



TanSeeq

COORDINATION

For Ending Gender Based Violence In Lebanon

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EDITORIAL

The eradication of gender based violence (GBV) is a key step in the construction of a society of equals, in which differences among human beings are considered a wealth and not a base to construct social hierarchies, restricting individual and collective social, economic, and political freedoms.

Regrettably though, this multifaceted form of violence - which is mainly exercised against women and children - continues to be dramatically widespread in Lebanon, in Italy, as in the majority of countries in the world. Because indeed this is not a problem that affects only poor, marginalized, uneducated individuals and communities; violence is daily, routinely exercised within the closed walls of rich and poor households, across professional categories, citizenships, religions, generational boundaries...

Yet it is hardly heard of – sometimes because parts of the society tend to blame victims rather than perpetrators; other times because victims do not want to cause harm to their dear ones; or yet because sometimes women lack sufficient self-esteem to say 'no' to violence, and/or do not have alternative livelihood options. Still sometimes all these reasons intersect with yet other contingent factors to produce that silence which allows violence to be relentlessly perpetrated.

The GBV prevention program implemented in Lebanon by UNFPA in coordination with key Lebanese women's NGOs and line ministries, and with the financial support of the Government of Italy, is critically contributing to shifting attitudes and changing behavior in this domain. UNFPA's provision of technical assistance to the National Commission for Lebanese Women in the implementation of the recently endorsed 10 years National Women Strategy – inclusive of an objective on preventing/responding to Violence against Women - further ensures that it is owned, relevant and aligned to national priorities.

The promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women are key priorities in the portfolio of Italy-financed initiatives in Lebanon. We conceive of them both as full-fledged objectives, and as means to ensure that development results are fairly and nation-widely diffused across, in gender, age, socioeconomic differences. We thus wish to extend to UNFPA and all Lebanese and international like-minded partners our congratulations for the achievements so far, and the encouragement for those yet to come.

Mr. Giuseppe Morabito
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AWARENESS RAISING CAMPAIGN FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN FROM VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

To commemorate "World Day for the Prevention of Child Abuse", Dar Al Amal organized, in partnership with the Higher Council of Childhood, War child Holland, Diakonia, and End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism France (ECPAT France), an awareness campaign which took place at the Beirut International Airport on December 23.

Throughout the day, a group of 30 children from the specialized prevention centers of Dar Al Amal, in Nabaa and Sabra, performed at the arrival hall of the airport choreography about children protection.

They also held banners and distributed flyers about Children's Rights, focusing on the protection of children from violence, exploitation and abuse.

The public, travelers, attending parents, airport' administration, Dar Al Amal partners and the media, were very impressed by the children who showed pride in their participation. They enjoyed watching children dance and claim artistically the need to respect and protect children from violence. The media interviewed the children who explained the objective of the campaign which is "the child".

Dar Al Amal, along with local and international partners, from the public and private sectors, are working to combat gender based violence, which is a violation of human rights. The direct right holders and beneficiaries of Dar Al Amal centers, are vulnerable young girls and women, victims of poverty, discrimination, maltreatment, sexual abuse etc.

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STRENGTHENING LONG TERM GBV PREVENTION AND RESPONSE PARTNERSHIP

International Medical Corps (IMC) and ABAAD have continuously partnered together to respond to unmet needs in gender based violence (GBV) services in Lebanon. After first collaborating in 2011 to launch the First Men Center in Beirut, that today continues to provide counseling to men and boys with abusive behaviors as an important component of GBV prevention, IMC and ABAAD came together again in 2013 to respond to gaps in GBV service capacity. The two agencies worked with a team of international experts to create a GBV case management curriculum with specific focus on the emergency setting. With various donors' support, two trainings were conducted in July – in Beirut and Tyre – for 80 service providers working directly with women, young girls and survivors of GBV. More than 20 agencies including Beyond, Caritas, Danish Refugee Council, General Union for Palestinian Women, Handicap International, Heartland Alliance, Himaya, Institute for Development Research Advocacy and Applied Care, IMC, INTERSOS, International Rescue Committee, Maarouf Saad Foundation, Makhzoumi Foundation, Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Social Affairs, Médecins Sans Frontières, Najdi Association, Social Humanitarian Economical Intervention for Local Development, Terre Des Hommes, Think Positive and UNRWA took part in the trainings.

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WE HAVE A MISSION... IF THREATENED, DO NOT HESITATE! CALL US – 112

KAFA (Enough) Violence & Exploitation concluded in 2013 a campaign launched in cooperation with the Directorate General of the Internal Security Forces (ISF) within the 16 days of activism against gender violence running from November 25 to December 10 under the title: "We have a mission... If threatened, do not hesitate! Call us- 112".

The campaign aimed at rebuilding trust between women and the ISF and highlighting the serious efforts undertaken by the ISF to ensure appropriate protection to women victims of violence. The campaign falls within the joint project between KAFA and the ISF seeking to "reinforce the role of the ISF in fighting domestic violence", supported by UNFPA and the Italian Cooperation- Italian Embassy in Lebanon, along with the Norwegian Embassy and the Swedish Kvinna Till Kvinna foundation.

The project's main achievements: two curriculum on domestic violence and on communication skills adopted by the ISF institute in the Warwar barrack; a training of trainers guide developed on the content of the two curriculum; a service note issued by the Directorate General on "how officers have to deal with domestic violence complaints"; a circular issued by the court of appeal's public prosecutor office on the referral of domestic violence complaints to the judiciary police instead of police stations; 12 judiciary police centers equipped with decent investigation rooms and beds for sound medical screening; training of 175 agents of the judiciary police and of command rooms conducted. It is worth mentioning that the training will continue to cover all judiciary police officers.

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ABAAD RELEASES A RESOURCE PACK EMPHASIZING THE ROLE OF MEN IN PUTTING AN END TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Within the list of resources produced by ABAAD over the year 2013, the documentary movie "Men in the shadow" and the booklet "Their impact on my life" came to emphasize the approach behind ABAAD's methodology of work in reinforcing gender equality and involving men in the efforts to fight gender based violence (GBV).

These two resource materials shed the light on active men in the societies seeking to promote the concept of positive masculinity and present them as models for community change with the aim of eradicating violence against women.

"Men in the shadow" shed the light on the profile of three men of different social and economic backgrounds who could challenge gender stereotypes imposed by society on the role and image of men.

The second resource material "Their impact on my life" illustrates 10 stories shared by women, who are survivors of violence and discrimination in Lebanon and about men who played a role in their lives and had an impact on breaking the circle of violence they were living in. These are stories of women who suffered from violence and discrimination as well as of men who played, in their own way, the role of hidden soldiers in putting an end to violence against women.

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EMPOWERING WOMEN WITH BASIC LIFE SKILLS

From September to December, UNFPA collaborated with Women Charity League, Dari, SHEILD and the Ministry of Social Affairs Social Development Centers (SDC) in Halba, Baalbeck, Minyeh, Kfar Sir, and Bint Jbeil to provide Syrian refugees and Lebanese women with knowledge on basic life skills. Thirteen social workers were trained by experts from the American University of Beirut and the Lebanese American University on how to conduct communication sessions on various issues such as problem solving techniques, environment, nutrition, children's development, gender based violence prevention and reproductive health. The social workers were also trained in providing psychological first aid.

More than 1,500 Syrian and 640 Lebanese women were included in over 120 sessions, and the program got an overwhelmingly positive feedback with more women participating than expected, and many requesting additional sessions. The project also strengthened safe spaces in the partner organizations and SDCs, which function as places where women can come together and seek assistance if they experience gender based violence.

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AVAILING SAFE SPACES FOR EMPOWERED WOMEN AND GIRLS

To strengthen the gender based violence (GBV) response in Lebanon, the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) implements Women Resource Centers (WRC) that are designed as safe spaces to promote women and girls' empowerment and self-reliance, and therefore reduce negative coping mechanisms. These centers adopt a holistic strategy to assistance that includes both psycho-social support and socio-economic reintegration. Through a women-centered approach, specialized, age-appropriate and group-based support is available to women and girls (both Syrian and Lebanese) who may not otherwise come forward to access survivor services due to fear and stigma.

DRC aims to create long term behavior change among the targeted population to further strengthen community-based protection and help-seeking behavior. In partnership with UNHCR and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), DRC launched four WRC in Saida (South), Halba (Akkar), Tripoli (North) and Ksarnaba (Bekaa). All WRC are operated jointly with local organizations (Arc-en-Ciel, Feminism, Rassemblement Démocratique des Femmes Libanaises and Tadamon Wil Tanmeia) in order to build their capacity on livelihood and psychosocial support to women and girls, and GBV survivors in particular. The WRC target both Syrian and host communities beneficiaries in order to mitigate the socio-economic pressure they face and to foster greater social cohesion. Between July and December, the WRC accommodated about 1,500 women and girls.

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WELL-BEING OF SYRIAN REFUGEE FAMILIES – MAINLY WOMEN AND YOUTH – IN LEBANON – AN INTEGRATED INTERVENTION

In times of crisis, violence soar – particularly gender based violence (GBV) – women and children being the weaker link. “My husband hit me on my breasts when I was breastfeeding our 2-month baby, he was angry because he did not find work” this was the testimony of a young Syrian women who attended one of the GBV and mental health sessions, organized within the frame of the project “Well-being of Syrian Refugee Families -mainly women and youth- in Lebanon: An Integrated Intervention” aimed to improve the mental and social wellbeing of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon implemented by IDRAAC in partnership with the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA), through the support of UNFPA and with US Government funding.

At the end of the sessions, intended to increase the awareness and enhance the capacities of women about GBV on the one hand, and to provide psychosocial support, where needed on the other, a questionnaire administered between October and November to the 636 women participants in total, disclosed interesting findings.

Though 49% of the women revealed that females in their respective families have been subjected to GBV, 31% of the respondents argued that this act is “acceptable”. Answers reflected on the cultural factor behind GBV, which ranked second (34%) after poverty (36.4%) and was interestingly followed by the authority granted to men by religion or Sharia (26.9%) as well as educational levels of both the violated (28.8%) and perpetrator (25.1%). The husband was the first perpetrator (63.9%), followed by the parents (25.9%), parents in law (17%), and other males in the direct family (18%).

All women said that they will encourage others to attend the GBV sessions, as it improved their knowledge (50%) and changed their attitudes where 83% of women refused completely GBV against them.

But there's more. During the same reporting period, aimed to offer mothers better parenting strategies to alleviate violence, 70 sessions were organized at the MOSA's Social Development Centers and at public schools, benefitting a total of 227 women. The sessions were facilitated by the trained social workers and additional mothers are expected to be trained in early 2014 benefitting a wide number of children.

It is also worth mentioning that the project additionally focused on shaping the mediation skills of 32 school teachers to deliver behavioral change and resilience sessions and services to Syrian and Lebanese children in public schools, thus reducing vulnerability to GBV. By the end of December and through 595 delivered sessions a total of 2,520 students from 19 schools were equipped with the related awareness and knowledge.

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INTER-AGENCY COORDINATION FOR ADDRESSING SGBV IN THE HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

Towards the end of 2013 the number of Syrian refugees in Lebanon increased to almost 890,000 refugees. Women and children represent 78% of the registered refugee population, and are disproportionately affected by sexual and gender based violence (SGBV). The national SGBV Task Force consists of some 40 international and national non-governmental organizations, UN agencies and relevant ministries. The priority for 2013 was to strengthen prevention activities and response services to all GBV survivors.

The most notable joint activities undertaken by members of the Task Force between July and December were:

- In collaboration with IMC, ABAAD and UNICEF, a number of "Training of Trainers" health facilities to provide clinical management of rape were undertaken across the country, followed by delivery of equipment by UNFPA. In total, 13 public hospitals and primary health facilities in North, Bekaa and South were trained and equipped.
- From September to December, national data on GBV cases was collected for the first time in Lebanon. Nine organizations participated in information sharing group. The trends show that more than 85% of survivors of reported cases were women and girls, 30% of the survivors of reported cases were children, 22% of the reported cases were related to sexual violence, 74% of forced marriages were child marriages, and 75% of the reported incidents took place in Lebanon, while 25% took place in Syria.
- UNFPA and Heartland Alliance produced and disseminated information material about how survivors of SGBV can access case managers and assistance. Hotline numbers and contact information were made available through 107,000 community brochures and 11,700 frontline workers leaflets printed. Dissemination workshops were conducted in December and will continue in 2014.
- During the annual 16 days of activism against gender violence, from 25 November to 10 December, more than 50 activities were conducted across the country to raise awareness about violence against women. Activities included focus group discussions for women, men and youth, art therapy sessions for children, and cultural dance shows by Syrian and Lebanese performers.
- Three mid-way transition houses which provide temporary housing for women at risk or survivors of GBV were established in South, North and Bekaa by UNHCR, UNICEF, DRC and ABAAD.

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SHARING IS HEALING

Amel association adopts throughout its programs a gender mainstreaming approach and aims to empower individuals to reclaim their rights and not concede to flagrant abuses of their human integrity, such as domestic violence, abuse and other forms of gender based violence (GBV).

Under a current UNHCR-funded project, Amel association disposes of trained staff to identify cases of GBV and deal with victims in a gender and culturally-sensitive way throughout its centers. Through an internal and external referral system, case management, group discussions and awareness sessions, children participating in child protection activities and education, as well as women involved in livelihood activities are able to report the abuses they suffer from and benefit from special counseling and psycho-social support to overcome their situations.

During the activities, staff described the women as feeling lost and reluctant in revealing their experiences, but once a trust and a group cohesion relationship was established, women felt more comfortable in sharing their testimonies and finding common solutions to their problems.

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MAKHZOUMI PROVIDES CONTINUOUS SUPPORT FOR GBV SURVIVORS

Makhzoumi Foundation (MF) in partnership with UNHCR continues to provide gender base violence (GBV) services. MF provides direct support to GBV survivors with referral to other services (livelihood, health, legal safe shelters) when necessary. MF has identified till the end of December around 60 GBV cases.

Between November and December, MF had worked to ensure gender equality through arranging several awareness activities for 200 boys and girls on several topics such as early marriages, violence against women and sexual harassment. MF coordinated with Bassma and Zaitouna in Shatila Camps awareness sessions on violence against women where around 30 women participated. Leaflets were distributed to women and were provided with MF's hotline number that enables them to get assistance needed in case of violence.

Moreover, MF participated in the 16 days of activism to end violence against women and girls and organized an art competition in Omar Fakhouri Public school where 100 boys and girls participated and gifts were distributed to the winners.

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EXPANDING PREVENTION OF AND RESPONSE TO GBV IN SOUTH LEBANON AND MOUNT LEBANON

Since August, INTERSOS is working in partnership with UNHCR to contribute toward building a protective environment for Syrian refugees, asylum seekers and vulnerable host populations. In order to improve the quality of the gender based violence (GBV) response, INTERSOS has established within local community centres or newly identified premises, nine safe spaces (six in South Lebanon and three in Mount Lebanon) where specialized case workers provide case management services including basic emotional support, psychological support, ad hoc cash assistance, as well as timely referral to most appropriate services available (medical care, mental health, legal counselling, safe shelter, education and livelihood opportunities), according to the survivor's needs.

Along with the case management services, from October to December, INTERSOS has organized an awareness campaign on GBV key concepts with special focus on the importance of preventing and reporting GBV incidents, targeting more than 6,000 people, mainly in the refugee community.

In December, INTERSOS conducted a successful distribution of 1,000 hygiene kits provided by UNFPA in South Lebanon (including 1,000 sanitary packs and 1,000 soap bars). The distribution was associated to specific awareness sessions on sexual and reproductive health and rights and GBV prevention and response targeting teen girls and women. INTERSOS has also delivered specialized trainings on GBV basic principles and the GBV Information Management System (GBVIMS) for 40 frontline workers.

Moreover, in partnership with UNICEF, from October to December, INTERSOS has distributed 1,440 dignity kits to extremely vulnerable women and teen girls in South Lebanon, and organized vocational trainings for 90 teen girls at risk of GBV.

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