



# IN FOCUS GAZA

## STORY FROM THE FIELD

Gaza women revive cultural and creative industry through innovative design

### NEWS & PROGRAMME UPDATES

Serious Cases Review Final round of consultations mechanism finally endorsed on the Gender Charter

New training to build lawyers expertise in dealing with violence against women cases A new study strengthens the sustainability of the women-run school can-teens model

Aligning Palestinian law to international women's rights standards and norms MIFTAH assesses gender responsiveness of local councils programmes

Palestinian Bar Association New income generating brochure brings information activities for women's to women victims of centres in the Jordan Valley violence

- Improving response to women's needs in emergencies
- Protection and access to justice for women victims and survivors of violence

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- Directory of UN Women-supported community-based organizations' services
- Access denied: Research on Palestinian women's access to justice

## WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN GAZA



## IMPROVING RESPONSE TO WOMEN'S NEEDS IN EMERGENCIES

### GENDER ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF THE DECEMBER WINTER STORM

On 11 December, one of the strongest winter storms recorded in the recent decades hit Gaza, adding to an already extremely deteriorated situation. In the framework of UN humanitarian coordination response, UN Women and OCHA gender advisor initiated a series of 6 focus group discussions with women across the Gaza Strip to gather information on the gendered impact of the storm and ensured that women's and girls' voices were reflected in the humanitarian response and their specific needs and concerns addressed.

*" I know that I need to contact an ambulance or the civil defense department in case of emergency, but I do not know how to contact them"*

#### **1. Gender-specific restrictions carry-on even in contexts of emergency**

In emergencies situations, the expectations of women to comply with strict social codes regarding dress, mixing with men, and mobility remain unshaken. This presents women with added challenges, especially in the context of the loss of their houses and privacy.

The discussions also showed that women had little access to information on emergency response and were totally reliant on men for accessing information on available assistance.

### WHY A GENDER ASSESSMENT ?

#### **2. Women are particularly valuable in articulating the impact of the storm on the households and what is needed**

Women's concerns often extend beyond their own needs and are often focused on the needs of other family and community members with particular emphasis on the needs of children, people with disabilities, the old and the sick

#### **Gaza women and girls specific needs**

- Improving women's access to information on emergencies
- Temporary shelters, safe and appropriate for women (separated from men)
- Improved consultation with women in designing assistance and immediate humanitarian response

# نحو جهود تنسيقية فاعلة لمواجهة العنف ضد النساء في فلسطين

22 ديسمبر 2013 December



## COMBATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

### GAZA CALLS FOR INCREASED PROTECTION AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR WOMEN VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS OF VIOLENCE

On 23 December 2013, the Amal Coalition and the General Union of Palestinian Women (GUPW), in cooperation with Al Muntada Forum to Combat Violence against Women, brought together more than 355 representatives of civil society for the first **national conference on GBV** held in Gaza.

The Conference “Towards a Coordinated Response to Violence against Women in Palestine” brought together the expertise of civil society organizations, women’s activists, political leaders, academics and international organizations to highlight issues and challenges faced by Palestinian women victims and survivors of violence, and find ways to better address and coordinate response to the issue.

Discussions clearly highlighted the need to support and push forward the implementation of the National Strategy to Combat Violence against Women 2011-2019; strengthen access to justice programmes and services available to women, including the activation of the sheltering section of the Hayat Centre in Gaza; and raise public awareness on violence against women and girl as a public, and not private, issue.

During the Conference, participants expressed great concerns regarding the rise of femicide, so-called honour killings, with 25 cases reported in 2013 and 12 in 2012 and called for greater unified efforts to combat this flagrant violation of human rights and for women to break the cycle of silence.

*\* The Conference was organized in the framework of the 2013 joint campaign “From Peace at Home to Peace in Society: Let’s Unite to End Violence Against Women” of the Amal Coalition and GUPW for the Global 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence; a joint campaign supported by the UN Women; UNRWA; and OHCHR.*

#### Conference recommendations

- To advocate for implementation of the National Strategy to Combat Violence against Women in the Gaza Strip
- To increase support to existing networks and coalitions that work on combating violence against women and gender-based violence
- To advocate for protection centres in the Gaza Strip and the activation of the sheltering section of the Hayat multipurpose Centre
- To raise awareness of the public on the problem of violence against women, as a public issue
- To collect evidence-based data on violence against women used consistently by the different actors, including through the development of a database/information system
- To implement access to justice programmes to fill a gap when it comes to women’s access to legal aid and protection





## Prevent and respond to violence against women and girls

### The National Committee to Combat Violence against Women endorses the Serious Case Review (SCR) mechanism



On 15 January 2014, the National Committee to Combat Violence against Women, along with the institutional stakeholders involved in the implementation of the National Strategy to Combat Violence Against Women and the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) heads of sub-sectoral committees, endorsed the Serious Case Review Mechanism that was developed by MoWA, with the technical support of UN Women and the funding of DFID under the Access to Justice project. The mechanism is part of the implementation plan of the National Strategy to Combat Violence against Women that was officially presented during the National Committee meeting. The new Technical Committee that was established with the responsibilities of the Serious Case Review Mechanism was thereafter trained on the implementation procedures of the SCR mechanism.

### PUBLIC PROSECUTION EXPLORES WAYS TO APPLY CEDAW IN DISPENSING JUSTICE IN CASES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

20 prosecutors, from the specialized pool of prosecutors on violence against women and girls, participated in 2 working sessions in Nablus on 24 January 2014 and in Ramallah on 25 January 2014, to discuss policies and practices applying to cases of violence against women and girls. Actual cases tried in courts were looked at to identify the way to apply the Palestinian Penal Code in accordance with CEDAW regulations. Organized under UN Women Access to Justice project, funded by DFID, the workshop is to inform the development of Standard Operating Procedures on dealing with violence against women and girls cases.

### NEW TRAINING PROGRAMME BUILDS LAWYERS' EXPERTISE ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

The Palestinian Bar Association (PBA), supported by UN Women under the Access to Justice project, funded by DFID, finalized the training programme for the specialized pool of 25 lawyers (11 males and 14 females) established to provide legal aid to women victims of violence and women in conflict with the law. The training that started on 23 January 2014 focuses on the application of CEDAW in dealing with violence against women and girls (VAWG) cases; on litigation skills for lawyers handling VAWG cases; as well as advocacy and awareness-raising to promote lawyers as active agents in changing perceptions and attitudes regarding VAWG within their professional community; as well as the community at large.



### The Palestinian Bar Association

in the framework of its work with UN Women under the Access to Justice programme, funded by DFID, produced an informative brochure which provides guidelines as well as a list, with contact information, of all social, security and justice services available to women and girls who are victims of violence and are seeking emergency support. The brochure is being distributed to all organizations and institutions providing support services to women, including Family Protection Units, MoSA directorates, women's centres, NGOs providing services to women, and hospitals.

# Women's economic empowerment

## **In the Jordan Valley, 4 women's community-based organizations prepare to start their new income generating activities**

In January, UN Women and its partners under the Human Security Trust Fund programme in the Jordan Valley, finalized the completion of the construction works and equipping of the women's centres, allowing the implementation of the income generating activities. In Bardallah, the women's centre was handed over, while the Al Dyuk women's centre was preparing for the official opening of its brand new restaurant, which will provide employment opportunities to 12 women workers and cover for the expenses of the women's centre. The four kiosks to be placed on road 90 and managed by the 4 women's community-based organizations under the programme are now ready to be placed on Road 90.

## **A new study highlights the sustainability of the women-run school canteens business model**

Ma'an Development Centre, UN Women implementing partner under the Women-Run School Canteens project funded by Norway, has carried out a comprehensive analysis of the women-run school business model, which identifies standards and best practices in the management and sustainability of the school canteens. The study, available in both English and Arabic, will be distributed to the 41 women's centres – as well as the future women's centres – to integrate the programme in the 2nd year of phase III – and schools and private sector.

# Institutional accountability to gender equality

## **MIFTAH assesses the gender responsiveness of local council programmes**

Under the UN Women Financing for Gender Equality Programme, funded by the European Union, MIFTAH conducted a Gender-based assessment of the aid program provided by the Municipalities Development and Lending Fund (MDLF) to local councils in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and of the partners' support to gender-oriented programmes. The reports and the main results and findings were presented and discussed in a workshop on 30 December 2013 at the Grand Park Hotel in Ramallah.

## **Final round of consultations on the Gender Charter in the Local Aid Coordination Structure**

Under the auspices of the Ministry of Planning (MoPAD), Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA), UN Women, the Local Aid Coordination Structure (LACS), and the four members of the Gender Charter Steering Committee, final consultation workshops were held with national partners, civil society and donors end of December 2013 and in January 2014 to discuss the final draft of the Gender Charter. The Gender Charter is now ready to be shared with LACS co-chairs for approval.

## UP-COMING

### Who's who? Mapping of the women members of local councils in the West Bank

More than 450 women are members of local councils across the West Bank, with little information on who they are. The Women's Affairs Technical Committee (WATC), under the Spring Forward for Women, a UN Women-European Union regional programme, is currently finalizing the development of a database of the women elected in local councils. The database, which will result from an intensive mapping done across the different governorates of the West Bank in the last 4 months, will improve information-sharing, networking and support to women elected to local councils.



### Directory of UN Women CBOs services providing catering services

UN Women is currently developing a directory of women's centres supported by UN Women that provide catering services. The directory will help to improve the visibility of the women CBOs and increase their income generation opportunities. The directory will be distributed to UN Women's partners to ensure that the services of the women centres be prioritized for events organized by UN Women programmes' partners and different stakeholders.

## Publications



### Palestinian women's access to justice - Access denied?

UN Women is finalizing and preparing for the launch of the first comprehensive study that explores and analyzes the sociopolitical and psychological factors affecting, hindering and promoting Palestinian women's access to justice in the West Bank, with the specific focus on Area C. The study examines the various factors, from social status to family relations, as well as legal structures, social attitudes and geographical fragmentation, that structure the experience of women attending the legal system. It uncovers in details the various legal paths women's victims of violence, as well as they offenders, passes through when approaching the justice system. Through women's voices and the reaction of social control agents, the study delves into spatiotemporal, socio-legal, and political and economic factors and ideologies to uncover hidden abuses and analyze the policies and practices that hinder women's access to the justice system and their right to a dignified life.

### Public Perceptions of Palestinian Justice and Security Institutions

In 2011, UNDP released a survey commissioned to establish the extent to which Palestinians engage with and trust justice and security institutions. Among other findings, the survey reveals a troubling gender gap in access to justice. Notably, even though Palestinian women's rights are more often violated in civil cases, 24% fewer women than men are party to civil cases. The access to justice challenges faced by women include: lack of 'legal literacy'; lack of legal assistance; discriminatory legislation; and justice and security institutions insensitive to their needs.



# SAFE CITIES PROGRAMME IN CAIRO



قطع إيدك

## BRINGING SAFETY FOR WOMEN IN URBAN AREAS

In Egypt, the spread of sexual harassment in public spaces in the recent years has made it one of the major issues in combating violence against women and girls. A government survey published in April 2013 revealed that as much as 99.3% of the female respondents had been subjected to one form or another of harassment. Threat of sexual harassment and violence in public spaces, reduce women's and girls' freedom of movement and their ability to exercise their rights and participate in schools, work and public life and access to essential services.

In 2010, UN Women, in partnership with UN Habitat, leading women's organizations and over 50 global and local partners launched a global initiative "Safe Cities Free from Violence against Women and Girls" with the aim of specifically addressing sexual harassment and making cities and communities safer for women and girls. Cairo is one of the pilot cities.

### Build on a large partnership

Implemented jointly by UN Women, UNDP, UNODC, UNFPA, UNICEF and the Resident Coordinator office, in full partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Housing and Physical Planning, Ministry of Health, National Council for Women, Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Justice, the programme operates in 3 slum communities of Cairo.

The programme has been particularly innovative in its ability to unite and establish a constructive dialogue and partnership between local government and civil society and ensure that the issue of women and equality with men is included in local

budgeting and community-led infrastructure upgrading and development.

### Prioritize infrastructure projects which focus on safer urban spaces

At the community level, the programme has established 3 Community Committees and 3 youth groups in each of the 3 slum communities where the programme operates. Both groups act as the main programme partner in decision-making and participatory processes to prevent and respond to sexual harassment.

Community Action Plans that set the priorities in the communities for local infrastructural projects are developed from women's safety audits, which have

been adopted by the Ministry of Housing Utilities and Urban Development to guide urban planning.

### Promote women's rights sensitive institutions

In parallel, the programme is working at the policy level to influence relevant stakeholders and ensure capacity development of right holders and duty bearers for quality and effective service delivery.

The programme has for example establish 3 Ombudsperson office in the areas to receive complaints and provide necessary counselling, and is training the personnel of the Ministry of Justice and Interior with regards to dealing with victims of violence.

### Advocating for change

Finally the programme has supported the development and implementation of an innovative advocacy strategy, in partnerships with youth networks, university councils, media and religious leaders, to change communities attitudes.

In 2012, the "transit campaign" brought in innovative advocacy activities in public transportation to engage people in changing their attitudes and behaviours towards sexual harassment. In 2013, 23 TV episodes on sexual abuses and harassment and a public service announcement were produced

When “Break the Siege Ship” coordinator visited the Al Majdal Sabaya centre in Beit Lahia in the Gaza Strip, he was surprised to find such innovation in cultural products.

“The designs were incredible. Colors and design were different from any item I have seen before and were really given the products a new taste.”

Ten women of the Centre had just finished training with profes-

sional designers and artists, during which they produced more than 10 new patterns with new colors and designs for embroidery (tartreez) and handicrafts to be used to produce new marketable products.

The Palestinian culture and creative industry dates back thousands of years. Glass blowing, pottery, embroidery, rug weaving, mosaics, handmade jewelry, cane weaving and traditional furniture are well-known Palestinian products. However, cultural industry in Palestine, as it is the case for most of the countries in the world, is highly dependent to tourism, and years of conflict and blockade has greatly affected the sector. Much of the finished products are destined to souvenirs shops and with the limitation on movement of people and goods created by the blockade in Gaza, cultural industry is reducing fast and at first does not appear like a booming market.

Still, as economic opportunities in most sectors dry up, many organizations and associations have come to support and try to revive the sector and preserve the savoir-faire in cultural craft. In this, women play a major role. Women artisans are key to several traditional crafts, among them embroidery and straw, rug weaving and others, and with times of economic stress, Palestinian society has opened up fields to women, allowing them to support families by creating and selling products through cooperatives and associations.

With this in mind, and building on the positive results of the former UN joint MDG programme on gender and culture, UN Women has decided, with its Spring Forward for Women programme, to invest further in building design



### REVIVING CULTURAL AND CREATIVE INDUSTRY THROUGH INNOVATIVE DESIGN IN GAZA

and marketing capacities of women in the cultural and creative industry to open real economic opportunities.

As noted in a Market Research on the Cultural and Creative Industry, “to penetrate international markets, much as to be done in regard to quality, design, packaging, marketing and merchandising.” Betting on women skills and innovation in embroidery and craft is one of the strength of the programme.

By building the capacity of women artisans to produce quality and innovative products, the programme give women opportunities to better compete against traditional old-fashion products.

For PADHP Manager, Anwar Maleeha, who is implementing the training in Gaza with Al Mahatta Gallery, the initiative is more than welcome: “The new designs and contrasting colors stem from the traditional flower design and it will definitely increase the marketability and production for embroidery items.”

For Amal Riyada, one of the trainees, change from traditional embroidery was also the very reason why she participated in the training: “I did not know how to sew very well and I have to say I was not so much motivated to improve my technique because I was not interested in the traditional old-fashioned flower design. But with the new design, I really wanted to get involved and improve my capacities”.

And success is already knocking at the door. Right after visiting the Centre, Break the Siege Ship made a first order for 100 products to be made using the new designs developed.

Such quick materialization of the products developed during the training, in actual production reaching new markets, constitutes a clear success for the Al Majdal Sabaya centre recently established - under a Saudi-funded project aimed at rehabilitating women’s centres- with the mission to create income generating schemes that support livelihood and financial sustainability of the Centre and its women.