

Sawa "All women together today and tomorrow"



# Reality and Challenges

September 2011



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Palestinian Child Helpline 121

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### I. Introduction

This analysis constitutes part of Sawa's effort to develop its performance and learning from its own experience. It includes analysis of the performance in the Palestinian Child Helpline "121" operated by Sawa. The analysis focuses on three aspects: 1) analytical documentation of the Helpline's history in terms of its scope of work and activity progress; 2) analysis of the data documented by the organization on cases contacting the line to request support and assistance. The data was analyzed according to the socio-demographic background of users together with their reasons for using the Helpline, with some examples; 3) the key challenges in operating the Helpline with findings and recommendations.

### II. Why is this report important?:

The counseling phone line, in the Palestinian context, is an important tool to empower the public to express their complaints, feelings and grievances. It is an opportunity to access counseling in a context lacking sufficient options for obtaining psychotherapy, where significant stigma is associated, in the mindset of the community, with referral or access to this type of therapy. Moreover, access to psychological clinics is not equally available to all citizens and, most importantly, it is not affordable by all.

The counseling line gives callers a feeling of security and enables them express themselves comfortably by providing them with utmost privacy. It also saves them time, effort and money since the calls are free of charge from any location and at any time during Helpline hours.

In the Palestinian context, telecommunication media are available to most residents: indeed statistics from the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) report that 54.3% of the overall population of the Palestinian Territory have cellular phones or at least one member of 92.4% of Palestinian households have cellular phones. Moreover, 47.5% of Palestinian families have a fixed land line. Consequently, the service is accessible to the majority of inhabitants as a result of the widespread fixed or cellular phone services.

### III. Report objective:

The report aims mainly to:

- Examine the use and effectiveness of Helpline (121) operated by Sawa in the Palestinian Territory by highlighting and analyzing its management and operation.
- Provide analysis of qualitative and quantitative raw data about callers, as documented by the Organization team, using several variables.
- Provide analysis – based recommendations to the Organization to understand and address the challenges facing its team.

### IV. Methodology

The analysis adopted the following methodology:

- Review of different pertinent literature and documentation, including reference material on the goals of Helplines and their relevance to Sawa's programs and projects and the Help line's operating methods; review of staff qualifications, in addition to assessment of the effectiveness of the guarantee of confidentiality.
- Processing and review of available raw data to identify significance categories that can be used in the analysis to examine the callers' reasons for calling, their age, gender, matrimonial status, calling area and district (governorate). It should be noted that core data is available on the SQL Server and that it was interpreted using SPSS. It is important to note that a margin of error may appear in the data after processing using the new system, and that the difference ratio will be adjusted for 1%.

- Individual interviews: a number of meetings were organized with the Organization's team (General Director and Helpline Program Manager). Meetings were also organized with the database technical manager in addition to other meetings with the volunteers and call center workers and with the Therapy and Counseling Officer in the Organization.
- Focus Groups: focus groups and discussions were held with the volunteers and the staff operating the Helpline.

## V. General Framework and background information on the Palestinian Child Helpline (121)

### 1- Use of the Helpline in the Palestinian context:

The Palestinian Territory is in a state of permanent instability as a result of the protracted Israeli occupation, which has lasted over 60 years. This prolonged period under occupation affects every political, economic, social, cultural and psychological aspects of people's lives. Data shows that the Second Intifada events caused the redeployment of the occupation army in urban centers. War against Gaza is ongoing. These factors escalate trauma and cases of depression of all degrees. This situation has made many Palestinian organizations take psychological counseling initiatives in order to help the people in different regions overcome these crises. With the severe restrictions on mobility, undermining the local population's ability to access the centers providing psychological services, the need has emerged for emergency and counseling lines or other types of hotlines to help families and individual victims of all forms of violence. Sawa established its Palestinian Child Helpline Program (121) to empower citizens of all segments to communicate and receive information that would help him better address their reality. Phone line counseling is available in most countries; such lines are sought by people without access to any other support service in their immediate environment. Benefiting from scientific advancement and new means of communication such as satellite, cellular phone and Internet, many services have become available to citizens around the world to help them handle the pressures in their lives.

### 2- Goals of the Program (Helpline)

The free call center at 121 is a counseling service provided via phone line. It has the advantage of making callers (users) feel control of the call, as they can initiate the call at the time most suitable to them. This is because the service is provided seven days a week for sixteen hours a day. Talking over the phone is also more psychologically comfortable, as the caller gets to choose the appropriate place and time to make the call.

### 3- Confidentiality

Safeguarding the confidentiality of callers' personal information is a top priority. The program ensures secrecy of information by many means, including:

- Integrating practices for preserving confidentiality in the training provided to the workers and operators of the Helpline because secrecy is a key to building trust and ensuring credibility in addition to being a guarantee of safety of callers and counselors.
- All trained counselors are obligated to sign an oath of confidentiality prior to commencement of receiving any calls. This is a legal binding to ensure respect for the secrecy of any information from Helpline users.
- **Callers are guaranteed the right to hide their names or any other identifying information; they are free to choose the personal information they wish to communicate to their respondents.**
- Sawa always ensures that all servers are not connected to any external storage unit or any other means of communication or to the Internet, so that any transfer of data or information outside the support Helpline circuit is blocked.

#### 4- Helpline 121 construction methodology

The Palestinian Child Helpline Program 121 was established in 2004 to provide assistance, care and counseling to children and young people who are victims of any form of violence, abuse or neglect. The Helpline is operated by a qualified and trained staff with sufficient aptitude in providing phone counseling using the communication technology to serve the needs of the largest number of callers possible.

Helpline 121 is part of an international network of child support phone lines service covering 140 countries.

In 2006, with the free line provided by Paltel, preparations began for a training course for volunteers for the new service. It should be noted here that Sawa had already accumulated long experience in operating Helplines through its women's Helpline established in 1998. Though the Organization makes relentless effort to secure funding to operate these lines, Sawa also obtained some of the basic needs to launch the service, including furniture and equipment, in addition to space in a staff member's office. Work began with a group of male and female volunteers who were provided with the necessary training to operate the service. Sawa's team considers that the actual beginning of operation of the line occurred in 2007, with the manual documentation of the incoming calls on a monthly basis.

The idea of this line was triggered through three main pillars:

1. Calls made by children to the women's support line attracting our team's attention to the need to dedicate a special line to children's calls.
2. Awareness programs in schools including workshops on violence and rights of children whose outcome revealed the need for a Helpline as shown through discussions with children, teachers and specialists.
3. Consultation with CHI (Child Helpline International).

#### 5- Helpline Milestones: War on Gaza

The war on Gaza constituted a milestone in the Helpline's life. Following dialogues, meetings, and coordination efforts with local and international organizations on the impacts of the war on the population of Gaza, it was shown that different organizations were mostly incapable of providing services to citizens. It is under such conditions that the idea emerged to expand the Palestinian Child Helpline, which had been in service 8 hours a day for five days a week before the war on Gaza. After the war erupted, the Helpline expanded to operate 24 hours a day and seven days a week, providing a total of 168 hours of support a week, thus increasing its productivity by 128 hours a week.

A number of administrative and logistics arrangements ensured this effort, including initiatives by our volunteers to increase their daily service hours from three to five. Some of our staff also doubled their working hours to respond to the needs of callers from the Gaza Strip and provide support to needy persons in exceptional emergency situations.

The Helpline still faced challenges addressing such a quantity of calls; therefore, the center was provided with two additional lines. Moreover, due to cooperation with Jawwal, callers became able to call the Helpline for free through their cellular phones. This doubled the number of callers, but made it difficult to document all calls.

Institution's pillars for development of the Helpline and better outreach:

- Human resources capacity building
- Use of cutting-edge information and communications technology in the social services sector
- Use of social communication tools via the Internet to access targeted groups of women and children
- Dealing with issues usually treated privately and considered taboo in the local community, such as abuse, rape within the family, and trafficking of women.
- Establishing and developing the new Mobile Clinic program to provide psychosocial support and counseling in remote areas. This new tool is complementary to the Helpline, allowing Sawa to reach marginalized populations and raise their awareness of the Helpline. Sawa may also use the Mobile Clinic services to fulfill special needs in certain areas, demonstrated by the calls received from these places.

#### 6- Assessment of the post-Gaza War phase:

After the war on Gaza, the need to serve a large number of callers and document them properly emerged. Sawa began planning to use IP Software connected to a database program to facilitate documentation of incoming calls. On 24 August 2009 Sawa connected the phones to an IP switch

linked to a database that is tailored to the needs and working conditions in the institution.

Before 24 August 2009, documentation was done manually on a monthly basis, documenting around 256 – 350 calls a month. But with the new, internally connected database and system, it became possible to document 900 – 1200 calls a month.

The operation capacity now included three lines, which turned out to be insufficient to fulfill all callers' needs. A noticeable increase in demand for the service, with many callers waiting for long periods before being attended, incited Sawa to upgrade its operational capacity. A PRI system was introduced in early 2011. The PRI is a single phone line that can simultaneously serve 30 open calls. Callers can now more easily access the service. The new system has made it possible to document around 1600 cases a month. At the same time, a special call center system was introduced to allow staff members work on a part-time basis for a maximum of 25 hours a week.

## 7- Training and volunteer work

Training and volunteer work are obviously connected, as all volunteers must receive training. 120 volunteers have received training since 2007. The total training hours have been increased since then from 80 to 110 hours for different phases, in addition to the individual and group counseling provided by staff members through the line on ongoing basis. We accommodate 12 -15 participants in the trainings, which are provided on semi-annual basis. The training center is quasi-independent. It is promoted as **the link in the chain**, as the training experience connects theoretical knowledge to practical experience and the needs of the labor market.

## 8- Provision of psychological support and counseling through the Helpline (121):

Every staff member who receives a call is assigned to follow up with the caller each time he/she addresses the call center. For difficult or unusual cases, staff document and record the call to discuss with the supervisor. If such a case requires counseling, it may be followed up for about six months. In the event the caller needs therapy, he or she is transferred to a specialized clinic or institution through the referral database. This further therapeutic follow-up is initiated only upon request from caller.

When the caller feels secure about calling, this can be observed through important indicators, including recurrent calls. He/she is then aware that somebody is listening and that he/she has the opportunity to access safe shelters if needed. He/she is also aware that the decision lies only in his/her hands and that he/she can improve his/her situation by establishing professional relations with the counselor. They think together, but the counselor does not impose any ideas or direct solutions on the caller.

### A volunteer's story:

I started my volunteer work in 2007;  
During this experience I acquired new skills:

- It was my first experience in some parts in Jerusalem (and now I do field work in the West Bank). I visited areas I was not aware of before
- Meeting and getting to know others who are different.
- Learning to be neutral and objective in handling opinions different from mine. I consider this as a success story. In fact, before volunteering in Sawa, I was always on the offensive in arguments that touched values that mattered to me in life. But when I started the workshops in schools and volunteer work on the line, I heard many incorrect stereotypes and opinions totally opposite from my own. This professionally-gained skilled affected also my personal communications. When I get into any argument now, I know how to listen first and last. I could have not developed this skill before. Now I am also able to give a more objective response.
- It is moreover a comforting feeling to be able to help a person in distress and to receive feedback on the changes taking place in the life of the person you are serving on the Helpline.
- I also grew more aware and open in addressing issues of sexual education in my professional and personal life.
- I learned a lot of theories I did not know about, through this training in psychology and social services. I started to gain new skills and information during each field visit with the trainer, and in the individual and group debriefing sessions. I also developed communication skills through interaction with my peers in the call center.

The caller understands that the counselor cannot always be there, and that he/she will need to make a decision that fits with his/her conditions. The caller must understand the limitations of the service and commit to purely professional relations.

No contacts are initiated with the case by the work or counseling team under any circumstances. The institution only receives calls at the time and place chosen by the caller in question.

Counseling through the Helpline is an all-in process; every step is interwoven with the previous and subsequent steps. Every step is important. Counselors must follow up on any call received from the beginning and later on. In the absence of response by the caller, the caller is granted sufficient time to feel motivated and capable of speaking.

Solutions on the counseling line (Helpline):  
The principle is that no solutions are provided. It is the responsibility of the caller to decide how to regain control of his/her own life; it is important to make him/her feel that it is a decision he/she will have to make him/her self.

Award from the Arab Gulf Fund, for Pioneering Human Development Projects

Sawa --All the Women Together, Today and Tomorrow was awarded a prize by the Arab Gulf Fund International Award for Pioneering in Human Development Projects for use of information and communication technologies to develop remote and rural communities (in particular, using the Helpline to provide counseling services in Gaza during the war).

## Part Two: Analysis of Caller Data

### I- Characteristics and limitations of the caller sample

The number of callers using the line, according to the data recorded, reached 20,977 callers from the West Bank and Gaza Strip in early 2009. Until mid 2011, most callers did not reveal any information on their socio-demographic characteristics; this is not surprising since they were using the Helpline with the intention of preserving high confidentiality. Callers were granted total freedom to provide the information they wished to communicate. The analysis shows clearly (in annexed tables) that some socio-demographic data is not available for some callers. It should be noted that only available data has been analyzed. The size of the calling sample is large and the percentage of non-disclosers will be indicated where necessary. It should be also noted that some calls were by proxy, and that the characteristics of the callers by proxy were identified.

#### 1- Calls recorded over the years

Starting early 2009 until mid 2011, 20,977 calls were documented addressing concerns of individuals ranging in age from under a year to 80 years. Annual distribution of calls has been as follows: 7,143 calls documented in 2009, representing 34.4% of the calls addressed; 9,636 calls in 2010, with a noticeable increase (46.4%); calls addressed as of June 2011 have reached 19.3% (4000 calls). Data is displayed in Table (1) below:

Table (1): Number and percentage distribution of calls according to calling year		
Calling year	Number of received calls	Percentage
2009	7,134	34.4
2010	9,636	46.4
End June 2011	4000	19.3
Total	20779	100.0

29,681 calls were received during this two and a half year period. 84.3% were one-time callers. 14% made two – five calls. The other callers (1.7%) made over 5 calls. As stated earlier, the counseling is provided through the line when cases choose to follow up with the counseling team, and they may do so for six months, or sometimes longer. Over 42,000 cases were reported by callers seeking counseling and support.

#### 2- Distribution of callers according to gender

Caller gender was documented for 92.2% of callers (or gender of the caller 'by proxy'); data showed that most calls were made by female persons (40.3% male callers, in comparison to 51.9% female callers). This can be explained by the fact that the Helpline provides a secure and confidential resource for women and young women to express their problems. Women also call to talk about problems relating to their children. The line offers them a rare opportunity to express these concerns, as they have limited access to other resources. See Table (2) below:

#### Attempts to call the Helpline

Close rates of attempts to call the Helpline 121 are checked every month; they can be classified as follows:

In September 2009, 58,658 attempts to call the Helpline were recorded. The counseling team answered 24,403 incoming calls (regardless of the type of call, as some calls came through Jawwal, PalTel, ambulances or emergency services). The work team could not respond to 17,824 of these attempts. Calls were reported as un answered. No-one was available as all lines were busy. 16,432 calls were from numbers blacklisted because callers used violent or improper terms against the work team taking the call. Counseling service was provided to 1,183 individual callers in total.

**Table (2): number and percentage distribution of callers according to gender**

Caller gender	Number	Percentage	Percentage of total
Male	8371	40.3	43.7
Female	10778	51.9	56.3
Total	19149	92.2	100.0
Undefined	1630	7.8	
Grand total	20779	100.0	

### 3- Age

24.6% of callers did not reveal their age; the majority of disclosers of age were children or young persons, 25.6% of whom aged between 15 – 18 years whereas 18.9% aged from 19-24 years. See details in Table (3).

Children and adolescents face problems pertaining to their educational, sexual, psychological and emotional life that they find difficult to communicate to their parents, school teachers or counselors for lack of confidence and openness. It is not surprising to find most callers are young people. Some

problems relating to children and adolescents were reported through their parents using the Helpline.

**Table (3): number and percentage distribution of callers according to age**

Caller's age	Number	Percentage	Actual percentage
0-5	1378	6.6	8.8
6-9	710	3.4	4.5
10-14	2177	10.5	13.9
15-18	5319	25.6	34.0
19-24	3923	18.9	25.1
25-35	1656	8.0	10.6
36-45	362	1.7	2.3
46-55	95	.5	.6
56+	38	.2	.2
Total	15658	75.4	100.0
Undefined	5121	24.6	
Grand total	20779	100.0	

### 4- Calling area/ district

The calls from the Gaza Strip noticeably outnumber the calls from the West Bank and represent 60.5% of the total number of callers revealing their calling area, in comparison to 39.5% from the West Bank. A radical shift occurred during the War on Gaza, with many calls received during this period. This explains the calls from Gaza outnumbering those from the West Bank.

Table (4): number and percentage distribution of callers according to area/district			
Area/district	Number	Percentage	Actual percentage/ percentage of total
West Bank	6359	30.7	39.5
Gaza Strip	9787	47.1	60.5
Total	16176	77.8	100.0
Undefined	4603	22.2	
Grand total	20779	100.0	

Hebron was governorate in the West Bank with the plurality of calls, representing 10.1%. Ramallah ranked next with a percentage of 5% of calls, while Jenin came third with 4.7%. For the Gaza Strip, the Gaza City ranked highest with 20.1%, followed by Rafah with 7% and Khanyounes with 6.4%. 33.5% of callers did not disclose the district they live in.

### 5- Place of residence and call

Most callers did not reveal their place of residence (59%), while 41% revealed their place of residence, most of whom live in Palestinian cities (30.9%). 5.2% dwell in rural areas and 2.5% live in camps. The other callers, representing 2.4%, live in suburbs close to cities (urban suburbs).

This issue attracted the Organization's attention prior to commencing work on this report. It therefore launched the Mobile Clinic component to target remote and marginalized area through two types of activities: an awareness-raising program and a program to introduce the services provided through the Helpline. Observations made by the Helpline counseling team showed clearly that calls have begun to come from the marginalized areas served by the Mobile Clinic.

Table (5): number and percentage distribution of calls according to place of residence			
Place of residence	Number	Percentage	Actual percentage/ percentage of total
City	6420	30.9	75.4
Village	1077	5.2	12.7
Camp	515	2.5	6.1
Suburbs	500	2.4	5.9
Total	8512	41.0	100.0
Undefined	12267	59.0	
Grand total	20779	100.0	

### 6- Relationship with the labor market

64.3% of callers did not reveal their relationship to the labor market, while 35.7% did report on this. Most of disclosers were students (23.5%) including 1% university students. 5.9% were housewives. 6.4% were in the labor market (with 2.4% of those reporting that they are currently unemployed).

**Table (6): number and percentage distribution of callers according to their relationship with the labor market**

Professional status	Number	Percentage	Actual percentage
School students	4669	22.5	62.9
Workers (employed)	822	4.0	11.1
Housewives (women heads of households)	1234	5.9	16.6
University students	204	1.0	2.8
Unemployed	489	2.4	6.6
Total	7418	35.7	100.0
Undefined	13361	64.3	
Grand total	20779	100.0	

**7- Callers according to social (matrimonial) status**

Non-disclosers of social/matrimonial status made up 67.7% of callers. 32.3% did report on their social/matrimonial status, most of whom have not been married before (23.9%), while 6.9% reported being married and 1% engaged.

**Table (7): number and percentage distribution of callers according to social status**

Social status	Number	Percentage	Actual percentage
Single	4,972	23.9	74.0
Married	1,442	6.9	21.5
Divorced	108	.5	1.6
Widow (er)	17	.1	.3
Engaged	174	.8	2.6
Total	6720	32.3	100.0
Undefined	14,059	67.7	
Grand total	20,779	100.0	

**8- Callers according to economic situation**

Only 11.5% reported on their economic situation. Most disclosers reported middle to low income.

**Table (8): number and percentage distribution of callers according to economic status**

Economic status	Number	Percentage	Actual percentage
High	99	.5	4.1
Middle	1613	7.8	67.5
Low	525	2.5	22.0
Poor	153	.7	6.4
Total	2390	11.5	100.0
Undefined	18389	88.5	
Grand total	20779	100.0	

## 9- How callers learned about the Helpline

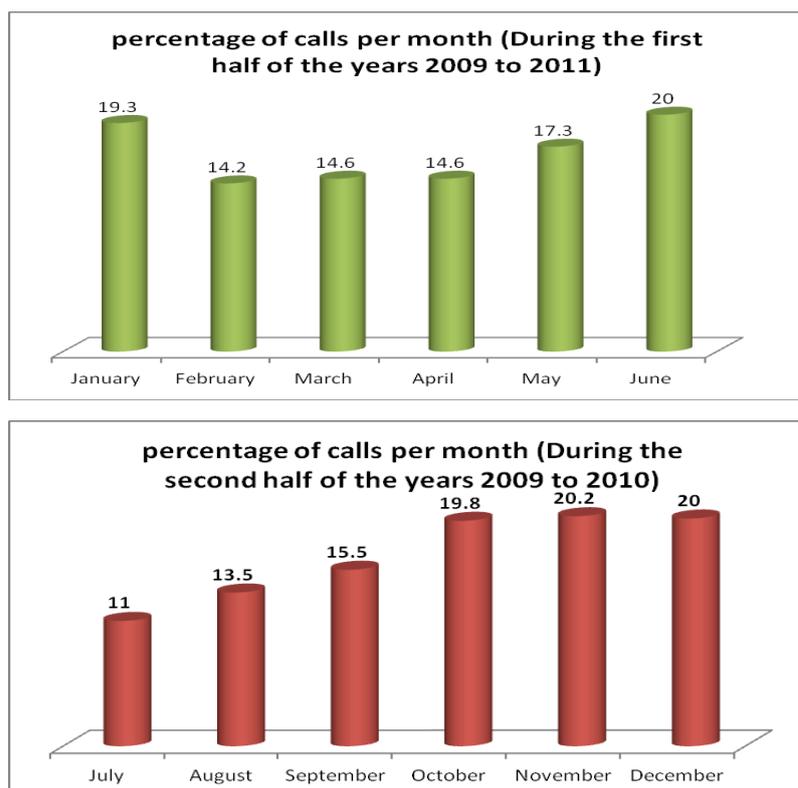
40.3% of callers reported on how they heard of the Helpline, with 29.5% reporting having heard about the line through their friends, while 7.2% heard of the line through media, mainly radio (6%). 3% reported having learned about it by chance and 59.7% did not reveal the source of information. It should be noted here that the high percentage of callers using the line after learning about it from friends shows a high level of satisfaction among beneficiaries of the services.

Table (9): number and percentage distribution of callers according to source of information about the Helpline			
Source	Number	Percentage	Actual percentage
Newspapers	102	.5	1.2
Radio	1251	6.0	14.9
TV	154	.7	1.8
School	30	.2	.3
Institutions	69	.3	.8
Friends	6122	29.5	73.1
Published leaflets	26	.1	.3
By accident	618	3.0	7.4
Total	8372	40.3	100.0
Undefined	12407	59.7	
Grand total	20779	100.0	

## 10- Calls by season

Data shows that calls increase during certain seasons. January, June, October, November and December are the busiest months, with 19.3 – 20.2% of calls. Calls in May represented 17.3%. the lowest number of calls was in July, with 11%, while the remaining months ranged between 13.5% - 15.5%.

**Figure (1): percentage of calls per month**



## II. Reasons for calling

### 1- Classification of calls

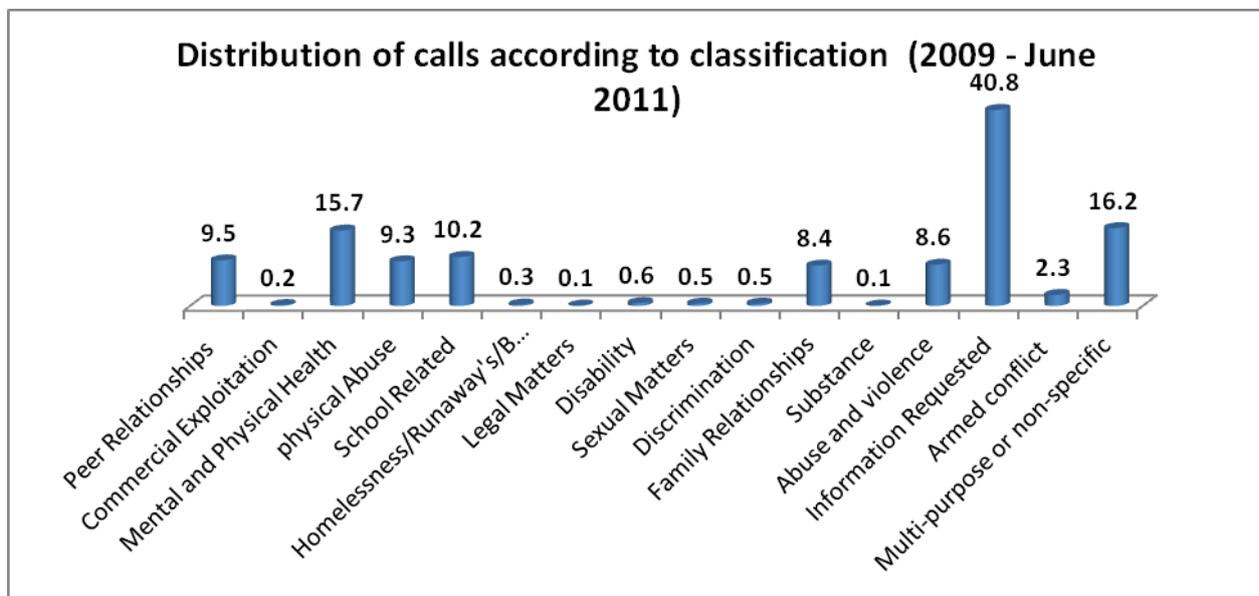
The reasons for calling are varied. Calls were classified into 15 main categories, with sub-classification to show the nature and details of every case, as shown in Table (10) here-below. The Organization applied CHI classifications in addition to a review of different classifications used by other international organizations including UNICEF, UNEFEM, Save the Children and others.

Table (10): calling criteria used in classification of data input	
Main indicator	Detailed elements
Peers relations	Problems with friends, problems with partners, emotional problems
Economic abuse	Child labor, sexual exploitation, abuse of runaways, exploitation of children in domestic labor, prostitution, kidnapping, child exploitation in criminal activity.
Mental and psychosocial health	Boredom, depression, blackmail (by threatening to reveal secrets), loss of appetite, anxiety, fear, identity, purpose of life, low self-confidence, loneliness, phobia, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD), bed-wetting, threats of murder, control, economic deprivation, suicidal thoughts, nightmares
Physical health	Questions about illnesses, admission to hospitals, access to medical care and advice
School-related issues	Academic problems; problems with teachers; dropping out; anxiety about performance; school work; homework; problems related to relation with adults
Abandoned children, runaways, and basic needs	Abandoned children needing food; street children; children without shelter; those seeking safehouses for children; orphans; children returned to their families; resources; financial assistance; runaway children
Legal matters	Advice and information; child marriage; child witnesses; legal representation of children in disputes; laws contradicting children's rights principles; request for accompaniment to courts, police departments and health services
Handicapped persons	Mental, physical or motor disability
Sexual matters	Masturbation; contraceptives; information on sex and the facts of life, sexual fantasies; sexual identity; sexually transmitted diseases; facts about the hymen
Discrimination	On the basis of ethnicity, gender, family, religion, political affiliation and place of birth (residence)
Family relations	Divorced or separated parents; alimony conflict; child support, parental relations; relations with relatives; child custody and visits; blended families; using children as a means of threat/manipulation; loss of parents; parents with addictions or mental and psychological problems
Drugs	Addiction, information on narcotics
Abuse and violence	Bullying; emotional abuse; negligence; physical abuse; sexual harassment; witness to violence or rape attempt; violence; gang violence; rape within the family; sexual harassment within the family; indecent assault; reporting on domestic violence.
Requesting information	Professional people calling for information on the line and to express their desire to volunteer; how to deal with children; thanking for assistance
Occupation	Unexploded phosphorus thermal bombs; witness to violence; intimidation; displacement; injuries; permanent anxiety as a result of violence; imprisonment; forced detention; children in armed conflict

## 2- Key categories

Most calls came under 6 main categories: peer relations; mental and psychosocial health; physical health; school-related issues; family relations; abuse and violence. These will be addressed in more detail and depth in the analysis. It should be noted that two major categories were excluded: the first is calls to request information (about 41%) and the second includes the 16.2% of calls for unidentified or unspecified reasons.

**Figure (2): distribution of calls according to classification**



## III. Data analysis on reasons for calls

While reading the following results and the previous figure, we should take into account that percentages are above 100% because the analysis was done per section; there are 20,779 callers in comparison to over 29000 calls; the percentages reaching 120% stems from this variance. Some callers called several times or requested support and counseling for services classified under several headings. Over 42 reasons for calls were documented, including requests by the same caller for support on several issues. The analysis on the reasons for calling will be classified under four parameters: 1) common categories of call type; 2) the occupation and its practices relating to the war on Gaza; 3) other categories of requested support; and 4) general and undefined call types.

### Parameter I: key categories

#### 1- Peer relations

The Helpline received 1964 callers requesting help on peer relations, representing 9.5% of all callers. In terms of gender, the service was requested for this reason by 73.7% female callers and 26.1% male callers. As for the age group, the majority of callers were aged between 15-24 years, constituting 80% of the callers.

In viewing the most important problems faced by callers regarding peers relations, data shows that most problems related to emotional issues as (1,250 male and female callers) reported this was their main problem. 76.6% of this group were female while 23.4% of callers were male. Other calls were related to problems with friends, with 426 callers, 63.1% female and 36.9% male, and problems with partners were reported by 355 callers, 76.6% female and 20.6% male).

See details in the Table (11) below:

Table (11): number and percentage distribution of callers regarding peers relation					
Issues related to peers relations	Female percentage	Number of female	Male percentage	Number of male callers	Total number
Problems with friends	63.1%	269	36.9%	157	426
Problems with partners	79.4%	282	20.6%	73	355
Emotional problems	76.6%	958	23.4%	292	1250

Calls about emotional problems often resulted from other problems. For example, in the beginning the conversation would be about the emotional relationship. But during the talk, it would appear that the caller is suffering sexual exploitation or harassment without realizing the abuse. Her partner (the young man) may have convinced her that what he was asking of her is a natural thing that happens in any love relationship, and that if she does not respond to him, this means she does not love him. He can thus exploit her emotional attachment to him to blackmail her. If she does not do as he wishes, he threatens to dump her, and says that there are many other girls who will do what he is asking. The conversation between them may start with sexual insinuation on the phone or via the Internet. He might masturbate and ask her to masturbate on the phone with him. He may even have attempted to attack her.

Regarding relationships with partners and friends, problems usually relate to divulging secrets or personal differences in the relationship with partners and friends. This may lead to pressures the caller cannot cope with alone.

### Stories:

A female caller was being sexually abused by her friend's husband, and by her brother's friend. She was sexually abused for over three years, subjected to maltreatment and verbal, physical and sexual violence, exposed to severe danger and continually blackmailed during his (the brother's friend's) visits to her family's residence. She did not submit to his demands and he threatened to make a scandal for her. The counseling team helped her restore balance in her life and be empowered, giving her hope for the future.

## 2. Psychosocial health

The Helpline received 3257 calls related to psychosocial health, which represented 15.7% of the callers. They were 40.2% male and 59.8% female. Most callers were aged between 10 and 35 years; this age group represented 78% of the callers for this reason.

The most important categories for psychosocial health were anxiety and phobia, reported by 1844 callers (63% female and 37% male). 437 callers were suffering from boredom (53.3% female and 46.7% male). The next in order were callers about bed-wetting (388 callers), while the remaining calls were distributed as presented in the following Table (12).

Table (12): number and percentage distribution of callers on psychosocial issues					
Cases	Female		Male		Total number
	Female percentage	Female number	Male percentage	Male number	
Boredom	53.3%	233	46.7%	204	437
Depression	60.2%	189	39.8%	125	314
Threats	82.2%	37	17.8%	8	45
Divulging secrets	90.0%	9	10.0%	1	10
Loss of appetite	56.4%	22	43.6%	17	39
Anxiety and fear (phobia)	63.0%	1161	37.0%	683	1844
Identity and purpose of life	52.8%	38	47.2%	34	72
Low self-confidence	64.5%	187	35.5%	103	290
Loneliness	62.0%	160	38.0%	98	258

Phobia and OCD	57.1%	40	42.9%	30	70
Self-hurting	65.4%	34	34.6%	18	52
Bed-wetting	60.8%	236	39.2%	152	388
Threat to kill	81.8%	9	18.2%	2	11
Control	64.7%	44	35.3%	24	68
Economic deprivation	50.8%	61	49.2%	59	120
Nightmares	43.5%	90	56.5%	117	207
Suicide	74.7%	68	25.3%	23	91

Issues prompting calls were diverse. They included parents calling about their children on matters related to bed-wetting, and to consult the team about dealing with their children under difficult circumstances. They were encouraged to adopt plans to change the children's behavior, after determining whether the bed-wetting or other problem is attributable to organic or psychological reasons. Cases of nightmares, phobia, OCD, anxiety and fear were also supported. The counseling team helped these callers work to amend the behavior, after making sure that counseling via the phone is sufficient.

Addressing at-risk cases:

Cases are each addressed differently. Counselors ask about the caller's (for example, a 13-year-old child) expectations from calling the line and what s/he wants to do about his/her situation. We operate on the principle that the person best suited to assess the situation is the caller him/her self.

Alternatives are examined to see what kind of support he/she can get from the family. If the caller is confused, we explain options, but we do not tell him/her what to do. For example: have you thought of \_\_\_? Do you think that \_\_\_ or \_\_\_? And if \_\_\_, what are your expectations?

### 3. Physical health

The Helpline received 1935 callers wishing to speak about physical health. This group of callers represented 9.3% of the total number of callers. Their gender distribution was 60.8% female and 39.2% male. Most callers aged between 15 and 24 years; this age group represented 63% of callers. The service was also requested by 28% aging from 0 to 9 years.

The type of consultancy required by these callers (a total of 1077 callers) included a range of different medical consultancies (63.3% female and 36.4% male), and 334 calls inquiring about different illnesses and their symptoms. The remaining calls on this issue inquired about how to access health services.

### Stories

1. A young caller had completed his general certificate last year but he is suffering family problems related to economic difficulties that prevent his enrollment in higher education. He is facing problems in his work and his behavior has grown unacceptable to his family members. He stays up late and has habits they disapprove of, like smoking.

The counseling team helped him change his life style and guided him to plan better for his life in order to match his family's needs with his own.

2. A female caller in high school was blackmailed and harassed by her teacher, which led to a disagreement with her friend on how to deal with this teacher. The counseling team supported her by discussing her actions and how she can handle her problem with her teacher and friend.

**Table (13): percentage distribution of callers for physical health**

	Female		Male		Total number
	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	
Inquiries about diseases	53.6%	179	46.4%	155	334
Hospitalization	50.0%	2	50.0%	2	4
Access to health clinic	52.7%	39	47.3%	35	74
Medical advice	63.6%	685	36.4%	392	1077

#### 4. Issues related to school

The Helpline received 2118 calls requesting assistance and advice on matters related to school and education. Percentage of callers requesting this type of help reached 10.2% of callers and were distributed according to gender as follows: 58.3% female and 41.7% male. Most callers aged from 15 – 18 years old, representing 64% of the callers.

The most important problems and challenges facing students and their parents about school related to anxiety about school performance. The line received 1084 calls on this issue (64.7% female and 35.3% male); second in place came callers about academic issue (569 callers, 52.5% female and 47.5% male). Smaller numbers of callers also spoke of other problems, like problems with teachers and a lot of homework and problems with adults at the school. See details in table (14).

Table (14): number and percentage distribution of callers on school related problems					
	Female	Male			
Academic problems	52.5%	313	47.5%	283	596
Problems with teachers	55.7%	107	44.3%	85	192
Dropping out	28.2%	20	71.8%	51	71
Performance related anxiety	64.7%	70.1	35.3%	383	1084
Homework	63.8%	67	36.2%	38	105
Too much homework	51.9%	97	48.1%	90	187
Problems related to relations with adults	51.5%	69	48.5%	65	134

Many education and school-related problems were documented through the Helpline. They include low academic attainment, not with standing ongoing effort by caller with feeling of continuing tension and fear of exams. They also included learning difficulties and lack of focus in studying, attributable to reasons identified by callers after intervention:

- Lack of understanding of the subject
- Fear of exams
- Fear of failure
- Social pressure laid upon student by others, often the family using words like “make your family proud of you”, associated with fear in case of failure (what would happen, how would this affect the future?)
- Family problems and conflicts at home during studying
- Trauma endured by callers like the war on Gaza and the PTSD caused by the war
- Sexual violence endured by girls, preventing them from concentrating
- Many studying hours and inability to organize their study time on a schedule that is best suited for their abilities and needs.

#### 5. Family (domestic) relations

The Helpline received 1742 calls related to family (domestic) relations. The percentage of callers for this type of problems represented 8.4% of callers. Distributed by gender, callers included 68.9% female and 31.1% of callers were male. Most callers aged between 15-24 years, as this age group represented 75% of callers for this type of problems.

Most calls of this type related to family conflict, with 890 callers (73.6% female and 26.4% male) reporting on this.

#### Stories on school-related issues

1. A female student is scared of the subjects English and math, and she feels that she is doomed to fail. The counseling team discussed her goals with her and how she can overcome her studying problem in order to attain her goals.
2. A female general certificate student who studies for long hours but feels bored and lacks concentration; at the same time he feels under pressure and needs to relax and do something fun.
3. General certificate student who is worried about the end of year due to his fear of the exam and the overall score he may get; he fears failing his general certificate exam  
The team discussed the reason behind his feeling and his goals and aspirations in life and how they can be achieved, leaving him reassured and happy
4. A female student who has an exam and has not finished studying for it; she was so scared that her body was shaking and she could not think or do anything else.  
The counseling team listened to her and gave her room to express her feelings. After the exam, she called again and said she had received a good mark.

The second most common problems reported by callers related to parent-child relations, as 379 calls were received (54.9% female and 45.1% male); whereas relation with relatives ranked third on this list with 355 calls (73.2% female and 26.8% male); it was followed by divorced and separated parents (67% female and 33% male).

Callers mentioned other problems including children’s custody, blended families, alimony, child support, loss of parents, as shown in the following table (15)

**Table (15): percentage and number distribution of callers on family related issues**

	Female		Male		Number total
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	
Divorced or separated parents	73	67.0%	36	33.0%	109
Family conflict	655	73.6%	235	26.4%	890
Alimony and child support	28	58.3%	20	41.7%	48
Parents-children relation	208	54.9%	171	45.1%	379
Relationship with relatives	260	73.2%	95	26.8%	355
Children custody and visits	54	77.1%	16	22.9%	70
Merging families	28	58.3%	20	41.7%	48
Threats using the children	6	75.0%	2	25.0%	8
Loss of parents	23	69.7%	10	30.3%	33
Addicted parents or mental and psychological problems	5	62.5%	3	37.5%	8

Calls on this issue were often questions raised by parents on the best way to handle children; some of them said the children were troublesome and hyperactive and very violent toward their siblings or other people, and that they were hitting others. In talking to the parents, it was revealed that the parents were actually hitting their children and applied punishments that were disproportionate to the situation. Sometimes, mothers begin by talking about their children and how badly they treat her; once she feels confident and secure she starts talking about herself and her marital problems. In the end of the call, she wants to talk about herself and realizes she needs somebody to listen to her.

Other calls related to disputes in marital relations that lead to divorce or separation, problems with child custody and support from a legal perspective, and inquiries about the repercussions of such cases. Many children call to talk about problems between parents and conflicts between them, and their direct and indirect impacts on children.

### Stories on family relations

- 1) A girl called to say she was being bullied by her family members and that they were treating her badly and calling her bad names. They exploited her in housework and prevented her from going to school, while her brother received the opposite treatment and was allowed to be enrolled in school. All what she could think of was getting married and running away from her problem.
- 2) A mother called and reported that her children were violent to each other and continually hitting each other and that she could not bring them to reason. With the counseling team intervention, it was revealed that she was being subjected to violence by her husband, who raped her and acted violently toward the children.
- 3) A father who is visually challenged and unable to handle his troublesome son who makes many problems, and whose mother was abusing him. He was helped to understand the importance of communication with his son and using positive encouragement, while coming to an understanding with his wife to apply similar treatment.
- 4) A father called explaining that his 4-year old daughter was very attached and jealous of her little brother and that the problem escalated when a family dispute led to separation. The counseling team intervened and talked to him about how to handle his daughter and her brother and the importance of his relation with his wife and settling the dispute with her.

## 6. Violence and maltreatment

The Helpline received 1787 calls related to violence and maltreatment. The percentage of callers for support on this reached 8.6% of the total number of callers. The gender distribution for callers requesting this service was 69% female and 31% male callers. Most callers for this service aged 10 – 24 years and represented 78% of the callers for this service.

Most cases reported maltreatment, at 594 callers (71.3% female and 28.7% male). It was followed by physical abuse with 455 calls (60% female and 40% male). In third place came the issue of domestic violence, with 355 callers (72.1% female and 27.9% male). Callers reporting on negligence reached 312 callers (78.8% female and 21.5% male). 265 callers talked about emotional maltreatment (80.4% female and 19.6% male). 295 callers sought advice related to sexual harassment (85.7% female and 14.3% male) while 133 callers spoke of bullying (51.3% female and 48.9% male). 113 callers reported on violence (51.3% female and 48.7% male). 165 callers called about rape, with 131 females and 34 males; the cases of rape were distributed as follows: 42 attempts to rape, 75 cases of rape, 7 cases of gang rape, 23 cases of rape inside the family and 18 cases of indecent assault. 54 callers reported sexual abuse in the family, most of whom were female (98.1%). See details in table (16) below.

Table (16): percentage and number distribution of callers on violence and abuse related issues					
Number total	Female		Male		
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	
Domestic violence	256	72.1%	99	27.9%	355
Emotional abuse	213	80.4%	52	19.6%	265
Abuse	422	71.3%	170	28.7%	592
Negligence	245	78.5%	67	21.5%	312
Physical abuse	273	60.0%	182	40.0%	455
Sexual harassment	222	85.7%	37	14.3%	259
Bullying	68	51.1%	65	48.9%	133
Reporting on violence	58	51.3%	55	48.7%	113
Witness to violence	20	40.8%	29	59.2%	49
Attempt to rape	58	77.3%	17	22.7%	75
Rape	58	77.3%	17	22.7%	75
Gang rape	4	57.1%	3	42.9%	7
Rape within the family	21	91.3%	2	8.7%	23
Sexual abuse within the family	53	98.1%	1	1.9%	54
Indecent assault	12	66.7%	6	33.3%	18

Under this category, the Helpline received many calls from children of different ages. They talked about being exposed to severe violence of all forms by their parents including physical violence like beating with a hose or beating the head against the wall, in addition to being subjected to psychological and verbal violence. Parents used swear words at their children and humiliated them, while forcing them to perform housework without any reward or thanks. Girls feel negative discrimination against them, especially regarding going out and participating like other family members in different occasions with the family. Girls are restricted with regard to their movements outside the home, even in the company of the family. Children reported that their parents forced them to work directly after school hours or to drop out of school, or forced them to work during summer vacation.

Many wives talked about violence and abuse of all forms which they were subjected to by their husbands, as shown in the following list:

- Severe beating
- Psychological or verbal violence: using bad words or degrading treatment in front of her children, relatives or other people.
- Negligence: either by going out on daily basis or for a number of days without saying where he is (and sometimes preventing her from asking him about his whereabouts) without calling her or leaving her a means of communication with him.
- Relations with other girls and women
- Not talking or communicating with her when they are together at home
- Absence/ lack of sexual relation
- Physical violence: raping the wife, using sharp tools during sexual practice by inserting them into the vagina or anus.

The sexual assaults and rape women and girls spoke about included sexual harassment in the family (by father, brother, sister's husband, father's or mother's brother, cousins, grandfather), in addition to attempts to rape or rape resulting in pregnancy or even gang rape.

## Paradigm II: the occupation and war on Gaza

### 7. The occupation and its effects

The Helpline received 480 calls linked to the occupation and war. The percentage of callers on this matter constituted 2.3% of the total number of callers. The gender distribution for callers for this service was 42.7% female and 57.3% male. Most callers aged 0-5 years with other people requesting help on their behalf (31.5%) together with the age group 10 – 24 years (55%).

### Stories on family relations

- 1) Female caller: a worker in a public health institution attempted to rape her.

#### Intervention method:

She was given the opportunity to debrief by talking about the incident she has been through and her feelings. She discussed her feeling and felt secure. The focus was on making her feel strong and able to defend herself, since she resisted the young man who tried to attack her.

- 2) A female caller in her general certificate year was assaulted and raped by her cousin when she was 9 years old and was exposed to sexual harassment by one of her peers as she was writing her general certificate exams. Her cousin proposed to her and pressure was exerted upon her to accept. She refuses to marry the very person who raped her and she was scared about the fact that she was not a virgin anymore.

#### Intervention:

She was given room to debrief and discuss the PTSD resulting from the rape, most importantly the fear of facing or visiting relatives, and refusing the idea of marriage because of her fear of not being a virgin anymore. She was supported and guided to maintain her position against the pressure to accept marrying her cousin.

### The war on Gaza

It should be noted that the Helpline in the first trimester of 2009 – that is during the war on Gaza – received 2326 calls, most of which came from the Gaza Strip (83%); most callers were women (52%) while adolescents and teenagers (10-19 years) represented 47%, most of whom (55%) called in January 2009.

Regarding the reason for calling, 35% called to request help on matters related to psychological and physical health while 17% called about issues directly connected to the violence by the occupation. 12% called to request information and 11% called for matters related to school. 10% called about physical violence and 6% about peers relation. 4% called about violence and abuse, 2% about family relations, and 3% about other issues.

The stories recorded during the war on Gaza included:

1. A 14-year old child who lost his family and was living with relatives in a foster and relief house (established during the war)
2. A woman from Beitlahia calling about amputation of her brother's foot as a result of an explosion in the school, in addition to seeing 9 children being incinerated as a result of exposure to phosphorus bombs.
3. Cases of children in different families aged between five and eight years suffering bed-wetting following the atrocities committed by the occupation in the Gaza Strip.
4. A 6-year old child who called the Palestinian child Helpline "121" at 3 am. His father was next to him and took the line to explain that his son was acting strangely after hearing the sound of shelling, especially after having seen his sister martyred before his very eyes. The boy had seen pictures of her on TV, and this made him feel disturbed and extremely uncomfortable.

## Paradigm III: other analytical indicators

### 8. Homelessness and running away from home

The Helpline received calls from 66 persons on issues related to homelessness and running away from home. The percentage of callers for support on this issue reached 0.3% of the total number of callers with a gender distribution of 30.8% female and 69.2% male. Most callers aged 10-35 years, representing 91% of callers for this service.

### 9. Legal issues

The Helpline received 18 callers inquiring about legal issues who represented 0.1% of the total number of callers.

### 10. Disability

The Helpline received 116 calls related to handicaps with 0.6% of callers requesting help on this issue. Regarding gender distribution of this group, it was 45.7% female and 54.3% male. The service was requested by people of different age groups.

### 11. Sexual issues

The Helpline received 111 calls on sexual matters. The percentage of callers for this issue represented 0.5% of the total number of callers with a gender distribution of 55% female and 45% male. Most callers aged between 15 and 24 years, who represented 73% of this group.

### 12. Drug addiction

The Helpline received 30 calls related to drug addiction; the percentage of callers on this issue attained 0.1% of the total number of callers

### 13. Discrimination

The Helpline received 107 calls from callers on this issue, who constituted 0.5% of the total number of callers. As for gender distribution, it was 64.5% female and 35.5% male. Most callers were aged 10-24 years who represented 80% of this group.

### 14. Economic exploitation

The Helpline received 44 calls related to economic exploitation; the percentage of callers for this service reached 0.2% of callers. The gender distribution was 81.4% male and 18.6% female. Most callers were aged 10-18 years, who represented 83% of this group. It is not astonishing that the issue is more often reported by children, adolescents and young people who are the most often economically abused.

## Paradigm IV: general and unidentified indicators

### 15. Enquiries

The Helpline received calls to enquire about information related to the line and the nature of its work and the types of services it offers. 8478 callers requested this, representing 40.8% of callers. As for gender distribution, it was 52.6% female and 47.4% male. Most callers were adolescents and children. Most of the calls enquired about the seriousness of the line and guarantees of confidentiality.

### 16. Unidentified calls

The Helpline received 3374 calls with unclear requests, representing 16.2% of the total number of callers. As for gender distribution, it was 56.3% female and 43.7% male. Most of these callers were aged 10-24 years, 75% of this group.

Counseling team: we handle every case even if the caller acts in a violent way. We try hard to explain to these callers that it is clear they are not serious about their call and that when they feel they are ready to talk, we will be there for them. When these callers start to feel secure, they sometimes report on serious issues. Other times, when they continue to be annoying and act violently against the counseling team, the program blacklists/ blocks the caller's number.

## Part three: Future vision

Three main items will be discussed in this last part of the study--the main challenges found during the different meetings, presenting findings, and formulating most important recommendations for improvement of work.

### I. Challenges

- Working on cases of violence is a challenge, since violence in the Palestinian society is a complicated issue with political, social and economic repercussions that require recruiting high-level energies and resources to handle them.
- Providing help in the cases of violence directly and in an open way is a challenge of another type, in several ways. Callers want counselors and others to see their situations in the same way they do, or they expect a quick, magical solution. Regarding other trends, callers of the Helpline sometimes call for non-valid reasons. Workers need to listen and be open. It is hard to deal seriously with some callers and it is true that the end-result for some annoying callers is usually blocking their calls. But it still may be possible to open communication with these callers and get them to discuss serious issues.
- Consequently, the institution's role is to help callers in the time and place they choose and to let them express themselves and guide them to find the solutions that suit them on their own. The purpose is to make them capable of handling life in a way that gives them room to express their feelings and reach balance in their life again. Every individual case is treated separately, which lays additional burden upon the work team.
- The fact that the service is provided to abused people, entails finding people who can handle a sensitive professional position that involves handling cases of abuse. There are two important issues in this context:
  1. Workers in this field have limited capacities and cannot continue doing this kind of work indefinitely. Experiences and capacities are developed in specialized topics, and they start seeking work opportunities with other organizations after a period at Sawa
- The other challenge is when female workers have to do night shifts. This is a social and security challenge relating to young women's work. There are limited resources available, with the lack of a dormitory for the young women, or safe transportation for them if they live in areas distant from the Helpline premises.
- Related to the above, some of the calls come late at night from female callers who prefer to be counseled by women. Absence of female workers in the night shift deprives this group of female callers from receiving help.
- The other challenge involves providing human and financial resources to operate the line on a permanent basis to provide the service day and night. In some cases, callers can call only after mid-night. This may be the most appropriate time for calling, and time is an important factor, but as we have already explained, there is a need for greater financial and human resources. It is a challenge to provide the necessary human resources to enable the 30 lines available to receive calls. The work team explained that some cases have to wait on the line and the team still cannot take all calls.

#### Findings of the workshop with workers and volunteers on the Helpline

- Callers need a long time to be reassured about the credibility and goal of the Helpline; this is a vital security and privacy issue that must be addressed and considered at all times.
- Callers have high expectations of a magical solution their problems. Volunteers have to try hard to help callers take responsibility for their actions and regain control over their life by listening to them and discussing their problems.
- Some callers try to talk about personal issues and talk about topics related to the location of the service and possible meetings. Team members try gradually to shift back to the reason for their calls and to explain that the service is provided to all of the regions in Palestine.

- The institution has specialized training and counseling professionals to follow up with the volunteers operating the Helpline. The team adheres to a clear plan of psychological counseling and debriefing; however the counseling team and volunteers acknowledge their need for additional sessions. This demonstrates again a key challenge facing the institution, namely limited human and financial resources.

## II. Findings

- The Helpline is the only debriefing space for some marginalized groups who are unable to communicate directly with other such services, especially women, children and adolescents. The Helpline is a resource for people who lack financial, social, political or economic capacities.

### - *Requests from callers focused on five main aspects:*

1. Psychological matters and people's need for empowerment and self-reinforcement in handling difficulties in their lives.
  2. Problems faced by service callers who need help in cases of violence, including abuse to sexual harassment to rape. The way callers handle these situations requires different working strategies, not only counseling.
  3. Relations and communication within the family or with peers. This occupies a central focus in the lives of callers for its emotional, social and psychological dimensions.
  4. Request for health services related either to enquiries about diseases and their treatment, or how to access different health services.
  5. Educational and pedagogic issues are also important as a result of the educational system and the anxiety and tension in which students and their parents live.
- People talking about the previously mentioned issues touching their private lives is an indicator of the concerns and needs of the people and their need to talk about issues that have direct and indirect impact on their life.
  - It is difficult to measure beneficiaries' satisfaction of the service since choice to access the service is made only by the callers; however the following indicators may be a sign of the level of beneficiaries' satisfaction:
    - 1- The number of callers over the past two and a half years passed 20,000 calls; this is an indicator of the size of demand on the protection program and of the level of trust. The percentage of callers who request direct service after contacting the line attained 44% of the total number of callers. It should be noted that the Helpline received about thirty thousand calls from these callers.
    - 2- Findings show that the number of continuing calls throughout the year in all months of the year, with varying volume from one month to another but without being less than 11% of the average monthly calls of all calls. This shows the continuity and sustainability of service provided by the institution.
    - 3- 16% of callers request the service several times with 2% of them calling over ten times. This is a sign of their satisfaction and wish to improve their situation via the use of the counseling service provided on the line.
    - 4- As for the average duration of calls for follow up, it reached 17 minutes per call. This is an indicator that counseling team dedicates sufficient time to the cases that require follow-up and support for long periods.
    - 5- Documented data on callers show that they learned about the Helpline from friends, as documented by 73% of them for those who responded to this part. This indicates that recipients of the service assess the service as being positive and reliable. As a result, they encouraged friends to contact the service.
    - 6- Other signs of trust include workers' satisfaction with the line. Their level of satisfaction about themselves and assessment of their work is an indicator of the importance of the work achieved and their ability to provide support to others.

### Findings of the workshop with workers and volunteers on the Helpline

- Callers need a long time to be reassured about the credibility and goal of the Helpline; this is a vital security and privacy issue that must be addressed and considered at all times.
- Callers have high expectations of a magical solution their problems. Volunteers have to try hard to help callers take responsibility for their actions and regain control over their life by listening to them and discussing their problems.
- Some callers try to talk about personal issues and talk about topics related to the location of the service and possible meetings. Team members try gradually to shift back to the reason for their calls and to explain that the service is provided to all of the regions in Palestine.

7- To give an indicator of the level of satisfaction with the service, we report some of the callers' words as reported by the line operators

- The project allowed 120 young men and women from the Palestinian Territory to gain experience of different types, all of which influenced their lives. Some quotes are listed here-below.

- With this positive situation, there are multiple challenges facing the team, mostly focusing on limited financial and human resources. This is a challenge that can be addressed due to the interest of relevant institutions in supporting the program, because it is important and effective as shown in the findings.

Findings of the workshop with workers and volunteers regarding their assessment of the value of their work:

- A focal point of achievement
- A shelter to the people, helping those in need.
- I feel comfortable with myself
- I find myself full of energy inside.

- Some expressions used by callers as documented

- I want to thank you for taking me up into the sky
- Thank you; my relation with my son improved and we started to communicate in a better way
- I changed because you could bear with me although I used bad words and was violent toward you; thank you
- My life has changed in certain aspects, but on the other hand sometimes I want to commit suicide.

#### Some expressions used by callers as documented

- I wa Findings of the workshop with workers and volunteers operating the line regarding their gained experience
- I learned to listen to others
- It was mutually beneficial; all have their own experiences to share. I developed wider perspective and started to assess things better and to think in several new directions
- I am usually rushing thing, but through working on the line, I learned to be patient and dedicate sufficient time to what I am doing.
- In the beginning I used to sympathize with every case and cry and thoughts of cases followed me even at home; with the experience I gained in operating the line, I started to see things more calmly.
- Operating the line requires people with experiences of different types, as a result of the cases calling from different social, cultural, intellectual, political and religious backgrounds (a doctor, a student, a driver, a woman, a man, a child, a senior person, or anybody else may be calling). This means people of different backgrounds and age groups . With all respect due to all of the people-- we are not disrespecting any of them--but this is a sign of difference and we need to deal with everybody with the same level of appreciation and respect and address their needs to provide them with help.
- We endure better and accept the others and the people different from us more; I am now more capable of handling my problems
- I developed my own personality by learning from other people's experiences
- I could not accept other people and was always sarcastic and offensive refusing to accept other opinions. As a result of this experience, I became more open to the others and the discussion made me more conscious especially during the debriefing sessions organized by the institution to help us acquire behaviors to empower us and build our personality.
- Another important issue is the training provided and with the end of the training after six months we become truly capable of performing counseling over the Helpline in a professional manner. nt to thank you for taking me up into the sky
- Thank you; my relation with my son improved and we started to communicate in a better way
- I changed because you could bear with me although I used bad words and was violent toward you; thank you
- My life has changed in certain aspects, but on the other hand sometimes I want to commit suicide.

### III. Recommendations:

As author of the report, I could not conclude the report without formulating recommendations that the institution may use together with the efforts and energies of the human and financial resources. The recommendations may find an ear among local and international organizations cooperating to develop the program, and providing institutional or financial support to the organization.

The line went through several developmental stages since 2007. The work team explained that there was a development plan covering several aspects. This requires strategic steps on the short and long run:

- Coordination: activate coordination with the higher education institutions, especially with the universities and community organizations working with women and young people to achieve two key suggested objectives. The first suggestion is promotion of the Helpline to give the opportunity to different segments to have access to this service. The second suggestion is coordination with higher education institutions, especially specializations pertaining to social service, to form a regional network of volunteers guided by the Ministry of Social Affairs to provide support and motivate the work team.
- Extend the program operation to 24 hours: improving the team's ability to operate the line for longer periods in addition to providing the necessary human resources to operate and manage the thirty lines. It is also important to note the problem of young women's security when working at night, especially as some female callers prefer to talk to female rather than male counselors.
- Marginalized areas still lack any therapy providers. Therefore the Organization needs to develop a psychosocial clinic to receive cases in addition to providing counseling via the Helpline; such a development is now being considered. It also should continue the mobile counseling and support clinic, together with the awareness program and dissemination of information about the Helpline.
- It is certain that the Helpline program, with the devoted work of the line operators, has made important achievements; still there is the need to increase the follow up and counseling periods with the line operators.
- To facilitate the clear documentation of cases according to their problems and their causes. For example, violence could have induced a difficult psychological situation or a certain psychological crisis that escalates the violence. This effort requires providing training to the team on the appropriate documentation mechanisms.
- Finally, the 121 Child Helpline constitutes a much needed resource for the Palestinian society in general and it is used by callers from different age groups, different areas and classes, and from both genders. Therefore, I recommend to change the name of the program to become "Palestinian Citizen Helpline Program" in the next phase. Along with a 24-hour expansion of the line, this will help Sawa to make it clear that the Helpline is a resource for Palestinians of all ages and genders.
- It is also important to codify some of the detailed categories to suit the nature of calls received. Table (17) presents some suggestions.

Table (17): amending call criteria used in the classification for reading data			
Main category	Proposed amendment	Detailed category elements	Proposed amendments
Peers relations	-	Relations with friends, problems with partners, emotional relations	Differences with friends, partner disputes, emotional relations, threats to divulge secrets
Economic exploitation	-	Child labor, sexual exploitation, trafficking, homelessness, prostitution, abduction and exploitation of children in criminal activity	Child labor, sexual exploitation in work, domestic labor (housework), prostitution and abduction, child exploitation in criminal activity

Mental and psychosocial health	Psychosocial health	Boredom, depression, loss of appetite, anxiety, threat to divulge secrets, fear, identity, purpose of life, low self-confidence, loneliness, phobia, OCD, self-injury, bed-wetting, threats to kill, control, economic deprivation, suicide	Boredom, depression, loss of appetite, fear and anxiety, low self-confidence, loneliness, phobia and OCD, self-injury, bedwetting, threats, control and economic deprivation, suicide, sexual identity
Physical health		Questions about diseases, admission to hospitals and difficult access to health care and medical advice	
School related issues		Academic problems, problems with teachers, dropping out, anxiety related to homework and performance of homework, problems in relations with adults	Problems with teachers, dropping out, anxiety related to performance and homework, problems with peers, school violence
Homelessness, runaway from home and basic needs	Homelessness	Abandoned children in need of food, street children seeking shelter, shelter for lost children, orphans, children returned to parents, financial resources and aid to runaway children	Abandoned children, children in need of food, street children, lost children, running from home.
Legal issues		Advice and information, marriage of children, children witnesses, legal representation of children, legal disputes, laws in conflict with the rights of children, request for escort to courts, police departments and health services	Legal advice, request of information on laws, legal representation, escorting to competent bodies (police and other bodies)
Persons with disabilities	Remove; it is still important to put a question in the program to ask callers whether they suffer a certain difficulty/ disability; and if yes, specify	Physical, mental or motor	Remove
Sexual issues	Sexual education	Masturbation, pregnancy, contraceptives, information on sex and facts of life, sexual fantasies, sexual identity, sexually-transmitted diseases, virginity	
Discrimination		Ethnic, gender-related, family, religious, political and regional	

Family relations	-	Parents divorced or separated, dispute over alimony and child support, relationship between parents and children, relations with relatives, child custody and visits, merging of families, using children as a means for threatening, loss of parents, parents with addictions or mental and psychological problems	Divorced or separated parents, disputes over alimony and child support, relationship between parents and children, relation with relatives, child custody and visits, merging families, using children to threaten, loss of parents, addiction inside the family, upbringing difficulties
Drugs	-	Addiction, information on narcotics	
Abuse and violence		Bullying, emotional abuse, negligence, sexual abuse, sexual harassment, witness to violence, attempt to rape, rape, collective rape, rape within the family, sexual harassment within the family, indecent assault, reporting on violence and domestic violence	Bullying, abuse, negligence, physical violence, sexual harassment, witness to violence, attempt to rape, rape, collective rape, rape within the family, sexual harassment within the family, indecent assault, reporting on violence
Request for information (enquiries)	Enquiries with hidden objectives	About the Helpline, a professional requesting information, expressing wish to volunteer, dealing with children, thanks for assistance	About the Helpline, enquiries, wish to volunteer, thanks for assistance, annoyance/ disturbance, entertainment
Occupation and internal conflict	The occupation and its crimes	Unexploded thermal phosphorus bombs, witness to violence accident, displacement, horror, injuries, continuing fear of violence, imprisonment and forced detention, children in armed conflict	Abuse, terror and fear of shelling, witness to violent incident, injuries, continuing fear from violence, imprisonment, humiliation and personal search, internal discrimination and violence.





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