in the moderator and the project, and increase the likelihood of open and interactive discussions.

The key outcome of these debates is for the public to think about what they wish to communicate, the issues most important to them, who they need to communicate these issues to, and finally, to choose the mechanisms to communicate to these various bodies. Some of these mechanisms may already exist in your particular community, but perhaps are not being used adequately. Others will have to be thought about and chosen from a range of possibilities. Accordingly, the main role of the moderator is to lead the groups through a process where they have enough time to think and consider, so they may identify needs. This must happen before they can talk about specific structures to raise these needs through. Accordingly, it is a process of deliberation and reflection, and takes time. The moderator must above all pay attention to this process, and give people adequate the time to air their views and determine their needs before being able to identify the bodies that will be responsible for dealing with these issues. Only then can they finally come to a useful discussion of the structures and channels they might need to connect to these bodies. Here are some notes to assist you.

1. The moderator needs to demonstrate an understanding of the project, its history and background, the objectives, and the main issues to be discussed in the meeting. In addition, he/she should be a good listener; non-judgmental about peoples' views, and be adaptable to the situation and the environment.
2. Since the main objective for the debate is to give the people the chance to express their own views about issues that are important to them, the moderator need to promote this debate by asking open questions and illustrating the main issues to be discussed in very clear and simple way in order to make sure that people understood the objective of the meeting and to avoid any misunderstandings.
3. Given the complexity and sensitivity of the issues to be discussed in the meetings, and that people have different ways of speaking about issues, the moderator may occasionally need to challenge participants, especially to draw out people's differences on a diverse range of views on the issues under discussion. They must ensure those that disagree or are confused are not silenced, but that all issues are raised, and people can see the process is inclusive and respectful. But this engagement by the moderator should never interfere with the flow of the discussion. It is in order to facilitate the debate, if the discussion becomes stuck or too far away from the main themes.
4. When very general issues are raised by the participants, the moderator needs to probe for details, or move things forward when the conversation is drifting or has reached a conclusion on a particular subject. Always refer to the poster that highlights the areas to be discussed as a focus point to take people back to the issues.
5. It may be that some people will only want to make political speeches and declarations. In this case, the moderator has to keep the discussion focused, and sometimes he/she may deliberately have to steer the conversation back to the main issues. This should be done gently, and with courtesy.
6. It is important for the moderator to ensure that all participants get an equal chance to speak and to express their views. They should be aware and look

Annexe B

Documents To Be Completed by Moderators

Annexe B

Documents To Be Completed by Moderators

out for all different types of people attending, especially those who are silent or shy, but may have important things to contribute if encouraged.

7. Given the main role of the moderator is to facilitate the discussion and not to interfere in the type of views which people express, it is important for the moderator to avoid showing approval with certain issues and favouring particular participants. It is important also for the moderator to avoid giving their own personal views and opinions on the issues under discussion in the meeting so as not to influence the discussion towards any particular view or opinion or choice in structure.
8. Below is some background information that moderators, facilitators, and note-takers need to know about their community before the debates take place. This information will help explain the project whenever there is need for clarification, to answer questions that arise accurately, to ensure full discussions, and to assist the meetings when people are trying to make decisions about their choices for structures and identify their needs in a helpful and impartial way:
 - a. What types of structures and mechanisms exist in your community to communicate with the following bodies: national; host country; humanitarian agencies; within the refugee community; other refugee communities including inside Palestine? Which ones are missing? Which ones work?
 - b. Are there unions, associations, committees, newsletters, email lists, NGOs already doing this job? Or were there previously some which are not so active anymore? What structures do Palestinian refugees use in other countries which could provide examples of useful possibilities?
 - c. What are main issues affecting your community that need communicating to outside bodies for action and improvement and urgent attention? Is it political issues such as lack of identity papers and travel documents; problems with humanitarian services by international agencies; discrimination or inadequate education provision; legal issues such as right of return, and property; issues with unemployment and work?

The Role of Note-takers in the Meetings:

There should be two note-takers for the meetings. Each note-taker should make sure they are covering the following issues during discussions. They should ensure they make note of the person speaking, the issues the speaker discussed while focusing on recommendations they suggested by the speaker. The notes should be typed using a computer within 24 hours of the meeting. At the top of their notes they should clearly indicate:

1. Date, Time and Location
2. Name of moderator
3. Name of note-taker
4. Type of meeting that was held.

DOCUMENT 3

Palestinian Community Mapping Form

COUNTRY
THE SIZE OF THE COMMUNITY:
RESIDENCE LOCATIONS (NAME OF THE CITY, TOWN OR VILLAGE)
MAIN OCCUPATIONS
POLITICAL STRUCTURE

Annexe B

*Documents To Be Completed
by Moderators*

Annexe B

*Documents To Be Completed
by Moderators*

ORGANISATIONS THAT SERVE THE COMMUNITY

I Palestinian

II Non-Palestinian

III The Relationship Between These Organisations & The Palestinian People

RELATIONSHIP WITH HOST COUNTRY

RELATIONSHIP WITH PLO

Annexe B

*Documents To Be Completed
by Moderators*

<p>PEOPLE TO BE CONTACTED IN THE COMMUNITY (WITH THEIR CONTACT DETAILS)</p> <p>I Advantages</p> <p>II Disadvantages</p>
<p>PROBLEMS AND OBSTACLES THAT MIGHT FACE US DURING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT</p>
<p>WAYS TO SOLVE THESE PROBLEMS AND OBSTACLES</p>
<p>MEDIA ORGANISATIONS AND NETWORKS (DETAILS AND CONTACTS)</p>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This body of work involved the participation of thousands of people over a period of several years. Most individuals cannot be thanked because they contributed as members of a collective, working anonymously in order to serve their people by bringing forward their voices. This report is a tribute to all of those who participated in its construction. It is also a heartfelt tribute to the late President Yasser Arafat, who understood, encouraged, and supported this project from its inception.

From the start, in light of the Parliamentary Commission of Enquiry's recommendations, the Commission of External Relations of the European Union – instead of slamming the door shut on such a complex request – demonstrated an admirable sense of openness and flexibility, allowing a Palestinian researcher to suggest particular mechanisms and methods hitherto untried and untested. Most important, the Commission agreed to fund the research carried out in this project, which took some courage. Here, the former Commissioner of External Relations, Chris Patten, and especially the remarkable Christian Berger are both to be thanked. Indeed, without the latter's commitment, resolve, and steady nerve, this project would never have seen the light of day.

Nuffield College as host to the project was the ideal environment in which to run an international project involving creative research of such methodological complexity. The institution's uniqueness made it the only place on earth that could have absorbed a Palestinian Diaspora civic needs assessment exercise where the technical experts and facilitators included activists in refugee camps and representatives from exile communities in over 20 countries. In this regard, the role of two Fellows – the Warden, Sir Tony Atkinson, and the Bursar, Gwilym Hughes – were pivotal in both the launching and maintenance of the project, never blinking in the face of seeming insuperable hurdles, and offering encouragement and practical advice, sometimes on a daily basis. The Fellows and staff of the College provided an astonishing level of support throughout, entering into the spirit of the enterprise on intellectual, practical, and administrative levels, and dealing with every challenge presented to them with the self-possessed authority and confidence which that extraordinary institution never ceases to exude.

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