

CEPAL Canadian-Palestinian
Educational Exchange

Taking Stock 2006

CEPAL's Annual Report

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

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Introduction

Since the organization's founding in 1996, CEPAL has become a strong, vibrant, and well-known and respected organization, both in Canada and internationally. We continue to focus and expand upon our goals in the areas of education, human rights, raising awareness and building capacity with the overriding goal of improving the lives and future prospects of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. Moreover, CEPAL continues to support the Palestinian Right of Return, and our events and awareness-raising activities are centered on affirming this right.

CEPAL's Summer Program has expanded from English language training, to incorporate French language and computer literacy, in addition to arts courses such as photography and journalism. This training is a direct response to the needs of our local partners. CEPAL's Summer Program has to date sent over 60 volunteers to work in the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon.

Unfortunately, due to the conflict in Lebanon this summer, we had no choice but to discontinue CEPAL's 2006 Summer Program to ensure the safety of CEPAL's nine volunteers who were in Lebanon at that time. This was a great tragedy for the Palestinian refugees who would have benefited from CEPAL's volunteers. Though the situation in Lebanon is still tenuous, CEPAL is going ahead with preparations for recruitment for next year's Summer Program. Our partners in the Palestinian refugee camps have expressed the need for CEPAL's Summer Program next year, and we are communicating with them to determine how CEPAL can best meet their current needs.

In Canada, our awareness activities have expanded and our infrastructure has solidified, as has our reputation for fiscal responsibility and for providing consistent programs. Our Board of Advisors includes long time supporters: Nahla Abdo, PhD, an expert on Palestinian refugees and women's issues and Professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Carlton University; Michael Lynk, LL.B., a labour arbitrator and mediator based in London, Ontario who teaches labour law and human rights law at The University of Western Ontario's Faculty of Law; Chris Giannou, M.D., a Canadian physician who worked at a hospital in Shatila refugee camp throughout the 1980's, and author of *Besieged: A Doctor's Story of Life and Death in Beirut*; John Sigler, an expert in Middle East politics and Adjunct Professor in the Department of Political Science at Carlton University.

Our Canadian volunteer support has grown in numbers and has spread from our base in Ottawa, to cities across the country, including Montreal, Quebec City, Toronto, and Vancouver. Our donor support has grown substantially and we have continued to channel 100% of the monies raised directly into our overseas and public education programs.

With the support of our dedicated volunteers and generous donors, we will continue to focus and expand upon our goals in the areas of education, human rights, and raising awareness about the plight of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

Shannon Dow
CEPAL President

Events and Fundraising

CEPAL events and fundraising go hand-in-hand. This year, CEPAL was fortunate to have a Fundraising Director who guided the Board of Directors to maximize fundraising efforts at CEPAL's two main events, the Summer Program Launch and the United Nations International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, in addition to guiding a general fundraising strategy.

2006 Fundraising Strategy

The fundraising strategy that was adopted this year consisted of a two tiers approach. The first was to maintain existing Sustaining Members (who donate a minimum of \$500 per year). The second was to increase the number of Sustaining Members by three to five individuals.

To achieve the first goal, individual customized letters were sent to all Sustaining Members to encourage them to renew their membership. This was followed by personal phone calls by the Fundraising Director to remind all existing Sustaining Members to renew their membership and to encourage others to join. All Sustaining Members who were active in 2005 renewed their membership in 2006.

To achieve the second goal, letters were sent all CEPAL members, friends and contacts in order to encourage them to become Sustaining Members. This letter drive accompanied the distribution of CEPAL's spring newsletter. Local businesses were also approached for support.

Our Sustaining Members who provide CEPAL financial support are essential to making CEPAL's programs a reality. Through their incredible generosity, our members and donors not only help CEPAL implement its current programs but also help CEPAL plan for the future. As a result of this fundraising strategy, this year four individuals generously decided to become CEPAL Sustaining Members. This brings the number of Sustaining Members to 20.

Summer Program Launch

CEPAL's 2006 Summer Program launch was entitled A Feast for the Senses, and included an evening of fine Middle Eastern cuisine, beautiful music and inspiring art. The dinner took place 15 June 2006 at the Jericho Mediterranean Restaurant, at 840 Bank Street, Ottawa. The artwork of the restaurant's co-owner, Raouf Omar, was on sale and up for auction, with a part of all these proceeds going toward supporting this year's CEPAL Summer Program. Also included in the evening was the talent of Kamal Elkadri, a world renowned musician who has enchanted the world over with his mastery of music.

United Nations International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

The commemoration of the United Nations International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People is instrumental in highlighting CEPAL's important work, as the only Canadian organization to work directly with Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. It is critical in raising awareness about the dire and worsening situation Palestinian refugees face, and how Canadians can become involved in helping CEPAL fulfill its mandate. The event is well attended by Members of Parliament, foreign diplomats and community members.

This year, CEPAL hosted keynote speaker, Dr. Naseer Aruri, Chancellor Professor (Emeritus) of Political Science at the University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth. His presentation was entitled "The Marginalization of the Basic Rights of the Palestinian Refugees: Geopolitics over International Law"

and addressed the current plight of Palestinian refugees within the broader context of the recent war in Lebanon, as well as other regional conflicts.

Moreover, CEPAL's role and work during the latest war in Lebanon was discussed, followed by volunteer testimonials from this particularly turbulent summer. The event also featured a photo presentation of pictures from the Palestinian refugee camps where CEPAL works, accompanied by live music by a local Palestinian artist.

Summer Program

2006 marks the 58th anniversary of “al-Nakba” – the catastrophe – that created the first wave of Palestinian refugees and led to the continued suffering of their descendants. In Lebanon, the Palestinians’ half-century of exile has been marked by a 16 year saga of unimaginable violence – the 1975-1991 civil war, the 1982 Israeli invasion, protracted sieges of Palestinian camps and massacres. Moreover, despite the hopes engendered by the end of the civil war in 1991, the recent Israeli onslaught in July-August 2006 had a devastating impact on Lebanon’s present and aspirations for the future, while placing the Palestinian refugees in an ever more precarious socio-economic and political position.

CEPAL’s Main Areas of Operation

CEPAL continues to work in three Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, Bourj el-Barajneh, Shatila and Wavel.

Bourj el-Barajneh

- Situated in the southern suburbs of Beirut
- Established by the League of Red Cross Societies in 1948
- Approximately 15, 484 registered Palestinian refugees
- 500 families (1, 630 persons) registered as UNRWA special hardship cases
- Only 1 UNRWA health centre with an average 168 patients per day
- 7 UNRWA elementary/preparatory schools for 2, 511 pupils in 2003/2004
- CEPAL has been working in Bourj el-Barajneh since 1997

Shatila

- Situated in the southern suburbs of Beirut
- Established by the International Committee of the Red Cross in 1949
- Approximately 8, 212 registered Palestinian refugees
- 293 families (1, 068 persons) registered as UNRWA special hardship cases
- Only 1 UNRWA health centre with an average 79 patients per day
- 2 UNRWA elementary schools for 1, 056 pupils in 2004/2005
- CEPAL has been working in Shatila since 1997

Wavel (Al-Jaleel)

- Situated on the outskirts of Ba’albek in the Beqa’a Valley
- Originally a French army barracks
- Approximately 7, 551 registered Palestinian refugees
- 200 families (908 persons) registered as UNRWA special hardship cases
- 1 UNRWA health centre with an average 65 patients per day
- 1 UNRWA elementary and 1 secondary school for 833 pupils in 2003/2004
- CEPAL has been working in Wavel since 2000

CEPAL Partners

CEPAL currently works with nine partners in Lebanon. Every year, prior to the volunteers’ arrival, the CEPAL Overseas Program Director communicates with partners to determine their current needs and how the Summer Program can best respond to these needs. The Summer Program is thus a genuine reflection of and response to partner needs and desires.

Arab Resource Centre for the Popular Arts (ARCPA) / “Al-Jana”

ARCPA is a non-profit organisation founded in 1990. The Centre works both to impart skills and instil self-confidence in Palestinian children and youth through art and creative pedagogical techniques known as “active learning”. ARCPA also provides non-formal learning programs and materials to counteract the culturally impoverished environment of the camps and schools, and to motivate children to assume an active role in re-establishing their own and their communities’ sense of self-worth and identity.

CEPAL has worked with ARPCA in Bourj el-Barajneh and Shatila since 2000.

Association Najdeh

Najdeh is a non-profit organisation founded during the 1975-1991 civil war. Najdeh works primarily with women in low-income families and in the field of education, as well as providing social services and running income-generating projects for women and their families throughout the camps in Lebanon. Najdeh’s primary goal is to empower women to become financially self-sufficient and to encourage their participation in society.

CEPAL has worked with Najdeh in Bourj el-Barajneh and Shatila since 1997, and in Wavel since 2001.

Children & Youth Centre (CYC)

CYC is a non-profit organisation founded in the 1990s to serve the Sabra-Shatila community and to provide a place for children and youth to come together and learn. As an organisation, it placed a great deal of importance on community work and strives to make its members sensitive to social justice issues, by empowering them as youth and providing them with a variety of skills.

CEPAL has worked with CYC in Shatila since 2001.

National Association for Vocational Training & Social Services (NAVTS)

NAVTS is a non-profit organisation founded in 1983. Its goal is to combat illiteracy, poverty and disease, by helping young men and women expand their career choices by offering intensive vocational training based on current market demands in Lebanon. In addition to its vocational work, NAVTS has recently established cultural centres for youth to engage in arts, theatre, language classes, etc. in most of the camps where it works.

CEPAL has worked with NAVTS in Bourj el-Barajneh since 2001.

National Institution of Social Care & Vocational Training (NISCVT) / “Beit Atfal Assomoud”

NISCVT is a non-profit organisation founded in 1976 to care for children who were orphaned following the siege and massacre of Tal al-Za’atar camp. NISCVT centres are found throughout the camps in Lebanon and provide educational, recreational and cultural activities for children and youth, as well as computer training and income-generating projects.

CEPAL has worked with NISCVT in Bourj el-Barajneh and Shatila since 1999, and in Wavel since 2004.

Popular Aid for Relief and Development (PARD)

PARD is a non-profit organisation founding in 1985, with the goals of fighting disease, poverty and illiteracy by establishing projects for public benefit, and to improve community health consciousness in displaced and impoverished areas. It provides social and medical services to displaced people and those with low incomes in the camps and the deprived areas that surround them.

CEPAL has worked with PARD in the Sabra area adjacent to Shatila since 1999.

United Nations Relief & Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)

UNRWA is a UN organisation established by the General Assembly on 8 December 1949, with the purpose of carrying out direct relief and social work programs for Palestinian refugees expelled from their homes in 1948. UNRWA currently provides education, health and relief/social services to approximately 4.1 million registered Palestinian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and the West Bank/Gaza Strip.

CEPAL has worked with UNRWA in Bourj el-Barajneh, Shatila and Wavel since 2000.

UNRWA Women's Centres

UNRWA established the Women's Centres as non-profit community-run centres with the aim of improving the education of women, children and youth through the provision of English, French and computer classes.

CEPAL has worked with the Women's Centres in Bourj el-Barajneh and Wavel since 2001, and in Shatila since 2004.

Women's Humanitarian Organisation (WHO)

WHO is a non-profit organisation founded in 1993 with the aim of serving women and children living in the refugee camps, by providing early childhood education, vocational training, an elderly care program, as well as after-school tutorial programs and cultural activities for youth.

CEPAL has worked with WHO in Bourj el-Barajneh since 1997.

Achievements of the 2006 Summer Program

This has been a turbulent year for CEPAL, and one that has brought out the strengths of the individuals who keep CEPAL's programs going. This is evidenced by the success of CEPAL's Summer Program despite the conflict in Lebanon this summer, as well as the volunteer special project, which CEPAL's volunteers undertake each year with their students in the refugee camps.

Hope despite war

While CEPAL's 2006 summer program was cut short in the most horrific fashion, our dedicated team of volunteers nonetheless managed to make their impact felt in the refugee camp communities of Bourj el-Barajneh, Shatila-Sabra and Wavel, where CEPAL has been working for the past ten years. With two

wonderful coordinators, Michelle Turner and Amélie Plaisance, having already set up the logistics of the program, the volunteers arrived in late June to start teaching English and French language classes with a variety of NGO partners, as well as the UN, providing support to small children, young adults preparing to sit the national official examinations, as well as NGO staff. In the two short weeks that the volunteers were able to work in the refugee camps, they successfully provided language skills training to nine partner organizations and 13 centres, and combined they put in well over 200 teaching hours.

The volunteers also integrated well into the camp communities, spending time with their host families, the children and youth they were teaching and the NGOs they were working with. That many of our partners and friends in the refugee camps were extremely worried about the volunteers' safety at the outbreak of the war – and did everything within their means to help them depart without incident – is a testament both to CEPAL's genuine connection with these communities, as well as to the extent to which this year's team of volunteers was appreciated.

Throughout the war and in its aftermath, CEPAL maintained a constant line of communication with our partners; while there was little that could be done concretely from such a distance, it was nonetheless clear that solidarity and contact were appreciated. Currently, CEPAL is in contact with partners to see what their needs are for the coming year, and how CEPAL's mandate and program can best be made to fit with the new realities emerging in the field.

Needless to say, CEPAL, our partners in the refugee camps, and not least of all the volunteers were all extremely disappointed, saddened and appalled by what happened in Lebanon this past summer. Despite the volunteers' short stay, and despite the fact that they were forced to leave the people they had come to love without the chance to even say good-bye, they still feel extremely honoured to have had the opportunity to participate in CEPAL's summer program. The volunteers deemed CEPAL's program both effective in its educational aims, as well as extremely successful at forging a link of solidarity between a Palestinian refugee community in exile for close to 60 years and Canadian citizens who bear witness to its strength and resilience.

Special project: recipes as cultural heritage

Each year, CEPAL Summer Program volunteers work together with their students in the Palestinian refugee camps to create a special project, as a way of raising awareness about the Palestinian refugee issue back in Canada. Special projects in the past have included photographic exhibits of students' pictures of the camps and their lives, as well as the production of a documentary about the camps.

This summer's volunteers chose to work with their students to compile recipes which students' felt best symbolised their cultural heritage. Though only a few recipes were collected due to the unfortunate early termination of the CEPAL's 2006 program, those recipes that were collected were published in CEPAL's fall 2006 newsletter.

Awareness-Raising

As with every year, CEPAL has continued to raise awareness in Canada about the plight of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. As previously mentioned, two awareness-raising activities that CEPAL organizes every year are the Summer Program launch and the United Nations International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. In addition to these events, CEPAL's 2006 Summer Program volunteers have held awareness raising events, written articles, and participated in interviews that have reached audiences in Montreal, Toronto, Ottawa, Quebec City, and nationally (see CEPAL Highlights from 2006). In addition, there were a number of ways in which the CEPAL Board of Directors conducted awareness-raising activities in Canada:

Website

CEPAL launched its new website this summer at www.cepал.ca. The website includes stories from our volunteers who lived and worked in the refugee camps, events and other announcements, CEPAL publications—such as our bi-annual newsletter—and transcripts from the talks given by our guest keynote speakers.

The CEPAL Digest

Given the cancellation of CEPAL's 2006 Summer Program and the continued crisis in Lebanon, we decided to focus our efforts on raising awareness about the conflict in Lebanon, and specifically how the conflict is affecting Palestinian refugees there. To this end, the CEPAL Digest, a weekly listserv email sent each Thursday, was established. The Digest includes current news and relevant articles from various sources, in addition to letters from our partners and friends in the refugee camps. The intention of the CEPAL Digest is to present information that might otherwise not be presented in mainstream media, with a focus on the personal experiences of the people the refugee camps and in Lebanon.

So far, close to 25 Digests have been compiled and distributed, and it is our intention to ensure that it continues to be a useful and effective awareness raising tool in 2007 and beyond. The CEPAL Board of Directors have thus far received very positive feedback from listserv subscribers.

Publication of CEPAL Digest in Al-Ahram Weekly

The first CEPAL Digest, a special edition that we dedicated to refugee diaries, was published in Al-Ahram Weekly (27 July 2006). Entitled *Besieged by Bombs*, this Digest included an introduction by Giulia El Dardiry, CEPAL Overseas Program Director, and five refugee diaries, including diaries written by long-time CEPAL partners. This edition of the CEPAL digest was published online as well as in print, and was therefore disseminated to many people worldwide. *Besieged by Bombs* can be accessed at <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2006/805/re82.htm>.

Letter to Prime Minister Stephen Harper

The CEPAL Board of Directors wrote a letter to Prime Minister Stephen Harper in protest of Canada's support of the Israeli attacks on Lebanon, and requesting a Canadian position promoting diplomatic solutions and respect for the human rights of all people (see Appendix I). This letter was faxed and emailed to Prime Minister Harper July 21, 2006. In addition, the letter was published on CEPAL's website, and can be accessed at www.cepал.ca.

Voices

CEPAL continues to screen *Voices*, the documentary directed by a 2005 Summer Program volunteer. *Voices* was filmed in three Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon (Wavel, Bourj el-Barajneh and Shatila). It relates the experience of nine CEPAL volunteers who went there to teach English and French and to share time with Palestinians of exile. Each volunteer was filmed in their classroom where the students, young and old, talk about themselves through different activities (such as artistic activities, plays, poetry, storytelling, photography, etc.). These activities served as a way for the viewer to understand, through the eye of the camera, about their lives, and their dreams.

This film is an excellent awareness-raising resource, and has been screened at many venues. In addition, this year the film was given to all CEPAL volunteer alumnus who now number over 60 individuals, CEPAL Sustaining Members, and Ambassadors and Members of Parliament who have supported CEPAL by attending CEPAL's commemoration of the United Nations International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. The film will also continue to be used during the Summer Program volunteer orientation session to prepare new Summer Program volunteers for their experiences in the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. So far feedback about the film has been very positive.

Newsletters

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

CEPAL Highlights from 2006

Several areas are worth highlighting from CEPAL's 2006 programs:

General

- CEPAL has been managed entirely by volunteers for ten years now.
- Nearly all funding for CEPAL's programs is donated by Canadian citizens.
- CEPAL is supported by leading experts, NGOs, the UN and Canadian government, and has been supported as such for ten years now.
- CEPAL remains the only Canadian NGO working with the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

Lebanon Summer Program

- Two coordinators and seven volunteers sent to implement the Summer Program from end of May 2006 – early July 2006 (cut short due to the war).
- Despite early termination of the program, volunteers put in well over 200 teaching hours with nine partner organisations at 13 centres in Bourj el-Barajneh, Shatila (including the area of Sabra) and Wavel refugee camps.

Awareness Raising and Communication

- 2006 marked the launch of the CEPAL Digest a weekly listserv email that covers current news and link related to Palestinian refugees, and refugee diaries, stories written by CEPAL partners and friend in the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon.
- Publication of the first CEPAL Digest in Al-Ahram Weekly (27 July 2006): "Beseiged by Bombs."
- Letter sent to Prime Minister Stephen Harper in protest of Canada's support of the Israeli attacks on Lebanon and requesting a Canadian position promoting diplomatic solutions and respect for the human rights of all people (see Appendix I).
- Summer Program Wavel Coordinator, Amélie Plaisance, was interviewed by the Québec City newspaper, Le Soleil (23 July 2006), about her work in the refugee camps and impact of the war for Palestinian refugees in Lebanon in an article entitled: "Les Palestiniens: des réfugiés oubliés."
- Summer Program Lebanon Coordinator, Michelle Turner, was featured in the Ottawa Citizen (late July 2006), in an article about the event "In the Warzone: Civilians Under Siege" which was co-sponsored by CEPAL and where Michelle was a guest speaker.
- Shannon Dow (President) and Giulia El-Dardiry (Overseas Program Director) gave a presentation on CEPAL's program and the consequences of the war for CEPAL partners to a group of Montréal-based activists in August.
- CEPAL's listserv currently reaches over 500 people and organizations.
- CEPAL's 2006 Summer Program volunteers have held awareness raising events, written articles, and participated in interviews that have reached audiences in Montreal, Toronto, Ottawa, Quebec City, and nationally.

Financial Overview

Income	2006	2005
Term deposit (not included in income gross total)	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 4,000.00
In kind donations	\$ -	\$ 1,132.10
Sustaining membership contributions	\$ 9,040.00	\$ 9,026.00
General membership contributions	\$ 4,423.25	\$ 1,501.39
Volunteer sponsorship	\$ 18,287.40	\$ 20,726.25
Summer Program sponsor-a-day contributions	\$ 50.00	\$ 3,200.00
Web donations (Canada Helps)	\$ 675.00	\$ 430.00
Payroll giving (United Way)	\$ 774.82	\$ 961.37
Events sponsorship	\$ 1,940.00	\$ 4,000.00
Events donation	\$ 1,761.00	\$ 3,745.70
Raffles	\$ -	\$ 237.00
Silent auctions	\$ 800.00	\$ -
Book sales (at UN Day of Solidarity event)	\$ 1,020.00	\$ -
T-shirt sales	\$ -	\$ 60.00
Other	\$ 3,502.35	\$ 5,000.00
Income Gross Total	\$ 42,273.82	\$ 50,019.81
Expenses		
Office & Admin		
Rent	\$ 3,775.00	\$ 3,180.00
Postage and copying	\$ 704.57	\$ 759.14
Printing and supplies (Annual Report, newsletters, posters, etc.)	\$ 1,369.65	\$ 462.60
Web services (domain hosting, website, topica, etc)	\$ 888.50	\$ 405.54
Telephone	\$ 1,105.67	\$ 1,002.87
Legal fees	\$ 30.00	\$ 135.00
Bank fees	\$ 370.17	\$ 83.26
Board travel	\$ 1,033.32	\$ 688.87
Other	\$ 364.88	\$ -
NSF Cheques	\$ 250.00	\$ 275.00
Total	\$ 9,891.76	\$ 6,992.28
Summer Program		
Recruitment and interview costs	\$ 1,210.49	\$ 1,116.01
Copying	\$ 668.85	\$ 702.96
Postage	\$ 8.99	\$ 117.96
TESOL training	\$ -	\$ -
Training (orientation, debrief, etc.)	\$ 1,092.35	\$ 379.05
Airfare	\$ 22,135.07	\$ 14,550.54
Visas	\$ 844.25	\$ 476.50
Travel insurance	\$ 601.00	\$ 1,744.25
Overseas stipends	\$ 13,073.09	\$ 14,268.54
Special project exhibition	\$ -	\$ 494.91
Debriefing costs (travel, etc.)	\$ 424.30	\$ 356.50
Other	\$ 633.50	\$ 465.10
Total	\$ 40,691.89	\$ 34,672.32

Events		
<i>Summer Program Launch</i>		
Misc.	\$ 218.59	\$ -
Venue expenses	\$ 300.00	\$ 1,129.65
Travel and accommodation of speaker	\$ -	\$ 2,309.85
Refreshments and food	\$ 555.00	\$ 305.91
Other	\$ 400.00	\$ 1,226.11
<i>UN Day of Solidarity</i>		
Venue expenses	\$ -	
Travel and accommodation of speaker	\$ 931.41	
Refreshments and food	\$ 130.00	
Other	\$ 2,050.19	
Total	\$ 4,585.19	\$ 4,971.52
Total Expenses	\$ 55,168.84	\$ 46,636.12

Future Plans

The CEPAL Board of Directors are already looking ahead to 2007 to plan for yet another successful year. Some specific future plans include the 2007 Annual General Meeting, the 2007 Summer Program, and CEPAL's 10th Anniversary Celebration.

Annual General Meeting 2007

CEPAL's Annual General Meeting will take place January 14, 2007. At this time, CEPAL's current Board of Directors will provide a review of CEPAL's 2006 programs and operations. In addition, CEPAL members will elect CEPAL's 2007 Board of Directors.

All CEPAL members are invited and encouraged to attend the Annual General Meeting. You must be a current member in order to participate in CEPAL's Annual General Meeting. CEPAL membership must be renewed annually, and we welcome new members throughout the year. For more information about becoming a CEPAL member, please visit <http://www.cepal.ca/en/support/membership.php>.

Date: January 14, 2007

Time: Noon

Location: CEPAL Office, 323 Chapel Street, Ottawa, Ontario

Plans for Summer 2007

Though the situation is still extremely tenuous, uncertain and political unpredictable, CEPAL is going ahead with preparations for the 2007 Summer Program. All of our partners in the refugee camps have expressed the need for the continuation of CEPAL's Summer Program next year, and the board is currently communicating with them to determine how CEPAL can best meet their current needs and desires. The Lebanon and Wavel coordinators have been recruited, and we are delighted that Michelle Turner and Amélie Plaisance have once again been selected as CEPAL coordinators! Moreover, the summer volunteer recruitment was launched in early December, and the new CEPAL team will be selected by end of March 2007.

In addition to the Summer Program, CEPAL also hopes to be able to complete two additional projects in the Palestinian refugee camps next summer. First, we would like to implement a formal evaluation of CEPAL's Summer Program and assess what changes and additions are needed to make it more responsive to the needs – not only of our partners – but also of the broader communities in which CEPAL works. Second, in commemoration of what will be the 10th anniversary of CEPAL's Summer Program in 2007, we plan on conducting a needs assessment to determine what – in addition to the Summer Program – CEPAL could tangibly provide to the communities where we work, and that would be a fitting marker of our ten years of partnership and solidarity with these communities. Examples of such a project include a community centre or library.

CEPAL's 10th Anniversary Celebration

2007 marks the tenth anniversary of CEPAL's Summer Program and we are going ahead with plans to commemorate this special occasion. To celebrate this occasion, we are planning to structure next year's commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People to coincide with a reunion of all past CEPAL volunteers, including Summer Program volunteers, Board of Directors, and

local, community volunteers – all those who have dedicated their time to CEPAL throughout the years. In addition, we plan to conduct a needs assessment next summer to determine what, in addition to the Summer Program, CEPAL could provide, in a tangible way, to the Palestinian refugee communities where CEPAL works, and that would mark ten years of CEPAL’s relationship with these communities. Examples of such a project include a community centre or library.

How You Can Help

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

Volunteer

CEPAL is always looking for volunteers to help in the running of the organization in Canada. Whether it be in desktop publishing, book keeping, content contributing, or event organizing, your time and skills can be put to use for the benefit of CEPAL's programs. Please visit www.cepal.ca for information on how to volunteer in Canada.

Become a CEPAL Director

CEPAL is currently recruiting for volunteer Board of Director positions, to commence January 2007. Every January, CEPAL members elect the CEPAL Board of Directors through an open and competitive process at the Annual General Meeting. Currently CEPAL is seeking to fill five Board of Director positions, including:

- President
- Treasurer
- Overseas Program Director
- Fundraising Director
- Events Director

Being a CEPAL Director is a challenging and time-consuming task, but one which is greatly fulfilling and enriching. It will allow you to use the breadth of your skills, creativity and knowledge, while providing fertile ground to explore new strengths and develop greater NGO experience, managerial and organisational skills, as well as a better appreciation for the Palestinian refugee issue. In addition, in 2007 CEPAL celebrates the 10th anniversary of the Summer Program. This is therefore an exciting time to join the CEPAL Board of Directors!

All applicants must have a strong commitment to social justice, the ability to work as part of a team, excellent communications skills, and dedication to and belief in CEPAL's mandate. Each Director position requires approximately 15 hours of work per week. Please visit www.cepal.ca for complete job descriptions of each available position.

Any CEPAL member can run for a position on CEPAL's Board of Directors, and we encourage all interested candidates to apply.

To apply for a position, please submit:

1. A cover letter describing the reasons why you would like to run for CEPAL's Board of Directors, highlighting the area of responsibility that interests you, and where you think your skills would best be maximized;
2. Resume;
3. Contact information for two referees (i.e., name, job title, address, phone number and email address).

Please forward this information to Shannon Dow, CEPAL President, at info@cepal.ca by January 1, 2007.

Make a Donation

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

1. Individuals can use a credit card to make a donation through the secure CanadaHelps.org website, located on CEPAL's website using the "Donate Now" option (<http://www.cepal.ca/en/support/donate.php>).
2. Individuals can mail a cheque to CEPAL's office in Ottawa. Cheques must be made payable to Canadian-Palestinian Educational Exchange, and must be forwarded to:

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

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

Become a Sustaining Member

CEPAL relies heavily on its membership for fundraising, and particularly its Sustaining members. You can become a Sustaining Member if you commit to making an annual payment of \$500 or above. These payments can be made in one lump sum or in monthly/quarterly installments. In addition to regular membership benefits, Sustaining Members may choose to have a meeting a year with the Board of Directors. The designation of "Sustaining Member" will apply from the day a member makes this commitment (by filling out the form attached and sending it to CEPAL), and will continue for as long as this commitment is fulfilled annually. With their consent, Sustaining Members are also recognized publicly (i.e., on CEPAL's website, newsletters, etc.) for their continued support of CEPAL's work.

Sustaining member benefits

- Sustaining Members are entitled to call a meeting with the board, and once a year a meeting will be held with the board and all sustaining members.
- Sustaining Members receive an annual gift from the board.
- Sustaining Members are entitled to be informed of and attend all general meetings of the organization.
- Sustaining Members hold voting rights and can vote at CEPAL's Annual General Meeting.

- Sustaining Members will receive regular updates via CEPAL's email news list and semi-annual newsletters.
- Sustaining Members are eligible to run for a position on CEPAL's Board of Directors.

If you are already a Sustaining Member, please encourage others to become Sustaining Members! To find out more about becoming a Sustaining Member, please visit www.cepal.ca, or send an information request by email to info@cepal.ca. Alternatively, you may call CEPAL at 613-236-7825.

Appendix I: CEPAL Appeal to Prime Minister Harper

CEPAL Canadian-Palestinian Educational Exchange

July 21, 2006

Mr. Stephen Harper
Prime Minister of Canada

Dear Prime Minister Harper,

The Canadian-Palestinian Educational Exchange (CEPAL) is a volunteer humanitarian organization, founded in 1996 by Canadian individuals who share a deep commitment to the respect of human dignity and the rights of all people. Our objective is to assist the Palestinian refugees in the pursuit of their basic human rights by increasing their access to education, and by raising public awareness in Canada about their struggle. We accomplish this objective through our Summer Program, which includes sending Canadian volunteers every summer to teach English and French language skills in three Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon: Bourj el-Barajneh, Shatila and Wavel. We work with local non-governmental organizations, and CEPAL has offered our Summer Program to the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon for nearly ten years.

Last week, due to the events unfolding in Lebanon, we had no choice but to discontinue CEPAL's 2006 Summer Program to ensure the safety of CEPAL's nine volunteers who were in Lebanon at that time. This is a great tragedy for the Palestinian refugees who would have benefited from CEPAL's volunteers. Approximately 400,000 Palestinian refugees live in Lebanon, none of whom have social and civil rights and all have very limited access to the Lebanese government's educational facilities. They rely entirely on the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) as the sole provider of their education. UNRWA schools in and around the Palestinian refugee camps operate on double shifts, meaning Palestinian students only attend school for half the day, and class sizes have burgeoned to over 50 students in some schools. Illiteracy among Palestinian refugees in Lebanon is rising rapidly as a result. The teaching component of CEPAL's Summer Program brings essential language training to Palestinian students that they otherwise cannot access through the Lebanese government or UNRWA, and in this way we assist in their progression through the Lebanese educational system. Moreover, through language skills training CEPAL affirms that education is a human right. The Israeli assault on Lebanon currently prevents Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, and all Lebanese citizens, from attaining this right.

CEPAL sincerely regrets the current situation, and we strongly oppose the drastic and disproportionate measures adopted by Israel against Lebanon. We further regret that the Canadian government describes Israel's assault on Lebanon as self-defense. We feel that this position only allows Israel's assault on Lebanon to continue, leading to the loss of innocent lives, and which will directly affect the rebuilding of Lebanon and the continuation of education services for Palestinian refugees there who are already a very vulnerable population. In the interest of human rights for all those affected by the current crisis, we therefore plead with you to immediately denounce and condemn the measures taken by Israel against Lebanon, calling for an immediate ceasefire and using diplomacy to resolve the conflict.

Finally, as an organization with extensive experience in Lebanon and with a deep commitment to two strong Canadian values – education and human rights – we ask that you consider meeting with us or ask the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of International Cooperation to meet with us at the earliest possible time to discuss how Canada can better assist Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and thus make an effective Canadian contribution to peace in the Middle East.

Signed,

Shannon Dow
CEPAL President

Giulia El-Dardiry
CEPAL Overseas Program Director / Vice President

Sami Al-Hussieni
CEPAL Treasurer / Secretary

Mohamed Zahaby
CEPAL Fundraising Director

