

ANNUAL

REPORT

2017

SAWA ORGANIZATION



220.277

likes on facebook

18 New Volunteers



Monthly training of professionals

133 PROFESSIONALS

4597

Participated in workshops

3464 Women

896 Children

237 Men

7.061

documented calls received

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Use Smartphone

Vision

To become a change catalyst for a Palestinian society that combats all types of violence and abuse against women and children

Mission

Sawa is a leading Palestinian organization, established in 1998, dedicated to providing support, protection and psycho-social counseling for survivors of violence and offering community awareness outreach services. The priority is to combat all types of violence, abuse and neglect against women and children. It networks with community stakeholders to spread values of humanity and gender equality for the creation of a safer society and a decent life for all Palestinians.



Organizational Values

HUMANITY

We stand for respecting and preserving human rights and dignity for all members of our society

EQUALITY

We believe in diversity and work against discrimination in all of its kinds

CHANGE

We work on the creation of societal transformations for enhancing good citizenship and for breaking silence, passivity and surrender

TRUST

We treasure ethical conduct and highly value openness and transparency

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A message from the Founder



This year has been both successful and full of development for the future of Sawa. We were able to influence the lives of thousands of individuals from all area of Palestine to give the opportunity to many to express their feelings, whether at workshops, via the 121 Helpline, or at the Counseling Center. Through various campaigns on ending child marriage, Sawa reached 684,769 views on Facebook across different demographics in the Arab world.

Our year took off with a conference that drew in 180 individuals from the Palestinian society under the title “Generations Under the Influence of Pornography”. We sealed our year with a conference that drew in 150 individuals under the title “Social Media and Its Effects on Society”. Both conferences touched on topics relevant to the Palestinian society and can be considered taboo by some, which is important we shed light on these issues as to create a society that is more aware of the negativities and consequences to be careful as well.

This report will present the broad details of Sawa’s successes during the year, especially in continuing the provisions of our services after the donor chart priorities changed from donors to Palestine. We thank all of our partners, new and old, our supporters, and our employees and volunteers without whom 2017 would not have been a success.

With my greatest appreciation,

Ohaila Shomar

Sawa's Programs

Sawa's 121 listening Center Helpline is a toll free call center that operates through a professional, well trained team of social counselors to provide psycho-social, legal and health support for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and more.

The Educational and Social Awareness Program Sawa works to raise awareness toward the reduction of all types of violence and abuse against women and children, family education, and sex education. We do this through workshop, and awareness lectures for all sectors of societies, with numerous programs for professionals in addition to awareness campaigns, and periodic reports on the prevention of all forms of violence.

The Psycho-Social and Sexual and Reproductive Health Mobile Clinics the Clinics brings Sawa's services to distant and marginalized communities and areas adjacent to the apartheid wall from awareness raising workshops to home visits and provision of supplies for basic medicinal needs.

The 'Let's Talk!' Program bridges the gap of communication between parents and children in order to create dialog based on respect for human rights and children's rights. This program is also used as a model for parenthood.

The Face-to-Face Counseling Center is a specialized center providing psycho-social counseling for people all age groups to cope with different areas of life such as family, school, work, etc. This center is operated by a team specialized in social and psychological counseling and provides confidential private sessions.

The Volunteer Program is designed to attract university students and graduates who seek to develop their professional skills and capacities. They are trained as volunteers and contribute to conducting Sawa's programs. Training occurs over 110 hours, followed by 220 hours of voluntary work in the Listening Center and the Education and Social Awareness-Raising Program.



Accomplishments 2017

Listening Center *The volunteers and employees at our Listening Center have given their all to provide counseling and psychological support to anyone in the Palestinian community with the need for it.*

During 2017, they have handled 7,061 cases (this does not account the following-up cases, which would make the number much higher), from both females and males. Sawa has also worked to develop the Helpline which now has expanded to provide support through chat counseling, along with the safe and secure phone and e-mail counseling.

The documentation of Sexual Gender Based Violence (SGBV) has been improved in the specificity of marking what category the caller is seeking help or referral on. The categories are: abuse and violence, discrimination, family relationships, information request, legal matter, mental and psycho-social, peer relationships, physical health, school related matters, sexual matters and special needs.

This is important in documentation so when Sawa looks over the reports we can see what demographic areas are facing most problems with, and target those areas with workshops around the needs of that geographical location.

Counseling Center *For the fourth consecutive year of operation, the Counseling Center has offered treatment and 88 counseling sessions to 72 beneficiaries, 61 females, and 11 males. The trend in individuals coming to the counseling center were victims of violence and/or abuse.*

Sawa has also continued with another related component, the Women's Empowerment Program, which aims to strengthen and support women's capacities related to gender-based violence, and prepare them to share this experience with women in their own communities. In the first half of 2017, 50 women took part in the Women's Empowerment Groups (WEG), and in the second half there have been WEG's in East Jerusalem, in Al Thouri with 10 women and in Ras el Awood with 12 women. In 2017, there was a total of 72 female beneficiaries.



Education, Awareness and Training Sawa conducts workshops to strengthen and support the capacities of women on topics related to gender-based violence, and empower them to share their knowledge with other women in their areas. In addition, these meetings help them escape the psychological pressures they live under, and give them space to decompress and express themselves. During 2017, 3392 women took part in Sawa's Awareness Raising Workshops in different areas.

Beyond the Awareness Raising Workshops targeting women, Sawa held 34 workshops for men with a total of 237 participants and worked with 72 women participating in empowerment groups. The other component involves discussing case studies with professionals. In 2017, a 133 professionals from different sectors took part in Sawa's training. During the trainings, we were examining topics such as drugs and alcohol abuse, suicide, loss, and using role-playing of cases as part of learning how to address cases and provide individual counseling. We discussed bullying, aggression among children and mental health illness.

In the second half of 2017, we had monthly professional workshops with individuals from, among others, Ministry of Labor, Family Protection Unit (Police Unit), and Ministry of Women's Affairs.



We also introduced the various services available in local society to facilitate communication and networking. We followed up with the professionals and held recreational sessions to reduce the stress and pressure they experience in the course of their work

Professional Committee: The Professional Committee meets weekly throughout the entire year, in order to discuss general matters related to the Listening Center, and take decisions regarding interventions for the most difficult cases at the Center.

Children's workshop Using creative methods such as films and theater Sawa's awareness workshops in various areas, in schools and women's and community centers, in addition to other participatory, educational, and relaxation activities. We contributed greatly to educating children on the basic information about their rights, the different types of violence, sex education, internet bullying, AIDS and the 121 Listening Center. The play "Doso" is one of the most popular plays Sawa performs during workshops for children. It presents the issue of sexual harassment and emphasizes the importance of saying "No!" with strength and confidence when they feel uncomfortable with words or a touch or another act. The play also emphasized the need to share the problem with a trusted adult when one faces any problem. In addition, we let the children know they can call the 121 Helpline. During 2017, we held 19 child specific awareness raising sessions with a total of 896 children benefitting (644 girls and 252 boys).



Teacher's workshop Male and female teachers are an important part of our education program, wherein Sawa works with teachers to bolster their abilities to fulfill their roles, because we believe they are one of the most important parts of our children's lives. Through this program, we provide teachers with information and scientific methods to teach with information and scientific methods to teach about adolescence and the violence taking place during that period, and increases daily. For example, Sawa worked with a group of 7 male teachers in East Jerusalem in a boys school. The guidance helped teachers to better understand and contain teenagers they are working with on a daily basis with professional skills to deal with students in non-violent ways.

Volunteer Program Sawa places great importance on its volunteers, making them one of the most important areas of focus. This year we trained 10 male and female volunteers to contribute to the organization's various programs, whether providing psychological support over the Women's and Children's Protection Helpline 121, or conducting workshops through the Education Program. Beyond the 10 volunteers, Sawa also trained 5 college students studying Sociology in East Jerusalem for 20 hours focusing on how to lead workshops and implement the various topics necessary.



Training with AAUJ Students Sawa sought to raise awareness of targeted districts on SGBV and mechanisms for seeking support through community-service activities conducted by students from the Arab American University in Jenin. 32 students, both men and women, participated and went through training in a duration of 3 days before conducting the awareness raising session. In the beginning of the training the room was divided into 2-same sex groups and many held back their opinions but as the days went by, everyone felt more comfortable discussing the sexual matters and the collaborations with men and women had a very positive outcome. Conducting this training undermined the state of fact that sex and violence are taboo subjects and participants were shocked to hear the number of cases addressed by Sawa's Helpline. Sawa was told by the Counselor on the project not to "get in too deep" into "sexual" matters/terms, because it would confuse the students and might cause a problem for the University. But it was made clear by Sawa's staff that training discussions are based on scientific terms and knowledge: as we tackle sexual abuse, we have to spread awareness amongst the students on relevant terms and facts. Despite this, the participants showed a lot of interest in the topics and asked for more detailed questions during break time, stating that they were too embarrassed to ask out loud in front of the other participants. This illustrates how much students need scientific information about different topics related to sexual education.

Project in Area C focusing on legal issues/ Judge's Training In 2017, Sawa worked on a project in Area C, focusing on legal issues and organizing awareness-raising training for the Family Court Unit's (FCU) judges and judicial staff, to promote the adaption of a proper referral mechanism. Sawa identified 16 judges who attended a 21-hour training concentrating on gender equality, how to detect and address SGBV, how to refer cases appropriately, and how to use their social influence to limit violence in their community. Though Sawa faced challenges before and during the Judge's Training, many of the participants expressed after the training, they were happy to have gotten to know Sawa and its services. Many were shocked by the statistics Sawa presented, and all agreed that there was a need for more cooperation between the NGO and governmental sectors in this form of training. The judge's left the training with a set of new skills; they gained the ability to determine the cause of violence, and how to build legal cases for representing victims. Furthermore, they improved their abilities in talking and understanding the victims. The participants even recommended holding further training cycles for more judges after the trainings.

Project: Ending Child Marriage in Palestine In 2017 Sawa held various campaigns on ending early child marriage. Campaigns on Facebook were made, as well as informative brochures, to attract both children and adults, though the main target were the women attending our Mobile Clinic workshops. Mothers, grandmothers, aunts - older ladies that have some decision making power. We want to focus on older women as they are the influencers, tend to be more aware and would understand the medical and psychological repercussion much better than a child. We want

these women to become advocates for young girls. The campaign on ending early reached 684.769 views on Facebook.

The brochures handed out contained information regarding: statistics on early child marriage in Palestine, the risks of child marriage on the mental health symptoms of girls, the risk of child marriage on the physical health of girls, and tips/help on what one can do, to prevent early child marriage.

Sadly, it is necessary with brochures like this, since currently in Palestine:

- There are 21.609 Early Marriage Cases registered as of 2015¹
- In 2015, 43% of the marriages that were registered, were early marriages²
- According to a UNICEF study in 2016, 15% of girls in Palestine are married by the age of 18.
- 758 brides were 14 years old or younger in 2015.³

Furthermore, teenage wives and mothers face high levels of stress that can lead to mental health concerns, as well as higher risks on suffering on a physical health level.

And that is why it is very important to address this problem, and work towards ending early child marriage. At the end of the brochure, tips on how you can help someone, who is being pressured into an unwanted marriage were described. Also a reminder, that if you know someone being pressured, or you have any other concerns, you should contact Sawa Organization at the Toll Free Helpline 121.



¹ Palestinian Census Bureau of Statistics, Registered Marriages Cases in Palestine by Age of Groom and Bride – 2015.

Published 2015

Retrieved May 2018

² Ibid

³ Ibid

Professional Training Among Sawa's goals is to increase the awareness and skills to work with victims of violence among the sectors of society most likely to interact with them professionally as part of their various areas of expertise. We are also endeavoring to strengthen the partnerships among organizations in Palestinian society, to make our work with victims of violence proceed more smoothly. This year, we held profession training courses involving 86 professionals representing different organizations, (institutions included the Family Protection Unit (police unit), UNRWA, Future School and Ministry of Women's Affairs etc.). These trainings addressed how to attend victims in a rights-based, age-appropriate, gender-sensitive, empowerment oriented and survivor-centered manner.



Sawa in the Media Sawa enjoys an important position in society with regard to media outlets, as an organization specialized in topics relate to violence and active in this work. It has a large influence on the lives of many in our society, and, thus, the media has shed light on many of the organization's activities. Sawa works to spread awareness through various available methods, especially on social media such as Facebook. We discuss topics and news related to Palestinian society, and the overall concern of violence against women and children. During 2017, the number of "likes" on Sawa's Facebook page reached 220,277, with 219,268 people following the page.

Sawa participated in interviews on the radio and on television. Interviews on the radio were included on 24-FM, as well as Nisaa-FM with a 10 minutes a day, 5 days a week inclusion in a radio talk show to speak out about Sawa and our various activities. In talk shows, Sawa participated in various interviews, of which include: BBC, Palestinian National TV, Falasteeniya, TV Al Quds Al Terbawi, and TV Al Quds. Sawa is interested in reaching as wide a swathe of society as possible, to spread our message of combating violence against violence against women and children in Palestinian Society, and educating them about their rights. In particular, we mention the Palestinian Women's and Children's Protection Helpline 121, which gives preliminary psychological counseling and support to violence victims. The organization is eager to keep aware of developments in new communications technologies in order to reach its goals.



Development and Guidance for Professionals Sawa's employees and volunteers from all programs take part in individual and group psychological support sessions, and receive professional support. This is provided by the Counseling Supervisor each week, and meetings are held on a more intensive basis during times of emergency.



Annual Conferences Sawa held two conferences in 2017. The first was held in March 2017, with 180 people attending. The conference was titled "Generations Under the influence of Pornography", tackling an issue considered to be a social taboo but important to shed light on as people need to understand not only the physical effects but also the psycho-social effects of pornography.

The second conference was held in December 2017, with 150 people in attendance. The conference was titled "Social Media and its Effects on Society" tackling the different factions that use social media and the various effects it has on the different factions of society. There were nine prominent speakers from various fields in Palestine. The topics covered included:

1. Effects of social media on relationships within the family
2. The time span children spend on social media and the sites they visit and its effects on their mental, behavioral and focal development
3. The neuro-physical effects of social media on children
4. Safety on social media
5. The effects of social media on the thinking process of children
6. The role of social media in the intellectual polarization of adolescents
7. Electronic crimes



Future Plans Sawa will work during the next years on continuously combating various forms and levels of violence practiced against women and children and any other marginalized groups in Palestinian society and to raise issues of violence, abuse and neglect as public issues. We also hope spread our provision of psycho-social counseling via the 121 Helpline to international scopes to help even refugees and women to be empowered.

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