

ASSESSMENT OF THE SERVICES OF ANTI-VIOLENCE CENTRES AND SHELTERS IN PALESTINE



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Publication by UN Women Palestine Office.



This “Assessment of the Services of Anti-violence Centres and Shelters in Palestine” has been funded by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation within the Project “A Holistic Approach to Sheltering Services for Women Victims and Survivors of Violence in Palestine”.*

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CWLRC	Centre for Women’s Legal Research and Consulting
ESJ	Emergency Shelter- Jericho
FDS	Family Defence Society
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Services
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoSD	Ministry of Social Development
MoWA	Ministry of Women’s Affairs
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PNA	Palestinian National Authority
SHN	Safe House in Nablus
SHG	Safe House in Gaza
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
VAW	Violence Against Women

INTRODUCTION

Violence against women and girls is widespread, systemic and culturally entrenched. The United Nations Secretary-General has described it as reaching pandemic proportions.¹ Globally, Shelters represent a critical point of crisis intervention when women face abuse or threat for their lives or well-being. They serve as a “home”, a safe space when women and children are extremely vulnerable.

A shelter is a residential facility providing short-term interventions for women and children who are experiencing violence and are exposed to a high level of risk of experiencing it again (or need to be protected). This intervention includes meeting basic needs as well as providing support, counselling and skills development.² Sheltering service delivery is mostly done at an early intervention stage when women receive a direct threat to their lives and need protection and interventions with their families until the direct threat is resolved.

Shelters are temporary measures to provide a woman who is in danger with a safe place until she takes control of her situation, overcomes the direct threat to her life, can live a life without domestic violence and be able to face other forms of violence by equipping her with the needed life skills to do that. Around the world there are different types of shelters. Some are run by the state or government. Others are run by non-governmental organizations including CBOs, CSOs, religious institutions and other organizations which have strong belief in women’s rights and gender justice or have some religious or humanitarian convictions that lead to protection of the most vulnerable especially women and children victims of violence.

In Palestine the history of shelters goes back to the

establishment of the first shelter (Safe House in Nablus) in 1999³. However, women rights organizations, churches and some charitable organizations have been protecting women long before that. Currently there are five sheltering services in the West Bank and the Gaza strip. They are Mehwar Centre, Nablus Safe Home, the Jericho shelter in the West Bank, the Hayat Centre and Aman Centre (Safe Home) in Gaza. The establishment of Mehwar marked an important milestone towards professionalizing sheltering services in terms of standards, training and developing skills and expertise will guarantee the needed safety and protection of women victims of violence. It also marked the new understanding of a continuum of services response. Longer term interventions are implemented by the Ministry of Social Development although require additional support such as second stage sheltering and viable economic empowerment which the MOSD cannot fully provide yet.

This report assessed the services of all five centers/shelters (Mehwar Centre, Nablus Safe Home, the Jericho shelter, the Hayat Centre and Aman Centre (Safe Home) in Gaza) that offer anti violence services to women survivors of VAW in Palestine. The assessment includes the role of the National Government in institutionalizing the centers’ sheltering services and coordinating their services within the national strategies on eliminating violence against women.

The assessment is undertaken in line with the “Essential Services Package for Women and Girls Subject to Violence” guidelines developed by UN Women jointly with UNFPA⁴, where relevant, and will assess all services provided by the centers. The assessment has been developed in alignment with priorities outlined in the National Strategy to Combat VAW and the GBV sub-cluster GBV

¹ UN Women and UNFPA, Essential Services Package for Women and Girls Subject to Violence: Core Elements and Quality Guidelines.

² Task Team on shelters (2010/1) Minimum Standards on Shelters for Abused Women, South Africa. Available on: http://www.endvawnow.org/uploads/browser/files/minimum_standards_southafrica_2001.pdf

³ At that time women rights organizations considered the work of Safe Home Nablus as a charitable work and did not consider it to have a “feminist” preceptive towards women victims of violence.

⁴ Virtual Knowledge Center to end Violence against Women and Girls, <http://www.endvawnow.org/en/initiatives/view/1-essential-services.html>, last visited 25.9.2018.

strategy. The assessment has been factoring in and examining alignment to national referral system

Objectives of the Assessment Study

This comprehensive assessment for the anti-violence centres multi-sectoral services including sheltering services in the West Bank and Gaza is intended to:

1. Assess the quality, efficiency, sustainability and inclusiveness of the multipurpose

Methodology

This is a comprehensive appraisal of five shelters/ anti-violence centres in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Guiding approaches for the field work were right-based approach; advancing gender equality and women's empowerment; culturally and age appropriate and sensitive; victim/survivor centred approach; safety is paramount; and perpetrator accountability. The approach of this assessment is participatory and right-based. It provides comprehensive assessment of the shelters from different angles including a point of view from inside (staff, beneficiaries, governance body) and from outside (families of beneficiaries, local community, partners and stakeholder). Each shelter was assessed separately following the same methods which includes multiple site visits,

Limitations

The research had some limitations especially regarding reaching out for survivors (women who left the shelters) and their families. For understandable reasons, these women did not wish to talk to the team. The few who agreed spoke over the phone but refused to allow us to contact their families. They did not want to live the bad experience again. Some of them got married and moved on. A specific and carefully designed research is needed if a good analysis of impact has to be reached.

A major limitation to the research was inability to assess the economic value of sheltering services, cost effectiveness for existing shelters and to assess the possibility to replicate services. Reasons for that included inability to receive accurate financial information from shelters. All the shelters they are not the owner or even the holder of their

and GBV sub-cluster SOPs and referral pathways.

essential services provided for VAW victims/survivors as well as responsiveness to women's needs and expectations.

2. Provide actionable recommendations for the improvement of VAW services to better suit the needs of women survivors of VAW.

in depth interviews with different stakeholders and group interviews, when possible. More than 50 in-depth interviews in addition to three group interviews were conducted in the period of April-May 2018.

Different stakeholders were included in the assessment design and process to ensure reflections of different points of view. A client-centered approach was used, placing the survivors of violence at the heart of this assessment and therefore being oriented by their needs, priorities and recommendations. The field work was conducted with the general surrounding environment in mind, taking into consideration the legal, social and economic situation in Palestine.

budgets. Budgets are controlled by the NGOs or the ministry that supervises their work. There are national standards of sheltering services but they only indicate the minimum requirements and not how the services need to be provided which makes it hard to assess cost effectiveness, if some services are missing or not done delivered as they should. The research team was not confident that with the available data, a sound and objective analysis can be made. This remains an important area to be studied in the future.

The other challenge was in interviewing some beneficiaries who still live at the shelters. Staff did not allow the research team to sit alone with the beneficiaries. They wanted to protect the privacy and confidentiality of these women. Most assessments of the shelters were in the presence of staff and generally were positive. In future

research it is important to reconsider how to receive feedback from the beneficiaries through anonymous forms or in one to one interviews without the presence of shelter staff.

This research focused on the shelters themselves but early on the research team realized that the full national referral system needs to be assessed because in many cases there are challenges of slow

implementation, lack of vision and understanding and lack of support by other service providers. Although the research team tried to cover some of these issues by interviewing different service providers connected to each shelter, a more comprehensive assessment of the services covered by the referral system as well as others who needed these types of services is still needed⁵.

Theoretical Background

Sheltering services are important component of combating VAW in the current context in Palestine especially for women whose life is threatened.

At the national level Sheltering services are placed within the first strategic objective of the Palestinian National Strategy 2011-2019 to Combat Violence against Women (VAW) which aims to promote a legal framework and institutional mechanisms to protect women from violence. The Palestinian National Strategy to Combat Violence Against Women, referred to the need to “*increase the number and develop services*

of safe homes and institutions offering legal and social protection services and ensure their wide geographic distribution throughout the oPt”. The Cross Sectoral National Gender Strategy 2014-2016: Policy # 5 highlighted the importance of “Developing social services for battered women and the most vulnerable to marginalization”. The UN Women’s strategic framework: Impact Area 3” *Preventing violence against women and girls and expanding access to services*”: has a main outcome (3.2) on supporting “Specialized, quality, multi-sectoral survivors-based services available and accessible to women and girls’ victims of violence”

Minimum Standards for Shelter Services

There are usually a set of minimum standards that the shelters need to have including which services should be available within the shelter, how shelters need to be distributed geographically and who be responsible of these services in terms of financing, supervision and accountability and who will provide them in terms of qualification, commitment and in-service training. These include:

- Confidentiality
- Safety, security and respect for residents and staff
- Accessibility (including child care services)
- Availability

- Free of charge and provision for residents to stay as long as required, regardless of their financial situation
- Work within a gender analysis with the principles of empowerment and self-determination
- Qualified staff
- Staff Expertise recognized and developed through training
- Services with a holistic approach
- Interagency (including government, non-government, private sector and community) coordination⁶
- Providing services for the children of women victims of violence.

⁵ There is an ongoing assessment conducted by TAM in Bethlehem which produced proper baseline data and will monitor the national referral system for the coming few years. MOWA also has recently carried out an assessment of the National Referral System and the UNFPA has reviewed and developed the procedures manuals

⁶ Virtual Knowledge Centre to End Violence against Women and Girls, <http://www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/1391-standards-and-regulations.html> , last visited on 25.9.2018.

Shelters are encouraged to adopt **a survivor-centered approach which entails:**

- Respect for women's autonomy and right to make decisions (for example, in determining whether to report an incident to the police or renew contact with the perpetrator in cases of intimate partner violence).
- Consideration of a survivor's family and social environment when providing health services and safety responses (e.g. where survivors are ostracized by their families or cannot return to their homes).

The External Environment

The five Palestinian centres offering sheltering services are functioning within a very difficult political, economic, social and legal system. They

The Political Situation

Palestinians live under prolonged occupation which affects all aspects of life and has profound effect on daily life, access to education, health and social services and causes increased poverty levels, limits the potential of growth and causes some major changes in power dynamics and gender relations in the family and the society at large.

Since 2006 and only months after the last Parliamentary elections Palestinians suffered the consequences of deep internal division which split the political system deeply and cause the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) to be inactive and unable to discuss any laws or regulations. Internal political division affects the Gaza Strip the most. The lack of services, salary cuts, and the wide spread poverty only increase the traditional burden on women. Recent studies⁸ show the negative impact of the blockade (e.g. the dire economic situation) on women's conditions in the Gaza Strip especially concerning psychological stress. The electricity and fuel crisis has only

- Ongoing rights-based education and legal literacy, which empowers all women and girls, including survivors of violence.
- Provision of both immediate needs (e.g. medical, safety, psychological needs, legal), as well as longer-term socio-economic supports (such as ongoing therapy and health care, access to income, employment security, housing, transportation) for the survivor and her dependents (e.g. children and elderly relatives)⁷.

face the challenge of dealing with VAW in addition to all the other struggles that Palestinians in general suffer from. Some of these challenges are:

further intensified the situation making the living conditions of women worse, disrupting almost all aspects of daily life, including the household tasks, which by society are considered the job of women.

In East Jerusalem in the absence of available sheltering services – particularly outside the Separation Wall– women would resort to different protection mechanisms⁹ depending on factors such as the specificities of the situation and violence, the intensity of the abuse and recurrence of the violence. Primarily, women would rely on “self-help” as a coping mechanism. Disclosure of violence tended to exacerbate the violence and would be considered an insult or disgrace to the family honour. Hence, women would maintain silent about the abuse and endure the violence without turning to external actors for protection.¹⁰

The over dependency on foreign aid is another major challenge where Palestinian receive the highest per capita aid in the world¹¹ and where the

⁷ Virtual Knowledge Centre to End Violence against Women and Girls, <http://www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/312-ensuring-survivor-centred-and-empowering-approaches.html> last visited on 25.9.2018.

⁸ See for example UN Women, *Navigating Through Shattered Paths: NGO Service Providers and Women*

Survivors of Gender-based Violence. An Assessment of GBV Services in Gaza, September 2017.

⁹ Some of these women might approach protection through WCLAC emergency shelter.

¹⁰ UNFPA, 2018

¹¹ “According to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), over \$35bn in aid has been spent on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip

aid is highly politicized. When it comes to women's rights there is a shrinking pool of resources available especially after the deterioration of humanitarian situation in surrounding Arab countries. Women rights organizations are challenged to keep up with their fundraising efforts which led them to focus their efforts on fundraising and be more separated from their grassroots constituency. On the other hand, most funded

The Economic Situation

Poverty is wide spread in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Palestine's poverty rate is 29.2% were living in poverty in 2017 (13.9% in the West Bank and 53% in the Gaza Strip)¹² and it reaches 56% among the youth, representing the highest youth poverty rate in the world. According to MAS, 27% of the Palestinians are food insecure in 2014¹³. Gaza remains under siege and in humanitarian crisis. With reconstruction slowed by ongoing Israeli attacks, only 18% of 18,000 displaced families have been able to return to reconstructed or repaired

The Legal System

Palestinians are still living under outdated, un-harmonised legal system. Women's rights advocates in the oPt have been pressing for law reform since the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) in 1994. While progress has been made, important pieces of legislation fail. A national referral system was approved by the Council of Ministers decision no. 18/2013 and was published in the official Gazette in 2014 as mandatory for all organizations. However, the system is not implemented at all in the Gaza strip¹⁷

between 1993 and 2016. Of the \$35bn, around \$24bn (70 percent of the total aid) was allocated between 2006 and 2016, at an average of \$2.2bn per year, and \$560 per capita per year. Such figures make the Palestinians one of the top recipients of non-military per capita aid in the world." Tartir, 2017, International Aid to Palestine: Time to Change Course, Middle East Eye, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/columns/international-aid-palestine-time-change-course-1205482743>

¹² PCBS, Levels of Living in Palestine 2017. Available on <http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/post.aspx?lang=en&ItemID=3115>

¹³ MAS, Food Security Bulletin no 15, Winter 2016. MAS Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute, Ramallah, Palestine.

¹⁴ World Bank, 2016, p. 1.

projects are limited in time while social change requires longer commitment.

Palestinian Authority does not have security control over area C and does not have jurisdiction over Palestinians in East Jerusalem which creates limitations to what services can be provided to Palestinians living in East Jerusalem and increases women and children's vulnerability in these areas.

homes after the Israeli bombing of Gaza in 2014; 47% of Gaza's households remain food insecure. A prevalence of food insecurity is registered among the refugee households and women-headed households also in the West Bank. Economic growth in Palestine dropped from 8 per cent to 3 per cent between 2007 and 2015.¹⁴ Many studies show a link between economic factors, such as male unemployment, and increased domestic tension and violence.¹⁵

to meet the basic requirements of international human rights law.¹⁶ The split in the political system causes a complete paralysis of the Palestinian legislative council, preventing any potential for legal reform.

and has limited implementation in the West Bank. This system is the first of its kind in the region and the term "referral" means change of status or course of action i.e. transferring the case from one service provider to another to receive other

¹⁵ Clark, Cari J. and others (2010). Association between exposure to political violence and intimate-partner violence in the occupied Palestinian territory: A cross-sectional study. *The Lancet*, 375(9711): 310–316. And World Bank (2010) Checkpoints and Barriers: Searching for Livelihoods in the West Bank and Gaza Gender Dimensions of Economic Collapse. Available from <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWESTBANKGAZA/Resources/GenderStudy-EnglishFeb2010.pdf>.

¹⁶ UNDP, 2012

¹⁷ The GBV Sub-Cluster together with the Child Protection Working Group established case management and referral pathways SOPs for institutions dealing with GBV cases. The SOPs have been accepted by the NGO service providers. There are discussions with MoWA about a referral system in the Gaza Strip but it is not in place yet.

services, whether health, social or legal services, depending on the nature of violence and the level of danger that threatens the woman's life. The system establishes set of rules that collectively constitute a national charter for dealing with victims of violence and provide a guide to professional treatment of victims; a moral and ethical reference for professionals, and confirmation of the set of rights and duties of service providers and abused women. The system comprises three main sectors: social, health, and security. Recently, the public prosecution and Shari'a courts (Justice sector) were added.

Palestinian decisions and laws to protect women from violence

- Cabinet Decision No. 366 of 2005 to strengthen the protection of abused women.
- Decision of the Council of Ministers in 2008 to form a national committee to combat violence against women in 2008
- Presidential Decree No. 19 of 2009 on the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women - CEDAW
- 25 January 2011 Adoption of the National Strategy to Combat Violence against Women for the years 2011-2019
- May 16, 2011 Abolition of the excused excuse by repealing Article 340 of the Penal Code No. 16 of 1960 in force in the northern governorates and the Penal Code No. 74 of 1936 in effect in the Gaza Strip
- 2011 Council of Ministers issues a decision no 9 to adopt the system of protection centres for women victims of violence

According to this system there are women who are excluded from sheltering services. These include:

- Women who are linked to organized crime networks and suspected of collaboration with

- 2013 Council of Ministers issues a decision no 18 to adopt the national referral system for women victims of violence

A national system for protection centres was approved in 2011 by the Council of Ministers. Shelters were recognized as official institutions under the State responsibility. MoSD is the Ministry responsible for monitoring shelters and ensuring that they meet the minimum requirements. Until now the MoSD does not issue "licence of operation"¹⁸ to the shelters because most of them do not meet the national system requirements and to change this situation a lot of resources are required.¹⁹ MoSD however keeps track of the number of cases, participates in all the "case conferences" and ensures that there are no major violations. MoSD does not monitor or investigate the quality of services within all shelters. The level of supervision also varies from one shelter to the other. For example, in the West Bank Jericho emergency shelter has a higher level of supervision because the governorate protection committee has an active and engaged role in the day to day activities of the centre.²⁰ Mehwar has direct line of connection with MoSD through its manager who is also the director of gender unit at MoSD. The Safe House in Nablus has the directorate of MoSD in Nablus as the chair-person of the steering committee and are supposed to invite for the steering committee meetings. However, since the steering committee is inactive, this role is limited. In the Gaza Strip the safe House in Gaza is under the supervisor of the Ministry of Social Affairs there while Hayat is not supervised by the ministry. There is a need to harmonize the level of supervisor, its regularity and clarify roles and responsibilities of MoSD to the different shelters.

the Israeli occupation or being a member of prostitution network.

- Women addicted to drugs and/or alcohol.
- Women who suffer from mental disability or chronic mental illness and pose a danger to themselves and/or other people.

¹⁸ This practice is common for any service provider who receives annual inspection to ensure they keep up with the required standards.

¹⁹ Interview with Saida Al Atrash on 3.3.2018

²⁰ The Governorate Protection Committee consists of director of social development in the governorate, the women affairs counsellor, WCLAC, Tawasol Centre, and the Governor's office.

- Women who are convicted for a crime and whose period of suspension and / or sentence has not ended.
- Women with infectious diseases confirmed by medical reports.
- Women who have a motor disability that makes them not self-sufficient.

Prevalence of GBV in the Palestinian Context

There are no recent comprehensive data on the prevalence of GBV available²¹. In 2017 only, the GBV Sub-Cluster partners provided services to more than 29,000 GBV survivors focusing on health care services, legal aid and MHPSS.²² The latest PCBS survey on violence against women was conducted in 2011 and shows that 37 percent of ever married women in Palestine were exposed to one form of violence by their husbands. Evidence collected by development agencies suggests that violence, especially in Gaza, is on the rise, aggravated by an upsurge in political violence. A survey of internally displaced persons (IDPs) indicates that more than 70 per cent of respondent households perceive a rise in violence against women in Gaza.²³ A small, but more recent survey of Palestinian women indicates that 53 per cent of respondents have experienced or witnessed domestic violence.²⁴

Palestinian women and girls are also subject to verbal, physical and sexual harassment in public spaces. According to a 2015 survey, 25.7 per cent of young women aged between 15 and 29 in Gaza had experienced some form of sexual harassment in the previous year, compared with 13.8 per cent in the West Bank. Most cases are related to sexist statements.²⁵ Research suggests that women with disabilities are at higher risk of physical and verbal abuse, feel that women's rights organizations do not meet their need for protection and report that shelters and other services are not always physically accessible.

Definition of Violence against Women (VAW)

"Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life."

United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women UN General Assembly Resolution 48/104, 20 December 1993

A recent study identifies early marriage as one of the main entry points to violence against women in addition to other contributing factors such as unwanted marriage, poverty and low level of education. When analysing the exit points, it was found that the family is the first point which the women uses to exit a violent situation. However, families do not provide the ideal solutions. Most families refuse the divorce option either because of the stigma associated with divorces or because of the economic burden of caring for a divorced woman and her children. Many families impose a condition that the woman must give up custody of her children to allow for divorce. This option is also seen as creating additional opportunities for the divorced woman to re-marry. Not many men will marry a woman with children.

As a second option, women try to adapt to the violent situation and accept some suggestions offered to her by family and friends. Only as the third option women start to seek solutions outside

²¹ The PCBS is currently working on a new violence survey but results will not be available before the end of 2018

²² UNDP Regional Hub for Arab States, 2018, Laws, policies and practices in Gender Justice: State of Palestine.

²³ Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, In the spotlight: Gaza internally displaced persons. East Jerusalem. Available from

<http://gaza.ochaopt.org/2016/04/gaza-internally-displaced-persons-april-2016.p>. 6.

²⁴ AWRAD, (2016), A comprehensive Analytical Study of Gender Based Violence and the Reality of the National Referral System on Women, in Arabic. TAM, Bethlehem, Palestine. p. 1.

²⁵ PCBS (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics), 2015 Palestinian Youth Survey, 2016, Ramallah, Palestine. p. 111.

the family sphere starting with resorting to informal tribal law.²⁶

In the Palestinian Context only 0.7% of all women seek any services provided for victims of violence against women including sheltering services. There are many reasons of that including the fact that 30% women seek help from family as their first option. VAW is considered a private matter and should stay in the family. In addition, shelters' capacity, their business model and reputation also play a role in that. Shelters are not supposed to be

a solution but a step towards empowering women to make informed life choices. When looking at the options women take we find that most of them avoid solutions that may expose their private issues them to people outside their private sphere like people who work with social services or women rights organizations (see table below). Women who reach the shelters are women who tried many different solutions with family, relatives and friends and failed to find a satisfactory solution.

Measures taken by abused woman	Received assistance %	Seeking assistance %
Left the house and went to the house of your father, brother or relatives	83.9	24.0
Did not leave the house, but rather you talked about it with your parents or relatives	85.1	24.0
Talked about it with your colleagues at work or neighbors for counseling, advice or even protection	80.1	8.2
Ignored your husband and refused talking to him for several days	—	57.5
Did not tell anybody about it	—	64.8
Went to a leading figure in your area	67.7	1.8
Went to a lawyer to file a complaint against your husband	84.6	1.1
Went to women organization or center for counseling	63.3	0.7
Went to police to file a complaint against your husband	78.2	1.2
Called an organization for counseling via phone	87.7	0.6
Talked to a religious figure with outstanding reputation in society for counseling	87.0	2.3
Talked to an outstanding social/political figure with outstanding reputation in society for counseling	82.0	0.9
Talked with your husband and asked him to stop abusing you	75.0	39.5
Went to medical center for medical treatment	87.3	3.0

Source: PCBS, 2015

²⁶ UN Women (2017) **Navigating through Shattered Paths: NGO Service Providers and Women Survivors of Gender-Based Violence**, Available from

<http://palestine.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2017/12/gbv-research>

The Need for Shelters

All people interviewed for this paper confirmed the need for shelters in the Palestinian context. The lack of shelters was a struggle for Palestinian women's rights organizations in the 1990's. Some activists explained how they rented hotel rooms and furnished apartments, used churches and sometimes private homes to save women's lives. Almost twenty years later and with the establishment of four different shelters and an emergency shelter in the West Bank and Gaza that the situation has improved. However, the challenges are different. On the one hand some shelters like Mehwar accumulated expertise and developed skills on how to deal with survivors' issues in the Palestinian context. On the other hand, there is a need to develop a comprehensive service network and distinguish between the different needs of sheltering.

There is a need for wide range of services such as "day service" for women who need counselling and guidance and are not ready yet to challenge or leave a violent situation (Hayat Centre), emergency services for women who face direct threat to their lives and well-being or who cannot stay in the situation any longer (Emergency shelter in Jericho), comprehensive sheltering services including overnight stay as well as psychological and social counselling, legal support, health support, reintegration and economic empowerment services (Mehwar); and a second stage shelter where women need stabilization,

These include:

- Showing respect and acceptance to abused women all the time
- Respecting abused women values, beliefs, culture, goals, needs and desires
- Respecting women rights, thoughts and opinion even if different from the society
- Respecting women's agency and her right to make her own decisions and accept or rejects the offered services
- Equality of reaching and using services without any discrimination based on sex, color, ethnicity, religion, political believe, social and economic class and disability

support to be able to live independently and economic empowerment (does not exist in the current situation in Palestine).

Some of the interviewed service providers demand for additional shelters, specialized shelters and more care centres for women below 18 years old. According to the research team assessment an additional shelter is not needed at this stage. None of the shelters in Palestine function in full capacity. There are no waiting lists or unmet immediate needs²⁷. At the same time with the current philosophy of reintegration in the community and support women to return to their families, there is a need for more trained staff and accumulated technical expertise which is not easy to build. It would be better to invest in existing facilities and build capacities of existing staff to serve a wider range of beneficiaries.

Due to the privacy and sensitivity of abused women situation, they need to be treated within certain ethical standards. This is especially important in a patriarchal and conservative society as the Palestinian society where all staff as well as women were according to certain social norms. Therefore, a right-based and client-centred approach is needed and should shape the practical framework for all interventions. The researchers found that better work ethics based on justice, respecting human dignity, acceptance the other, and non-discrimination need to be developed, trained on and monitored by the MoSD.

²⁷ In all field visits to the shelters the staff confirmed that they do not have waiting lists. The largest number of beneficiaries during the field work was in Mehwar (13 women) while capacity is at 28. Mehwar Manager

confirmed that the highest number of beneficiaries was 23 at one point. The Safe House in Gaza has the capacity to house 50 women. The maximum number it had was 23.

Shelters and Essential Services

Essential Services encompass a core set of services provided by the health care, social service, police and justice sectors. The services must, at a minimum, “secure the rights, safety and well-being of any woman or girl who experiences gender-based violence”.²⁸ Although shelters are not expected to provide all these services, they need to be part of a network of service providers and ensure that their beneficiaries receive these

needed services. Coordination of the national referral system which can be the umbrella to identify, refer and serve all victims of violence is still weak and not fully operational. This is a shared responsibility for all service providers. One reason is staff rotation especially in health and social services where trained staff is usually transferred to other positions and new staff are not properly trained to deal with violence cases.

²⁸ UN Women and UNFPA, Essential Services Package for Women and Girls Subject to Violence: Core Elements and Quality Guidelines.

CHAPTER 1

MEHWAR CENTRE FOR THE PROTECTION AND EMANCIPATION OF WOMEN AND FAMILIES

Background

The “Mehwar Centre for the Protection and Empowerment of Women and Families” represents the first centre in Palestine offering specialized anti-violence- services for women and their children. It was formally inaugurated on 27 February 2007 as a shelter, and to provide services for the community at large and it operates as a purely governmental shelter under the institutional support and supervision of MoSD.

History of Mehwar

“In 2001, Based on the request of the directorate of social affairs office of Bethlehem; the Italian Cooperation commissioned a group of Palestinian academic specialists from the Universities of Jerusalem (Al Quds) and Bethlehem to undertake a feasibility study, which confirmed the need and demand for such a centre. In response, a multi-stakeholder consultation process established a joint strategy for the establishment of the first specialised anti-violence centre in the oPt.

In order to ensure the success of the Centre and the support of the community in the difficult social context into which it would be embedded, the strategy proposed establishing two sections: the internal section, which would serve as a shelter for women and children victims of violence, and the external section, which would provide various community services.

Following the multi-stakeholder consultation process, the Government of Italy agreed to donate an initial fund of approximately three million dollars, allocated through the World Bank for the construction and implementation of a “Counselling Centre for Women in Difficult Circumstances” in the Bethlehem Governorate, on land donated by the Bethlehem Municipality. The project was executed from 2004 to 2007 by the Palestinian Welfare Organisation, later renamed the NGO Development Centre (NDC). It was entrusted by the World Bank, and implemented by the Palestinian NGO, Women’s Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling (WCLAC), and Differenza Donna (DD), a specialist Italian NGO with extensive experience running and managing anti-violence centres in Italy. NDC was responsible for constructing the building and administrating the project’s funds, while WCLAC and DD were responsible for technical matters such as stakeholder sensitization, policy development, staff recruitment, training, and supervision, in cooperation and under the auspices of MoSA, currently known as MoSD.

The project established a pilot anti-violence centre of 1,800 square metres, built specifically to suit the goals of protecting and empowering women, preventing violence, and raising community awareness about issues related to VAW.

The Mehwar Centre was formally inaugurated on 27 February 2007. To staff the Centre, a group of 25 women were locally recruited and received intensive theoretical and practical training, both locally and in Italy, beginning in October 2006. Key stakeholders from the Palestinian police, governmental ministries and courts also received training in VAW issues and a campaign to raise awareness about the Mehwar Centre and its services was conducted in cities and villages throughout the West Bank prior the Centre’s inauguration.

Following this phase, with the aim to consolidate the Mehwar Centre experience and use it as model for the development of national women’s protection policies and services, UN Women, in partnership with MoSA, and with additional funding from the Italian Cooperation and technical assistance from Differenza Donna,

launched a 36-month project called the “Mehwar Centre for the Protection and Empowerment of Women and Families” in September 2008.”²⁹

In 2011 and based on a decree from the Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas the center became a governmental institution working under the administration of MOSA at that time. All its employees were transferred to be civil servants.

UN Women provided support to “Mehwar Centre” as a continuation and up-scaling of the “Mehwar Centre for the Protection and Empowerment of Women and Families” Project, executed by UN Women through funds provided by the Government of Italy (2008-2012) to build capacity and case management skills among its staff. Since 2015, the Italian Agency for International Cooperation (AICS) has been supporting the Mehwar Centre through the WELOD programme to build its capacity also on reintegration services.³⁰

The objectives of Mehwar are:

1. Prevent VAW through partnerships with multi-stakeholder networks;
2. Protect and safely reintegrate women and children victims of violence into society;
3. Empower victims of VAW through counselling, legal aid, medical support, educational and vocational training, and employment assistance;
4. Support the families by strengthening positive, non-violent relationships based on recognition and respect of each individual within the family;
5. Increase awareness of VAW and the human rights of women and children within Palestinian society.

Physical Condition of the Building

Mehwar has a building that is specifically designed to be a shelter in a rather remote area in Bethlehem. This location is good for safety and confidentiality. It is built on 1,800 square metres with a design that services its goals of protecting and empowering women, preventing violence, and raising community awareness about issues related to VAW. The shelter section for women (with their children) has bedrooms for around 35 persons. On the first floor there is a counselling centre, which provides social, psychological and legal counselling. The building is well protected with a guarded gate and high fence. No one can enter the shelter without permission. There are security cameras around the building and four guards available around the clock for seven days a week.

The Centre’s facilities also include a small nursery for both the children of the women sheltered at Mehwar and those of women in the surrounding community. The nursery is not functioning at the

moment for issues related to licencing. It has recently been renovated and will be re-opened in the new school year.

There are nursing and medical counselling facilities (clinic) at Mehwar which is not functioning and all medical consultations are referred externally to local hospitals in Bethlehem where a special arrangement is done through the Ministry of Health to cover such services. Hiring a nurse or a doctor is an extra cost and all needed health services are easily accessible in Bethlehem, including psychological and psychiatrist support through the only mental health hospital in the West Bank that is located in Bethlehem.

The multipurpose hall for prevention programmes and various community activities has around 100 seats and is equipped with a screen, a projector, stereos, computers, a portable stage, chairs and tables is also little used. According to Mehwar Manager many workshops and trainings and

²⁹ Gaylard, Robert, (2012), “The Mehwar Centre: Women Agents for Change”, UN Women: Jerusalem.

³⁰ WELOD is a program for the Italian Cooperation for development which funds gender equality and

combating violence against women through support the Ministry of Women Affairs, The Ministry of Social Development and different women institutions in the West Bank and Gaza.

activities with the community and women in the shelters are held weekly in the hall.

There is also a well-equipped beauty salon which not functional at the moment because the ministry is in the process of hiring a supervisor. There is also a small sewing factory in the shelter which is utilized by the women at the shelter for training and small-scale production. These two facilities are seen as part of the women economic empowerment role of the shelter. There is also a small library which is according to the shelter manager is well used by the women at the shelter.

Organizational Structure

Mehwar is run as a governmental shelter. Therefore, it has no Board of Directors and the shelter director is also the person in charge of all shelters at MoSD. This is a governance challenge because MoSD is supposed to supervise the work of Mehwar and a separation of authority is needed. The fact that Mehwar manager is also the lead person in the MoSD who oversees all shelters (the gender unit) has an added value in terms of abiding with rules and regulations. However, Mehwar needs to be managed by a person who is only in charge of Mehwar and still be supervised by the MoSD. There were many attempts to hire a director for Mehwar which did not work out. The current director therefore divides her time between Mehwar and the ministry. Mehwar has highly qualified staff who keep the shelter running in a very effective way.³² The director is a highly qualified well-respected figure in Bethlehem/ Beit Sahour where the shelter is located. This gives the shelter high credibility with the local community. The arrangement seems to also be serving navigating the complicated financial and administrative system at the ministry. With her support she manages to move payments, purchase new things and repair the car. However, there are some challenges to this arrangement including the actual accountability system in place, the lack of trained second in command person who would

One of the best utilized facilities of Mehwar is the small gym³¹ which is also open for women from the community and used by the beneficiaries as a recreational place and for stress release. The gym has few equipment that are well utilized. Mehwar has a well-maintained garden space which beneficiary can use as an external recreation facility. There is also a cafeteria which is not used at the moment. The PNA restricts the use of governmental facilities for any income generation.

serve in emergency situations and the risk of burn out and over stretching capacity of the current director. These issues pause a risk on the shelter and require some attention.

Mehwar employs 24 women and 6 men (the men are mostly as security guards). Half of the staff are on the PNA payroll. The other half are paid of funded projects. This situation is problematic. Although the PNA staff receive lower salary, they have a more sustainable job. The project staff suffer from lack of stability and job security.

Mehwar has served 445 cases through sheltering services since it was established in addition to 190 children accompanying their mothers. In addition, the shelter has a strong community outreach program which provides awareness building and legal aid to women in the community.

Mehwar has a strategic plan and annual plans. It does not have an electronic database, although the staff is diligent in documenting the cases through proper filing. They considered developing a database, an issue that was disregarded because of the maintenance issues (need to be done by external consultants) and how this will lead to breaching privacy and confidentiality of the data. Obviously, these issues have technical solutions and should not hinder Mehwar ability to develop a searchable data base. They may even consider a

support each other on a daily basis. The main researcher also witnessed a very delicate situation of dealing with outraged parents who wanted to see their daughter at the shelter. The situation was handled in a highly effective way without harming the beneficiary or further upsetting the parents.

³¹ Group interview of Mehwar neighbors who use the Gym 19.4.201. All interviewed beneficiaries also confirmed the use the gyp daily at least two hours.

³² The manger is not there daily but the staff keeps the shelter running smoothly. Interviews with staff showed their commitment and knowledge and how they

national database that can help tracking the beneficiaries' history and movements around all shelters. Currently they use excel sheets.

Mehwar follows the national standards for shelters in terms of which cases it houses, and in all other systems and procedures. However, the building of

Financial Situation

Mehwar is under direct supervision of MoSD which covers almost half of its expenses and channels any project funding. The shelter has to follow the PNA financial processes and procedures which the staff in Mehwar claim to be too complicated. Mehwar staff find these procedures especially difficult when they need to go out for community activities, when they need to hire a consultant, pay for a taxi or spend some money on gas. Many service providers stopped serving the shelter because they need to have tax receipts and invoices even for small amounts. This is compulsory by the financial procedures of the Ministry of Finance. Even when all procedures are followed the payment takes many weeks to come through. This is complicating

Services

Mehwar has one of the most comprehensive SoP amongst all shelters running in Palestine and possibly in the region. It has a continuum of services (both internal and through networks with other service providers) that makes it a model for VAW services. There are two sections that work simultaneously to prevent, protect and intervene in VAW cases. The internal counselling department supports beneficiaries who are housed in the shelter. The community outreach department has regular visits to remote areas and engages with local communities and local civil society to raise awareness of VAW and ensure that all members of

Psychosocial Support

Mehwar offers high quality social and psychological support to beneficiaries and their families. All beneficiaries who were interviewed said they receive high-quality support. These

Mehwar has the potential to provide additional services to cases excluded by the system. It is possible for Mehwar to house women with disability, or young women in a separate section of the building. Additional staffing and resources will be needed as well as a permission from MoSD.

many activities and delayed some much-needed interventions such as renovation of the nursery or the staff retreat.

Project funding from the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation is used to partially cover staff and until now most operation cost has always been funded by the Italian Cooperation. The PA covers only some staff salaries. There is no scenario to explain what may happen if the Italians stop funding. The expectation is that it would be the responsibility of the Palestinian authority to maintain it. However, the shelter does not appear on the budget of MoSD.

the community are aware of its services. This is an important role and different from other shelters who take a low profile with the assumption that they protect privacy and confidentiality of their cases. In fact, Mehwar attempts to reach out are more effective than other shelters in preventing violence before it happens rather than solving the problem after the fact ³³. Awareness and prevention are essential to the continuum of services to combat violence against women. It is good to see that Mehwar is taking a proactive role in violence prevention.

include some severe cases that were not possible to receive counselling in any other shelter or NGO.

The counselling staff is over stretched with very little support of professional supervision.³⁴ In this case Mehwar does not lack the funding to support

³³ Interview with community outreach manager at Mehwar 3.3.2018

³⁴ Interview with manager of Mehwar, 3.3.2018 and manager of internal division 10.6.2018.

a retreat for their staff or a regular professional supervision. The staff did not have a retreat in the last three years. The financial procedures of the PNA as explained below are hindering. This is a major challenge to the quality of services especially for acute VAW cases as the ones housed in Mehwar. Staff usually support each other and help each other in de-briefing and moral support.

Legal Support

Mehwar has excellent legal support unit which attracts women from the community as well as beneficiaries who live at the shelter.³⁵

Recreational Support

Mehwar is well equipped with possibilities for internal and external recreation. The gym is well utilized by beneficiaries as well as the neighbours.³⁶ There is the beauty salon, the sewing

However, this is not enough and they need some external support. A university professor from Bethlehem volunteers sometime to support the team but this support is not regular, consistent or based on need and demand. Therefore, it is important to institutionalize such support for the staff.

machines, arts and crafts materials the women can access at any time. The surrounding gardens are well maintained, and women are usually allowed to have counselling sessions in the garden.

Family Reintegration

Mehwar is very developed in terms of family reintegration and helping women survivors to reintegrate in their community. When they first started operating, they used to have beneficiaries living for 4 or 5 years. They realized this is not their role of helping victims of violence. Living in a shelter not only creates dependency but also isolates beneficiaries from reality. Mehwar staff realized that in fact they are not helping their beneficiaries if they do not support them to reintegrate in their communities and live a normal life outside the shelter. Currently women live in Mehwar for 6 months up to a year. The staff help them to develop the needed social skills to face the reality of reintegration and stand up for themselves. While the shelters say that “success rate is very high” a recent study raises questions

about this success “the policies adopted by NGOs and other international and national organizations are not always effective because they fail to comprehend local dynamics and sometimes they impose policies and intervention they believe that they represent the best solutions for the problems of abused women. For example, efforts to empower and raise awareness among/of abused women in shelters without creating parallel and continuous programs within the local and social environment, especially in households where violence against women is prevalent, leave women victims vulnerable to psycho-social conflict, with subsequent adverse consequences.”³⁷ This topic requires more specialized research that follows the survivors after certain periods and check their abilities to lead a life free of violence.

Safety

The building is very secure with adequate number of security guards at the gate and security cameras.³⁸ No one can enter the shelter without

permission. Any family member who wants to visit needs to coordinate with MoSD directorate in Bethlehem, Mehwar administration and the local

³⁵ Interview with Mehwar lawyer 10.6.2018

³⁶ Interviews with five beneficiaries 31.3.2018 and a group interview with the neighbors 19.4.2018

³⁷ Nidaa Abu Awwad, “Reintegration of women survivors of Gender-based violence: combating VAW in

Palestinian Society, Nov 2016, Institute of Women’s Studies, Birzeit University.

³⁸ Field visits to Mehwar and interviews with manager and staff.

police. They need to phone in advance and the staff places their name at the gate. Women who stay at the shelter indicated that they feel safe and protected. The research team witnessed an incident when relatives came to visit one of the cases and were very angry. The staff dealt with the situation with a delicate way that rapidly de-escalated a tense situation. This is a sign of good training, wisdom and long experience of dealing with such a situation.

Privacy

Privacy is very well respected in Mehwar. During the team visits we did not see any of the beneficiaries or learn any detail that may expose their identity. Even when we met the beneficiaries, they were given fake names and we were allowed to meet them with their counsellor. Although this is one of the challenges of the feedback from

Coordination and Networking

Mehwar has excellent relationship with local NGOs and local community.⁴⁰ They have a strong connection to Bethlehem University. As

Local Community Assessment

Local community value Mehwar and its role. The female neighbours of the centre expressed their appreciation for having such a service in Palestine. They were introduced to the centre early on and are regularly invited to participate in events, workshops and activities. The presence of the gym is important for them. They do not mix with the beneficiaries who usually have separate sessions,

Sustainability

Being under the supervision of the PNA, there is a tendency amongst staff and local community including the NGO sector to think that Mehwar is sustainable. The manager of Mehwar said: *“Mehwar as a governmental institution has always guarantee of sustainability because its budgets are guaranteed from the ministry as well as the non-*

One of the neighbours said that when the shelter was first established women used to climb the walls and escape.³⁹ This was confirmed by Mehwar manager. At that time the shelter did not adopt client-centred services where women know and believe that they are there on their own will and can leave the shelter at any time they feel safe. Using the current case management approach women agree on the direction the centre uses to help them and ensure their safety. Therefore, in the last few years they did not have any “escape” case.

beneficiaries, it is a sign on how staff takes the issue of privacy and confidentiality very seriously.

There is a proper closed room for back-dated files that is not accessible by anyone who has no business. The research team was allowed to look at the files without compromising the confidentiality of information.

mentioned above they receive some professional expertise from the faculty of social work at the university.

but they know that these women are being helped because they are survivors of violence

Mehwar has good reputation in the surrounding villages. It was mentioned as the place to go to if suffering from domestic violence in three focus group discussions that were held in villages surrounding Bethlehem and Hebron.

governmental employees could be paid through the government in case of crisis. But the issue is with the other developmental activities and services which will be somehow affected (as an innovative institution).⁴¹ The assumption is that it will always have an operational budget and staffing cost covered. However, knowing the situation of

³⁹ Group interviews with neighbors 19.4.2018.

⁴⁰ Interview with the Director of TAM, 10.6.2018.

⁴¹ Saida Al Atrash comments on an earlier version of this study, 25.9.2018.

donor dependency in Palestine and the fact that if donors support stops, this would be one of the first services to cut back.

Mehwar needs to develop other sustainability plans including developing its social enterprise and developing a pool of sustainable donors from the local community. There is a good potential with the hair dressing salon and the sewing machines that

can generate income and help sustain some activities. Mehwar can also consider a “fee for service” for some of its legal and counselling services. With the current situation this is not possible because of PNA financial rules and regulations that prevent engaging in income generating activities. Some dialogue is needed with policy makers at the PNA to find a model that allows for sustainability of some social services.

Challenges and Needs

The main challenge that Mehwar faces is the financial processes and procedures. Although we encourage high accountability and transparency systems to be implemented in all PNA organizations, shelters of women victims of domestic violence represent a special case because of the urgency of needs and the need for regular professional support. These women are amongst the most vulnerable population most of the time require acute care and quick decisions. If the beneficiaries and staff need to wait weeks to have permission to spend or be paid back for expenses, this can be life threatening. The MoFP together with MoSD can find arrangements to solve issues of delays and train the financial manager on how to obtain all supporting documents without compromising the quality of services or accountability measures.

Within the financial challenge some serious problems are created sometimes, including inability of buying food, personal items and medicine for beneficiaries. This is a very challenging situation for staff who do not know sometimes how to respond to urgent needs.

The second challenge is not having a full-time manager who focuses only on Mehwar and its

issues. This governance issue which was mentioned above needs to be resolved to allow for stronger MoSD supervision and the centre to flourish and grow in different ways with new ideas.

Staff highlighted the lack of psychological support service as a serious challenge. Although Mehwar receives support from the mental health hospital in Bethlehem and there is a doctor who volunteers to serve the beneficiaries, they see the needs to have psychology specialist as a staff member.

Having two groups of staff one is project based and another is employed by MoSD creates some serious problems especially if project-based staff do not receive their salaries on a timely or regular manner and if there is a delay in accessing benefits. Human resources issues are major concerns for staff and administration. These issues include lack of incentives, lack of training opportunities, lack of professional support and not paying attention to risk factors that these employees face at the community. There are also concerns regarding staff mental and psychological health because of inability to conduct a retreat in the last three years and because of irregular debriefing and individual and group counselling.

Lessons Learnt and Best Practices

Community Outreach

Since the beginning, the strategy of Mehwar proposed establishing two sections: the internal section, which would serve as a shelter for women and children victims of violence, and the external

section, which would provide various community services.⁴² This approach proves to be effective not only in violence prevention but also in changing

⁴² Gaylard, Robert, (2012), “The Mehwar Centre: Women Agents for Change”, UN Women: Jerusalem.

local community perception of shelters and the women who end up in shelters.

Community outreach of Mehwar is still focusing on the South of the West Bank, because of budget and

staffing limitations⁴³. This model needs to be replicated in different locations in the West Bank and Gaza because it will enable better outreach for the victims and contribute to eliminating the stigma around women seeking sheltering services.

Family Reintegration

Mehwar has a good success rate in reuniting women with their families and solving family and community issues that prevent women from living a safe and healthy life at their own community. The

level of trust that staff build enabled them from achieving high success rates. There are many factors of this approach that can be a model to replicate in other shelters.

Recommendations

- Consider separation of power at the governance level that will allow for emerging leadership to take over the day to day management of the centre
- A special financial arrangement needs to be in place allowing for a higher petty cash amount, some easier procedures for vendors to provide emergency services and urgent supports
- Staff retreat, de-briefing and group counselling is an urgent need that needs to be provided as soon as possible to help staff maintain ability and strengthen their morale
- Mehwar can serve as a peer to peer learning place where staff from other shelters and MoSD staff at the different governorates get some in-service training and learn how to deal with sensitive issues

⁴³ Interview with the community outreach manager at Mehwar 3.3.2018

CHAPTER 2

AL BAYT AL-AMEN: THE SAFE HOME IN NABLUS

Background

The “Safe Home” in Nablus (SHN) was established in 1999 by a local NGO named the “Family Defence Society” (FDS). SHN has been working on protection of women victims for 20 years including more recently through the provision of telephone services and shelter services⁴⁴. The shelter accepts women of all ages, including their children. Beneficiaries receive shelter services, psychological counselling, legal counselling and coordination with different civil society organizations and formal institutions. The period that a woman may stay in the shelter ranges from 24 hours up to six months, and sometimes even longer⁴⁵, depending on the social, and psychological needs and rehabilitation plan and

the ability to find solutions for reintegration of the woman into the family and/or community.

SHN provided services for 530 since it was established. It serves all the North of the West Bank but also received women from all over the West Bank. Many service providers in that area said they find it hard to refer cases to Mehwar because of cost and logistics. These include not having a car available or female staff working in the evening or there is no female counsellor available to accompany the beneficiary after regular work hours or during weekends or holidays. These issues should be addressed to improve reach and quality of services.

Objectives of SHN are:

- To protect and care for battered women, strengthen their self-confidence and develop their abilities and skills through providing integrated social, health, legal, psychological, educational, rehabilitation and economic empowerment to provide them with dignity.
- Strengthen and support the relationship between the beneficiary and the family, and strengthen family relations based on respect for the rights of individuals
- Work to reintegrate the beneficiaries into society, in a way that guarantees them protection and living in safety and dignity
- Rehabilitation of women and the restoration of psychological stability in proportion to their abilities and possibilities
- Take all measures to empower battered women, promote their social and economic independence, and protect and promote all their fundamental rights and freedoms

The declared beneficiary group of SHN include:

- Women over 18 and under 60 years of age.
- Male children accompanying up to 10 years of age and females up to the school age (18 years old). Young girls are then transferred to the Women's Union to allow them to complete their school education and to be with their peers of the same age group, to be received during weekend visits and official events
- Girls under the age of 18 years, if they are at risk, until they are transferred to institutions appropriate for their age group, unless the beneficiary is married.

⁴⁴ The hotline is more the of an information line and quick counselling/ guidance provided over the phone. Assessing its effectiveness was beyond the scope of this study.

⁴⁵ In fact, there were women who stayed there for more than 2 years as explained below.

Any abused woman can benefit from the shelter with exceptions as follows:

- Women who commit a crime and convicted under a judicial judgment and her sentence has not ended
- Women who suffers from mental disability or mental illness which is confirmed by medical reports and poses a risk to beneficiaries
- Women who has been drug or alcohol and has been confirmed by medical reports.
- Girl under the age of 18 years, unless accompanied by her mother
- Women involved in prostitution, unless they are obliged or have a desire to stop, and need protection and assistance.
- Women who have infectious disease confirmed by medical reports
- Women accused of collaboration with the Israeli occupation

As an exception SHN receives women with some minor disabilities who have been assaulted. They can be accepted for a specified period until the necessary action is taken.

It is important to note that there is flexibility in dealing with some of the cases mentioned above. These boundaries are stretched sometimes if SHN receives a case that requires some help. They host her then for 48 hours until a proper solution is found. This is confirmed by all the interviews with staff and SHN administration. *“With the children under the age of 18 years who were sexually assaulted and pregnant teenager, we can only accept them for at least 24 hours and sometimes more until the Required procedures are followed by partners.”* This situation is known by other service providers in the sector and they tend to turn a closed eye on what can be considered as a breach of the official procedure. The lack of other alternatives and limitation of resources make the SHN a practical solution for the challenge of not having adequate housing for many cases that are currently excluded on paper.

The Physical Condition of the Building

The shelter is based on the two top floors of the FDS. The building was established to house the shelter as well as the other needs of the NGO. There are 4 entrances to the shelter. All are secured and usually closed and secured. The building is not suitable to host a woman with disability.

Staff said they receive cases of girls who are recovering from addiction despite them being excluded under professional responsibility.⁴⁶ They believe that protection and support should be available to these women because there is no other alternative so far. This is important and goes in line with the belief of women’s right to protection. However, the response is not adequate. This is a huge liability on SHN which does not have the technical and physical capacity to deal with such complicated issues.

Women are housed for a period ranging from 24 hours to 6 months. There are some exceptions when the client needs to stay longer based on the nature of her problem and the risk to her life. Her stay extends then until a proper solution is found. The research team found that there were some women living at the shelter for more than two years. This is problematic and changes the nature of the shelter to a second stage shelter rather than a shelter for women at risk.

SHN has a capacity to house 18-20 beneficiaries at the same time. However, the beds and rooms require urgent maintenance. They have not been maintained since the shelter was opened in 1999 and are in bad shape that makes them unusable. Furniture and mirrors are broken. The manager of SHN points out some problem in the design itself

⁴⁶ Council of Ministers decision no 9/2011 to adopt the system of protection centres for women victims of violence

which makes it not suitable for women victims of violence who have lots of frustration, hence the broken mirrors. No lights in the bathrooms which makes the women unable to close them. Water provision is a problem. SHN has a large electricity bill which was not paid. The municipality did not provide them with exemptions and now they have to pay it by monthly instalments and use a pre-paid electricity card. The kitchen does not have proper

Organizational Structure

The SHN was established in 1999. Since then it served more than 530 beneficiaries. It employs 7 staff members, including 2 social workers, 3 night-supervisors, a part-time lawyer and a manager. The governing body of SHN is the Board of Directors of the Family Defence Society which consists of 9 members of well-respected women figures in Nablus city. The board is not actively engaged with the shelter except for the Chairwoman and one member which explains the dire financial and administration of SHN. The board can play more active role in supervision, management and fundraising for SHN. It is important to confirm the support for the shelter and all board approval of running a shelter.⁴⁷ Otherwise, it is better to have a separate board of the shelter who believes in its important role and will be able to maintain it. This alternative will weaken both SHN and FDS. The third option which the research team is inclined to support is having a strong steering committee for the shelter with representatives from the FDS, civil society in Nablus and other service providers. The steering committee can have more active role in the shelter's affairs.

SHN is supervised by a "steering and supervision committee" formed by MoSD represented by its directorates in Nablus Governorate and composed of civil and governmental institutions headed by FDS. However, one of the NGOs representative said: "The committee is ineffective. We did not meet for a long time. There are gaps that need to be rectified and the committee needs to be activated and to assume responsibility for steering

equipment. There is no special preparation to house women with their children.

There is an outside yard which is not maintained and therefore cannot be used. There is an internal sport room that does not have functioning equipment.

In general, this is a place to keep women away from the streets rather than protecting them in a dignified manner.

the Safe House to avoid becoming a governmental institution. There is a need for a clear work plan and clear tasks for the committee. Despite the existence of an internal system to regulate the work of the Committee, we cannot say that the Committee fulfils its roles."⁴⁸

In 2005 when the SHN was launched, an "Advisory Council" that advises the work of SHN and supposed to facilitate providing additional support through their institutions in order to achieve the goals of SHN was appointed by the FDS board of directors at the time. It consists of respectful personalities such as the Governor of Nablus, the Mayor, the Director General of the Nablus Police, the Director of MoSD Directorate in Nablus, the President of An-Najah National University, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of An-Najah National University and the President of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Nablus. The Advisory Council is inactive for at least 6 years prior to the field work. When SHN struggled for example in paying the electricity bill, none of these members or their institutions helped to solve the problem.

Activating the two advisory groups is the responsibility of the board of directors of FDS who needs to be able to convene regular meetings with these committees and advocate for the shelter's needs.

SHN does not have a strategic plan or action plan or emergency plan or financial plan. There are no clear financial or administrative regulations that

⁴⁷ Only three board members are engaged with the shelter issues. The others are not active and do not consider it a priority.

⁴⁸ Interviews with NGOs and governmental institutions in Nablus 8.4.2018

govern the work of the shelter. There is no human resources guidance of procedure which means there is no salary scale for the staff, no medical insurance, no rewarding system. The staff members do not even have signed contracts.

Financial Situation

SHN is run as an NGO and in a dire financial situation. Because of this situation the staff was not paid for 9 months in 2017. Until the time of this study SHN did not receive any funding although FDS hired fundraising person to write proposal and paid him a high salary with no success to raise any fund.⁴⁹ The reason may be attributed to the shrinking pool of funding for all Palestinian NGOs but it is also due to the FDS and SHN in ability to make a case of the need and importance of their services and therefore were not successful in convincing new funders.

They also failed to receive their fees from MoSD. An amount that reached \$86,000 and can easily help solve the financial situation of SHN which operates on a “fee for service” model where MoSD buys the SHN’s services through a signed MoU. However, MoSD is not diligent in paying the fees and FDS is not persistent in following up to demand

Services

Basic services are available at SHN but they do not meet required standards. During the field visits the shelter suffered a financial crisis and had limited available services including food, clothing, bedding items like cover sheets and blankets as well as water, electricity and care products.

There are some educational services for beneficiaries (two of the women were preparing for Tawjihi exams and one is studying at the Al-Quds Open university). SHN managed an agreement with the Ministry of Education to hold the exams at the centre which is good for the

These are all symptoms of non-viable organization and reflects on the quality of services as well as the safety and security of the vulnerable women who live in the shelter.

the fees⁵⁰. During the time of the study SHN received an urgent assistant from the Prime Minister Office for the amount of \$10,000. Although a gift of this kind was highly appreciated by the staff, it is hardly sufficient for the needs of SHN. A stable budget is needed for funding any women’s shelter.

SHN top priority became how to provide basic needs of the beneficiaries including food, clothing and paying electricity and water bills⁵¹. Because of this situation even expenses of other basic needs are not available. One of the beneficiaries said: “we live with the bear minimum in terms of meeting our basic needs.” This is not a humanly possible situation, especially for women who already suffer from other stresses. The manager of SHN depends on loans from local community shop keepers (a vegetable shop, bakery and grocery) waiting for their budget to arrive.

safety of the two beneficiaries. There is a need for extra lessons and some preparation that SHN cannot afford.

Other trainings are offered like hairdressing and training on soft skills. SHN offers training for students at Al Quds Open University. SHN also offers beneficiary and their children education services to ensure that they do not break out of schools and universities.

Cultural activities and services are limited and only offered through coordination with civil society organizations.

⁴⁹ They were funded by AICS under the programme IRADA through the MoSD. No MoU was signed between the two, no clear admin and financial procedures agreed, therefore the funds were not transferred. The draft of the MoU has been prepared by MoSD and will be signed soon. A workshop on the procedures has been conducted by MoSD in July 2018. Until September 25th, 2018, this funding was not transferred to the SHN.

⁵⁰ Before submitting this study MoSD transferred an emergency support (from the Prime Minister) of 10,000 US\$. However, the “fee for service” budget 86,000\$ is still not transferred. There need to be a regular schedule for such a transfer to keep SHN functioning

⁵¹ Interviews with the board chairwoman 4.4.2018, manager of the SHN on 1.4.2018 and staff 1.4.2018.

Psychosocial Support

There is individual and collective counselling and psychological support available for beneficiaries. The staff is qualified by education but is not subjected to in service training. There is no continuous supervision and debriefing for the social workers either as individuals or as a group. Training opportunities are limited. In one case an

NGO in Nablus insisted for at least one of the social workers to join a training. Because staff is overworked and overstretched, it is not always possible to afford spending time in training. In general, staff, especially social workers, are overworked, little trained and not supported.

Legal Support

SHN has a part-time lawyer (reduced from full time to 50% because of the financial situation). The lawyer provides services to beneficiaries only and not externally to other women in the community. Her reports are valuable and used to be presented to the prosecution offices and usually used as evidence which is helpful for the beneficiaries. This

is also a good sign of the quality of work she is capable of. However, she would be even more effective if she could work in providing legal advice as a prevention or protection measure. The lack of financial resources is hindering and preventing this service from being used by the community.

Health Services

Health services are provided for beneficiaries by specialized doctors, if these services were not covered by the basic health insurance provided by the MoSD, free of charge from a female doctor and a male dentist. Both expressed their readiness to provide free services with the best quality while

maintaining confidentiality and without using the names or details of the cases. In cases where women need to follow up with the doctors, they open a file with a recognizable code agreed on with SHN manager to maintain confidentiality and privacy.

Recreational Support

Recreation activities are very limited. There is an internal sport room which does not have enough or suitable equipment. Beneficiaries can use it for dancing or aerobics exercise but if more instruments and tools were available, it can be better utilized. There is a TV and a multi-purpose room that can be utilized for painting or reading, however, there is no tools or materials to allow for stress release through creativity. There is also no library which the beneficiaries can use.

Externally, SHN has a small garden surrounding its building but it is not maintained. Therefore, the staff are hesitant to allow the beneficiaries to go out. They fear snakes and dangerous insects. There is a swing and a small fountain that can be a good source of stress release. The garden is well protected by high fences but it is not used.

In very rare occasions beneficiaries enjoy a party arranged by an external NGO or an excursion/ trip outside the Safe House but this is very limited.

Economic Empowerment and Job Creation

SHN has some attempts of economic empowerment for beneficiaries. In the last couple of years, they trained more than 55 beneficiaries on secretarial skills, photography and editing, beautification and nutritionists. However, there are different concerns about such training. They are all trainings within the traditional role of

women and with very little economic value. In fact, it can lead to more exploitation of women if they have to work at a beauty salon for example for very long hours with very little income. Opportunities are limited and although the training quality may be good, the possibility for these women to earn a living out of the training is limited. In some cases,

when the beneficiaries went back to their villages where such services do not exist, they could start a business. However, the majority cannot.

The other concern is in the dual relation between SHN and the FDS. These trainings can benefit the beneficiaries of the shelter who are usually disadvantaged and vulnerable women but FDS does not benefit from such a training in running a social enterprise for example operating the beauty salon that exists in the building or make use of the women skills in running the industrial kitchen. FDS staff think that these women cannot operate a business because of their many social and

psychological problems. At the same time FDS did not invest in a person to run the business and provide training and work opportunity for the shelter beneficiaries.

Some funders equipped the beauty salon and the industrial kitchen but when the research team visited the place it did not have the required tools to start a business in either of them. A comprehensive investment plan is needed and proper training on running this business is needed for the NGO. Otherwise, the potential of economic empowerment for women could never be utilized.

Family Visitation and Reintegration

SHN does not have a special room for family visitation. Visits usually take place at the counsellors' or manager's offices which are open and accessible to other beneficiaries and other staff all the time. From the staff perspective, reintegration is the duty of the social affairs department in Nablus. They have limited human and technical resources to be able to work on this intensively. SHN does not own a car which when coupled with the current financial crisis limits

their ability to do community outreach especially for families and arrange conflict resolution and family reconciliation.

The assessment of beneficiaries who were reintegrated was very positive⁵². SHN provided the team with few names of women who were economically empowered and live independently. One of them was happily married and SHN efforts were much appreciated.

Safety

There is one security guard who works during the day 08:00 am to 03:00 pm which is hardly a good protection for the shelter. He sits at the first floor of the building and the research team did not notice that he restricted any one from entering the building. Visitors can easily access the shelter areas and the keys are available for many staff and even beneficiaries. This is a very open concept of a shelter than can easily compromise safety and security of the women who live there. The beneficiaries move freely from one floor to the other. They can close their rooms during the day but keep it open at night. This is a risky situation if one of the beneficiaries was suicidal for example. Staff needs training on risks and hazards and how to mitigate them.

SHN has a direct contact with the family protection unit in case they feel any risk. There is also a security point⁵³ nearby which SHN administration established a connection with and feel they can contact them any time they need. The SHN reported one incident when they actually reached out for that security force because they felt harassed by a group of young people and the issue was peacefully resolved.

As mentioned above there are four gates that are usually secured with keys that are kept with the social worker. Most of the time this social worker is alone with the beneficiaries. This is not a good practice because ideally there is a need for at least two workers at any point.

⁵² Two women survivors and a mother of another survivor were interviewed by the research team on 3.4.2018

⁵³ This is not a civil police station but rather a security camp of one of the other security forces who are not responsible for civilians and not trained to deal with VAW issues.

The keys are sometimes in the hands of the beneficiaries which is also not a good practice. There is external danger at any point in time.

There are no night guards. The staff and manager reported two separate incidents only that were resolved swiftly. The isolated location of the shelter makes more difficult to target. However, it is still not safe to be left without a security guard at night. In most nights beneficiaries are alone with

Privacy

The research team did not feel that privacy was a focus of SHN work. Details of cases are sometimes shared with FDS board or visitors. Beneficiaries are moving around and enter the staff rooms where they can access any information. Files are not centralized. They are placed in the offices of the social workers.

Coordination and Networking

SHN has good relations with many individuals and organizations in addition to experts who are providing quality service to SHN. These include

Governmental partners: they have a good relationship with the family protection unit at the police, the directorate of social development, the gender units at all Governorates' office in the North of the West Bank.

SHN worked on implementing many awareness-raising meetings in networking and coordination with relevant institutions, including, but not limited to, Women's Studies Center and Center for Conflict Resolution.

There is a disparity in assessing the effectiveness of networking and coordination between staff and management of SHN on one hand and that of organizations in Nablus including governmental partners and non-governmental organizations on the other hand. Staff believe that their networking and coordination are active, effective and fulfill the desired purpose. Organizations believe that networking needs to be more proactive especially in the framework of raising awareness of the community about existence of SHN, its objectives and mechanisms. People in the local community are not aware of SHN and those who know about

one night-worker only. For women who have life threatening situation this is not a good situation to be in.

Beneficiaries who go to university or work outside SHN are not escorted and there is no protection for them. If there is no danger on their lives, then there is no need for them to be in the shelter. If there is a danger, then these women can be attacked at any given point.

The data are computerized in a simple using excel sheets and there is specific provision of data security or protection of information about beneficiaries.

it unanimously described SHN as the "house of women with bad reputation".⁵⁴

Community awareness and education workshops on violence against women, family relations and their relationship to violence, involuntary urination in women's centres, camp / village / city. The house manager considers these meetings and training to be one of the achievements of the security staff.

SHN is a member of the NGO Forum Against Violence Against Women, the Child Protection Network, the Palestinian Network for the Rights of the Child, a member of the psychosocial support team (as FDS), a member of the Arab NGO Network (as FDS), a member of the Union of Charitable Societies and the Palestinian Observatory (Al-Marsad). This is a good level of participation in the community and raises the profile of sheltering services in the civil society. However, the challenge is in the value of these networks to the actual work at the shelter. Social workers are not aware of these networks and what they can provide to support their work. At the same time FDS representatives are not fully aware of the work of the shelter. The research team can affirm that these networks do not offer any added value to the shelter's work.

⁵⁴ Focus group discussion in Nablus 4.4.2018

Local Community Assessment

Local community in Nablus is not aware of the SHN location or services⁵⁵. There is little outreach and awareness raising about the shelter mainly through other service providers and the work of the SHN lawyer who provides legal aid to women in the community. There is no community outreach program. Some service providers like the doctor or the dentist who provide services to the women do not know anything about the other services of SHN. This is contributing to the stigma surrounding the shelter as well as the lack of support from local community during the financial crisis of SHN.

Al Quds Open University which has a campus nearby is very supportive. In general students do

not know about the shelters but the social work students had an opportunity to be trained by the FDS. Social work professors are also supportive and provided some much-needed help for beneficiaries who want to study at the university.

Local NGOs are very supportive and believe in the value of the shelter and the unique added value of its services. SHN staff has good connections with local NGOs in Nablus and sometimes beneficiaries and staff of SHN receive services such as workshops and training courses as well as some recreational activities.

Sustainability

Difficulties related to financing and finding sources of permanent income to finance SHN threatens its continuity. The board of FDS and the administration of SHN do not have any plans for the sustainability of the shelter. There is no idea how and if the SHN can maintain its services is the small limited funding stopped. They did not develop any alternative. Lack of sustainability and contingency planning led SHN to the current situation of inability to pay staff salaries and to the lack of basic services and logistics such as paying electricity and water bills.

To be able to raise funds and guarantee sustainability, it is necessary to have a strategic plan and annual plans and develop proper financial management processes. SHN also needs to develop local alternatives for financing, especially given that SHN is currently suffering from a crisis because of the lack of funding and is not active is

securing domestic funding from the private sector and related institutions. Sustainability requires facing all challenges and difficulties at various level.

In this context and within the vision of the board of directors, FDS are studying a production project by operating the industrial kitchen located in FDS building. They are in constant communication with MoSD to get the needed permission for the project. In a previous attempt they rented the industrial kitchen for a trial period to a male business man from the community. He did not pay rent for 6 months and the FDS did not benefit much from the process. On the contrary, the kitchen utilities were depreciated. Any future attempt needs to have a proper feasibility study. This include financial and social feasibility to avoid any compromise to the safety and privacy of beneficiaries of the shelter.

Challenges and Needs

There are many challenges and needs that SHN faces. The main challenge is their governance structure and the commitment from FDS board of directors to maintaining and developing the shelter. This is a challenge that needs to be solved

internally. Recommitment of the board will lead to proper strategic planning, annual planning, supervision and accountability.

Financial crisis is another challenge that needs to be addressed in a systemic and structured way.

⁵⁵ The main researcher asked many people living in Nablus if they know about SHN and they did not. The focus group participants on 4.4.2018 also confirmed

that only service providers who work directly with the shelter or in VAW issues know about its services.

Financial management abilities are currently lacking. Staff can be trained to better manage budgets and to plan ahead. Sound financial planning and management will enable SHN to

conduct the needed renovation and at least better provide for basic needs. They will also be able to request their “fees for service” and access grants available for them from the MoSD and MoF.

Lessons Learnt and Best Practices

Accepting Cases that are Rejected from Other Shelters

This is an important added value of the safe home in Nablus. There are many cases that cannot be housed in other shelters because of the official regulations. These cases can be housed in Nablus. However, this could also be a negative aspect, contributing to the bad reputation of the shelter. Especially if all rejected cases are collected in SHN and are not handled adequately, with a decision to

house rejected cases comes some additional responsibilities which are not met yet, including proper training for the staff and preparing the facility in a way that allow for safe housing for dangerous cases and proper treatment for women with serious issues such as addiction and mental illness.

Recommendations

The SHN is not a functioning organization. The good intentions of staff need to be commended because they worked in impossible situations in the last 10 months. However, without strong commitment from the board of FDS and without

urgent financial, administrative and strategic support, the SHN represent a hazard and women’s lives can be endangered. To develop the SHN into the viable shelter is has the potential for the following is recommended:

- Consider developing the SHN as a second stage shelter which will make use of existing facilities and empower survivors to reintegrate in the society. This includes proper psycho-social integration as well as economic empowerment. This will enable women who need to stay longer at a shelter to find a place to stay and will utilize the existing facilities in the Family Defense Society.
- Ensure regular transfer for “fee for service” from MoSD to SHN and at the same time ensure high standard supervision on the shelter and its services.
- Develop a strategic plan, an annual operational plan, proper standards and procedures for the shelter, even if separate from the FDS
- Improve the computerized database for case management
- Re-election of a new board of directors for the FDS of women and men who believe in the mission of the Safe Home, women rights as human rights and the important role of women shelters.
- Consider opening a special section in SHN for girls and women who are excluded according to the official standards of safe houses. The Nablus safe house has the potential to do so because it is run by an NGO and because it provides an easy access to cases from the north of the West Bank
- SHN requires urgent maintenance and re-equipment especially for recreational activities. At the same time consider external recreation such as field trips and visits to other places in Palestine. Increase cultural activities and sports for beneficiaries so that they do not to consider SHN a prison
- SHN requires reassessment of its current staffing and financial situation and some serious training and capacity building for current staff including regular supervisor and debriefing for them to be able to fulfil their responsibilities.
- Activate networking and coordination with all institutions, especially with the protection committee in Nablus and other partners to raise awareness of the community about the

definition of a shelter and its vision and objectives and the most important achievements, and this in turn contributes to change the inferior view of the guest and negative view of SHN in the local community. This will contribute to raise the level of social support and social responsibility.

- Developing economic empowerment of women beneficiaries while ensuring the highest standards of safety and security
- Engage with the local media to raise awareness about the objectives of SHN and to change any negative views around it

CHAPTER 3

BAIT AL TAWAREA: THE EMERGENCY CENTRE IN JERICHO

Background

The Emergency Shelter in Jericho (ESJ) is a program of the Women Legal Aid and Counselling Centre (WCLAC) one of the most prominent women's rights organizations in Palestine. It was initially opened in 1996 but was closed in 2011. The reason was mainly unsuitable building and the fact that Mehwar was opened in 2011 and was expected to fill all the needs for shelters in the West Bank. It reopened in May 2013 with support from the Australian Consulate. It conforms to and abides by the regulations and by-laws that govern the operation of women's shelters. WCLAC was established in 1991 and due to the lack of availability of shelters, offered safe havens for women in private schools and shelters. WCLAC has a strong feminist perspective and was influential in establishing Mehwar and developing the national referral system. The Jericho shelter is meant to act as an "Emergency shelter" and filter for all cases in the West Bank but it does not

currently work as it should because not all cases are transferred there for filtering and assessment. Some cases are directly transferred to Mehwar or SHN.

The shelter can cater for up to 8 cases in two bedrooms and has dealt with approximately 85 cases since it reopened. All those cases have been referred from MoSD. Approximately 15% of those cases have been referred to one of the other shelters in Bethlehem or Nablus for a longer stay. This percentage shows the importance of emergency shelter which can help filter and resolve cases in a relatively short time with the proper kind of intervention. The terms of the shelter establish that women received there can stay for up to one month although this has in the past been extended and four or five cases have stayed there for up to three months because of the time taken in administering the procedures.

Physical Conditions of the Centre

The Emergency shelter uses a "rented" house in an isolated neighbourhood in Jericho. It is a one-story building with two main bedrooms that can house up to eight women. It has counselling room, recreation room, kitchen area, large garden/yard. It is protected with a closed gate and a set of cameras. The rooms of the centre are equipped with the necessary furniture and suitable to serve

its purpose. The rooms contain proper furniture, private lockers, covers and sheets, all basic needs of the beneficiary and her children, kids' toys although not enough for the needs of children who come to the shelter, well equipped kitchen available for the guests, fitness room, outdoors space, closed electronic gate, security cameras and air-conditioning in summer and winter.

Organizational Structure

ESJ employs seven full time staff, the Director, a social worker and five 'house mothers'. Legal services are provided by WCLAC. ESJ work is organized using a clear financial and administrative system that includes strategic and action plans, periodic monthly, quarterly, semi-annual and annual reports, proper documenting using a special and computerized filing system, regular meetings for the staff, periodic supervision by

specialized and qualified counsellors of the "mothers of the house" and supervision of the social worker individually and collectively, periodic supervision for the Director of the Centre, a daily journal to record any notes to the different shifts of the mothers of the house, a daily work program for the beneficiaries involvement in the daily chores of the Centre.

The objectives of the emergency centre in Jericho are derived from the objectives of the official system of protection centres. It aims to protect and rehabilitate battered women through the following:

- Protecting and caring for abused women and their children, enhancing their self-confidence and developing their abilities and skills through providing integrated social, health, legal, psychological, educational and rehabilitation services.
- Rehabilitation of abused women and restore psychological stability according to their capabilities and potential.
- Strengthen and support the relationship between women and their families, and strengthen family relations based on respect for the rights of individuals.
- Work to reintegrate the beneficiaries into society, in a manner that ensures their protection.
- Take all measures to empower the beneficiary and enhance her social and economic independence to ensure a decent life for her. This is for all protection homes

The Centre is specialized in providing protection for battered women and their children through the following interventions:

- Provide shelter and protection for battered women and their children in coordination with the Directorate of Ministry of Social Development until the danger ends.
- Follow-up with the Directorate, which operates in its region and any other service providers.
- Providing psychological, social and legal counseling services for battered women, their children and families who go to the center in coordination with the Directorate.
- Follow up the situation of cases that require external follow-up and within the family by the Directorate of MoSD
- Coordinate work with relevant national institutions and activate international principles, covenants and agreements related to the women's sector.

The work of ESJ is supported by the Coordination Committee of the Jericho Emergency Shelter, which consists of the Social Development Directorate in Jericho and the Family Protection Program in the Palestinian Police Service and the Gender Department in the Jericho Governorate.

Financial Situation

There is an MoU with MoSD that support the centre. This MoU was not renewed at the time of the field work.

There is an agreement with the Ministry of Health to provide health treatment in which all the health services are provided from periodic examinations,

comprehensive examination and the necessary medicines, and if no health treatment is available according to the health insurance ESJ provides all medicines according to the special budget of WCLAC in this regard, especially skin diseases and medicines, which are not covered by health insurance.

Services

As soon as a client arrives to ESJ she receives a package that contains underwear, tooth brush, tooth paste, soap, shampoo, hair brush, sanitary pads, towels and pyjamas. This is a very important service that maintains the client's dignity and self-care. The beneficiaries do not need to request for these basic items.

Staff stressed the importance of rapid interventions after the assessment of each case. There are cases that may require a week to make the necessary arrangements to solve the case. They do not prefer to transfer the case to a shelter if a rapid intervention can solve her problems and keep her safe at her own home. The goal is to encircle the problem and solve it as soon as

possible. This is sometime criticized by the other stakeholders and seen as if the ESJ is pushing them for a quick solution within 30 days. In fact, staff of ESJ show maturity and acute understanding of what an emergency shelter should be: a temporary

Psychosocial Support

ESJ provides quality social and psychological services. The quality of services can be measured by the professional supervision received by the mothers of the house who are in daily contact with the beneficiaries. Social worker staff receive regular special supervision and management. This

Health Services

Health services are arranged with a MoU with MoSD to receive free health services for their clients. ESJ also have good connection with the Red Crescent and use their ambulances in cases of emergency.

Local Community Assessment

The administration at ESJ was clear about not having any connection with the local community that surrounds the shelter or the local community of Jericho. ESJ claim was that women stay at the shelter for a very short time. As a procedure, there is no self-referral and women are referred to the

Recreational Support

ESJ has different recreation options including a well-developed sports hall, arts and crafts room with full materials and equipment, outdoor garden that is well protected although it can be better developed and made available for the women to

Family Visitation and Reintegration

Because of the emergency nature of the shelter family visitations are limited and usually organized by MoSD directorate. Same with efforts of reintegration which is not the responsibility of JES

Safety

During field visits, the research team observed that safety and security is very high at the Emergency

measure where women do not stay longer than 30 days. This is something that they need to be commended for. ESJ fulfils its role as a temporary reception place for women victims of violence.

contributes to providing professional services and high efficiency. Forms for the follow-up and evaluation of the quality of services are provided to beneficiaries and reflected upon by the team as a part of performance and quality control.

At entry to the ESJ staff check with beneficiaries whether they have any food allergies and take this into consideration when preparing their weekly cooking program. Beneficiaries share three meals a day and they are encouraged to prepare food for themselves and under staff supervision. ESJ is very health aware.

Centre only through the Ministry of Social Development through its local offices and the family protection program. ESJ is located in an isolated neighborhood where no neighbors were identified to ask about their general assessment of ESJ.

enjoy some outdoors activities. Currently, the garden has limited use. Because of the emergency nature of the shelter it is not prepared for a long stay and therefore the available activities are suitable and enough.

but the “case conference” which is usually led by MoSD. ESJ does not have contacts or information about the reintegrated cases which is only available at the MoSD directorate.

Shelter. The place is equipped with security cameras. It has many protection elements by

design including a security gate and window protection. Women are escorted from and to the shelter at any time by the family protection unit in the police.

Mothers of the house are trained on safety and security. They make sure beneficiaries are safe by closely monitoring any alarming behaviour that may cause any concern. If they notice anything they are instructed to contact the social worker who is on call 24 hours. They also make sure that there are no sharp tools in the hands of beneficiaries such as scissors, kitchen knives, or even a nail scissors. *“Beneficiaries use kitchen knives for cooking purposes, and when finished, we do not leave it in their hands. Personal tools such as nail scissors and mirrors are used in front of us. This way we can keep our house safe and secure.”*⁵⁶ The kitchen is not locked but the tools are used with extra care.

ESJ experienced one case of attempt escape. The beneficiary used an outlet from the outer wall of the Sports Hall. As a result, ESJ renovated the outer

Privacy

Privacy is highly respected at ESJ. If one of the beneficiaries knows one of the mothers of the house, arrangements are made to change the shift to keep the dignity and privacy of the woman. There are clear policies and procedures about respecting privacy that all staff abide by. All staff personal phones are silent to avoid provoking any feelings of beneficiaries who usually hand their own phones when they enter the centre. Their

Coordination and Networking

The Coordination Committee of the Jericho Emergency Centre, which consists of the Social Development Directorate in Jericho and the Family Protection Program in the Police and the Gender Department in the Jericho Governorate, confirmed the ability of the ESJ to network with the partner institutions. The Coordination Committee works with team spirit and there is high cooperation in accomplishing the work Social, Governorate, Family Protection /Police.

wall and built a protective fence. *“The beneficiaries are the responsibility ESJ as soon as they arrive at the centre. Providing security and safety for them is a must and it is our job to make sure this work is done”*⁵⁷.

Staff is keen to provide security and safety to women through building their confidence in the services and by maintaining privacy and confidentiality of information discussed with the beneficiaries. Details of the case are kept confidential and shared only with limited number of people who are part of the solution. Even the mothers of the house are not allowed to ask or share any information they may have. Their role is limited to providing care and support. Mothers of the house sometimes gain the beneficiaries confidence who start to share some details of their stories. They are advised to explain to the beneficiaries that although they sympathize with them details of the situation are discussed only with the specialist.

phones are put in safety until they leave ESJ in order to preserve their security and their psychological and physical integrity. If they wish to contact and communicate with their parents or natural supports, they are allowed to use a telephone in a public place especially if the beneficiary has children and wants to reassure them. All calls are under supervision of a social worker.

The police in particular is a real partner and is aware of the different intervention plans that are prepared with different partners to protect women survivors of violence.

Networking is an important work mechanism for ESJ who build a wide range of networks across the West Bank and Gaza. They receive women from all over Palestine and house them for 30 days. After one week from the arrival (giving time for the beneficiary to recover from any physical,

⁵⁶ Interview with one of the mothers of the house at ESJ 17.4.2018

⁵⁷ Dima Nashashibi Manager of ESJ, 17.4.2018

emotional or psychological stress), ESJ starts an active dialogue and pushes the different partners to develop an intervention plan. Some partners complain about how persistent the ESJ is but in fact this is a good sign that the shelter is fully aware of its role. Through strategic partnerships the issue of protecting and preventing from further violence is guaranteed.

To have this type of networking functioning well, there is a need to ensure that all women victims of violence are sent initially to the ESJ and that the “case conference” tries to assess and solve the

Local Community Assessment

ESJ is a model of where local community know about the shelter and its services but do not know where it is located. This is the perfect balance and distinction between secrecy and publicity/ community awareness of the services. Most people who work on VAW know about ESJ but few know about its location. No one can visit without the presence of the police. One of the women’s local NGOs expressed how they all feel relieved to know how that shelter respects confidentiality.

Sustainability

As an NGO the ESJ is functioning on a project funding basis and as such not sustainable. Although it has been running for many years, the fact that it is a funded project makes it vulnerable. WCLAC is also renting its premises and does not own it. Although the rent is long term, if the current rates of development in Jericho continue, the area where the shelter is located will be gain higher economic value and they may be asked to

problem before sending them to other shelters. This is not happening now. Some women are sent by the “case conference” to the nearest or most accessible shelter which jeopardize the possibility of early intervention and solving the issue before it is too late.

In some cases, some members of the “case conference” act individually and do not respect the collective plan which poses a risk on women’s lives. Better coordination is needed from the start to the end of the case management process.

People in the community are satisfied and supportive to have ESJ although they think even more awareness building is needed to avoid the stigma. Although this is not the sole responsibility of ESJ, they can play an important role in changing the common views around shelters because of their professionalism and long history.

evacuate. ESJ might consider investing in an owned location and diversify their funding, clearing alternative funding model. Staff of WCLAC said: *“Shelters and protection of women victims of GBV should be the responsibility of the state. We are not sure if having own property is necessary. Further the shelter is part of WCLAC core programs. It cannot be considered a project.”*⁵⁸

Challenges and Needs

The place needs to change the roof of the rooms and replace the wooden roof with concrete. With the current rental arrangement, the ESJ renovated parts of the building in exchange of 10 years rental fees. The owner of the building is not going to renovate any part. The wooden ceilings are flammable if the place is exposed to fire. This is

what the government partners expressed in the coordination committee of ESJ.

⁵⁸ Feedback from WCLAC staff on the first draft of this study, 26.7. 2018.

Lessons Learnt and Best Practices

Having a Feminist Vision and Believing in the Work

JES demonstrates a shelter where there is a strong feminist perspective to VAW, respect of human rights and human dignity and commitment to a client-centred approach. This shelter and the staff who work there can be a model for peer to peer

support and open dialogue of how all staff, including the support team, need to believe in the vision and mission of the shelter in order to provide quality services.

Electronic Filing

ESJ has a functioning electronic system for filing the data and be able to track beneficiaries. This is a good model that needs to be replicated. The

system can be checked and if it serves all the needs of MoSD and other shelters can be replicated.

Adequate and Trained Staffing

The emergency shelter ensures that there are always at least 2 workers with beneficiaries at any given point of time. The staff/ beneficiaries' ratio is appropriate which is a good practice and maintains

the workers ability to deal with the difficult cases they face. There is also appropriate professional supervision and support for the workers to guarantee quality of services.

Recommendation

This is a very viable and fit for purpose centre. The whole organizational structure and services are aligned to serve a clear vision and mission statement. The following is recommended to ESJ to improve,

- Unanimously staff and partners think the place location is suitable but needs maintenance, update of cameras and new bed sheets and covers. The gym can be better

equipped with the necessary sports instruments and children's playroom can be developed.

- The staff recommends expanding the space to host special section for girls under 18 years. This section needs to be separate from adults and can serve as emergency shelter before the girls need to be sent to the "Girls Care Centre" in Bethlehem.

CHAPTER 4

BEIT AL AMAN: THE “SAFE HOME” IN GAZA

Background

Beit Al Aman Shelter Safe Home Gaza (SHG) Gaza is a safe house for women victims of violence that is operated by the authority in Gaza. It was established in June 2011, as a response to the needs to protect women in the sieged Gaza

strip and to mirror some of the services that were already provided in the West Bank. SHG provides sleep in services in addition to psychological support and family support, legal aid and legal awareness.

Physical Condition of the Building:

The shelter is a two-story building. The first floor has administration offices, vocational training room, psychological rooms and group counselling room. There is also a library, a computer room, a place to play sports and a meeting room. The second floor has the beneficiaries' rooms and available to receive 50 cases at the same time. The maximum number of cases the centre had at the same time was 35. The centre receives 30-35 monthly and sometimes women with their kids. Some rooms can accommodate 5-6 women. Other rooms are prepared to receive women with their children. Boys are allowed until the age of 9 years and girls can stay without an age limit.⁵⁹ The centre also receives girls age 13-18 (as beneficiaries) if they do not have a criminal offence.

The physical condition of the centre is not good. Generally, it needs renovation. Although the rooms are acceptable, the bathrooms and toilets are in bad conditions all the beneficiaries said that they require repair.

There is a cleaner who cleans the whole building although the beneficiaries clean their own rooms.

There is a kitchen that is currently not used by the beneficiaries. It was closed because of financial limitations and now the women receive food from a central kitchen which also serves the juvenile centre. The quantity of food is satisfactory but the quality is questionable. This is a cause of concern to the beneficiaries and to the administration. The food is not good and quality varies according to the cook and the type of meals offered. It would be good if women were allowed to cook again. Cooking can be a recreational and therapeutic activity which may help women to release stress, learn new life skills and connect with other women. For example, a special arrangement was made during the month of Ramadan. The central kitchen sent raw food to the centre and women cooked it and enjoyed doing that.

There is no useable external recreation space. There is a playground which is a paved area in front of the central kitchen but beneficiaries are not allowed to use it because “it is not suitable for women”, however, it can be developed into a garden if some trees were planted.

Organizational Structure

SHG is under direct supervision of the Gaza Ministry of Social Development. There are 22 staff members (all women) working at the Centre. They are qualified with a bachelor or master degree in psychology and social work. Five of them work during the day and 17 work in evening shifts (two

days a week). SHG had a change in executive manager which reflected positively on the relationship with other organizations and the local community.

SHG has a procedural manual and specific forms for intake (registration/ receiving of cases),

⁵⁹ Interview with the Beit Al-Aman manager Ms. Hanadi Skeik on April 8th, 2018.

internal and external referral. The manual and forms guide the work of the different staff members. SHG has case reports which are used to keep the knowledge flow between the social workers. Staff prepares monthly, quarterly and annual reports for MoSD in Gaza. There is also an administrative procedure that guides the day to day work of the centre and staff issues. Financial procedures are according to the MoSD and MoF guidelines.

Target group:

SHG targets:

- Women victims of domestic violence and marital disputes that threaten the family entity
- Women subjected to torture and physical, sexual and psychological abuse

The only external monitoring and evaluation the centre has is from the Independent Commission for Human Rights (ICHR) which visits SHG periodically to ensure that there are no human rights violations. There is no system in place to monitor beneficiaries' satisfaction.

- Women who do not have family support (they have no relatives or relatives to turn to if they are subjected to violence and abuse)
- Girls over 13 years old who need protection, provided they are not in conflict with the law

Financial Situation

SHG is fully covered by the authority in Gaza and does not have any independent financial resources except for some donations from the local community. There is a special budget line for the Centre at the MoSD. The manager sends her financial request (mainly a shopping list for direct and immediate needs) monthly rather than having a full budget approved at the beginning of the financial year, i.e there is no budget control that enables the Centre to function well and plan ahead. Due to the fact that the budget is limited and not enough for the needs of women, it affects negatively the quality of services provided for women. The budget was further reduced by 50% of their budget following the financial struggle of the authority in the Gaza Strip and salary reduction imposed by the PA⁶⁰.

SHG has a small emergency petty cash which amount is not more than 500 NIS per month. The Centre's manager does not think that the allocated budget is sufficient. They are not able to offer the beneficiaries a "dignity kit" or some hygiene items. They also feel that beneficiaries need to have some personal expense to buy stuff they need especially if they were students or women with children who need milk or diapers. They cannot also afford to pay legal fees which is much needed in some cases. Some beneficiaries had to find other external resources that can help them pay the fees. SHG does not have a fundraising plan. There are scattered and periodical projects funded by local donations or local community contributions but it can barely support few additional needs.

Services

SHG has limited services due to the vision it has. They see their role as a family reconciliation centre rather than a protection centre for women victims of violence. Therefore, most of their services, case management and solutions are based on what the

conservative society in Gaza would support. Solutions are implemented through respected figures in the community (Mukhtars). Some civil society activists criticise this conservative way of solving women issues because traditional ways of

⁶⁰ According to the SHG administration the current contributions from the PA does not cover more than 30% of the SHG needs.

solving problems are not always in favour of women for example, by marrying them to the abuser or by forcing them to go back to an abusive

Psychosocial Support

The beneficiaries receive continuous psychological support by social workers in the day shift and the night shift.

The staff is qualified but there is little provision for in-service training, supervision or de-briefing which is a challenging situation for anyone who works in issues related to victims of violence. The psychological support is done when funded by

Legal Support

Legal services for the beneficiaries are provided by the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights. A lawyer for the centre sits at the “case conference” and

Health Services

If women at the centre face a health problem, they are referred to hospital. There is no regular check-up or pre-entry screening.

Recreational Support

There are few recreational activities such as a library, a sports room, and a computer room. Some services like fees for university studies and private lessons for school students are funded by external donors like the Zakat committee or some women organizations. Women have access to simple recreational tools such as pens and papers, painting or drawing materials but these are very limited. Beneficiaries asked for a field trip or an activity which can help them live a normal life.

Safety

There are adequate safety measures around Beit Al Aman. The SHG is in a compound which also has the juvenile centre and both are well protected by the police. To enter the shelter, you need to pass a long corridor which has two security guards at the entrance and there is a guarded gate. However, there were some stories about families attacking

relationship if some guarantees were taken for stopping the abuse without addressing the root causes of the problem.

external donors ⁶¹ and offered once every 6 months. It is usually provided by local NGOs such as the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights or Aisha. There is a debriefing session every 6 month for three days and only if externally funded. This is little support for such a stressful job. This is also a reflection of the quality of social and psychological support that the beneficiaries receive.

provides any needed legal advice or pro bono support (as free legal support).

There were beneficiaries who are confined to the centre for one or two months without even getting out of the building. This adds to their stress and anxiety. The beneficiaries consider training workshops as the most entertainment they can get even if they do not like the speaker. Usually these events are organized by the staff and women are not consulted about which topics they want to learn about.

the centre because they wanted to take their daughters forcefully. The neighbours did not think the house was safe enough because “security staff are poorly paid” and in the current economic situation in Gaza, employees have other personal concerns than protecting “these women”.

⁶¹ The staff received one training (45 hours) from UNICEF in 2017 on how to deal with victims of violence

which is hardly enough to keep up with the development of this sector.

Privacy

Neighbours of the centre thought the location does not provide privacy especially when a woman is brought in by the police and everyone is looking and curious. One of the neighbours witnessed a fight between two families in front of the gate but

he confirmed that families cannot go in without being checked by the police and there are confirmations that they will not cause any problems. Usually families can visit if accompanied by some “respectful” figures like a Mukhtar.

Coordination and Networking

The main strength of SHG is its ability to navigate the official/ governmental organizations in the Gaza Strip and gain their confidence. This is something that the local NGOs cannot do.⁶²

SHG has a close coordination with Hayat center. They are in the process of developing a memorandum of understanding to coordinate case referrals and work with the different cases. They have some connections with other women’s organizations in the Gaza Strip such as Aisha or Women’s Health in Al-Bureij and Jabalia but they

are usually referral relationships rather than building common understanding or developing joint programs. Women’s NGOs can develop the quality of work at the Centre but this is not the case at the moment.

Although SHG’s philosophy is supportive to coordination and networking, they are not members in any network. They participate as a consultative member/ observer in Wesal and Amal networks activities in Gaza but were not officially invited to join any of them.

Local Community Assessment

The interviews conducted with the local community including neighbours of the SHG shows that the local community is vaguely aware of the existence of SHG and that it provides service to women victims of violence. It seems only people who get in direct contact with SHG know about its services. One of the neighbours thinks that if anyone needs the centre, they should be able to use it, however, he believes that the percentage that needs it is very small. Another neighbour said, “we know every woman in there has a story but we do not know what the story is about.” Other neighbours did not even know the centre exists which is a good sign of privacy and secrecy and a confirmation that for example the security guards

and staff do not talk about their work with anyone in the neighbourhood.

Local community perception is that women in the centre do not eat well and that the centre lacks good staff.⁶³ This is due to the lack of general public awareness of the centre and its services although the SHG manager said they make sure to talk to the media about at least 10 success stories every year.⁶⁴

The manager said that there was some hostility against the Centre in the conservative Gaza society. Men were angry to have a place where women can stay overnight. She said that they managed to change this view and gain local confidence.⁶⁵

Sustainability

SHG is a government organization. The building is owned by the government. Staff are government employees. Therefore, the stability and sustainability components exist. However, the

facility is run with the minimum requirements and subject to cuts as soon as the government has a

⁶² Interview with an NGO representative in the Gaza Strip, 16.4.2018

⁶³ Interview with a neighbour of SHN

⁶⁴ Interview with the Beit Al-Aman manager Ms. Hanadi Skeik on 8.4. 2018.

⁶⁵ Interview with the Beit Al-Aman manager Ms. Hanadi Skeik on 8.4. 2018.

financial problem because shelters are not on the top of priority lists for the government.

Because SHG exists in Gaza which is subject to wars and military attacks, the centre has a plan to run

during war and disasters and to be supervised by the Red Cross which is an important emergency and contingency measure for any centre.

Challenges and Needs

The main challenge was the physical conditions of the bathrooms and toilets which all the beneficiaries and staff complained about. These need urgent maintenance to be able to serve the women needs. SHN does not have a garden and an outside space for women to have an outdoor recreation space. The centre does not have a space for a nursery. Some women with young children need help caring for their children while they go to work or receive other services. It is hard to receive counselling services when the children are in the same room.

SHG is the only shelter in the Gaza Strip which has almost two million inhabitants and the needs are high. The Centre accepts young women (below the age of 18) and sometimes elders who suffer from health problems and the staff is not prepared or trained to deal with these cases. The Ministry of Interior is also pressuring the Centre to take in women who finished their sentence and cannot go back to their families. So far, they resist because these women will need a different type of rehabilitation and will be difficult to accommodate.

Lessons Learnt and Best Practices

The Existence of Emergency and Disaster Preparedness Plans

For a shelter that hosts vulnerable women and children, it is important to have an executable emergency plan and train all staff on how to use it and when to initiate it. The centre has such a plan

because of the situation in Gaza. However, they need to have another procedure for the staff on how to deal with an emergency situation with beneficiaries.

Recommendations from the Research Team

- Moving the Centre to a larger place in less crowded (commercial) neighborhood in the Gaza Strip which will provide more privacy for the women.
- Reconsider women cooking for themselves.
- Provide recreational activities which will also help women release their stress and bond with each other and with their community.

CHAPTER 5

THE HAYAT CENTRE FOR THE PROTECTION & EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN AND FAMILIES

Background

In order to respond to the demand from women's organizations in the Gaza Strip, which later became the Amal Coalition to Combat VAWG⁶⁶, UN Women and UNDP, through the MDGF⁶⁷, had established the Hayat Multipurpose Centre for the Protection and Empowerment of Women and Families in the Gaza Strip as a shelter for women victims of violence. Hayat centre was inaugurated in December 2011 and is currently run by the Centre for Women's Legal Research and Consulting (CWLRC) with Amal coalition playing an advisory role in the Steering Committee. The centre does not receive any government funding. Modelled after the Mehwar Centre in Bethlehem, the Hayat Centre was conceived to respond to VAWG cases through an integrated, human rights-based approach, working on prevention by promoting a culture of gender-sensitive and violence-free family relations, as well as protection and empowerment of women, girls and children victims/survivors of violence. However, Upon the inauguration of the centre in December 2011, the

managing organization, the Centre for Women's Legal Research and Consulting (CWLRC), received a communication from the de facto Ministry of Social Affairs in Gaza that limits its functioning as a shelter and not allowing women to stay there overnight.

Since the beginning of 2012, the Hayat Centre has been providing day services as an anti-violence centre, providing case management, psychosocial and legal counselling to women victims of violence as well as child visitation facilities for children and divorced couples. In 2017 the centre received 157 cases in addition to 79 cases they follow up from previous years. The centre reports an increase in violence cases in the Gaza Strip, especially sexual violence.

During the field work of this research (June 2018) the Hayat Centre was allowed for the first time to receive a case over-night. This is a new and important development which means that the long awaited for licence is finally coming through.

Physical Condition of the Building

Hayat operates in a rented place in a very crowded commercial neighbourhood in the Gaza Strip. This is the third place rented since the centre started in 2011. The furnished and well-prepared rooms

were not used for night stay because the centre didn't have the permit to operate as an overnight shelter until June 2018 when it was utilized as a shelter for the first time.

Organizational Structure

The centre is governed by CWLRC board of directors who monitor the work and follow up on all activities. The centre has a coordinator who

sometimes fulfil a financial and administrative role. They have financial guidelines and human resources guidelines. Hayat runs as a project that

⁶⁶The Amal Coalition was established in 2009 by a group of human rights and women's organizations in partnership with the UN-Women. Al Amal's steering committee is composed of 12 CSO members.

⁶⁷ The Millennium Development Goals Fund on Promoting Gender's Equality and Empowering Women (MDG-FG), funded by the Government of Spain was the first joint programme to be implemented in the oPt by

six UN Agencies over the period 2009-2012. The MDG-FG had three main components: reducing gender-based violence against women and girls; increasing the representation of women and women's issues in decision-making bodies and advancing equal opportunities for women's economic participation.

follows the financial system and strategic plan of CWLRC who is the budget holder for received funds. All staff are project staff which means they

Goals of Hayat Centre:

- Address the phenomenon of gender-based violence through a human rights-based approach.
- Strengthen the protection and empowerment of women, girls and children who are victims and survivors of violence.

Hayat Centre is monitored through periodic meetings with CWLRC director, and quarterly and annual reports submitted to CWLRC board of directors and general assembly. Cases are managed following a specific guideline developed by CWLRC. This guideline is based on experience

Financial Situation

Hayat's budget depends on funded projects only. If the centre loses the funds it cannot sustain the rent or keep the furniture and equipment. It means they need to restart again whenever another fund is available. If funding is not available there is a

Services

Hayat Centre was operating as a day centre until June 2018. Although it has some beds and can host beneficiaries overnight, it did not have the permission from de facto government to operate as an over-night shelter. Hayat built a compelling

Psychosocial Support

Hayat staff works full capacity with very little time for supervision or debriefing. Although the social workers continuously demand for debriefing since they work with very difficult cases, the project budgets usually do not allow it. The Centre tries to have at least once a year debriefing day for staff.

Legal Support

Legal support is the strongest service of Hayat centre because of its relationship with CWLRC which provides legal aid and services to women

are paid by projects. If funding is not available they cannot work. This happened at least once in the short time of the centre.

- Raising awareness among the community about gender-based violence through community awareness.
- Support positive family relationships, strengthen their support as protectors, based on care, mutual respect, trust and rejection of any form of violence.

and developed through a project that was funded by Japan. There is a financial system within the project that allows them to keep track of their expenses. Cases that arrive to the centre are monitored daily and all services are tracked by time and number of sessions.

threat to the continuation of the centre. There is no core budget or saving/ bridging funds available for Hayat or CWLRC. This is a high risk for Hayat and its sustainability.

case and the government was convinced of the need. In June 2018 the General Attorney in Gaza wrote to the centre asking them to house a specific case which was considered by the Centre as a permission.

This is hardly enough. When staff has training opportunities abroad, the Centre tries to arrange for two additional days for rest and re-energize. However, this is not possible if they do not have the needed permits from the Israeli occupation power.

victims of violence. The centre provides a full range of legal services that are well respected in the community.

Safety

Hayat was a day-service centre until June 2018 when it started receiving over-night beneficiaries. As such it is safe to use during the day and there are no safety preparations or provisions during the day. As the centre has become an overnight stay centre, all safety measures need to be revisited.

Privacy

The staff is well trained to keep the privacy of beneficiaries and does not talk about the cases outside the centre. New cases are received and entered in a database according to specialized models. After the initial evaluation of the situation, the case is directed to the social worker/ case

worker. All staff is trained on confidentiality and high confidentiality. There is a coding system and each case has a file. Beneficiaries can speak to their own social worker openly, and coding protects the information.

Coordination and Networking

Hayat is a program of CWLRC which is a member of different networks in the Gaza Strip and nationally. They also have regional and international connections. Hayat centre is acknowledged for having good experience with women victims of sexual abuse which makes it an address for other NGOs when they need to refer a case. The Centre also has good relationship with the police in Gaza who usually refers cases to Hayat if they do not need to stay overnight and started since June referring few difficult cases. Other NGOs in Gaza like Aisha and Wefaq feel that they can provide the same quality services of counselling and support. Therefore, they may feel reluctant to refer cases to Hayat or coordinate with them on certain activities.

Because of CWLRC regional connections, Hayat staff receive regular training and are more exposed to new approaches and procedures in combating violence against women. Therefore, they are acknowledged for their expertise in difficult cases.

Hayat is strong in community outreach and hired a specific staff position for that. Therefore, it can reach different communities around the Gaza Strip and capable of networking and coordination more than other NGOs. Hayat managed to sign many MoUs with different organizations around the Gaza Strip. One of the most important MoUs is the one with Bayt Al- Aman (Safe House) in Gaza. This coordination is extremely important especially now when Hayat Centre started to receive overnight cases.

Local Community Assessment

The local community highly valued the existence of Hayat Centre. "If it was not valuable, women would not come to it", one of the community members said. She thinks that more services like this are needed because women in the Gaza strip are under pressure and this is one of the few places that provide support. "Three quarters of women in Gaza face domestic violence because husbands do not work and they release tension towards their wives who cannot take it anymore. More centres like this are needed."

Local community had a good knowledge of what Hayat Centre is providing. They were supportive and understanding. The economic empowerment project of Hayat Centre attracted the attention of the local community. It was relevant and needed.

The centre organized a recreational field trip and invited some women of the local community. This is a good gesture that helps remove the stigma around the women who visit the centre. They

would be seen as ordinary and women who are in need and can be supported.

Local community is willing and actively referring women to the centre because they believe it

Sustainability

Hayat centre is run as a project and therefore not sustainable. So far it received short term funding

Challenges and Needs

As a project in an NGO, Hayat needs continuous support and fundraising efforts. The centre sometimes lose staff and cannot maintain same

benefits them. One of the local community members needed a legal advice although she was not a victim of domestic violence and she got it from the lawyers there.

which was problematic and caused the centre to lose staff, change venue and stop some activities.

level of performance because of the funding challenge.

Lessons Learnt and Best Practices

Linking the shelter work with a women's rights and legal aid organization is a good practice and in the case of Hayat the persistence and commitment of

the CWLRC led the de-facto government in Gaza to acknowledge the shelter and its importance to women in Gaza

Recommendations

- Long term funding that can enable Hayat Centre to stabilize and strategize.
- More economic empowerment opportunities for beneficiaries who need economic support

- More recreational activities and field trips for beneficiaries and women who seek the center's services

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS

Sheltering services are crucial for a comprehensive continuum of services for women victims of violence. This temporary measure is not a permanent solution but rather an important step to protect women's lives and provide them with skills needed to overcome a violent situation and lead their life with dignity.

Although the history of local sheltering services is recent in Palestine, all existing shelters to a variable degree accumulated knowledge and experience that developed their practices to a model that is client-centered and community oriented. Although the shelters still suffer from many shortages, there is a strong basis of improvement.

Snapshot

There are three shelters in the West Bank and two in the Gaza Strip. The following table is a snapshot of their current situation

Description	Hayat Centre	Safe Home Gaza	Emergency Centre Jericho	Safe Home Nablus	Mehwar
Location	Gaza Strip	Gaza Strip	West Bank	West Bank	West Bank
Year established	2011	2011	2013	1999	2007
Number of Beds	14	50	8	18	36
Type of Governance	NGO	Government	NGO	NGO	Government
Ownership of the building	Rented		Rented	Owned	Owned
No of Female employees	7	22	7	8	24
Number of Male Employees	2	None	None	None	6

Fulfilling a Niche

Shelters in Palestine vary in vision, mission and quality of services. They all fulfil an important niche in the Palestinian context. An activist in Gaza said: "Shelters are an important necessity to protect women and preserve their human dignity." However, she adds: "this is connected with women and local community trust in these shelters and the services they offer". Most of the people interviewed believed there is a need for "more" shelters in Palestine. "one in every governorate" as

participants in a group meeting agreed. As mentioned elsewhere this is not realistic and points to the lack of community understanding of the role of shelters as temporary measures to protect women and help them build their own agency and take charge of their own lives.

What follows is some of the common challenges and requirements for the shelters to continue providing this important service.

Addressing the Stigma

In all centres the social stigma to sheltering services was obvious. This stigma is part of a wide community awareness. Even staff of sheltering service and in some cases board members and members of the steering committees have this stigma.⁶⁸

A community member who is a neighbour of Hayat centre was praising the services and recommending her contacts to visit the centre to

get help. She said she was not willing to go there although she is a victim of domestic violence herself because her “social status” does not allow it and if she goes there she “may harm her profession”. A neighbour of Beit Al Aman in Gaza believes that there is a very negative view of the centre and those who use it. “If a woman goes there, it means she is in big trouble and people will think of the worse.”

Sheltering Period

Sheltering services are temporary measures to guarantee the safety and security of women victims of violence. The international standards limit emergency sheltering to 30 days, first stage shelters up to one year and second stage shelters up to 2 years. In the Palestinian context these distinctions are not discussed and in many cases not possible to observe. In the emergency shelters there are cases that stayed up to 50 days. In the first stage shelters (Mehwar, Nablus and Safe home in Gaza) cases stayed more than two years. The justification was that these women have no place to go. Some were students and needed to be sheltered until they graduate. Others did not have

the economic viability to live alone or secure a living. In all these cases there is no direct threat to women’s lives but the system was not able to secure dignified living for them away from their families.

The idea of second stage shelter does not exist in the Palestine. Hayat centre aspires to function as a second stage shelter but this is not possible in the current political and economic situation in Palestine. It is also questionable if second stage shelter is needed if women were supported to develop their self-esteem and reconnect with their natural supports.

Organizational Viability

The five centres have different components of organizational structure and stability but none of them is viable to continue or has all the required components. As a minimum requirement all shelters need to have their own strategic plans, action plans, emergency policies and procedures,

financial and administrative systems as well as a set of human resources guidance and regulations. These documents need to be updated regularly and all staff needs to be aware of and trained to use.

Governance Structures

The two governmental shelters (Mehwar and Bayt-Al Aman in Gaza) are governed by the MoSD. The staff and managers are implementing the official rules and regulations and subject to governmental standards.

The three NGOs centres are governed by the board of directors of these organizations and by a set of advisory committees that vary in their vision and understanding of VAW, their interest in the work, their commitment to support the centre. This is a good model when the NGO has a clear vision of

⁶⁸ Interviews with different staff members, board members and service providers referred to the “stigma” as a serious challenge and recommendations to have a

“feminist” approach to sheltering services that is non-judgemental and rights-based was voiced by many interviewees.

why they are interested and operating a shelter, clear about their ethical motivation and has a rights-based approach and client-centred services. WCLAC is a good example of this model. The commitment and accountability trickles down from the board to the lowest ranking staff

Ability of “MEAL”, data management and research

All five centres gather basic information about beneficiaries and their Monitoring, Evaluating, Accountability and Learning is very limited and does not allow for a learning organization model. All of them (except Emergency Shelter in Jericho) follow a simple form filled manually with no possibility to track cases, the accumulated information about success stories, lessons learnt and possible replicated methods. This means that, after almost 20 years of operation for some of them, if the staff leaves a huge knowledge gap will be created. In all five centres the filing system is weak and the information gathered in the files are based and depends on the social workers' ability and willingness to write details rather than following certain criteria. It is worth mentioning uniqueness of data collection at the Emergency

Quality of Programming

Quality of programming vary as mentioned above in each section. Mehwar being the most advanced in terms of shelters services, offers a continuum and comprehensive type of services that the others are not able to provide. ESJ also provides quality services serving its role as an emergency shelter. Hayat provided quality day services and was able to function as an over-night shelter since June 2018. Quality control however is not guaranteed. This is the role of MoSD and its directorates. However, in order to be able to assess the quality, MoSD staff needs to be trained according to specific standards agreed on amongst all stakeholders. Shelters need to be given specific

Effectiveness

Effectiveness vary from one shelter to the other based on the type of supervision available, governance structures, follow up from MosD and

member. There is a strong belief on why and how this work is implemented. The challenge is when the board changes and the new board is not as committed as the previous one. The shelter then becomes a burden on the organization rather than a distinguished project.

shelter. WCLAC has a well-established management information system that can be replicated in other shelters. Further, as part of monitoring quality of work each beneficiary fills in a satisfaction questionnaire prior to leaving the shelter.

The filing of cases is also problematic and does not allow for confidentiality and privacy. In three of the five centres the case files are not kept in a closed place that limits un-authorized access. They are kept in the offices of the social workers and counsellors. The centres do not have a secure place to store old and closed files that protects them from being accessed by any curious staff or even visitor and ensure a future reference if the case returns to sheltering services.

period of time to adjust their policies and procedures to be able to serve their beneficiaries on a rights-based, client centred manner.

Services of all shelters are accessible to women who are not excluded from the national system. Accessibility of other women who may even be more vulnerable is questionable. Women addicts or women exiting the sex trade are clear examples of exclusion. They need special provision and the system of protection centres needs to be adjusted in a way that allows for such cases to be helped in a proper place that meets their needs.

the availability of systems and procedures. Please refer to chapters above for details of each shelter and assessment of its effectiveness.

Efficiency

All shelters showed efficiency in using the limited resources available to them. Resources are limited and therefore efficiency is a means for survival and

continuation. Please refer to chapters above for details of each shelter and assessment of its efficiency.

Cost Effectiveness

Although the researchers looked for information regarding cost-effectiveness, it is hard to have a specific conclusion about how cost-effective the existing shelters are. The reasons include: all existing shelters are not at full capacity. They have less clients than they can host. The staff/ client ratio is variable. At one day a shelter can have 6 beneficiaries and on the next day it can have 13 or 14 beneficiaries. The staff needs to be in place at all times and ready to work more or less based on the number of clients. However, salaries are paid and running costs (water, electricity, heating,...etc) need to be paid.

Shelters do not provide all the needed services. For example, staff professional supervisor, staff retreats and some clients' services (psychiatrist) are not provided. At the same time, not all services are up to standards. For example, have two staff members with beneficiaries at all times, or regular renovation of the building or purchasing new equipment to replace the damaged ones. The shelters struggle to provide the basic needs with

limited resources. If a cost-effectiveness is to be assessed, at least there is a need to guarantee that the national minimum standards are met.

Most shelters do not have an annual planned budget and they do not have control on money allocated to them. The governmental shelters (Mehwar and Bayt Al Aman) run on low budgets allocated by the MoSD and they do not have oversight and control over plans and even expenditure. The non-governmental shelters fluctuate their services based on available funding and therefore very hard to assess their cost-effectiveness if they have shortages (line Safe House in Nablus) or some funded projects (like Emergency Shelter Jericho and Hayat). At the same time none of the shelters run on full staffing capacity. Current staff in some shelters are poorly paid which makes it harder to assess cost-effectiveness in relation to return for money and long-term stresses on staff. In any case, there is a need for further studies on this issue.

Sustainability

None of the five centres is sustainable by itself. Even the shelters under governmental support are not considered priority. If there is a financial crisis or lack of funding these shelters will not be able to provide the minimum required services. The current situation for all five centres depends on donors and any drop of funding means immediate drop in quality of services. The most evident example is the Safe Home in Nablus which is still functioning at a very low capacity because the Family Defence Society failed to raise funds for support. The other example is Hayat centre which provides services that fluctuate in quality and change in nature based on available funding.

To overcome such difficulty different financing models can be used, including building trust funds to serve all shelters and developing fund raising campaigns based on local funding rather than international funding. Other sustainability measures are in place for some shelters more than others. Mehwar and the Safe Home in Nablus own their buildings and there are potentials for social investments through projects run from these buildings such as an industrial kitchen and a hair dressing Salon. However, this potential is underutilized and requires a different type of management than the current one.

Referral Systems

Although a national referral system was in place since 2013 it is not well utilized. The referral system is not implemented in the Gaza Strip.⁶⁹ In response to GBV, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) established a referral system that focuses on case identification, case management, in-house services, and external referrals.⁷⁰ In the West Bank not all shelters and partner organizations use it. Mehwar is the most advanced in using the national referral system. However, there are many challenges because not all services are available and staff trained to deal with the VAW and GBV cases. There is a need to invest in dissemination of information about the referral system and ensuring that all service providers are aware and well trained to operationalize the referral system. This requires investments in physical and technical capacities of the different components of the system.

Within the sector the five shelters are fairly known and recognized for their work. A Palestinian women's rights organization would know about the shelters and would be able to refer victims of violence there. The same cannot be said about the larger community where some sheltering services are not well known. In Nablus for example the local community is not aware of the existence of the

shelter and the shelter does not invest in introducing its services to the public because they claim to keep secrecy and privacy of the women there. Same applied to the emergency shelter which is over protective to its services and location. They do not advertise their services beyond the sector. Advertising service means making them know at the community level and not advertising the location of shelters or the cases they receive. On the other hand, Mehwar community outreach is remarkable. Remote villages in the South of the West Bank are familiar of Mehwar and its services. This is an important prevention measure that is worth investing in.

Internally, the different shelters have a functioning system to refer cases to each other or within the networks they have. In the Gaza strip where Hayat centre is a member of Al Amal coalition they are more equipped to refer cases than Bayt Al Aman for example which only receives cases and does not refer them to others.

In the West Bank the situation of internal referrals is much better. It is a regular practice to refer from the Emergency Shelter to the other two shelters in Bethlehem and Nablus. It is possible to refer cases from Nablus to Bethlehem but Mehwar is still seen as the main shelter where difficult or sensitive cases are referred.

Quality of GBV Case Management

The quality of case management varies in the different shelters, however the use of case conference and the participation of MoSD in all these conferences is a good quality control and safety measure in the West Bank. In the Gaza strip case management quality control is managed by partnership with the local community and local civil society organizations. Most vulnerable and

serious case review mechanisms are still weak. Because of the self-determination principle used and respected in case management, some cases were subject to severe consequences. As explained above, issues of confidentiality, safety and security are questionable which means that the most vulnerable cases are disadvantaged by the system.

⁶⁹ During the time of this study the Ministry of Women Affairs in Gaza started inviting the civil society and various service providers to discuss a Gaza referral system.

⁷⁰ UNRWA experience in GBV programming; lessons learned from the first five years, 2015, page 12. Available at: https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/content/resources/gbv_learning_document_final.pdf

Essential Services

All shelters services are complementarity with other service providers. They also receive some complementary services for example from the health sector. In general, all shelters have good relationship with security and justice institutions. Some shelters have legal representation or legal

advisory role and get direct referrals from the police.

All shelters are weak in economic empowerment services and have few and not very successful income generation models.

Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs)

The research team assessment is that all shelters are aligned with humanitarian and developmental efforts on GBV/VAWG in referral and effectively contribute to an essential service in the continuum of essential services to women victim of violence. The quality of services varies from one shelter to the other but in general they fill an important gap in the system.

Although there is a national system for shelters in Palestine, SoPs are variable in the different shelters which requires the attention of MoSD as the regulatory body for shelters. Proper licencing and regular inspection and supervision visits need to take place to ensure quality of services and women's safety.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Legal Provision

The legal framework of shelters is not complete yet. Although there is a national procedure for shelters, there is a need for some additional laws, regulations and procedures to ensure that the centres are functioning well. These include the adoption of the family protection law which will clarify the national referral system and will provide the legal background for protecting women and their children. There is also a need for a law to protect those who work in social services in general and in cases related to domestic violence

in particular. The law needs to define standards of protection and the consequences for any violations of their protection. There is also a need to have clear procedures on how to deal with violence cases out of regular work hours and to provide for safe and dignified transportation to and from shelters, ensuring that the victim is accompanied by a female officer or social worker. In addition, proper procedures need to be in place to ensure that the national referral system is being implemented properly.

MoSD Supervision

MoSD has a legal and professional responsibility to supervise all shelters without necessarily running them. This responsibility needs to be linked to a central unit at the Ministry rather than delegated to the offices in the governorates. The centralized

supervision allows comparison, transfer of knowledge and accumulation of expertise. This is a higher level than the case management process which currently takes place.

Need for New Shelters

The assessment of this research team is that there is no need for additional shelters in Palestine. The current existing shelters never functioned in full capacity. Even if awareness of VAW increases, the new approaches of reintegration and community support is a good way to ensure that shelters are temporary measures. Therefore, improving the quality of services in existing shelters is a higher priority than building new shelters. In the West Bank, the shelter that has the most capacity to

accommodate more women is Mehwar, followed by the Safe House in Nablus (if it was well resourced). The Emergency Shelter in Jericho is better left for emergencies and further develop its capacity to deal with emergency cases. In the Gaza Strip, The Safe Home has the most stable facility to accommodate more women but it needs support at different levels on how to deal with cases from a rights-based approach. Hayat has a good capacity as well to accommodate any additional cases.

Training, Building Capacities and Supervision

Because of the variable level of expertise and knowledge about how to operate and work with a shelter, a great deal of training and capacity building is still needed, especially for the Safe

Home staff in Gaza and the Safe Home in Nablus. This capacity building can take the form of peer support, exchange visits and joint training for shelters staff.

Funding and Sustainability

There is a need to budget, fund and plan for sustainability of sheltering services using different models. Governmental shelters are not the only model and there is a need to support NGOs

shelters because they can offer different types of services which can better serve women in different situations.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study showed gaps of knowledge in certain areas and it is recommended to support research efforts that explore:

1. Track survivors in the community and assess their ability to lead a healthy life free of violence and how the sheltering services affected their lives and assessing the rate of women returning to shelters, killed or live in a life of violence. ⁷¹
2. Assess the cost effectiveness of sheltering services and how better financial management can lead to better services.
3. Assess the effect of professional supervision and debriefing on the staff and how it reflects on quality of services for women victims of violence.

⁷¹ A similar study was conducted by Nidaa Abu Awwad, "Reintegration of women survivors of Gender-based

violence: combating VAW in Palestinian Society, Nov 2016, Institute of Women's Studies, Birzeit University.

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List of Interviews in the West Bank

No	Name	Position	Date of the Interview
Safe House Nablus			
1	Ikhlas Soufan	Manager- Safe House Nablus	31.3.2018 and 1.4.2018 and 8.4.2018
2	Shaden Bostami	Manager- Family Defense Society	3.4.2018
3	Reem Barghouthi	Chair Woman- Family Defense Society	4.4.2018
4	Samah Ashami	Social Worker- Safe House Nablus	1.4.2018 and 8.4.2018
5	Samah Jekhleab	Lawyer- Safe House Nablus	1.4.2018
6	Nour Abu Srou	Social Worker- Safe House Nablus	1.4.2018
7	Lubna	Night shift worker- Safe House Nablus	1.4.2018
8	H	VAW survivor- Safe House Nablus (phone interview)	3.4.2018
9	R	Client 1- Safe House Nablus	3.4.2018
10	M	Client 2- Safe House Nablus	3.4.2018
11	N	Client 3- Safe House Nablus	3.4.2018
12	R	Client 4- Safe House Nablus	3.4.2018
13	Mother of R	Mother of a client- Safe House Nablus	3.4.2018
Mehwar			
14	Saida Al Atrash	Manager- Mehwar	3.3.2018 And 21.4.2018
15	Alaa Shweiki	Social Worker- Mehwar	6.5.2018
16	Hanan Al Botmeh	Social Worker- Mehwar	6.5.2018
17	Mehwar community Members	Neighbours and members in the gym-Mehwar	19.4.2018
18	Linad Jarysieh	Community Outreach- Mehwar	3.3.2018 and 31.3.2018
19	Manal		31.3.2018
20	Thoraya Meshaal	Community Outreach- Mehwar	31.3.2018
21	Lama Michael	Financial Manager- Mehwar	31.3.2018
22	Basima Jaradat	Lawyer- Mehwar	10.6.2018
23	Amina Hilou	Manager- Internal Division- Mehwar	10.6.2018

24	Shams	Client 1- Mehwar	31.3.2018
25	Shaima	Client 2- Mehwar	31.3.2018
26	Rema	Client 3- Mehwar	31.3.2018
27	Rana	Client 4- Mehwar	31.3.2018
28	Mais	Client 5- Mehwar	31.3.2018
Emergency Shelter Jericho			
29	Dima Nashashibi	Manager- Emergency Shelter Jericho	12.4.2018 and 17.4.2018
30	Amina Jaradat	Social worker- Emergency Shelter Jericho	17.4.2018
31	Maisa	Mother of the house- Emergency Shelter Jericho	17.4.2018
32	Nisreen	Mother of the house- Emergency Shelter Jericho	17.4.2018
33	Itedal	Mother of the house- Emergency Shelter Jericho	25.4.2018
34	Rania Salahedin	Manager Protection Services- WCLAC	21.4.2018 And 24.4.2018
35	Samah Asalman	Gender Unit- Jericho Governorate	12.4.2018 and 25.4.2018
36	Nahil Sawafta	Tawasol Centre- Jericho	23.4.2018
37	Rakad Shejaiyah	Social Development- Jericho	25.4.2018
38	Fawzia Hamad	Family Protection Unit- Jericho	25.4.2018
39	MSR	Client 1 Emergency Shelter Jericho	3.5.2018
40	MSH	Client 2 Emergency Shelter Jericho	3.5.2018
41	MSM	Client 3 Emergency Shelter Jericho	3.5.2018
Civil Society, Donors and Experts in the West Bank			
42	Dr. Maazour Alawneh	Student's Affairs- Al Quds Open University	4.4.2018
43	Dr. Mohammad Barqawi	Dentist	4.4.2018
44	Dr. Salma Masri	Gynecologist	4.4.2018
45	Iyad Abu Baker	Psychiatrist	8.4.2018
46	Amal Soufan	Ministry of Education	8.4.2018
47	Njoud Kharyoush	Ministry of Social Development Nablus	8.4.2018
48	Samar Hawas	Palestinian Working Women Society for Development	8.4.2018
49	Nadia Dweikat	Independent Commission for Human Rights	8.4.2018
50	Suad Shtewi	Family Defense Society- Nablus	8.4.2018

51	Amina Aslan	Women Studies Centre- Nablus	8.4.2018
52	Asma Khaled Oude (Focus Group Participation)	Tulkarem Governorate	4.4.2018
53	Saher Shadid (Focus Group Participation)	Social Development- Tulkarem	4.4.2018
54	Imand Natour (Focus Group Participation)	Family Protection Unit	4.4.2018
56	Riad Yehia (Focus Group Participation)	Family Protection Unit- Jenin	4.4.2018
57	Khalid Al Jabi (Focus Group Participation)	Family Protection Unit- Nablus	4.4.2018
58	Dia Zoabi (Focus Group Participation)	Legal Advisor- Jenin Governorate	4.4.2018
59	Hala Idabis (Focus Group Participation)	Social Development- Jenin	4.4.2018
60	Najla Dweikat (Focus Group Participation)	Social Development- Jenin	4.4.2018
61	Majd Abdo (Focus Group Participation)	Legal Advisor- Nablus Governorate	4.4.2018
62	Sana Asi	UNFPA	26.4.2018
63	Areen Sheik	Jericho Ladies Society	3.5.2018
64	Fouad Ghrouf	Sharia Court Jericho	3.5.2018
65	Maher Said	Psychiatrist	3.5.2018
66	Suheir Faraj	Director- TAM	10.6.2018
67	Sama Eweidah	Director- Women Studies Centre	11.6.2018
68	Ohaila Shomar	Director- Sawa	19.6.2018
69	Guia Fagila	Italian Cooperation for Development	11.6.2018

List interviews in the Gaza Strip

No	Name	Position	Date of the interview
Beit Al Aman- Gaza			
1	Thanaa Al Khozondar	Deputy Minister- Ministry of Social Development- Gaza	5.4.2018
2	Iman Edwan	Deputy general director- Women's Affairs Department- Ministry of Social Development- Gaza	5.4.2018
3	Hanadi Skeik	General Manager- Beit Al-Aman	8.4.2018
4	Ghada Abu Shaaban	Education Consultant- Beit Al-Aman	15.4.2018
5	Suhad Qanita	Psychological Counselor - Beit Al-Aman	18.4.2018
6	Shakreen Karsoua	Social Worker- Beit Al-Aman	19.4.2018
7	Rawya Swerki	Social Worker- Beit Al-Aman	19.4.2018
8	Maha (fake name)	Client 1- Beit Al-Aman	8.4.2018
9	Romoz (fake name)	Client 2- Beit Al-Aman	8.4.2018
10	Sisters (fake name)	Client 3- Beit Al-Aman	8.4.2018
11	Heba (fake name)	Client 4- Beit Al-Aman	15.4.2018
12	Hanadi (fake name)	Client 5- Beit Al-Aman	8.4.2018
13	Iman	Ex-client- Beit Al-Aman	30.4.2018
14	Ahmad X	Neighbor of Beit Al-Aman	3.5.2018
15	Basta A	Neighbor of Beit Al-Aman	3.5.2018
16	Basta B	Neighbor of Beit Al-Aman	3.5.2018
17	Mariam	Mother of two beneficiaries- Beit Al-Aman	8.5.2018
18	Abeir	Mother and sister of beneficiaries- Beit Al-Aman	8.5.2018
19	Ahmad Y	Uncle of a beneficiary- Beit Al-Aman	8.5.2018
20	Bashayer	Friend of a beneficiary- Beit Al-Aman	8.5.2018
Hayat Centre			
21	Tahani Qasem	Hayat Center- Community Engagement Coordinator	9.4.2018
22	Dr. Sarah Alwahidi	Psychologist- Hayat Centre	9.4.2018
23	Linda Abu Marsah	Family connections coordinator- Hayat Centre	9.4.2018
24	Wafa Eid	Psychological Counselor- Hayat Centre	9.4.2018
25	Doaa Abu Salim	Administrative Assistant- Hayat Centre	9.4.2018
26	Merna (fake name)	Client 1- Hayat Centre	10.4.2018
27	Doaa	Client 2- Hayat Centre	10.4.2018
28	Fatima	Client 3- Hayat Centre	10.4.2018

29	Nahed	Client 4- Hayat Centre	10.4.2018
30	Sarah	Client 5- Hayat Centre	10.4.2018
31	Meyasar	Client 6- Hayat Centre	10.4.2018
32	Imad	Father of one of Hayat's Clients	30.4.2018
33	Jehad	Husband of one of Hayat's Clients	30.4.2018
34	Naser	Divorcee of one of Hayat's Clients	30.4.2018
35	Om Mohammad	Mother- One of Hayat's Clients	30.4.2018
36	Ahmad	Husband of one of Hayat's Clients	30.4.2018
37	Siham	Neighbor of Hayat Centre	30.4.2018
Civil Society, Donors and Experts in the Gaza Strip			
38	Nadia Abu Nahlah	Director- Women Affairs Technical Committees	11.4.2018
39	Donia Al-Amal Ismail	GBV Consultant- Ministry of Women Affairs	12.4.2018
40	Feryal Thabet	Women Health Centre- Bureij	14.4.2018
41	Bothaina Soboh	Director- Wefaq	15.4.2018
42	Abdelmoneim Tahrawi	Project Manager- The Palestinian Centre for Solving Community Disputes	16.4.2018
43	Mona Ashawa	Manager of women's unit- the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights	16.4.2018
44	Hanan Matar	Lawyer- The Palestinian Centre for Human Rights	16.4.2018
45	Reem Freina	Director- Aisha	21.4.2018
46	Amira Mehana	UNFPA	23.4.2018
47	Maisoun Shaltout	UNRWA	26.4.2018
48	Fidaa Al-Araj	Oxfam	26.4.2018
49	Heba Zayyan	UN Women- Gaza	16.5.2108

ANNEXES

Annex 1

A List of International Standards for Shelters

Illustrative Example: The Council of Europe's *Combating Violence Against Women: Minimum Standards for Support Services* includes the following set of minimum and aspirational standards for shelters.

Minimum standards	Aspirational standards
Services in shelters should be provided by female staff.	
The security of residents should be addressed through confidential addresses and/or through appropriate security measures and monitoring.	There should be a written policy on visitors (where they are permitted). This should include ensuring that visitors understand confidentiality.
If there are insufficient places, or services are withdrawn – the shelter should assist in finding a suitable safe alternative accommodation.	Any alternative accommodation should be evaluated for compliance with the shelter's safety and confidentiality policies.
Refusal to provide or re-admit to services should ONLY be undertaken where serious breaches of rules have taken place, or for safety of women and children.	
Shelter support should be available for as long as the service user needs them.	
Staffing levels should be sufficient to meet the needs of current service users and children.	
Crisis support and safety planning for each service user.	<p>Should provide information on the service user's rights and responsibilities (including confidentiality policies) within 24 hours of admission.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rules should be presented in empowering language.
<p>A written needs assessment should be completed within 3 to 7 days of admission. This should encompass:</p> <p>health/medical needs;</p> <p>children;</p> <p>housing;</p> <p>legal options;</p> <p>financial assistance and options;</p> <p>job training, employment, and education.</p>	Specialist shelter provision should be made for women who are substance abusers.
Should be able to provide (or make referral to) legal advice, advocacy, accompaniment and other support services.	

Should provide assistance to ensure that service users have independent economic means when they leave the shelter.	
Should have at least one qualified child care worker on the staff.	<p>One child care worker per 10 children;</p> <p>Safe play areas;</p> <p>Outings and activities for children</p> <p>Child protection policy</p>
Shelters should model and promote respect and non-violence in all interactions including those between adults and children.	
Where a place is unavailable due to the age of an accompanying male child. The shelter should assist in providing or finding an alternative safe place for the family.	Any alternative accommodation should be evaluated for compliance with the shelter's safety and confidentiality policies.
Should assist in maintaining the child's education.	<p>Have protocol with local schools to address child residents' needs.</p> <p>Have space and facilities for adolescents to do homework.</p>
<p>Training for shelter volunteers and staff should be a minimum of 30 hours and cover:</p> <p>A gendered analysis of violence against women;</p> <p>Communication and intervention techniques;</p> <p>Confidentiality;</p> <p>Child protection;</p> <p>Accessing translation and disability services;</p> <p>How to make appropriate referrals;</p> <p>Information on trauma, coping and survival;</p> <p>Assessing risk;</p> <p>Non-discrimination and diversity;</p> <p>Empowerment.</p>	<p>There should be staff trained/ able to communicate in sign language.</p> <p>Information and counselling should be available in several languages reflecting the communities the shelter provides services to.</p> <p>Staff should receive some basic training on immigration status/law.</p>
Resettlement and follow-up services should be available to ex-residents and their children.	

Annex 2

Check list of Shelter Minimum Requirements⁷²

Hayat Centre	Safe Home Gaza	Emergency Centre Jericho	Safe Home Nablus	Mehwar	Requirement
Safety and Security					
None	Yes	No	No	4	Night Guard
2	Yes	No	1	4	Day Guard
No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Emergency Plan
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Clear written policies and procedures
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Closed gates
Yes (limited and re-purposed)	Yes (not functioning)	Yes (not well equipped)	No	Yes (well equipped)	Internal recreation facility
No	No	Yes (not used)	No	Yes	External recreation place
Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Well furnished bedrooms
Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	
Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Rooms for mothers with children
No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes 2	Counselling rooms
No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes 2	Family visitation room
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Ability to call family by phone
Yes	No (very limited for students)	None	No (very limited for students)	No	Ability to use the internet
Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	A place to practice productive work

⁷² Minimum requirements for country level cluster leads and services to be provided, **Global Shelter Cluster**, <https://www.sheltercluster.org/.../Minimum%20requirements%20and%20services.docx>

No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Health services
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Psychological counselling
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Psychosocial counseling
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Family reintegration
Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Vocational training
Organizational Needs					
Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Itemized budget
Yes	Yes	Yes (With WCLAC)	No	Yes	Strategic plan
Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Annual work plan
Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Indicators to measure impact
Yes	No	Yes	No	Documentation not database	Database for all cases
No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Forms to enter the cases and follow them
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Case files
No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Closed filing room
Yes daily/ Monthly/Quarterly/ semi-annually annually	Yes daily/ Monthly/Quarterly/ semi-annually annually	Yes daily/ Monthly/Quarterly/ / semi-annually annually	Yes daily/ Monthly/ annually	Yes Monthly/ annually	Regular Reporting
Yes (well trained)	Yes (not trained)	Yes (well trained)	Yes (not trained)	Yes (well trained)	Trained staff
Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes (not regular)	Professional supervision for staff
No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Board of Directors

Yes (only in projects)	No	Yes	Yes (not effective)	Yes	Coordination or advisory committee
No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Regular supervision from the Ministry
No	No	No	No	Yes	National referral system

Annex 3

List of Interview Questions

Question for staff in the Shelters

Quality of services

1. What are the service you offer in the centre? Do you think it is adequate? Is it compatible with the beneficiaries' needs?
2. What are the missing services that you wish you had in the centre?
3. In your opinion how is the quality of the services you provide in your centre? What is the evidence on this quality?
4. How do you protect secrecy in your work?
5. Do your centre face any challenges or pressure? What are they and how do you deal with them?

Efficiency

1. What are the process you follow for sound financial management? What processes you follow for sound human rights management?
2. What are the different types of accountability you have in your centre?
3. What are the different psychological and moral support that the workers in the centre receive? Are they enough?

Management and administration systems

1. Are there any procedures protocols that guide your work?
2. Are there clear financial and administrative procedures?
3. How the budgets are prepared and spent?
4. If one of your beneficiaries faced a problem is there a clear protocol on how to deal with emergencies?

Effectiveness of services preventing and responding to VAW

1. Are there clear indicators to measure, monitor and evaluate the daily work at the center?
2. When and how often do you prepare reports and to who do you submit them?

Cost effectiveness of VAW/sheltering services

1. Do you think the budget of your centre is adequate?
2. If there is additional budget available, what would you spend it on?
3. Is there enough budget for social activities? If there is more money what would you use it for?

Sustainability of the VAW/sheltering services provided by the anti-violence centers sops Alignment with internationals standards for GBV case management and sheltering services

1. Are you aware of international standards to deal with women victims of violence?
2. Did you receive a training of international standards that would make your work easier?
3. What are your sustainability plans? What happens if you stop receiving funding?
4. How is your relationship with donors? How do they follow the work of the centre?

Linking with other sectors and actors through coordination

1. Do you cooperate with other women's organizations? With other service providers?
2. What are the networks that you are members of?
3. What is the moral, social and legal support that you receive?

Effective communication

1. What are the means of communications you use?
2. What are the tools you use to reach out for women?
3. How do you document your learning and case studies?
4. How do you reach out to the different stakeholders?
5. What social media tools do you use?

Participation by stakeholders in design

1. Do you involve other organizations in designing your interventions?
2. Do you involve your beneficiaries in designing interventions?
3. Do you involve the local community on designing interventions?

Implementation

1. Do you involve other organizations in implementing interventions?
2. Do you involve beneficiaries in implementing interventions?
3. Do you involve the local community in implementing intervention?

Assessment of service

1. Do you include other organizations in evaluating your interventions?
2. Do you include your beneficiaries in evaluating your programs
3. Do you include the local community in evaluating your programs?
4. What targets are excluded from your services?
5. Do you think this exclusion should change?

Questions to the beneficiaries

Accessibility

1. How did you know about the centre?
2. Did you know about it before your arrival?
3. How long did you stay?
4. Did you need a longer time?
5. Do you think the period that the beneficiaries spend is enough?

Adaptability

1. How did you adapt to being in the centre?
2. Could you reach out to your family or friends or any supportive group while in the centre?

Appropriateness

1. Did you find your needs available in the centre?
2. What are the service you received? Please mention them all.
3. Did you need other services that were not available?
4. Were the facilities and services of the centre appropriate for a social, cultural and religious perspective?

Safety

1. Did you feel safe while staying in the centre?
2. Did other beneficiaries feel safe?

Confidentiality

1. Did you think that the confidentiality of your case was respected?

Effective communication

2. How was your relationship with the employees of the centre?
3. How was your relationship with other colleagues?
4. How was your relationship with your family and your support groups while you were in the centre?

Participation by stakeholders in design

1. Did you participate in the daily chores of the centre?
2. Were you consulted about the daily cultural and entertainment activities?
3. What do you suggest for improving the services of the centre?

Implementation

1. Were the legal and social counselling services suitable to your needs?
2. Were the service providers understanding and helpful in solving your problems?
3. What do you suggest for receiving better services?

Assessment of services

1. What is your assessment to the services that the centre provides?
2. What is your assessment of the rooms and facilities of the centre?
3. What is your assessment to the psychological, social and legal services of the centre?
4. What is your assessment to the services you were referred to outside the centre?
5. If your friend was subjected to domestic violence would you advise her to come to the centre and why?

Questions for civil society organizations and donors

Effective communication

1. What is your assessment of the ability of these centres to network with other service providers?
2. Are you aware of the services that the centres provide?
3. Are you consulted when designing and implementing any service of the centre?

Participation by stakeholders in design

1. Do you think that Palestinian shelters follow professional standards when working with women victims of violence?
2. What are the pros and cons of having shelters in Palestine

Implementation and assessment of services

1. Where are the shelters in the priority list of the services provided for women victims of violence?
2. How satisfied are you of the services regarding
 - a. Number of centres
 - b. Quality and type of service
 - c. People awareness of the service
 - d. People usage of the service
 - e. The work model the shelter use
 - f. Its reputation in the community
 - g. The degree of safety
 - h. The degree of privacy and confidentiality
3. If you are to improve the services for women victims of violence what would you add
4. Do you think the financial support of the shelters is adequate?
5. Do you think the political, social and legal support of the shelters is enough?
6. Who is excluded from the shelters' service and what do you think about that?

Questions for the local community and families of the beneficiaries

Effective Communication

1. What is your assessment of the shelters ability to network?
2. Are you aware of the shelter's services?
3. Are you included in designing and providing the shelters' services?

Participation by stakeholders in design

1. Do you think the shelters are using professional standards to serve women victims of violence?
2. What are the pros and cons of having shelters in Palestine

Implementation and assessment of services

1. Where are the shelters in the priority list of the services provided for women victims of violence?
2. How satisfied are you of the services regarding:
 - a. Number of centres
 - b. Quality and type of service
 - c. People awareness of the service

- d. People usage of the service
 - e. The work model the shelter use
 - f. Its reputation in the community
 - g. The degree of safety
 - h. The degree of privacy and confidentiality
- 3. If you are to improve the services for women victims of violence what would you add?
 - 4. Do you think the financial support of the shelters is adequate?
 - 5. Do you think the political, social and legal support of the shelters is enough?
 - 6. Who is excluded from the shelters' service and what do you think about that?

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