

SAWA-All The Women Together Today And Tomorrow

Together we create the human potential for nation-building

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Sawa Child Helpline Represents Palestine in the Second Consultative Meeting for Child Helplines

Sawa Child Helpline 121 represented Palestine, alongside 16 Arab states, in the second consultative meetings for child helplines in the Middle East and North Africa which was held in Abu Dhabi, the UAE. In the conference, the Palestinian delegation presented 2 papers: the first, titled 'Palestine Children between the Current Reality and the Uncertain Future,' presented an overview of the status of Palestinian children under the occupation and the economic hardship. The second paper addressed the issue of volunteerism in child helplines, explaining Sawa long experience in recruiting and training volunteers for its programs and presenting the Center's mission to offer assistance, guidance, and psychological support to victims of sexual and physical abuse and increase awareness in order to prevent all forms of violence.

A Training Course for Members of Public Prosecution Offices

Sawa held a 3-day training course for 19 prosecutors and assistance from the public prosecution offices in the different Palestinian districts. The main goal was to train participants on how to deal properly with women and children victims of violence. According to the Attorney General Ahmad Al Mughni, this is the first of a kind training for the participants in this field, which aims at assisting them in dealing with such sensitive and difficult cases.

Concluding the Second Training Course for Child Helpline Volunteers

Sawa concluded the second training course for volunteers working in the child helpline 121 which lasted for 4 months over a total of 76 training hours. Thus, the number of volunteers in the child helpline 121 has reached 22.

MOU between Sawa Child Helpline and Palestinian Ministry of Labor

Strengthening cooperation between Sawa and the Palestinian Ministry of Labor has been the main objective of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by both parties, whereby Sawa Child Helpline 121 will help the ministry in the application of the provisions of the Palestinian labor law and child law in regard to child labor and protection and work conditions for Juveniles and women.

Through the helpline, children and women can complain or report on any violation or breach of the labor law, based on the terms of international conventions on child protection and the provisions of the Palestinian child law.

Sawa Third Conference on 'Children of abused Women'

In December 2007, Sawa held its third conference titled 'Children of abused Women' over 2 days with the participation of representatives from official institutions, NGOs, researchers and specialists in women and children issues from different parts of Palestine.

The Palestinian Minister of Women's Affairs and Tourism, Dr. kholud Daibes opened the conference calling for more attention to children living with women victims of violence and pointing out that the ministry is cooperating with NGOs and several society organizations to develop activities related to women issues.

This conference was unique in terms of topics, as it discussed a number of papers on: sexual abuse against disabled persons and how to detect it, the forgotten victims (referring to children of women victims of violence), and children of parents with special needs. The conference also shed light on Munchausen's phenomenon which has been better known in the field of psychiatry, introducing the participants to such dormant beast that strains the victims of sexual abuse and prevents the survivors from seeking therapy and getting rid of their pains.

Opening the Second Training Course for Volunteers in Sawa Hotline

Sawa Center launched its second training course to train young women to volunteer in Sawa hotline. The course will last for three months and will take place in Sawa offices in Jerusalem.

Topics to be covered by the course will include: Principles of child upbringing in Arab families, social division of roles, cultural heritage in relation to violence against women, sexual abuse within the family, principles of assistance provision, methods for telephone-based counseling, management of cases of violence and sexual abuse in the law, in addition to theories in the management of gender-based violence.

Training Course for Volunteers in the Educational Program

Recently Sawa concluded a training course for a group of volunteers in its educational program. The course lasted for 4 months with a total of 56 training hours targeting a number of young volunteers. The course coordinator stated that the program offers workshops and awareness raising lectures to all social groups, in addition to publishing educational brochures on sex education and sexual and physical violence, and training the relevant professionals on issues of violence and its various forms. The workshops are addressed at school students in Jerusalem and suburbs and mother groups, in addition to youth groups in Different clubs.

Recent publications

Sawa Center has published several brochures and statements on various topics, namely:

- An appeal for immediate action to protect Palestinian women and girls from the rising incidence of women killing.
- Publishing a monthly article in the health magazine 'Keef As-Siha'.
- A brochure on violence and sexual abuse against adolescents.
- A brochure on sexual abuse and harassment against women.
- A brochure on sexual abuse and harassment against children.
- A brochure on sexual abuse within the family.
- A brochure on sexual abuse and harassment in work site.
- Stickers for the Child Helpline 121.
- A notebook for the Child Helpline 121
- Sawa 2008 calendar.

The conference concluded with several recommendations including:

- To raise community awareness on dangers associated with sexual and physical abuse.
- To keep the dialogue ongoing on the issue of children of persons with special needs.
- Based on our belief that awareness is only a first step and it is more important to create a proper atmosphere for children to help detect their suffering and help them reach safety, it is important to listen to them, provide them with guidance, and ensure that adequate professional systems are in place for treatment and support.

Cooperation between Sawa and Ramallah Police Department

Cooperation has been strengthened between Sawa child helpline 121 and Ramallah Police Department (Criminal Investigation, Child Protection Unit) in the referral and treatment of a number of cases.

Launching the International Campaign against Violence against Women

The Palestinian NGO Forum for Combating Violence against Women – Al Muntada, which was hosted by Sawa Center during 2005-2007, announced the launch of the international campaign for combating violence against women between 25th of November and 12th of December 2007. This announcement was made during a press conference at Ramattan News Agency in the presence of Minister of Justice Dr. Ali Al Khashan, Minister of Women's Affairs Dr. Kholud Daibes, representatives of different institutions and women's rights activists. The campaign consisted of several activities, such as TV talk shows and spots, workshops, reports on women killing, signing petitions in demand for law amendments, as well as a sit-in strike. The main objective of the campaign was to strengthen the efforts of NGOs and public institutions in raising community awareness on violence and its impact, and in formulating policies to protect women and women's rights and combat all forms of violence.

Sawa develops a three-year strategy

Sawa staff and management held a three day meeting to develop together the institutional structure and regulations for the Center as well as to approve Sawa strategic plan for the next three years.