



Sawa Organization

Annual Report

2013



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Dear Friends and Supporters,

The year 2013—the year of **Sawa's 15th birthday**—got off to a **busy and somewhat sad start**. Even after hostilities in Gaza slowed, Sawa was still receiving many **calls from Gaza** residents coping with the psycho-social and health after-effects of trauma, grief, displacement, acute anxiety, and sometimes injuries. A 24-hour **emergency** expansion began in late 2012 and lasted into the first two months of 2013. Thus, the year began with an intense focus on assisting those in need in our own backyard. However, Sawa also recognizes that we have rich years of experience to share with others around the world. We also have a lot to learn.

Therefore, we continue to work to extend our global reach, including offering trainings to fledging and experienced organizations, study visits, and—most recently—**translating our distinctive Caller Information Database** for distribution to psycho-social call centers and crisis lines in other countries.

Always open to creativity, Sawa has embraced **artistic methods of spreading public awareness** more than ever this year—including theatre and performance art, puppet shows and clown acts, and animation. We have always used drawing and modeling clay in workshops to **help open discussion on hard subjects**. In general, we have found these artistic tools highly conducive to drawing attention, and relaxing people so that they are ready to face disturbing but important issues.

A final important point, as I introduce 2013's report, is that Sawa's **Strategic Plan for 2014-16** has been completed, with help from Sawa workers from all levels of the organization, and both administrative and implementation positions. It reflects diverse viewpoints and priorities, and expresses our **hopes, ambition, and optimism** for Sawa and Palestine.

Sincerely,

Ohaila Shomar, General Director

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121 Helpline and Counseling Centre

Call Centre (121 Helpline) staff and volunteers offered confidential support to 24,388 documented cases this year, among them 6278 women, 5889 girls under 18, and 6566 boys under 18. A larger-than-usual proportion of calls came continued to come to the Call Centre from **Gaza** in the early part of the year, as a result of the psycho-social and other **after-effects of the late-2012 Israeli military operation**. Throughout February and January, the Helpline offered its services **24 hours a day** throughout the week, before returning to our usual 16-hour schedule.



Sawa is continually updating and developing the **Caller Information Database** so that we can document cases more easily, precisely and usefully. We also maintain an extensive referral network, modified periodically to ensure accuracy of information on other organizations offering specialized services such as social services or legal representation. Call Center counselors have also supported people through **web-based counseling**, an alternative method which benefits those who cannot or do not wish to speak over the phone. For those requiring intensive support, Sawa also offers individual **face-to-face counseling**. This year, our **Counseling Centre** worked with 52 people, mostly women, and most of whom were facing violent or abusive situations. A **Social Worker assigned to Gaza** provided **direct assistance**, including home **counseling** visits, to 133 women, youth, and children.

Hamsat Al-Wasl: Volunteer Training and Support

Sawa **volunteer training** is the starting point of all our work; volunteers play a vital role in the Call Centre and Outreach Education Programs, and most employees got their start at Sawa as volunteers. Twelve volunteers participated in this year's **Outreach Education training course**, 3 men and 9 women, reviewing concepts such as the different types of

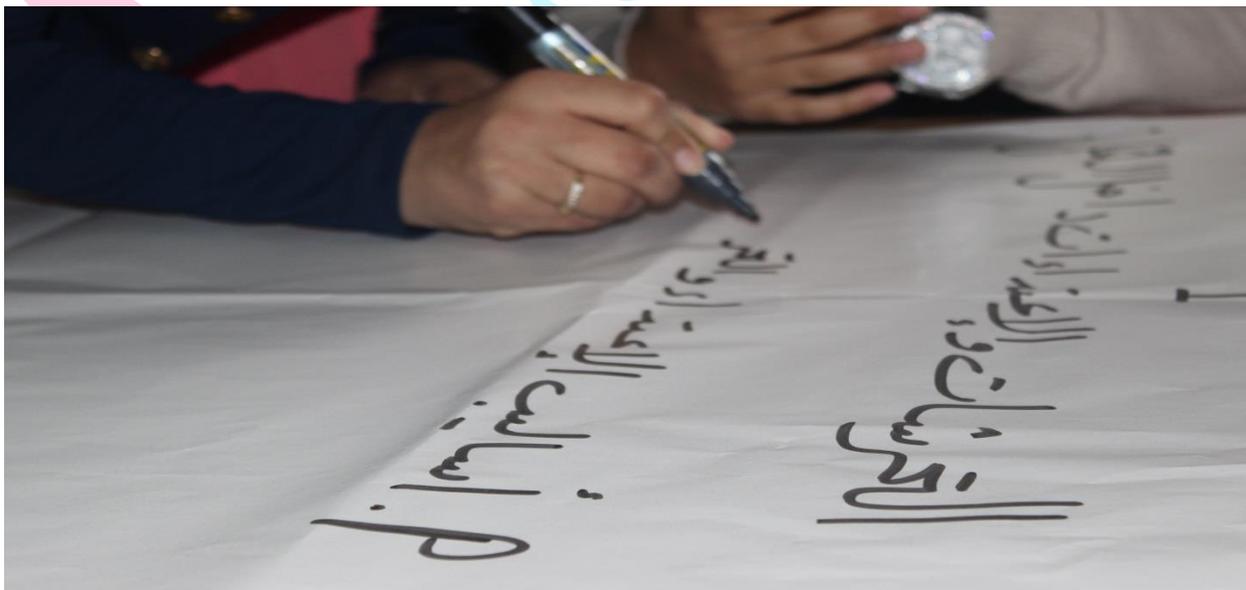
violence, Palestinian gender stereotypes, and sex education topics, and participating in many of the same exercises they will use with workshop participants.



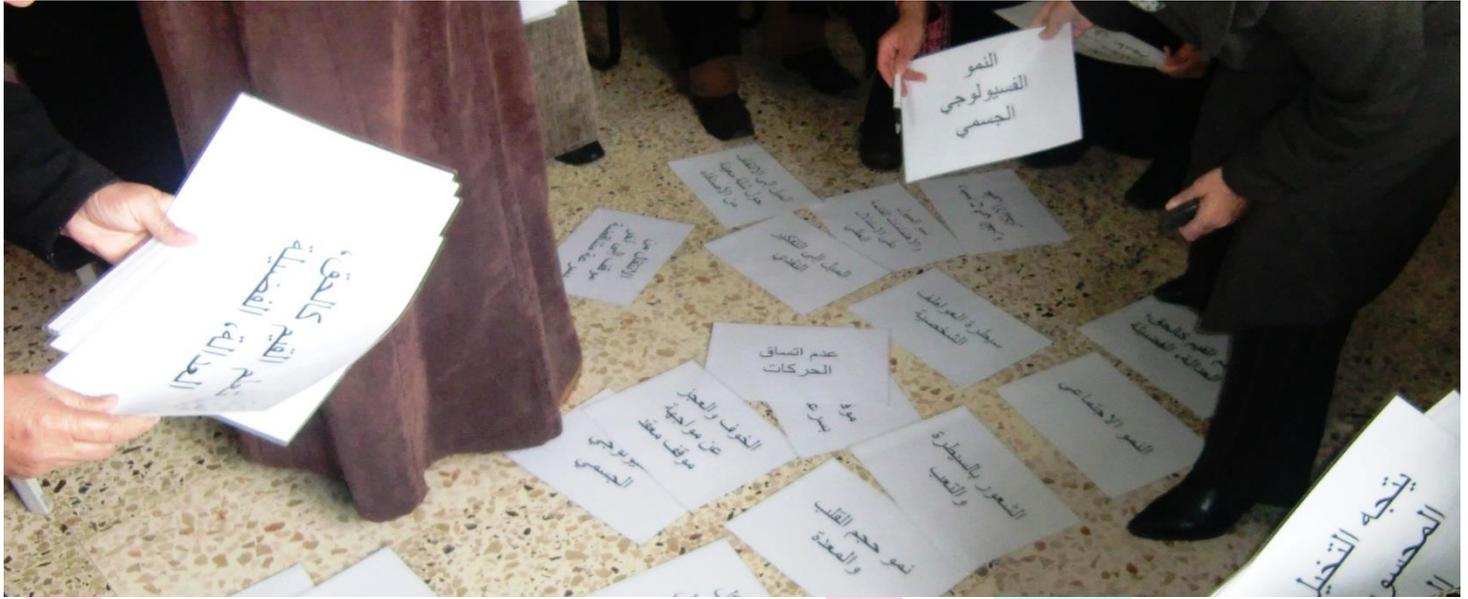
They also worked to build and practice discussion facilitation and communication skills. Fourteen volunteer trainees completed the **Call Centre training course**, 6 women and 8 men. They first completed conceptual training, reviewing the topics mentioned above, taking part in interactive exercises, and learning to understand trauma and post-trauma in violence victims, support methods, and important ethical concepts such as confidentiality. They then took part in real-time “on-the-job” training, listening as a group to veteran counselors and discussing, with trainers and one another, the techniques used to deal with the wide range of call types and cases.

Outreach Education and Professional Training

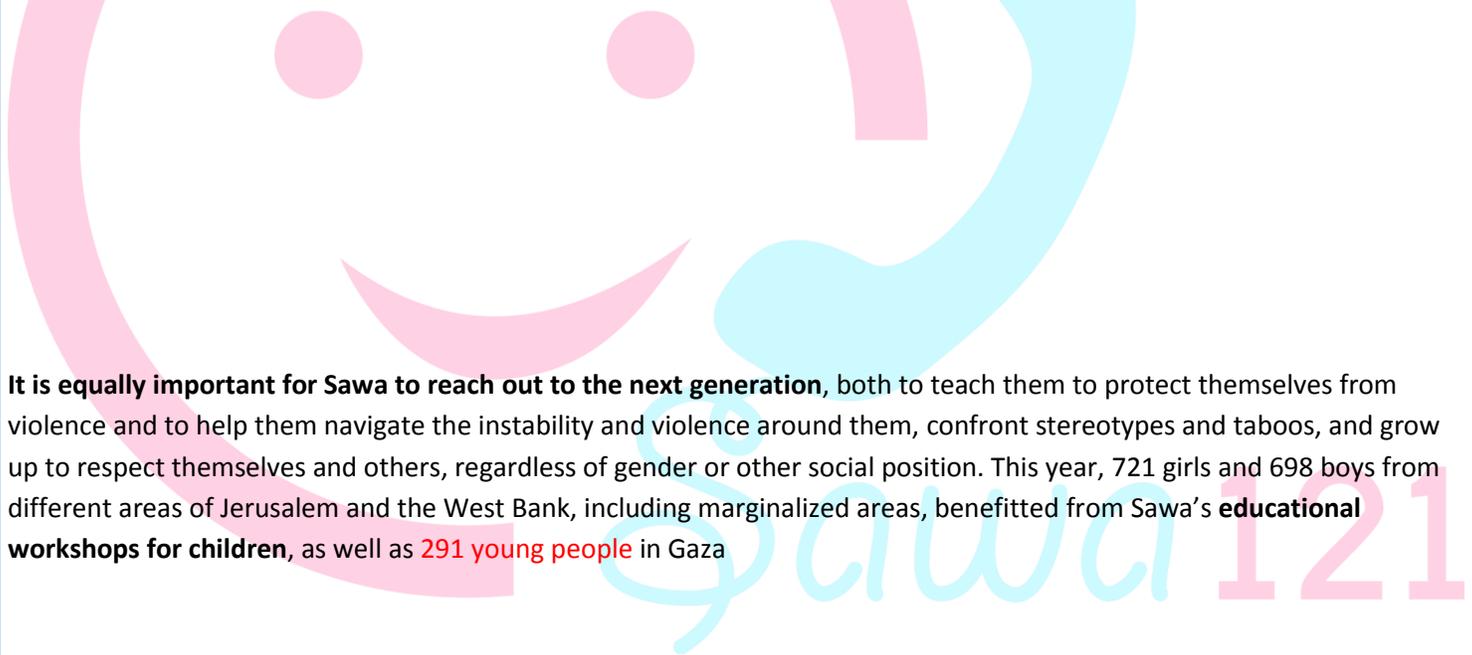
Women’s Outreach Education activities have been a part of Sawa’s work since the beginning, helping women to better understand violence and its effects, examine gender stereotypes and constraints, learn more about sex education and sexual health, and discuss parenting and family. Sawa offers two kinds of outreach activities for women—**workshops** of a few sessions, and longer **Women’s Empowerment Groups**, an opportunity for deeper discussion and the formation of strong trust within the group.



In 2013, 89 women of different ages and backgrounds took part in 6 Women's Empowerment Groups. 419 women took part in 19 education workshops, usually consisting of multiple-sessions in the West Bank and Jerusalem (55 were women students and volunteers who participated in workshops which also included some men), and 681 in 54 workshops, usually single-session, in Gaza.



It is equally important for Sawa to reach out to the next generation, both to teach them to protect themselves from violence and to help them navigate the instability and violence around them, confront stereotypes and taboos, and grow up to respect themselves and others, regardless of gender or other social position. This year, 721 girls and 698 boys from different areas of Jerusalem and the West Bank, including marginalized areas, benefitted from Sawa's educational workshops for children, as well as 291 young people in Gaza





Sawa's **"Let's Talk!"** project, another Outreach Education component, gathered three groups of adolescent boys and girls and their parents for a **6-month series of meetings**, both separate meetings for parents and youth, and joint meetings. They discussed issues related to the difficult teenage years—social, psychological, and physical changes, maintaining good family relationships, and constructive, non-violent ways of dealing with conflict, and issues of identity and self-confidence. The project seeks to **help young people stay safe by strengthening their relationships with their parents**, so that they feel comfortable talking with them about the problems they face as they grow, make decisions, learn, and take on responsibility. **In each place, groups of 10 or more young people and their parents took part in meetings**, benefitting from creative activities, educational games, and a variety of exercises designed to break the ice, and help children and parents examine their lives, personal; characteristics, relationships, concerns, and hopes. Sawa also rejoined three groups of parents and youth who had participated in the project previously, holding several follow-up meetings with them to assess the effects of the project and offer further support.

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Stylized photo of a group of “Let’s Talk!” participants, both adults and children. Seated in the foreground with several young people, a Sawa facilitator smiles.



Sawa's **Mobile Clinic** brings awareness-raising activities on violence, rights and duties, adolescence, development, and health, to **marginalized and underserved communities** in the West Bank and offers children psycho-social support.



This year, **614 girls and 567 boys** in **nine communities** in the central, northern and southern West Bank took part. Most said they had a good time, learned new things, and wished for future visits.

Sawa has now completed our Hebron-area pilot project **“Men and Women—Hand in Hand Against Violence”**, which **engages men in activism to end violence against women**. 2013 activities included awareness raising efforts by the **Hebron Men’s Forum**, a group of men from different walks of life who work together to address VAW within their community, mainly through workshops and meetings, which in 2013 alone reached 955 people! Men’s Forum members this year also wrote and filmed a short video telling a story where a man stops himself from becoming violent with his wife after imagining how he would feel in her place. This film was part of their efforts toward the 2013 **White Ribbon Campaign** during the 16 Days of Activism Against Violence Against Women, the second such campaign held in Palestine. This worldwide campaign calls on men everywhere to pledge not to condone or commit acts of VAW. Sawa plans to continue to work with men and boys on gender-based violence and plans in the future to make the WRC a permanent annual event all over Palestine.



White Ribbon Campaign promotional items—a sign along a busy road in the city of Hebron, and a car air freshener.

A volunteer distributing WRC materials.

Sawa offers **specialty-developed training for professionals** who are frequently called upon to work with violence victims, such as people in the **legal, social work, health, education, and law enforcement** fields. These brief but intensive courses have allowed these professionals to augment their own knowledge with Sawa's expertise on gender-based, sexual, and domestic violence. In 2013, we held professional trainings for 2 male and 15 female staff from the Star Mountain Rehabilitation Center for people with disabilities, for 12 female employees at Al-Haya, a second course for 3 men and 17 women from Star Mountain, and a course for 12 men and 6 women, from the Jerusalem Centre for Legal Aid. With the help of an external expert on human trafficking and forced prostitution, Sawa also held a seminar for 13 professionals from different fields the day after our March conference.

Sawa also returned to **Iraqi Kurdistan** this year to provide further training to workers running a Helpline there. We consider **sharing our experience with other lines around the world** to be essential as we and the Call Center grow.



Media awareness-raising has always been significant for Sawa, as a way to reach a mass audience and present issues of violence in a concise and affecting way, while promoting use of the Helpline as a safe support resource. This year, as usual, **radio ads** were broadcast on four stations, **covering all of Palestine**. Sawa also continued to publish informative **brochures** on our newer services—such as web-based counseling and the face-to-face Counseling Center—and on topics related to rights, violence, and sex education. In 2013, **social media**, particularly the popular **Facebook**, has moved to the forefront as a cost-effective and easy way of getting our message to large numbers of people, especially youth.



Sawa’s Facebook page, www.facebook.com/SawaOrganization, with over 35,000 “likes” as of the end of 2013!

In the year 2013, Sawa’s innovative and distinctive activities drew much attention from media outlets, including radio, television, and print. Many asked us for interviews about our workshops, conferences, and campaigns. Likewise, media have asked for interviews on topic related to violence against women and children--nearly 200 interviews on different subjects. News about Sawa has appeared through local news agencies and on Facebook pages.

The **Annual Conference** is a long Sawa tradition and one of our largest and most important regular events. It is an **opportunity to raise awareness on emerging, unfamiliar, or under-discussed topics, including sensitive issues**.

2013 was unusual because **two conferences** were held, one in March and the other at the usual time, in December. This was due to the state of emergency we experienced starting in late 2012, during and after the attacks on Gaza. As we reoriented our attention and energy toward providing 24-hour psycho-social support to Gaza residents, Sawa felt we would be unable to devote the necessary effort and resources to organize a high-quality conference, and so postponed the event till early 2013.



Three panel speakers, from Lebanon, France, and Holland, discuss different aspects of human trafficking and slavery, including forced labor and forced prostitution in Europe and the Middle East.



Sawa's conference on modern-day slavery attracted strong speakers, high attendance, and intense debate.

In March we held our conference on the **global problem of modern-day slavery** in its various guises: people from developing countries tricked into **forced labour** or **prostitution** in wealthier nations; **exploitation** of children by criminal organizations or even their families; people, mainly women and children, forced by circumstances into selling sex in their own countries. A Swedish human rights activist spoke about the Swedish legal system, which punishes only those who purchase sex and force others into selling it, while prostitutes themselves face no penalties and may receive help. **Sawa presented our 2009 study** on the topic, reprinted for the conference. It reveals only a few cases, as **most sex workers in Palestine fear speaking out** because of cultural taboos, the threats of pimps and madams, and the possibility of legal trouble. Ensuing discussions were heated and highly emotional. Some audience members also expressed interest in learning more and continuing Sawa's investigative work.

The December conference addressed **suicide and related psycho-social, cultural, and health issues**. Presenters from Palestine, Germany, and other places discussed international demographics, the reasons people feel suicidal or attempt suicide (including experiences of violence, economic or relationship problems, and mental illness), cultural perspectives, and the means by which people attempt to end their lives. They also presented as more **positive side**--methods of treating suicidal patients and **returning them to a hopeful and healthy life**.



The last session of the conference presented an **academic analysis of Sawa's Call Center statistics from 2011-13**, by a Haifa University professor. **Statistics** have been collected throughout these years, and presented in brief **half-yearly fact sheets** sent to relevant organizations, giving a thumbnail picture of the issues faced by women, children and violence victims. The study gathered this information, and more, and subjected it to deeper examination. The support available through the Call Center—for victims of violence and for those experiencing psycho-social difficulties, including suicidal feelings--was emphasized during this session and throughout the event. The Call Center has a **special protocol developed to help suicidal callers** and keep them safe.



The program for Sawa's conference on suicide included discussion from global and local perspectives.

Capacity Building and Support for Staff and Volunteers

In 2013, Sawa began a **large capacity-building and information sharing project with two local partners in Nazareth, Masar Institute for Education and Duroob, and a partner in Germany, Anne Frank Jugendbegegnungsstätte.** The **“Educational Innovation Incubator”** focuses on **social justice, human rights, and experimental and alternative methods of learning and teaching.** As part of this project, members of Sawa's staff and partner organization staff are building their skills in education methods through a training-of trainers preparing them to lead a special conceptual and practical training course for young Arab education students and professionals. This course will begin in the coming year. Throughout the project, Sawa management meet regularly with managers from the partner organizations to share experiences and ideas and to discuss progress, change, and challenges. Participants will develop education materials for future use, and a specialist in **Action Research** documents the project as it unfolds, so that future educators may benefit.

As a part of our continuous efforts to build a **web-based counselling component** alongside phone counselling, Sawa prepared a **small training project** with two consultants from Sweden experienced in this difficult area. The training aimed to teach staff and volunteers the unique **skills relevant to chat-based counselling.**



Unlike other formats, such as e-mail, **chat counselling requires counsellors to work with clients through writing alone**, in real time. This takes great **concentration and sensitivity**, and a lot of careful preparation.

Several staff took a **photography course** given by a local studio, learning to use high-quality cameras to vividly record activities and events. This course was sponsored by Surgir, a long-time international partner who share with Sawa an interest in **presenting our work clearly and effectively** to outsiders, including local and international partners and friends. This becomes more important as Sawa steps up use of social and online media to spread the word about our efforts.

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Other **capacity building** trainings in which Sawa staff members took part included a training on Risk Management and Organizational Well-Being facilitated by partner Kvinna till Kvinna, an Oxfam GB training on recruitment for the Hebron Men's forum, another KtK-facilitated training in Amman on Social Media, and a Technology Camp with local cell phone company Jawwal and Palestinian Telecommunications, which focused on the use of technology in organizations and the international experience.

Some of the **external meetings which Sawa attended and benefitted from** included a meeting with the police Family Protection Units to discuss a procedural manual, a meeting with the Steering Committee for a safety program with the Women's Studies Centre, a discussion of secondary trauma we attended along with staff from the Jerusalem Rape Crisis Centre, and a planning meeting with the Ministry of Women's Affairs.

At Sawa, **psychological and physical health and a feeling of inclusion are also priorities**, as we understand that people cannot give their time and energy unless they feel well. To preserve staff and volunteer **well-being**, Sawa not only provides support through the Counselling Supervisor, but also holds weekly **staff meetings** to share ideas, organizes **recreation activities** like day trips to natural and cultural sites, films, birthday and holiday celebrations, and provides **exercise equipment** at the office.

Special Events

Sawa held Palestine's first celebration of the international **Day of the Girl**, using the slogan, "**Put Your Hand Up to Put Down Early Marriage**". The event, held in Jenin, focused on the **health effects of early marriage**, encouraging children to complete school and marry when they are ready. This is an **important message for all young Palestinians and their families**, as children of both sexes may be pressured to marry too young. However, it **mostly affects girls**--often pushed to marry much older men. Girls who marry young risk a variety of **health and psycho-social problems** from having sex and bearing children before their bodies are fully grown, and from the stress of too much responsibility too soon.



As a **prominent member of Child Helpline international**, Sawa is proud to celebrate **International Child Helpline Day** each year. This year, we held a large recreational event in Nablus, under the slogan "**Empowering Children and Youth**". The **upbeat celebration** of young people included clown shows and puppet plays by Sawa staff and volunteers, delivering the message that **children have rights**, including the right to **resist violence** and to benefit from the **support, respect, and guidance** of the adults around them. The day also included a musical performance by a local group.



Children and their families enjoy the show and the beautiful day in an outdoor stadium.



A local band mixes diverse styles and instruments, including drums, guitar, and violin, and both rock and rap.

To mark the **16 Days of Activism to End Violence Against Women**, Sawa planned an **unusual demonstration**. In 2013, **27 women and girls were murdered** by husbands or other family members, some of them so-called “honour-killings”, a situation disgusting to human rights organizations like Sawa. To commemorate the victims and **display our condemnation of this most extreme form of violence against women**, we gathered staff, volunteers, and others, both men and women, at **Baladna Cultural Centre** in the middle of Ramallah, dressed in white robes and masks, and painted our right palms blood-red. While local residents gathered around us, we performed random, **silent** movements to haunting music before standing in the shape of the Hindi number “**27**” (used in Arabic), then sitting for several minutes without moving or speaking. Behind us were hand-painted signs expressing opposition to gender-based murder.



Sawa staff, volunteers, and friends raise accusing red-painted palms and sit in a formation of the digits “27” in the numbering system commonly used in the Arab world.



Sawa Social Worker in white robe and mask. The costume obscures her individuality, just as the murder of a woman unjustly wipes out her identity, will, and potential.

Also in recognition of the 16 Days, Palestinian **performing arts organization Al-Hara Theatre** partnered with Sawa to plan several public **silent tableaux illustrating situations of violence and discrimination against women**. Actors and actresses from the theatre performed the scenes in common areas of **Bethlehem University**, allowing watching students to independently interpret what they were seeing, and providing an opening for thought and discussion among them.



Ready for the Future

Sawa has just finished creating a **new Strategic Plan for the coming three years**, which outlines how we can best **reach the largest possible number of people, share with colleagues around the world, and try out creative ideas**. A consultant from Bir Zeit University facilitated the Strategic Planning process and prepared the SP document, with feedback from Sawa. Key staff were interviewed and provided verbal and written suggestions, and all members of staff, along with a selection of volunteers, took part in an intensive day-long workshop.



Sawa staff and volunteers listen to the Strategic Planning consultant as she opens the workshop discussion.

In line with our interest in new technologies and media, Sawa has begun to look into **crowd-funding and internet based donation**. **New methods of funding and greater financial independence** are strategic priorities in the coming years.

As 2013 ended, the **Caller Information Database** was being **translated into English**, and it will soon be made available in Spanish and French. Sawa will **share this technology with other psycho-social support lines around the world**. Further languages will also be available in the future.

During early 2014, Sawa will undertake an **extensive renovation of our facilities, including expansion of the Call Centre** to allow for more work space—and therefore **more counsellors**. Though our number of documented cases has increased between 2010 and 2011, and again between 2011 and 2012, **Sawa is only able to answer around half of incoming calls**. Our number of documented cases in 2013 was quite close to 2012's numbers. Nearly 25,000 cases supported during each of those years is a significant achievement, but it is still not enough when the needs of many potential beneficiaries go unanswered. Expansion is a big step toward **increasing our capacity to suit demand**. We are also **exploring new ways to encourage volunteers, interns, and part-timers to help us support the most vulnerable Palestinians**.



**HAPPY 15TH BIRTHDAY,
SAWA!**



AND

THANKS TO OUR 2013 SUPPORTERS!

BREAD FOR THE WORLD

DROSOS

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

KVINNA TILL KVINNA

OPEN SOCIETY INSTITUTE

SAVE THE CHILDREN

SURGIR

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

OXFAM GREAT BRITAIN

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