

2.17 Palestinian Territory, Occupied

Challenges and Obstacles in Palestinian Libraries

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Introduction

This chapter provides readers with an understanding of the current situation of libraries in Palestine. It offers an overview of the challenges and obstacles facing Palestinian libraries in this information age of the twenty-first century. It deals with general barriers inhibiting libraries from flourishing and functioning like peer libraries elsewhere.

Difficulties were encountered during the research process of this article. One of these was the lack of published literature on the topic of research. Lefebvre-Danset, in her article about Palestinian libraries, noted that the sources of information are scarce.¹ In several cases, the author had to use and cite material written about the governing bodies or about parent institutions of these libraries. It is obvious that when parent organizations were facing difficulties, libraries serving the populations of these institutions or organizations were also affected. For Palestinian libraries, parent institutions/governing bodies include universities, city administrations, as well as international and local organizations.

Input from Palestinian librarians and library administrators in the West Bank and Gaza Strip for this article was sparse. Several emails were sent, but unfortunately not a single response was received. A major factor that helped contribute to this difficulty in communication was a direct result of the unstable situation in the area and the unfortunate internal dispute between the Palestinian leadership in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

Despite all of the barriers, the author was able to collect some data to use. Several databases with scholarly articles available via some of the common gateways such as *EBSCOhost* and *LexisNexis* were utilized in the research process. Information from authentic websites such as the CIA's *The World Factbook*, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, *The Palestinian Authority* website, and selected books and encyclopedias with information relating directly or indirectly to the subject of this article were also utilized. In addition to that, the author recently had the opportunity to visit some of the area's libraries. The

1 Francolse Lefebvre-Danset, "Libraries in Palestine," *IFLA Journal* 35(4) (2009): 323.