

## Curriculum Vitae

# RIFAT ODEH KASSIS

Nationality: Palestinian and Dutch

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## WORK EXPERIENCE

### July 2015 – Present

#### **Co-founder, MENA Representative and Executive Director - GRIP Consulting**

GRIP Consulting is a group of international organizational consultants. I supervise and conduct consultancies in various organisational aspects, including external evaluations, strategic planning, baseline studies, staff safety and managing security risks, as well as drafting policies and strategies, with a focus on human rights and child rights. Our clients include ministries in Palestine, national and international organizations like UNICEF, UNDP, Save the Children International, World Vision International, YMCA/YWCA Palestine, Alhaq, Bethlehem University, Defense for Children International, Finn Church Aid, ActionAid Palestine, Terre Des Homes, Dan Church Aid/Norwegian Church Aid, Diakonia and others.

### June 2016 – Present

#### **Associate and MENA Region representative – INTRAC**

INTRAC is an international civil society support organization based in the UK. It provides consultancy services around the world for major international NGOs, national NGOs, other support organizations and donors.

### Jan 2015 – June 2015

#### **Country Representative – World Service of Lutheran World Federation (Jordan)**

DWS/LWF has been active in Jordan since 2012 responding to the Syrian refugee crisis. Its programs include psycho-social support, and education as well as other humanitarian assistance projects. My role was to run all DWS/LWF activities in Jordan; liaise with the Jordanian government regarding the program (planning and implementation); network with the UN, international and national organizations; seek and maintain resources, as well as support in preparing proposals.

### October 2008 – December 2014

#### **General Director – Defense for Children International/Palestine (DCI/PS)**

DCI is an international child rights movement which works in around 50 countries. It has consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council, UNICEF, UNESCO, and the Council of Europe. DCI/PS is a national section working under both Israeli and Palestinian jurisdictions. With an annual budget of around 2 million dollars and a 40-member staff, DCI/PS reaches out to thousands of Palestinian children, their families,

and other stakeholders in providing protection, legal representation, capacity-building, advocacy and lobby work. As the General Director, I was responsible for leading and supervising all organizational operations including the financial management system, relations with donors, coaching and supervising the senior managers, as well as leading the strategic directions of the program.

**September 2007 – October 2008**

**Consultant – DIYAR Consortium (Bethlehem, Palestine)**

DIYAR Consortium, a Palestinian institution leading a mission to preserving and revitalizing the cultural identity of the Palestinian community by encouraging creativity, self-expression and inter-cultural encounters. My duties included designing and managing a program called “Palestinian Youth: Vision Building, Strengthening Identity, and Activating Potential”.

**January 2005 – August 2007**

**Manager of the Human Rights Program – World Council of Churches Ecumenical Accompaniment Program in Palestine and Israel (WCC/EAPPI), Geneva, Switzerland**

EAPPI is a WCC initiative to support accomplishing a just peace in the Middle East. Its mission is to accompany local communities and organizations in non-violent actions and concerted advocacy efforts to end the occupation. Program participants monitor and report violations of human rights and engaging in advocacy and lobby on the international level. My role was to lead all program operations, supervise the office and field staff and cares for their safety and security, plan and implement international advocacy strategies.

**July 2000 – December 2004**

**Executive Director – YMCA Palestine;**

**General Coordinator – YMCA/YWCA Joint Advocacy Initiative (JAI)**

Young Men Christian Association (YMCA) in Palestine is one of the largest and oldest Palestinian NGOs. With an annual budget of 8 million USD and a 200-member staff, it works in various fields, such as vocational training for refugees; youth development; cultural, educational and recreation services; rehabilitation programs; psychosocial and vocational counselling services and both national and international advocacy programs. As Executive Director, my administrative and programmatic responsibilities included supervising all the operations in Palestine, developing programs; planning, monitoring and evaluation, maintaining relationships with donors and local NGOs; developing managerial systems related to personnel, finances, administration, supervising and coordinating the YMCA/YWCA Joint Advocacy Initiative.

**April 1996 – June 2000**

**Director – Donor Agency Office (ACT) in Central Asia (Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan)**

ACT was an initiative undertaken by a developmental Dutch donor agency, ICCO, along with DanChurch Aid (a Danish donor agency) and Christian Aid (a British donor agency). My work focused on establishing the office, recruiting the staff and training them; identifying, supporting and developing local NGOs in Central Asia, mainly Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan through funding and capacity building. I coordinated, facilitated and led capacity building workshops on institutional development, management, monitoring and evaluation, human resource development, accountability, advocacy and strategic planning.

**September 1989 – March 1996**

**General Director – YMCA Rehabilitation Programs in the West Bank**

YMCA rehabilitation program was the largest rehabilitation institution in Palestine. With an annual budget of more than \$1.5M, over 50 psychologists and social workers, and the support of over 20 donor agencies, this program provided rehabilitation and psycho-social services for over 700 traumatized and disabled children every year. My responsibilities included running and supervising all program activities, establishing policies, human resource and staff appraisals, and strategies and planning on all levels of rehabilitation; public relations and communication; relations with donors, monitoring and evaluation and finances.

## **VOLUNTARY POSITIONS**

**January 2012 – March 2017**

**Vice President for Asia and Pacific and General Commissioner for the MENA Region – Defense for Children International (DCI)**

DCI is an international child rights movement works in over 50 countries. As Vice President and member of International Executive Council; my role was to supervise the work of DCI sections in Asia and Pacific areas. As General Commissioner for MENA region, I was responsible for overseeing the implementation of the programs in cooperation with the managers of ten DCI sections in MENA region.

**June 2008 – June 2010**

**Member of the World Economic Forum's Global Agenda Council on the Welfare of Children, Switzerland**

The World Economic Forum is an international organization engaging leaders and directors of the world's 1000 largest corporations, heads of states, leaders of international organizations and other stakeholders. The Global Agenda Councils gathers the world's top experts from academia, business, government, and other relevant stakeholders to prepare the agenda for Davos meeting. I was member of the Children Welfare Council.

**September 2006 – December 2008**

**Member of ICCO International Advisory Group, the Netherlands**

ICCO is a Dutch donor agency working around the world. The role of the International Advisory Group is to advise ICCO management and board of directors on developmental and policy issues.

**June 2005 – 2012**

**International President – World President of the International Executive Council of Defense for Children International (DCI), Switzerland**

DCI is an international children and youth rights movement works in over 50 countries. My role as International President is to lead the strategic directions and represent the movement on national and international levels.

**2001 – December 2008**

**International Advisory Group member of Danchurch Aid–Denmark**

Danchurch Aid is a Danish donor agency working around the world. The role of the core group is to advise the Board of Directors on policies and directions for work in developing countries.

**1995 – 2005**

**Volunteer and Board Member – ARD-DENAI, Chechnya–Russia**

ARD-DENAI is an organization that provides psychosocial and rehabilitation services for Chechen refugees, mainly mothers and children in Ingushetia and Chechnya. I was responsible on helping the management in developing the organization, help building the managerial and financial systems, as well as coaching and mentoring the staff.

**1994 – 2000**

**Co-founder and Board President – The Alternative Tourism Group (ATG), Palestine,**

The ATG offers groups and individual tourists an opportunity to experience Palestine from within: an alternative to the tours that keep tourists and pilgrims isolated from the local people of the land.

**1991 – June 2005**

**Founder and President – Defense for Children International -Palestine (DCI/PS)**

DCI is a human rights organization primarily concerned with promoting and strengthening children's rights all over the world. I founded the Palestinian section of this organization.

## EDUCATION

**B.A.** Psychology and Sociology, Bethlehem University, Awarded: 1987

### Diplomas

- Advanced Security in the Field, UN Department of Safety and Security (2017)
- General Management, Bir Zeit University & Federation for International Training/Canada (November 1995)
- Group Dynamics: Theory and Application, Bir Zeit University (September 1987)
- Individual and Group Therapy, Bir Zeit University (November 1986)

## PUBLICATIONS

### Books

2011. *Kairos for Palestine*. Bethlehem: Badayl/Alternatives.

2006. *Palestine, A Bleeding Wound in the World's Conscience*. Ramallah: Bailasan.

### Chapters in Books, Articles and Reports

Writer and contributor to 16 joint books in different languages.

Selected relevant contributions:

- 2019. *Mission in the Context of Empire: Palestinian Children: Caught in the Snare of Israeli Military Occupation*. Singapore: CWM
- 2016. *Choosing the Side of Justice*. Jerusalem: Emergezian Est.
- 2014. *The Struggle for Truth*. Taiwan: Chang Jung Christian University.
- 2012. *Palestinian Christians in the West Bank: Facts, Figures and Trends*. Bethlehem: Diyar Publisher
- 2009. *A History of Child Rights in Action*. Leuven: Rosseels.
- 2007. *A critical analysis of Art.17 of the CRC*. Amsterdam: Stenco
- 2004. *From Communal Strife to Global Struggle: Justice for the Palestinian People*. Jerusalem: AIC

### Newspapers and Magazines

- Editor, "Chain Reaction" - an English quarterly magazine published by the WCC/EAPPI.
- Editor, "Little Hands" An Arabic bi-yearly newspaper issued by Defense for Children International, Palestine section.
- Editor, The East Jerusalem YMCA bi-yearly Arabic magazine & quarterly English magazine.

## CONFERENCES

Selected Relevant and Most Recent Participation:

- 2018. "Gaza Development & Humanitarian Access, impact on Children", UN Forum on the Question of Palestine: 70 Years after 1948, Lessons to Achieve a Sustainable Peace (New York; 17-18 May)
- 2017. "Role of National and International Civil Society in Strengthening and Respect of Palestinian Children Rights", International Conference on the Palestinian Children's Suffering under Israel's Violations (Kuwait; 12-13 November)
- 2017. "Child Protection in Armed Conflict", International Conference on Human Rights Approach to Conflict Situation in the Arab Region (Doha; 21-24 February)
- 2014. "Children Rights between Theory and Facts in the Arab World", Conference of the Family and Children Department in the Arab State League (Cairo; 21 October)

## LANGUAGES

Arabic	Native
English	Fluent
German	Intermediate