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# Safe Spaces and Family Counseling Performance

In partnership with UNFPA

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### **Executive summary**

This report presents findings of the assessment performance of safe spaces and family counseling centers which was carried out by the consultant and commissioned by (UNFPA). The assessment was conducted in September 2019 aiming to assess quality of services provided, identify gaps and needs to further ensure quality activities and referral. This assessment was prepared using the "Safe Areas Assessment Tool and Family Counseling Centers" by using a set of indicators and evaluation criteria included as the tools that have been consisted of three related main sections in addition to (96) sub-evaluation indicators. The assessment process targeted seven centers in the West Bank, which included three levels of safe centers and family counseling. The first level includes the safe spaces of the NGO's (PMRS , PFPPA). The second level, consists of safe spaces within the women's centers of UNRWA. Finally, the third level that contains of family counseling centers affiliated to moh in (Hebron, Jenin).

The results of the performance and capacity assessment process a point to the importance and the need of having safe spaces and family counseling centers, which represent a new approach of working with women and girls who are victims of GBV (Gender –Based Violence) in the occupied Palestinian territory. It aims to provide an integral and comprehensive services package through a unified service place within health clinics and women's centers. It is a very convenient, approachable place for women and far from social stigma. These safe spaces that work in direct contact with women victims of violence provide multi- sector services and they work as a service center, a place to exchange information, rebuild community networks and a full-immense support to the victims , survivors of domestic violence.

In addition to the success of the safe spaces mentioned in providing multi -sector services to survivors of violence and women in danger through the provision of a range of free services and integrated interventions in several areas within a relatively short period and limited possibilities and recourses which includes (health services, counseling and psychosocial support, legal consolation, awareness and education, empowerment and economic integration, and referral services). The percentage of beneficiaries of safe

spaces services is estimated in thousands since its establishment. It has been indicated by the sample of the targeted women during focus groups, which targeted about (29) women, out of ( 3) focus groups to the positive impact of safe spaces on these categories at the different levels. It can be noted in this aspect to the presence of a positive feedback and the high-level of satisfaction by the sample of women beneficiaries. in terms of the urgent need for safe spaces and the importance work through the health care and women's centers. In addition to the need for the beneficiaries to feel physically and psychologically secure in the place of service delivery and the satisfaction of the majority of this category on the level and quality of services provided within the safe spaces.

In the other side, It is necessary to mention about the positive performance of the safe spaces staff and their ability to have the required flexibility to develop work methodologies, achieve efficiency and effectiveness through service delivery, especially with the increasing demand for services by women and girls who are victims of violence. This is accompanied by the presence of many positive influences that represent sources of support and empowerment of safe spaces and family counseling centers, including the formation of women's protection networks, which includes various partners in order to provide support services ,the ability to referral with cooperation to safe spaces and the presence of many stakeholders ,partners and the concerned at the local and national level those who are involved in the project to protect women from GBV. In particular, the safe spaces were based on integration partnership in the governmental and nongovernmental levels . Also it included the integration of various partners through to provide support and various services to the beneficiaries of the mentioned safe centers.

On the other hand, the safe spaces and family counseling centers are still relatively modern and some of them suffer from weak infrastructure and limited facilities to provide services, lack of potential like human resources and work crews, as well as limited access to women survivors or that suffer from violence. In addition to the lack of a clear strategy for sustainability and institutionalization of its work to ensure the continuity of staff and the provision of services and expand continuously. It is necessary to mention, the Safe Spaces project has been depend on short-term funding, as well as the weak policies and procedures governing the service delivery process .The most important results of the assessment can be reviewed according to the levels of safe centers and family counseling, as follows: (It should be clarified in this context, that the

overall results of the (Scoring Overview) on the safe areas covered in the evaluation process, represents a good level of performance when its relatively compared to the duration of establish these centers and limited resources and potential available).

- **Safe spaces in the NGOs (Nawara / Methloun, Aqaba AL-Khaldiya / Jerusalem)**

The findings of the assessment performance of the safe spaces for both (Nawara Center, Aqaba Al-Khaldiya) indicate a good performance compared to other safe spaces and family counseling centers. As well as, the results of all indicators of this center (Nawara) about (5.86/10) compared to (5.65 /10) of the safe area (Aqaba Al-Khaldiya). The accessibility of services, policies, procedures and services provided are the best at the center level in Nawara at Mithloun, while the safety Level is the best equipment on the level of the Aqaba AL-Khaldiya in Jerusalem.

In addition, the safe spaces mentioned have a relatively adequate infrastructure and facilities, especially the Nawara Center, which has multiple facilities to provide integrated and comprehensive services, as well as the ability to work directly with women and girls who are victims of GBV, especially Aqaba AL-Khaldiya center that target women in the Old City of Jerusalem who do not have Jerusalem IDs . It is based on a philosophy of the partnership with the government sector (NGO's), such as "Nawara Center" or between the non-governmental organizations such as Aqaba AL-Khaldiya in cooperation with (PMRS , PFPPA).

However, the safe spaces still suffer from poor-deficient sustainability related to programs, policies and procedures governing service delivery, human resources, project dependence of short-term funding. In addition to the limited access to the GBV women victims in which some of them suffers from disability among the overall target women. The relationship between health centers and safe spaces lack clear organizational structure which is a necessary to ensure institutionalization of safe spaces within Health centers. In addition to the importance of developing a strategic framework to determine the vision of safe work spaces and future directions in the coming years.

- **Joint services units of women's centers in partnership with UNRWA (Khotwa Center / Qalandiya Camp)**

The objective of this task is assess the performance of (Khotwa) as a sample the joint services unit with UNRWA. Scoring Overview shows that the scores of all the indicators for the services unit (Khotwa) were (5.38 / 10) mark. The best score was within the "the accessibility of services, policies, procedures and services provided" yet , the level of safety and facilities is the lowest level compare the rest of indicators. In addition, it is

necessary to mention the importance of the joint service units of women's centers, in cooperation with UNRWA. As they are located inside the refugee camps, targeting the most marginalized women, working directly with women and girls who are victims of GBV and they are considered as a reference for such cases of violence.

Nevertheless, the area still needs to improve the quality of performance and services provided and reach a larger proportion of battered and disabled women than the overall target population. A strategy for sustainability of policies and human resources should be developed, and UNRWA staff should be given sufficient time to provide services across the unit . Ensuring the sustainability of the project coordinator's work in particular and preparing a clear organizational structure that ensures the institutionalization of unity within the structure of the women's center.

In addition, the service unit " Khotwa " in particular has many positive elements, mainly the existence of a relatively adequate infrastructure within the women's center in Qalandia camp ,the provision of integration and comprehensive services, accompanied by the availability of all forms of support by UNRWA team of.In addition, there is a protection network at Qalandia camp which has played a positive role in providing an incubator environment for the unit to increase participation in prevention, awareness interventions and transfer services at the mentioned camp level. It can be noted in this regard that there is a very positive level of satisfaction by the sample of the beneficiaries of the services of the center on the idea of joining the services unit in the women's center . The majority of beneficiaries refer to the acceptance of their families to join women's center and participate in various activities.

▪ **Family counseling centers affiliated to moh in (Hebron, Jenin).**

This task included conducting an assessment of family counseling centers to the Palestinian Ministry of Health, including Hebron (Karantina Health Clinic, Hebron Governmental Hospital), Jenin (Al Basateen Neighborhood Clinic, Jenin Governmental Hospital). The overall results showed that the family counseling centers were rated relatively suffer from weakness in all indicators related to work and services provided, and has been described as (inappropriate, needing significant improvements) Scoring Overview indicates that the results of the total centers were as follow : Hebron (Karantina Health Clinic (3.36 / 10) sign), Hebron Governmental Hospital (4.34 / 10) sign), Jenin (Al-Basateen neighborhood clinic (3.15 / 10) sign, Jenin Governmental Hospital (3.28 / 10) sign).

Although there is a convergence between the overall results of the family counseling centers affiliated to the Ministry of Health. It is necessary to emphasize that the results of the counseling centers in Hebron are relatively better, there is an appropriate infrastructure and acceptable level of services, especially compared with the family counseling center in Jenin Governmental Hospital, which can be considered as the nucleus of a center without actual services on the ground.

However, the family counseling centers in Hebron and Jenin are still suffering from limited services provided, lack of readiness of the facilities that it contain very simple furniture and the efficiency of full-time staff for the tasks of the counseling centers. Along with the lack of a clear vision towards the nature and quality of services that is intended to be provided . Together with the limited awareness of decision makers and stakeholders in the Ministry of Health about the issues of violence and services of the Family Counseling Center. Besides weak policies and procedures governing the process of service, limited access to women victims of violence and women with disabilities of all targeted women in general