



Success Story: Lina Saleh, Child Protection Helpline* Volunteer

The Child Protection Helpline (121) that SAWA has been operating since 2007 is currently the only available helpline in the occupied Palestinian territories responding to calls from children affected by violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation. The helpline, sponsored by Save the Children Sweden, relies on recruiting and training committed volunteers to provide the crucially needed psychosocial support to its beneficiaries. Lina Saleh, 24, is one of the volunteers functioning on the helpline.

Lina, currently pursuing a Master degree in Conflict Resolution in Jerusalem, has been consistently volunteering with SAWA for the past 3 years, first with their school sexual education program, and more recently with the Child Protection Helpline service. Like all volunteers in the helpline, Lina has gone through an extensive training program covering a wide range of topics, selected carefully to equip volunteers with the necessary tools and knowledge to respond adequately to children's calls. "All volunteers go through 56 hours of training, consisting of relevant topics that act as the backdrop of our line support" says Lina. "Each module is followed by a role play session where we put into practice the theory we had learned. This technique proves to be extremely helpful as it allows volunteers to learn from each other's experience and to pinpoint strengths and weaknesses thus ensuring quality response and solid preparedness to real calls" Lina adds.



Lina Saleh, child protection helpline volunteer responds to a call

After receiving the theoretical training, Lina spent few weeks listening to veteran colleagues responding to children's phone calls so as to become even more familiarized with the support process. When it was finally time for her to respond to helpline calls, Lina reports having felt pretty much at ease with her role. "By the time I was done with my theoretical training and observation stage, I was eager to put my skills and knowledge at the service of children in need of support." Lina takes a great sense of pride and accomplishment in her work. She feels the helpline provides a unique and desperately needed support service, particularly to children who have endured all forms of violence and who wish to address their concerns, feelings, and problems in a confidential manner. "Many of the topics we deal with through our service are considered taboo in a predominately conservative society; the helpline provides a safe venue for addressing these topics. Nothing beats the feeling of helping a child deal with his/her fears and concerns; it is such an empowering feeling" says Lina.

Lina is now giving the training she once received to new volunteers, thus completing the circle of knowledge and transferring the skills to new enthusiastic volunteers, who share her drive to provide essential support to vulnerable children in the occupied Palestinian territories. Save the Children Sweden continues to work closely with SAWA to ensure the resources and skills are available for quality functioning of the helpline.

*SAWA's Child Protection Helpline can be reached by dialling 121 from Jawal network or any landline in oPt