



Executive Summary



ELIMINATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Photo: UN Women/Eunjin Jeong

Overview

This five-year, 17 million CAD programme funded by the Government of Canada on contributing to ending violence against women has an ultimate outcome to reduce vulnerability of women and girls in the Palestinian society to all forms of violence against women and from the threat of such violence. This will be achieved through progress against three intermediate outcomes focusing on: 1. Decreased harmful practices and attitudes that perpetuate and validate violence against women and girls within targeted households and communities; 2. Increased access by women and girls of gender-responsive EVAW services (economic, medical, psychosocial, security, shelter) free of discrimination; 3. Strengthened institutional capacity to develop and implement legal and policy frameworks that promote and protect women's and girls' rights with regards to VAW.

Context

Violence against women in the Palestinian society is a reality that has a long historical and cultural past. "It is a behavior that expresses a direction of thought and culture based on control which is promoted through the culture, norms and traditions." [1] Violence against women is still not a top priority issue in the Palestinian society, often disregarded for different reasons and under different pretexts. It is considered a taboo where "A woman should tolerate violence to keep the family together." [2] In the Palestinian society, violence against women includes early marriage, sexual harassment, honor

killing, incest, and physical violence. The most recent prevalence data from 2012 shows that 30% of ever married women in West Bank and 51% in Gaza Strip have experienced violence. Violence against women has been recognized by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as one of the most widespread and systematic human rights violations and an impediment to achieving gender equality and sustainable development overall.

Methodology

The programme will employ specific strategies and tools under each intermediate outcome area to achieve higher level, quality and sustainable results for and with Palestinian women and men. More specifically, we will utilize behaviour change communications to challenge and change the harmful norms and practices in the families, communities and within institutions along with positive deviance approach, co-creation tools and others as part of innovation that we will employ throughout the program. Needless to mention that the program implementation will be based on key lessons learnt from interventions of various partners in the past in Palestine and in other countries, as well as evidences from the relevant research and studies done in the country and in the region.

First intermediate outcome

Under the first intermediate outcome the programme will focus on multi-pronged evidence based prevention

initiatives that support targeted households and communities for decreasing harmful practices, attitudes and behaviours. For this, about 40 communities in the Palestinian society will be selected through consultation with central and local authorities as well as CSOs. Joint UN actions will be undertaken in those communities by partnering with women and men and girls and boys in the families. Interventions include promoting the existing positive change and new norms through identifying the change holders (both women and men at various levels) and their replicable practices.

Changing values and norms in the families and communities also require outside-in interventions, including through the efforts of education institutions, local public authorities and media, with whom we are planning to partner with as positive social pressure within the target communities and beyond. For this, we are aiming at identifying “what works” in education institutions that succeeded to promote non-violent behaviours among students, as well as between students, teachers and parents with a particular emphasis on preventing concrete types of violence against women and girls. One of the specific efforts will be made to mobilize the target education institutions to prevent and combat early marriage of girls through researched and documented replicable local practices with the support of the joint effort of the UN agencies and positive champions/deviants (or the change holders).

Local public authorities in selected communities will engage in design-thinking along with women and men residents of communities to develop safe public spaces. These concrete examples will be used to disseminate the local replicable practices of local authorities with their peers in other communities. The documented practices will be disseminated through well-established education and decision making institutions in urban planning, design and construction fields by directly engaging them from the start of the local authorities’ interventions around creating safe space.

Sharing and dissemination of local replicable practices of families, communities, local authorities and education institutions will be done by engaging media actors from conventional and social media platforms through “learn-by-doing” approach, also by ensuring their active participation throughout the program implementation. In this way, the media engagement will serve two purposes, one on improving media engagement in eliminating violence against women and another on disseminating the community and institutional practices that are supported by the program.

At the initial inception phase of the program, we will complete the selection of communities and related local public authorities, schools, and media for testing phase as well as for the phase of replication during the program

implementation. Also, a full scanning of ‘what works’ in the context of the Palestinian society will be undertaken along with identification of the initial range of positive deviants/champions from among women and men and girls and boys in selected communities, as well as pro-active (who adhere to the new gender norms) school principals and teachers, and local authorities and media.

Second intermediate outcome

Under the second intermediate outcome, the programme will focus on increasing access by women and girls to gender-responsive EAW services. The major effort will be placed on increasing the ability of women and girls to freely and safely make informed decisions to use EAW services and also advocate for comprehensive EAW services. For this, we will employ the positive deviance approach, thus will closely partner with women, who already benefitted from the EAW services with successful outcome to serve as the ‘experts’ (further referred as ‘positive champions’). It will be of utmost importance to further empower such positive champions to network and stay connected as the key expert group of the program.

From among the positive champions, we aim to identify those, who are willing to speak up (based on consent) and disseminate replicable practices of women in combating violence against them. By engaging positive champions, the program aims to tackle one of the key challenges, which is women’s trust to public/formal service provision, and thus increase the share of women who access formal services and support. It is also key to engage the Human Rights and WHR actors on the need to consider the frontiers/positive champions as the key experts in advancing the WHR and GE agenda in Palestine, thus make a paradigm shift in understanding the notion of ‘expert’ and contributing towards having the right experts and advocates for key policy dialogues and change. We also aim to equip women positive champions and WHR actors with the knowledge to demand better and budgeted services from the public and CSO actors, as a way to ensure sustainability of efforts that we will support.

It is of key importance to further improve service providers’ capacity, including those of shelters to provide improved gender-responsive services of various range for the victims and survivors of violence in the Palestinian society. Evidences suggest that one of the key bottlenecks for women’s access to services is unconducive attitudes and behaviours of service providers, which translate into practices of their institutions (and which become not fit for the needs and rights of women, especially those from marginalized groups). By employing innovative approaches to improving the service providers’ capacity we will be able to cover the historic challenge of having very modest to no results on EAW service provision (despite numerous technical capacity development efforts by many competent organizations in the past).

During the inception phase the positive champions from among the survivors as well as service providers will be identified from the target communities, and participatory research about their practices and behaviours on EAW services (access or provision) will be undertaken and documented as a repository of key enablers for better outcomes of EAW services in the Palestinian society. The full mapping of EAW service provision related challenges and 'what works' will be undertaken from various sources in Palestine and in the region. It is important to note that there are number of excellent resources are available on the technical challenges, but not much from the perspective of 'what works' taking into account the adaptive and behavioral aspects, which can be immediately used by the program for higher level results.

Third intermediate outcome

Under the third intermediate outcome the programme will strengthen institutional capacity to develop and implement legal and policy frameworks that promote and protect women's and girls' rights with regards to VAW. For this, the program will focus on enhancing effectiveness and accountability of national authorities to develop, implement, and monitor policies, strategies and action plans on EAW in an evidence based and coordinated manner. This is especially critical in view of results of recently conducted monitoring and reviews of implementation of national action plan on EAW. Here, the joint effort of UN agencies will help to build the capacity of the national authorities in a manner that will enable the decision makers and executive bodies to learn by way of acting differently.

The typical trainings or short-term consultancies that deliver readily-made final products to the ministries and executive powers no longer produce the required policy level change and such critical lessons will be the base for the programmatic strategy throughout this outcome. We also aim to contribute to the data gap challenge by collaborating with the data producers on VAW prevalence, which will directly contribute to the fulfillment of the national SDG5 targets. The major task will be to facilitate the translation of data into evidence based policy making, for which we will offer unique way of sequencing data with the stories of positive champions based on the behaviour change communication techniques.

In order to ensure sustainability of efforts, the society pressure need to be put in place by building the capacity of civil society actors and human rights advocates (including the positive champions) to advocate for policy and legal frameworks for the protection of women and girls' rights. In doing so, the critical support will be provided to the advocates to utilize the evidence and data, and partner

with the positive champions. Also innovative tools and techniques will be provided for improved collaboration and communication with the local authorities, as well as tools for monitoring and holding the duty bearers accountable, along with the tools that will help them to further empower women and girls to end violence.

Target beneficiaries

Target beneficiaries of the programme are women and girls of the Palestinian society, who are victims of violence or vulnerable to VAW. Specific beneficiary groups include women and girl victims of violence and women from marginalized and vulnerable communities, including women from rural communities; women from area C and East Jerusalem; women with low economic households; and women in high risk of VAW. Men and boys will benefit by engaging in the program throughout its implementations.

Key national partners

Key national partners in the programme include the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA) [3], the Ministry of Social Development (MOSD), the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), and other relevant national counterparts such as the Ministry of Health (MoH) and Ministry of Local Government (MoLG), municipalities, and community associations and civil society organizations active on eliminating violence against women and promoting women's human rights.

The positive champions will be our partners throughout the program and will be the critical change agents at all levels. This way, the program will approach women survivors of violence also as experts, who hold unique knowledge and practice on EAW in the Palestinian society.

References

- [1] National Strategy to Combat Violence against Women: 2011-2019.
- [2] 63% of men and 50% of women respondents in the IMAGES MENA research agreed or strongly agreed that "A woman should tolerate violence to keep the family together."
- [3] UN Women and Promundo (2017). Understanding Masculinities: Results from the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES) – Middle East and North Africa. Palestine Chapter.

Haya programme is generously funded by the Government of Canada and implemented by a consortium of UN agencies consisting of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN Habitat), and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Key ministries of the Palestinian Authority (PA) including the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Ministry of Social Development are key partners of the Haya programme, as well as various civil society organizations. For more information about the Haya joint programme, please contact palestine@unwomen.org