

# SAWA-All The Women Together Today And Tomorrow

## Together we create the human potential for nation-building

Based on our belief in equality and social justice, we in SAWA – All the Women Together Today and Tomorrow, work for eliminating all forms of violence against women and children in the Palestinian society by providing relevant services and community awareness. We also work for promoting and employing a culture of peace and security in the process of human and community development in order to achieve a higher level of social advancement.

Through our work we seek to provide assistance, psychological support and guidance to victims of physical and sexual violence, as well as to raise public awareness in order to prevent physical, sexual and psychological violence among the target groups. Additionally, we seek to recruit and train new volunteers on a continual basis to work on the Center's programs.

Dear friends, we are pleased to offer you our first newsletters shedding light on the activities implemented by SAWA Center over the past months.

### In a Workshop in Al-Bireh The Forum for Combating Violence Against Women Calls for Enacting Laws to Protect Women from Violence and Killing

The Palestinian NGO Forum for Combating Violence Against Women (Al-Muntada), hosted by SAWA – All the Women Together Today and Tomorrow during the period 2005-2007, organized a workshop on 24 of March at Inaash Al-Usra Society's headquarters in Al-Bireh. A large group of participants from NGOs and women organizations attended the event, where they discussed the findings of a study prepared by Dr. Lamis Abu Nahleh on the so-called "honor killing" of women during the period 2004-2006.

In the beginning of the workshop, the Forum's coordinator Ohaila Shomar welcomed the audience and pointed out that this workshop is part of the Forum's strategic plan for lobbying with the Palestinian authorities, particularly the Legislative Council, to amend the penal code in relation to women killing. During the workshop, Dr. Abu Nahleh presented an overview of the study, stating that this study makes a contribution to the documentation and analysis of cases of women killing in the West Bank and Gaza Strip during the past three years 2004-2006.

She pointed out that the importance of this report is that it provides the public with data on this issue and allows the use of findings in lobbying activities with the Palestinian authorities and all other relevant parties, which have the responsibility for protecting the lives of girls and women, ensuring their safety and safeguarding their human rights by enacting gender-sensitive legislations that criminalize the killing of women and girls under the banner of "family honor."

### Educational program

This program is concerned with organizing awareness raising workshops and seminars for all community segments. Another aspect of its work is the publication of brochures and leaflets on sex education and sexual and physical violence, in addition to training relevant professionals on the issue of violence and its different forms.

Awareness raising workshops represent the main feature of this program. They are organized with schools in Jerusalem and suburbs, groups of mothers in different areas, and groups of young men and women through community centers and clubs.

Since the start of the school year, 150 workshops have been implemented so far with schools, where we were able to reach 2500 male and female students.

The importance of this program lies in its approach of raising the awareness of students by engaging them in activities that provide them with accurate and reliable information on issues like: human rights, sex education, adolescence, gender relations, parenthood, relation with parents, and sexual and physical violence, including prevention methods. By providing the students with access to this information, we help them avoid the risks associated with searching for information from unreliable and often inappropriate sources.

The educational program also addresses these issues with mothers in order to raise their awareness and help foster their communication with their children.

The report included:

1. A presentation of the methodology used in preparing the report and reviewing the existing relevant literature.
2. Documentation of cases of "honor killing" committed in the past three years (2004-2006).
3. Profile of girls and women victims of such murders during that period.
4. Socio-cultural and legal analysis of these cases.

At the end of the workshop, the participants presented recommendations to be added to the report. Major recommendations included: making sure to use the term of women killing instead of the prevailing terminology, enacting laws to protect women from violence in general and from killing in particular, considering such killing as a murder and providing for severe penalties against perpetrators, as well as increasing awareness among professionals, specialists and the civil society.

The study report will be published soon in order to make it available to the public.

#### Child Friendly Helpline

##### Organizing a training course for volunteers in Ramallah

Based on our strife towards a better future, our rich and interesting experience and our belief that children need a platform to express their thoughts and their sorrows and pains, we in SAWA Center work hand in hand to develop and activate the Child Friendly Helpline.

Recently, a training course was organized to develop teams of volunteers, with the participation of a number of young men and women wishing to work with the Child Friendly Helpline program.

As a start, we obtained a toll free national helpline with support from the Palestinian Telecommunication Group. Through this line, we seek to provide assistance, psychological support and advice to Palestinian children, as well as to provide them with an opportunity to be heard in line with their rights as stipulated in the international conventions and treaties on children and in the Palestinian child law.

The four-month training course is managed by a group of qualified trainers in this field. The course is made of two parts: the first part addresses several issues, including how to deal with children, psychology of child development, international conventions on the rights of the child, as well as the issue of child abuse and neglect.

During the second part, the trainees practice telecounseling and how to respond to calls received by the Child Friendly Helpline.

Finally, we highly appreciate the role of the Palestinian Telecommunication Group and the many contributions made by institutions and individuals from the local community to help make this project a reality.

The program has been welcomed and appreciated by most schools. This is evident in the evaluations made at the end of the workshops and in the increasing demand from schools for more workshops on these issues.

Additionally, we have produced several brochures to be used in the educational activities, such as: Adolescence: Let's Talk It, My Right and My Duty, Women's Rights, as well as a series of brochures on the different forms of sexual abuse.

#### Hotline in support of victims of sexual and physical violence

The increasing number of calls to the hotline indicates that some women in our society have managed to break the silence and report on the sexual and physical violence committed against them. From the beginning of this year, we have received 392 calls. This is a result of continuous efforts by the Center to ensure complete confidentiality in its work, as well as the promotion of the hotline through media campaigns and frequent publications, training of volunteers and educational and awareness-raising programs.

The Center provides ongoing training courses to prepare additional numbers of female volunteers, who can work on the hotline to provide assistance, psychological support, advice and guidance to victims of sexual and physical violence.

#### Organizing a training workshop for hotline volunteers:

Three months ago, one of such training courses was initiated in the Center's head office in Jerusalem under the supervision of the counselor Lamis Horani and with support from the EU.

During the workshop, the counselor introduced female volunteers to several issues, including: basics Of socialization in Arab families, division of social roles, cultural heritage in its relation to violence against women, and sexual abuse within the family. She also presented the basic principles of providing assistance and support, methods of telecounseling, how the law deals with sexual violence and abuse issues, as well as theories in the management of gender-based violence.