



## **External evaluation of the Women Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling- WCLAC Project:**

“Promote women's access to social and legal services in the West Bank and East Jerusalem”

**Funded by: UN Trust Fund**

**March 1st, 2017 till February 29th, 2020**

**Final Evaluation Report**

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## List of acronyms and Abbreviations

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DoP	Director of Program
FbO	Faith-based Organizations
FE	Final Evaluation
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GBV	Gender Based Violence
IC	Independent Consultant
ID	Identity Card
KII	key informant interviews
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoSD	Ministry of Social Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
oPt	Occupied Palestinian Territories
PCP	Palestinian Civil Police
PMU	Project Management Unit
PNA	Palestinian National Authority
SGBV	Sexual Gender Based Violence
S&J	Security and Justice
SSI	Semi-Structured Interviews
TVET	Technical Vocational Educational Training
ToR	Terms of Reference
ToT	Trainer of Trainer
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNTF	United Nations Trust Fund
WCLAC	Women Center for Legal Aid and Counselling
WB	West Bank
VAW	Violence Against Women
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls

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## Report Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of the external evaluation for the project: “Promote women's access to social and legal services in the West Bank and East Jerusalem” funded by the UN Trust Fund and implemented by the Women Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling- WCLAC in The West Bank and East Jerusalem. The evaluation work has been carried out by Effects for Consultations and Development as an external consultant over a two months period (May & August, 2020).

This project was initiated, designed, and implemented with a budget of USD 415,735 over three years (2017- February 2020) with the **overall goal:** To contribute to ending GBV through increasing access of 1215 women suffering from gender based discrimination to their social, legal and protection rights in the West Bank and East Jerusalem to be achieved by the two objectives:

**Objective 1:** Protection, social and legal support available and accessible to end gender based violence for 1215 women in the West Bank and East Jerusalem;

**Objective 2:** Responsive Palestinian communities equipped with skills to advocate for ending gender based violence in their communities in the West Bank and East Jerusalem;

The project is a continuation of several previous projects that were initiated by WCLAC in response to the severe lack of service provision (social and services to GBV victims) and the limited of protection from GBV in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. The aim of this evaluation is to assess the implementation of the project in regards to performance relative to the output and outcomes levels. In addition to extracting lessons learnt which can be taken into consideration in design of future similar projects. The evaluation process used mixed qualitative (Focus Group Discussions and interviews...etc) and data analysis tools. The project theory of change was well prepared and articulated. The results framework has a clear set of results with correspondent verifiable indicators, means of verifications and assumptions. Project's organizational plan and deployment of resources were among the key factors to achieve the desired results (outputs). Most of the activities have been appropriately implemented with close managerial supervision and dedicated professional staff.

The project has employed a successful positive change in community capacity of GBV issues working on various dimensions of community's awareness (such as community leaders, community resources and community culture and values) which has contributed to turn the project into a unique model that combines a package of social together with legal services to end GBV. Despite the many challenges the project management succeeded to maintain good information flow with the field.

The project's design and implementation proved to be relevant to the needs of beneficiaries and upper national and international levels. Beneficiaries were highly satisfied from the provided services and work seems to be highly efficient. The project was relevant to the beneficiaries needs, to the national plans, and to the scope of the organizations.

The project has difficulties in terms of financial sustainability despite the potential good sustainability on the institutional and policy levels. The evaluation team, by means of the various evaluation tools used, found that the evaluated project was successful in regards to achieving project planned outputs of the three years of implementation.

Efficiency of the project in regards to utilizing the budget, timeframe and service provision was assessed to be very good; the project implemented timely despite the local political and security instability challenges; the project outputs fully achieved and in many cases exceed the targeted numbers. The project was effective in terms of being able to achieve the intended outputs and objectives. The intended impact of the project in terms of improving protection services and combating GBV on the beneficiaries' level and community level was achieved. Project room for improvement includes adjusting the design to include more outcomes indicators (comprehensive social services and advocacy) and to include economic empowerment component to GBV victims. The project should have M&E capacity that could work on designing comprehensive M&E system and working on measurement of positive change of Knowledge, Attitude and

Practices (KAP) activities and results.

## **Overall Evaluation**

The consultant is comfortable to rate this project as “VERYGOOD”. In spite of challenges posed by the break of COVID-19 and other political and security instability challenges; the project was implemented successfully to good extent. The sincerity and dedication of project team and main beneficiaries helped to overcome all obstacles. This project is a very good model and shall be replicated, keeping in mind the lessons learnt during this evaluation

## **Context and Description of the Project**

### **Background and context to the project**

Within Palestinian society, patriarchal norms place great value on women’s roles as mothers and wives. While the average age of marriage for females in Palestine is 19.4, earlier marriage and the corresponding social and psychological risks are not uncommon. The rate of female participation in the labor force 19.4% compared to 25% in the Arab world in 2014 and among the lowest in the world. As a result, women often lack independence and financial leverage, and stereotypes underpinning these trends are perpetuated through cultural traditions, cultural events and in the mass media, enshrining discrimination against women in a vicious cycle.

Domestic violence and violence against women (VAW) in general is a widespread problem within Palestinian society. The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics presented the primarily results of the national violence survey for the year 2019, in which the data was collected from both Gaza Strip and the West Bank including Jerusalem. According to the statistics 60% of the women reported that they or at least one of their households’ members were exposed to a form of violence by the occupation forces or settlers, 15% of the women reported that they faced difficulties in reaching their workplace as for the restrictions by occupation forces and settlers caused difficulties in reaching workplaces at a percentage of 90%.

As for the societal/domestic violence, 29% of the women in the Palestinian society reported that they were subjected to at least one type of violence (psychological, physical, sexual, social and economic); psychological violence according to the statistics is the most abundant type of violence practiced against women 57% of the women experienced “at least once” psychological violence by their husbands 3% of the women have experienced psychological violence in shopping places, 4% in the street, 4% inside the educational institutions and 2% at the workplace. As for the physical violence 18% of the currently married or ever married “at least once was subjected to domestic violence as for sexual violence 9% of the women experienced it. Moreover 61% of women who were subjected to violence chose to remain silent, 24% resorted to their parents or siblings, 20% didn’t leave their houses but spoke about the matter, 6% spoke with a colleague or a neighbor for advice or protection, 3% approached a lawyer to file a lawsuit against their husbands, 1% resorted to a police station or households protection unit to file a complaint and 1% headed to a psycho-social or legal assistance. The statistics also revealed that while 40% of the surveyed (49% in the West Bank and 28% in the Gaza Strip) knew about the women’s organizations providing psycho-social and legal services to women victims of violence, only 1.4% approached women’s organizations for help.

Civil Society Organizations-CSOs are supporting the ongoing efforts to revise a number of laws relevant to combating and preventing violence against women, especially following Palestine’s accession to numerous international conventions and treaties (including CEDAW) since 2014. Thanks to national and community-based CSOs, these discussions are now less of a taboo even in the most conservative environments. At the same time, CSOs are a key service provider to the

victims of Sexual Gender Based Violence-SGBV, through shelters, legal aid and psycho-social support. These protection services are still scarce in the oPt, and need to be boosted to match the needs in the community.

Children, women and youth have been very much influenced by a fragile environment with multi-layered crises mainly caused by the Israeli occupation, the internal Palestinian fragmentation (political and geographical) and the growing economic and social crisis. This context is negatively impacting their well-being, physical security and future perspectives and all duty bearers are falling short of fulfilling their obligations towards protecting them. In this context, small scale, innovative, grassroots', citizens' and youth-led initiatives are taking place all over the oPt with the objective to protect the members of their communities, especially children, women and youth. Provision of protection-related services and counselling to women victims of violence in the oPt highly depends on available services by civil society organizations, and to lesser extent on the public institution which are often short of resources, availability of high quality professional services and lack of expertise in some specific areas.

Efforts to minimize and reduce violence against women have been met with many diverse challenges. High levels of stigma prevent vulnerable persons from knowing their status and from accessing, support, protection and health services. Nevertheless conservative norms and conservative political groups and traditional elements in the Palestinian society are currently leading a counter campaign against reforms suggested by Ministry of Social Development-MoSD to the family protection law aiming at hampering efforts aiming at widening protection networks for victims of Gender Based Violence GBV under the pretext of its contradiction with Sharia laws.

Policy change to traditional discriminatory community norms against women remain a challenge in Palestine context, while the recent COVID-19 crises led to an increase of GBV against women and girls. Despite the good work done by WCLAC in this project, there still a critical need for more efforts towards combatting VAW to ensure the necessary protection for victims of GBV.

Due to the limited achievements made by the Palestinian National Authority institutions in improving public services especially those related to women and girls victims of violence, the role of WCLAC and similar organizations in provision of services to victims of GBV remains critical and of top priority. This role will strengthen community support systems and linkages between community, clinical and district social services. In oPt in general and in Gaza communities in Particular, the role of civil society organizations is becoming more important in fighting the spread of GBV/SGBV and mitigating its impact. Indeed, there are community-based organizations (CBO) and faith-based organizations (FBOs) that offer support and help for the victims of GBV, but human and financial resource constraints, limited organizational and technical skills capacity, and lack of effective coordination strategies, hamper efforts to develop sustained support.

Considering the scale of the protracted protection crisis in the oPt the current tendency among donors to mainly fund short-term interventions, while there is a strong need for a more strategic and longer term engagement with Palestinian CBOs in the field of protection.

## Evaluation Purpose, Objectives and Scope

The Women Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling- WCLAC forges a feminist perspective to achieve gender equality, social justice, freedoms, and to build a vibrant and tolerant Palestinian state, Through the provision of interconnected services, and support all other areas of WCLAC's work by providing legal and social services, for example, WCLAC seeks to prevent or end individual cases of the abuse of women's rights, and also learns first-hand about the needs and priorities of Palestinian women. This information is used as a platform to direct policy development and advocacy programs. Furthermore, WCLAC seeks to establish best practices in service provision and to create and improve institutional capacity at a national level so that all Palestinian women can access services aimed at defending their rights.

WCLAC also recognizes the need to change the status of women who denounce abuses they suffer – in this way, service sector work ties closely to components of awareness-raising, in which WCLAC tries to change attitudes to women who denounce gender-based violence.

The Women Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling- WCLAC published a request concerning an evaluation for their three years project aims to protect Palestinian women by promoting their access to social and legal services that secure Human Rights and gender equality for all. The project is funded by the UN Trust Fund and implemented in West Bank (includes East Jerusalem) reaching 1215 women (direct beneficiaries) and providing legal and social support to 450 of them as well as 120 Sharia' lawyer trainees trained and equipped with gender sensitive knowledge enable them to better represent women in the court.

## Purpose

This is the Final Evaluation (FE) of the UN Trust funded program “Promote women's access to social and legal services in the West Bank and East Jerusalem”, a three years program which started on March 1<sup>st</sup> ,2017 and finished on February 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

As outlined in the terms of reference (ToR) in **Annex 1** the core purpose of the summative FE is to provide the UN Trust Fund, the project implementers - WCLAC - and other stakeholders with data and analysis on ***whether the project managed to achieve its objectives and results and to provide them with findings and recommendations to inform decision-making and good practices to focus on in new interventions and lessons learned.***

## Objectives, Key Questions and Focus

The main objectives of the evaluation were to assess the outputs, results and process of implementation of the project according to the OECD/DAC criteria for evaluating political/civic engagement projects<sup>1</sup>.

The **main objectives** of this external evaluation are:

- 1- To evaluate this three-years project (March 1st, 2017 till February 29th, 2020) against the effectiveness, relevance, efficiency, sustainability and impact criteria, as well as the cross-cutting gender equality and human rights criteria (defined below);
- 2- To identify key lessons and promising or emerging good practices in the field of ending violence against women and girls, for learning purposes (this is defined under the knowledge generation criteria below).

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<sup>1</sup> OECD/DAC. *Evaluating Assistance Programs in Complex Emergencies*, 1998

In specific terms, the evaluation addressed the following questions in order to draw conclusions against key evaluation criteria:

Relevance:

1. To what extent do the achieved results (project goal, outcomes and outputs) continue to be relevant to the needs of women and girls?
2. Are activities and outputs set in the project plan consistent with the overall vision and mission of WCLAC?
3. Are the activities and outputs of the project consistent with the intended impact?
4. To what extent did the project respond to the needs of WCLAC beneficiaries?
5. To what extent were project goal, objectives and interventions defined in the project responsive to the need of both women victims of violence and target communities?

Effectiveness:

6. To what extent the intended project goal, outcomes and outputs (project results) achieved and how?
7. To what extent have implementation plan and interventions been instrumental to achieve project goal and objectives?
8. What were the main factors influencing the achievement/non-achievement of strategic goals and objectives?
9. What methods/interventions defined to achieve project goal and objectives? Were these methods and interventions effective to achieve project goal and objectives defined in the project design?

Efficiency:

10. To what extent was the project efficiently and cost-effectively implemented?
11. Were objectives of selected programs achieved on time?
12. Was the overall programming under this project implemented in the most efficient manner compared with alternatives?
13. Were there any alternatives to implement current projects in a more efficient manner to achieve outcomes and impact?

Impact:

14. To what extent has the project contributed to ending violence against women, gender equality and/or women's empowerment (both intended and unintended impact)?
15. What are the intended/unintended, positive/negative effects of implementation of the project on lives of target women, and target communities?
16. To what extent did interventions and implementation support WCLAC to achieve its mission and vision (improving lives of women)?

Sustainability:

17. To what extent will the achieved results, especially any positive changes in the lives of women (project goal level), be sustained after this project ends?
18. To what extent will activities, results and effects be expected to continue after donor intervention has ended?
19. To what extent does the intervention reflect on and take into account factors which, by experience, have a major influence on sustainability like e.g. economic, social and cultural aspects?



Knowledge generation:

20. To what extent has the project generated knowledge, promising or emerging practices in the field of ERAW/G that should be documented and shared with other practitioners?

Cross-cutting criteria:

21. The extent to which human rights based and gender responsive approaches have been incorporated through-out the project and to what extent.

## Evaluation Methodology

### Description of Overall Design of the Evaluation

The evaluation was commissioned by WCLAC and managed by the Director of Program DoP who oversaw the project. Through an open recruitment process, an independent consultant team (Jamal and Rula) was selected and tasked to carry out the evaluation, with the help of the project team and WCLAC's management. The field visits for the evaluation took place during May-August 2020. The WCLAC management team provided support in arranging meetings and interviews, field visits and ensured that the evaluation experts had access to necessary documents.

The overall methodology was based on both inductive and deductive approaches using qualitative data gathered through a mixed-method approach from a carefully selected range of sources as indicated below.

The data collection for this review was mainly done through purposively selected key informant interviews (KIIs) both internal and external stakeholders), semi-structured discussions/interviews, documents research, case studies and carefully structured focus group discussions (FGDs) with direct beneficiaries in selected districts which were visited during the evaluation or carried remotely due to lockdown restrictions. The evaluation also used data from documents made available by project team at WCLAC.

### Data Sources

Data obtained from desk research, KII, FGDs, beneficiary interviews and observations were analyzed to draw conclusions on the evaluation questions outlined in the ToR (based on OECD/DAC criteria), as well as assessed against accepted evaluation standards.

1. Semi-structured interviews with beneficiaries GBV victims (28 interviews)
2. Semi-structured interviews with stakeholders (19 interviews)
3. Focus group discussions (3 FGDs)
4. Documents review

### Target audience

The primary audience of this evaluation is the WCLAC Project Management team and WCLAC's board of trustees— besides the UN Trust Fund. As secondary audience, the Palestinian government, Ministry of Social Development MoSD, other civil society agencies, women groups, media and donors may be interested in this evaluation as well, although the ToR did not specifically state this.

## Description of Data Collection Methods and Analysis

In addition to documents review the review conducted included key informant interviews, semi-structured interviews (SSI) and focus group discussions (FGD) with the stakeholders – beneficiary, women, senior public servant officials, WCLAC’s staff and external stakeholders (Academia and representatives of another women led platforms). A summary of all interviews and FGDs conducted is provided in Table 1 below:

**Table 1: Details of interviews and site visits conducted by the MTR team<sup>2</sup>**

### Interviews:

Stakeholder	Geographic Location				
	Ramallah	Bethlehem	Jerusalem	Hebron	Jericho
WCLAC Staff	6		2	4	
External stakeholder	3	1			5
Senior Officials	1	1			
Individual beneficiary interviews	8	6	8	6	

### Fcus Group Discussions

Key Stakeholders	Geographic Location				
	Ramallah	Bethlehem	Jerusalem	Hebron	Jericho
Beneficiaries/Sharia’a Lawyers	1		1	1	

### Document Review

Key documents were also used to supplement data gathered through case studies, KIIs and FGDs. Some of the vital documents which were examined by the evaluation are as follows:

1. Project proposal and results framework
2. Annual narrative reports and final report
3. Progress report against indicators
4. Printed materials

A detailed list of the key documents consulted is attached in **Annex 3**.

<sup>2</sup> A full list of all interviewees and FGDs is provided at Annex 2

## Triangulation of data

Triangulation is a core principle in mixed-method data collection as it ensures that the results are linked up into a coherent and credible evidence base. This evaluation mainly relied on:

- *Source triangulation.* The evaluation expert compared information from different sources, i.e. at various project management levels– attempt was made to include multiple key informants from different departments;
- *Method triangulation.* The evaluation expert compared information collected by different methods, e.g. interviews, focus group discussion, documents review.
- *Oral presentation* of preliminary findings and conclusions to WCLAC’s officials as part of the validation process.

As a principle, the evaluation ensured that opinions, views and perspectives offered by each interviewee or key informant were tested against information obtained from other interviewees and documents. Any perspective or data offered by an individual that could not be validated against data obtained from other sources was considered ‘unreliable evidence’ for the evaluation and, hence, has not been included in the analysis.

## Description of the Sample and Sampling Design

The evaluation’s multi-level approach and mixed methods as data sources (clarified above) impacted on sample selection. It ensured that attention was given to gauging as many perspectives from women at the grassroots as possible. It also involved stakeholders who had been involved at different phases of the program: at regional, in-country and the core group ultimately targeted by this program: women and girls.

The different tools for data gathering also proved valuable in accessing a diversity of perspectives, teasing out nuances or confirming commonalities in relation to key findings, hence strengthening the trust-worthiness of the evaluation (Lincoln and Guba, 1995). A total of **75** perspectives inform this evaluation, the sample attempting to be as representative as feasible (within evaluation timeframe) of the types of involvement that WCLC had had throughout this process, at regional and country levels.

The sampling approach’s starting point was a stakeholder list provided by the WCLAC’s focal point to the Evaluation Team. This list included all people who had participated in the more general program activities, at least three from the resource and reference groups, a facilitator that had helped document and steer the process, and a few expert people that had thematic input into the program as well as WCLAC’s staff and partners were included. During the course of the evaluation, additional key informants were identified by referrals from stakeholders interviewed. An updated list of stakeholders consulted via face-to-face and skype interviews available at (Annex 2). GBV victims interviewed for this evaluation remain anonymous as per good research practice and ethics. The names of these interviewees will not, therefore, appear in the Annex 2.

## Limitations

The evaluation suffered from the following limitations:

The main limitation of the evaluation is that it does not contain more direct evidence about the views and perspectives of the program’s indirect beneficiaries (i.e. judges at Shari’a courts and media reporting on violence). However, in terms of the relative of the program this does not

negatively impact since it is too early to assess precisely how increased VAW specialisation among service providers has translated into improved outcomes for clients or potential clients.

The Covid-19 crisis is affecting the way that we work and we're all learning how to work more remotely. It also affected the way we go about conducting this evaluation. The evaluators were forced to suspend some of the face to face data collection or re-design taking into account social-distancing measures.

Our initial evaluation proposal typically relies on face-to-face interaction for data collection through interviews, focus groups and field work. But after the kick off meeting, the Palestinian government announced a first two weeks lockdown, similar to many other parts of the world, first the evaluators postponed the field mission until resuming working face to face, however this was never fully possible again, the evaluators managed to carry many face to face interview with key informants and WCLAC team, however despite the many attempts all direct beneficiaries has to be met remotely. As result the field work and data collection took much more time than planned and anticipated, to coordinate to set time and reach those who are ready to meet remotely.

The evaluators had to adopt and used for data generation, and relied perhaps on the most obvious which is the use of video-calling (e.g. Skype/Zoom) or the use of text-based instant messaging (e.g. WhatsApp) to virtually replicate the face-to-face interview or focus group. Not with standing problems, such as participants not being able to use the technology or having a poor WIFI connection, video-calling is a close substitute to in-person interviewing and can allow for data to be collected over large geographical areas even when social distancing measures are not in place.

## Safety and Ethical Considerations and Protocols Put in Place

Evaluators operate in accordance with international human rights conventions and covenants to which the Palestine is a signatory. They take into account of local and national laws. Evaluators take responsibility for identifying the need for and securing any necessary ethics approval for the study they are undertaking. The external evaluators also abide by the ethical standards for violence against women and girls (VAW) research and evaluation. In accordance with ethical and ethnographic norms, the evaluators did not work directly with any stakeholder below 18 years of age. The evaluation will be guided at all times by the UN Evaluation Group-UNEG Ethical Guidelines and the UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System. Specific commitments included:

- Independence and impartiality: The evaluation team will remain independent from WCLAC and UNTF at all times. The final report reflects the view of the evaluation team, and not necessarily that. Evaluation team members were required to report any real or perceived Conflicts of Interest. These will be assessed by the team leader and addressed appropriately and transparently.
- Credibility and accountability: The evaluation team used best evaluation practices to the best of their abilities at all times. The project director will help ensure that commitments are met in the timeframes specified, or that the evaluation manager is advised ahead of time so that mitigating action can be taken.
- Rights to self-determination, fair representation, protection and redress: All data collection included a process of ensuring that all contributors and participants give genuinely free, prior and informed consent. The evaluators implemented a three-stage consent process (before, after, reporting) through which contributors are given multiple opportunities to refuse, grant or withdraw their consent based upon clear understandings of the

persons/institutions involved, the intention of the process, and possible risks or outcomes. The female evaluator team member is a professional social worker, with significant experience in working with GBV victims including volunteering in help lines, she is trained in collecting sensitive information and specially data related to violence against women.

- Confidentiality: All data and information were used and represented only to the extent agreed to by its contributor. When information is presented in reports accepted ethnographic norms will be applied. Where information is made available as open data, it will be stripped of identifiable information. Data collection tools were designed in a way that is culturally appropriate and does not create distress for respondents. Data collection visits and interviews were organized at the appropriate time and place to minimize risk to respondent and in full coordination with the project manager. GBV victims interviewed for this evaluation presented themselves by using their first name only.
- Avoidance of harm: The evaluation team worked with WCLAC offices to identify vulnerable groups prior to the field data collection phase, and to ensure that any participatory processes are responsive to their needs. The consideration of ethical issues applied all stages of the evaluation process to keep the balance between the potential risks of the evaluation and the likely benefits of the evaluation.
- Accuracy, completeness and reliability: All evidence were tracked from its source to its use and interpretation based on the evaluation framework
- Reporting: The outcome of the evaluation will be communicated through a participatory validation process and multiple accessible evaluation products.
- Acknowledgement: If any incidences of ethical wrongdoing are encountered during the evaluation, these will be reported to the Evaluation management team at WCLAC.

## Findings with Analysis Per Evaluation Question

### Relevance

Relevance will be assessed by the extent to which the project is suited to the priorities and policies of the target group and the context.

Here the question of the program's relevance to addressing the needs of the target groups is examined, including how the needs and expectations of the target groups have been addressed and the extent to which and how conflict and human rights-based, culturally sensitive and gender-responsive approaches have been integrated into its interventions. Program relevance is considered from design through implementation

For decades in Palestine, the women's movement and women's rights NGOs have played, as they continue to play, a crucial role in advocating and enabling progress in legislative and policy measures to prevent and combat violence against women, in line with international human rights standards. The Palestinian system of protection and support for victims of violence and their children is to a large extent based on the work of women's NGOs that are usually set up in the form of non-profit organizations running shelters at the local or regional level. WCLAC has played a pioneering role since decades in Palestine context and continues to lead the high-quality professional efforts to end GBV in Palestine.

The role played by WCLAC, in particular, their legal aid and advocacy work have received legislative recognition at the national level. The principle of their involvement in the design of policies to counter violence against women was expressly acknowledged by the government and MoSD in particular, which called for their participation in drawing up the national agenda on violence against women as well as adopted the national referral protocol developed by WCLAC for women victims of violence and to become the base for the national referral system applied by the MoSD. The MoSD further recognised the need for all public institutions to work in close co-operation with associations and civil society organizations such as WCLAC involved in supporting and assisting women victims of violence and protection shelters.

Despite this legislative recognition, consultation between national authorities and civil society is not ensured within a stable and institutionalised framework. It is carried out according to the varying governance models which are set up under the different national action plans. The lack of a permanent structure for dialogue and for co-operating with civil society exposes women's organizations to fluctuations in the degree of their recognition, depending on governments' varying agendas. However, WCLAC as a leading organization does have a memorandum of understanding with the MoSD, and do work in close cooperation with official service providers through the national referral system and its protocols (i.e. case management and conference cases at shelters).

At the local level, action plans to prevent and combat violence against women generally provide a means through which public and private entities involved in ensuring their implementation, including women's organizations, can be consulted. WCLAC have a long experience of these mechanisms, with some outstanding reporting levels of co-operation with local authorities compared to others.

With the support from UN Trust Fund WCLAC was able to expand its services and responses to GBV in Palestine and to deliver a three years project aiming at Promoting women's access to social and legal services in the West Bank and East Jerusalem" (March 1st, 2017 till February 29th, 2020). The three-year program was designed to protect Palestinian women victims of GBV violence, address their vulnerability and human rights, and contribute to the prevention of GBV outbreak across the society. It was formed of two components:

**Outcome 1:** Protection, social and legal support available and accessible to end gender-based violence for 1215 women in the West Bank and East Jerusalem

**Outcome 2:** Responsive Palestinian communities equipped with skills to advocate for ending gender based violence in their communities in the West Bank and East Jerusalem

The program design envisaged that UN Trust funding would allow WCLAC to provide free legal aid and social counselling services for women victims of GBV, will provide them with protection when needed (sheltering), training to equip young Sharia 'a lawyers to provide better services to women victims of violence; increase women's access to effective services through reach out and awareness raising to general public. This would also strengthen the evidence base for results

monitoring and public communication. Specific interventions were designed to advance tackling it at the structural level by challenging the culture of silence that surrounds VAW and addressing questions of immunity from prosecution for perpetrators. This was designed to go some way towards promoting the cultural and attitudinal changes that are needed to make significant progress on addressing VAW.

As reflected in the background section, the issue of violence against women remain highly relevant in the Palestinian context, and many key informants met during the evaluation were concerned that VAW might even increase due to the recent months' lockdown correlated to the COVID-19 epidemic combating measures. Some referred to informal reports and media reports highlighting the increase in domestic violence directed towards women as well as children. However, yet it is not possible to confirm if this year will end up with higher rates than the previous one until formal data of the Palestinian Central Bureau of statistic research reveal that<sup>3</sup>.

Primary target groups of this program were women victims of GBV, who are striving for help and support, in the absence of adequate, relevant public services including free legal aid and minimal social counselling services, WCLAC services provided under this project proved to be essential. The secondary target group were young Sharia'a lawyers are also highly relevant to the needs addressed by this program. Sharia'a lawyers are at the front line of legal service provision to women victims of GBV, having them trained, aware and understand women's victims of GBV point of view and needs is critical; nevertheless, evidence collected during this evaluation confirms the crucial need for such training for Sharia'a lawyers as they do receive a very poor preparation, training and induction before they are formally approved to start operating as Sharia'a lawyers. The general public is targeted through the raising awareness actions, and the public social services providers are addressed too, offering them tailored in job training. The related policy and advocacy work was not part of this project activities; however, WCLAC has conducted many policy changes and advocacy activities related to legislation and holding duty barer into account on a regular bases. The advocacy and policy change activities carried by WCLAC complementing the outcomes of their service provision actions include those they offered under this project; however, it was funded from other resources; hence, it does not form a part of this evaluation exercise.

The program has taken the cultural context on board in particular, through support to the mechanism described above, which is designed to address negative consequences related to women victims and survivor of GBV. WCLAC as the leading women organization expert in the field of GBV in Palestine, it highly aware of the constraints and cultural biases against women in general and victims of GBV in particular. The project design though did consider culture sensitivity; however, WCLAC didn't compromise women rights and challenged those negative aspects labelled as culture, while they are meant to hold women back or legitimatise violence against women. WCLAC rightly urged women victims of GBV, including women and girls who opt to report and prosecute those who have perpetrated violence against them to speak out and ask for help and support and not to stay silent.

Many of the women and experts met during the data collection phase suggested the social media and mobile's social communication apps did fuel the GBV and VAWG in the recent year in Palestine. Social media contribution to GBV highlights a new emerging need which has not directly considered under this project; therefore, we recommend WCLAC in their new programs

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<sup>3</sup> WCLAC analysis recent internal report reveal an increase in cases approached WCLAC demanding GBV protection services between March&May 2020 compared with the three months of the previous year/ or the monthly average of cases WCLAC usually receives.

cycles to tailor particular interventions, to educate and support women to have safe use of social media and new communication technologies, include cybersecurity training.

## Effectiveness

To what extent the intended project goal, outcomes and outputs (project results) is achieved and how?

The program was effective in making specific progress on women's victims of VAW rights. The program allowed GBV victims to have access to protection as well as it enhanced the prevention measures needed to mitigate the negative effect of this phenomena among the Palestinians live in the WB (includes East Jerusalem), including, changing gender dynamics and overcoming aspects of discrimination. Furthermore, interventions focused on the normative framework changes were effective in increasing access to the services provided by the program. The program has carried the activities as planned, it produced the outputs reflected in the logframe and project proposal and reached the number of beneficiaries it said it would, and in a few cases exceeded the committed numbers. The program progress reports were submitted on time and reflected those achievements, progress, challenges and mitigation action applied by WCLAC to overcome them. The reports found to be accurate and data collected by this evaluation confirmed the outputs reported by the project progress reports.

At the outputs level the project achieved the following:

Project Activities and indicators	Achieved within 3 years by WCLAC	Accomplishment
<b>Key Project Activity 1.1.1:</b> Provide legal (through representation in Shari'a, Civil and Ecclesiastical courts) and social counseling to 450 women (150 per year in WB and EJ) including Family Counseling within 3 years	In Year 3 , WCLAC reached the expected result and provided legal(through representation in Shari'a, Civil and Ecclesiastical courts) and social counseling to <b>450 women</b> in WB and EJ	Fully completed
<b>Key Project Activity 1.2.1:</b> Refer 90 women to the emergency shelter in cooperation with relevant institutions based on Takamol within 3 years (30 women per year).	In this project <b>86 women</b> were referred to the emergency shelter in cooperation with relevant institutions based on Takamol within 3 years.	Fully completed
<b>Key Project Activity 1.2.2:</b> Hold 90 case conferences to develop an intervention plan for each client at the shelter, in cooperation with MOSA, police and the governorate within 3 years (30 meetings per year)	During the implementation of this project, WCLAC held <b>124 case</b> conferences included the development of an intervention plan for each client at the shelter, in cooperation with MOSA, police and the governorate	Fully completed



<b>Key Project Activity 1.3.1:</b> Refer women to other institutions as needed using protocols in the national referral system	WCLAC referred <b>45 women</b> to other institutions as needed using protocols in the national referral system	Fully completed
<b>Key Project Activity 1.3.2:</b> Provide social and legal consultation to 300 women in the West Bank and Jerusalem within 3 years (100 women per year)	WCLAC provided social and legal consultation to <b>300 women</b> in the West Bank and Jerusalem within 3 years	Fully completed
<b>Key Project Activity 1.3.3:</b> Provide legal and social counseling through WCLAC's website (E-counseling) to 15 women within 3 years (5 women per year)	Throughout this project, WCLAC provided legal and social counseling to <b>15 women</b> through WCLAC's website (E-counseling).	Fully completed
<b>Key Project Activity 1.3.4:</b> Provide legal and social consultation through the help line to 240 women within 3 years (80 women per year)	WCLAC provided legal and social consultation through the help line to <b>240 women</b> within 3 years.	Fully completed
<b>Key Project Activity 1.3.5:</b> Ongoing advertising of the help-line in Palestinian media (one time per year for 3 months) and through posters and brochures	WCLAC advertised the help-line in <b>3 Palestinian radio stations</b> . Moreover, WCLAC continued to reprint brochures and materials on alimony and custody within the Palestinian legal system (these topics were printed according to women's needs).	Fully completed
Key Project Activity 2.1.1: Develop the skills of Sharia lawyer trainees on court procedures and gender sensitive representation to better provide legal service for women (40 lawyers per, 120 lawyers within 3 years in WB and EJ)	During the project, WCLAC developed the skills of <b>116 Sharia lawyer</b> trainees on court procedures and gender sensitive representation to better provide legal service for women.	Fully completed
<b>Key Project Activity 2.2.1:</b> Carry out 6 awareness raising activities in 6 local communities within 3 years (2 awareness raising activities per year, 20 participants each)	WCLAC conducted <b>6 awareness raising</b> activities in <b>6 local communities</b> targeting <b>122 women</b> .	Fully completed
<b>Key Project Activity 2.2.2:</b> Reprint awareness raising materials as needed	Throughout the project, <b>WCLAC reprinted</b> awareness raising materials as needed.	Fully completed

The program put in place mechanisms to generate the anticipated results:

**Outcome 1:** Protection, social and legal support available and accessible to end gender based violence for 1215 women in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

**Outcome 2:** Responsive Palestinian communities equipped with skills to advocate for ending gender based violence in their communities in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

Through these mechanisms the direct beneficiaries were able to have access to a good quality of protective services, information and materials, with a strong willingness to learn from and inform others, enhancing women protection from GBV. This was not only noted by program staff, but also by local women CSOs, networks and the Palestinian Ministry of Social Development MoSD.

WCLAC has been working in this project towards contributing to ending GBV through increasing the access of 1215 women suffering from gender based discrimination to their social, legal and protection rights in the West-Bank and East-Jerusalem by increasing awareness on women's rights and gender equality, and providing sustainable high quality rights based and gender based services. This could be noticed through the increasing number of women receiving protection, legal support, social counselling and long-term social and legal support approached WCLAC and have been served by this project.

WCLAC provided social and legal services for 450 women, 130 women received one-off legal and consultations, 80 women received counselling through the helpline, and 15 women received consultations through e-counselling, The consultations focused on divorce, custody, alimony, marital disputes, sexual harassment, sexual assaults, social empowerment and protection services.

Despite the considerable challenge associated with convening across WB (including East Jerusalem), most of those met during the evaluation exercise highly valued WCLAC's staff commitment and dedication to supporting GBV victims. Interviewees who had been engaged in this evaluation gave examples of how they had learned from WCLAC's staff experience, how the support they received had improved their lives (women victims of GBV), and how it was a key ingredient to affect their future work (young trainee Sharia'a lawyers). For example, one GBV victim noted that achieving the "simple" understanding that her situation was not unique was essential in remaining committed to change; that it was possible to effect change in her life and to identify means to do so.

At a thematic level, the critical aspects of the project in the Palestine case related to protection and prevention of GBV as reflected among those interviewed across government, experts, and civil society, there is a broad agreement that the strategy employed by WCLAC has helped Palestine advance in the area of women protection from GBV.

On the other hand, another key informant said: "Despite a range of efforts by WCLAC and various actors, the task of enhancing women's protection from GBV and not even talking about prevention in Palestine involves considerable risk, and as noted during the last couple of months remain inhospitable" This means that there are considerable risks in supporting significant legislative changes, law enforcement and policy change, such work in Palestine context related to ending VAW continue to requiring International partners support to proceed, accumulate achievements, and it should focus on both opportunities and risk minimization.

The evaluation found no unintended results from the project.

In the below section, the evaluators will discuss in more details the results of the program and the extent to which they were achieved.

### **Protection: Sheltering**

In Palestine, specialized services for women victims of violence are provided mainly by civil society organizations such as WCLAC, who were among the first to open sheltering services to accommodate and protect GBV victims.

WCLAC hosted 27 women between the age of 17 and 43 years old in the emergency protection shelter in Jericho. The women sought assistance for escaping family retaliation for out-of-wedlock relationships, pregnancy, inter-family violence, early marriage, psychological illness and denial of rights. WCLAC's services' unit team intervention resulted in advocating women's rights, protecting their lives from jeopardy, and providing a safe environment to protect their human dignity.

For years, shelters serving women victims of violence were regulated exclusively through NGO's internal regulations. The self-regulating practice led to varying levels of service provision throughout the country due to a series of factors: disparities between laws, varying levels of local public support and funding, and the availability of organizations running these shelters. To remedy these shortcomings, with the help of WCLAC and others, the MoSD developed a unified national referral system introducing the principle of state practices for shelters.

The unified national referral protocol and procedures laid the foundation for harmonising the provision of specialist services for victims. Under the terms of this agreement, both local public entities and non-governmental organizations may set up shelters. The evaluation findings confirm that the efforts applied by WCLAC advocating and leading the development of the unified national referral system were effective; however, it is noticed too that the enforcement of such procedures and support available to such shelters include public funding and staffing is yet far from being satisfactory. Nevertheless, some practices by law enforcement authorities, namely the police, are failing to respect those procedures. Sometimes the police put a pressure over the shelters to serve as a "detention centers" for women in conflict with the law, asking the shelters to host in those women waiting for their trial or until finding them other solution. While WCLAC team works in the shelter in Jericho (the one under the direct responsibility of WCLAC) did not comply with police requests to host women in conflict with the law at their shelter; however, other shelters did agree (Police officer testimony); hence it is essential that WCLAC not only to make sure their team complies with the national referral procedures but to support other less experienced and maybe powerless shelters to refuse to such pressure and to having MoSAD on board to hold police into account and stop such practices.

At the time of this evaluation, the exact numbers of shelters operating in the West Bank were three. (There are other two other shelters in the Gaza Strip) These divergent figures make it difficult to verify both the coverage and the quality of specialised service providers. Based on an estimate from WCLAC, and MoSD, there is a shortfall of beds for women victims of GBV in Palestine. WCLAC and MoSD report further points to an issue of uneven spread of services throughout the country and of the limited capacity of existing structures to respond to the needs of all victims and all forms of violence.

As for the quality of services provided in the shelters for GBV victims, there are several entities that are catering to the needs of the victims and their children in Palestine. However, they are in need for much more support and capacity enhancement to be able to follow the approach applied by WCLAC and endorsed by the national referral system, namely the one that is based on a gendered understanding of violence against women and domestic violence and focuses on the human rights and safety of the victim, while aiming to prevent secondary victimization and empowering victims. Moreover, the differences in the quality of services (although very limited) have entailed various conditions for admitting victims to services, with some categories of victims – such as young women with no children, or older women accompanied by grown-up children – experiencing heightened difficulties in accessing shelters.

WCLAC team operating the shelter in Jericho, proved to be well trained and professional, providing excellent quality services to victims accommodated in the shelter. The shelter team have an excellent working relationship with all relevant authorities, Governance office, MoSD directorate and staff their as well as with the police and law enforcement authorities. As said before the team are in full compliance with the standards and procedures agreed by the national referral system too.

### **Legal aid**

With the support of WCLAC's legal aid team, 190 cases were brought up to court, 95 legal verdicts were obtained in favor of women, that mainly dealt with divorce, alimony, and custody, nevertheless, up to 50 cases were closed through mediation by WCLAC's staff. WCLAC made sure that those women were equipped with knowledge on their rights before heading to the social or the legal solution.

In the absence of public free legal aid service for victims of GBV, the service provided by WCLAC proved to be fatal, without such service, victims of GBV in need of legal aid situation will be worse. And the scope of available protection services for GBV victims in Palestine will be tremendously reduced. In civil law, the general conditions of entitlement to free legal aid apply only for those allegedly accused of crimes and might be convicted with at least three years of imprisonment. Free legal aid is not provided to victims of GBV, and no positive measures or exceptions are made available for those victims of gender-based violence. The Palestinian BAR Association lacks any data on the amount and number of GBV victims' cases provided with such free service. Thus, low-income women victims of GBV experience several difficulties in accessing legal aid.

WCLAC free and professional legal aid service are essential and critical for GBV victims in Palestine context of existing poverty and high rates of unemployment among women leading to situations where victims are dependent on the availability and continuity of such service. Without international funding, the availability of free legal aid services for GBV victims will be questioned. One could assume most women victims of GBV (those in need first to overcome the many hindering barriers such; social pressure, conservative norms and psychological) will not be able to afford access to private lawyers' services and would suffer the most. Lack of access to free legal services is exacerbated further by restrictions on movement applied by the Israeli occupation and does not allow Palestinians with West Bank Identity Document (ID) holders travel to Jerusalem. They can't access services which might be available over their as well are expected to deal with the conflicting laws and lack of jurisdiction problems associated with having to refer to two different courts systems.

Experts, stakeholders and women victims of GBV met during this evaluation all are highly appreciative of the legal aid services provided by WCLAC legal aid team. Women met by the evaluation team during the data collection phase in Jerusalem, Ramallah, Bethlehem, Hebron and Jericho, expressed their gratitude, appreciation and satisfaction with WCLAC's legal aid support team and lawyers services. All of them, with no exception, clearly expressed their opinion that without WCLAC's legal aid services, they would have no chance to obtain their rights. All women met during the data collection phase were satisfied with the quality of services they received by WCLAC lawyers and were confident with results they could achieve at the court. However, some of them said they wished for better results especially at the economic compensation side. On the other hand, (with no exception) all women confirm that they were prepared by WCLAC lawyers to anticipate little financial compensation due to difficulties associated with the current personal status legislation and the mentality of judges at Sharia' religious courts.

One way of shielding victims from the risk of intimidation and retaliation during legal proceedings is to avoid as much as possible contact between victims and perpetrators within the court and law-enforcement premises and to enable victims to testify, according to the rules provided by the internal law, in the courtroom without being present or at least without the presence of the alleged perpetrator, notably through the use of appropriate communication technologies, where available. Vulnerable victims benefit from the opportunity to have their testimony recorded, and measures are foreseen to prevent them from having to repeat their testimony and to ensure their hearing takes place in a protected environment. Despite these known and internationally accepted measures, WCLAC and other women's organizations specialising in defence of GBV victims indicate that their application and availability in Palestine are rare and in best case scenario such measures considerably depending on the sensitivity of each judge, as well as, on the configuration of court buildings.

From data collected by the evaluators, women victims of GBV, while they have the courage to proceed and file cases against their partners, many victims may not want their partner or former partner to have a criminal record (in most cases as a result of social pressure applied over the victim under the excuse of the potential economic harm it might cause to herself and her children) making them reluctant to file complaints to the police family protection units or go to a trial. Once the offender realizes that he can get away with his misbehavior, the deterrent potential measures of protection are significantly diminished. The absence of deterrence not only provoke future violations, but it can also seriously discourage the victim from proceeding or reporting future cases of violence. With the lack of the Family Protection Bill that provides for protection orders, victims of GBV might feel that they are left alone in ensuring their safety and protection. This is why the culture of impunity prevailing in Palestinian society should be seriously addressed, especially in cases of VAWG to provide for the necessary protection for all victims of GBV and in order not to leave the victims alone in having to ensure their safety and protection.

There is no reliable national statistical data on the general incidence of domestic violence. Many incidents of domestic violence are not reported to the police or other statutory agencies. From civil perspective, investigation, prosecution, procedural law and protective measures establish a set of criteria to ensure criminal investigations, prosecutions and convictions of the various forms of violence covered therein providing immediate response, prevention and protection including reporting to and investigations by law-enforcement agencies.

The state civil police offices at the regional/governorate level have either anti-crime departments or specialist family protection units for crimes affecting women and children, which includes staff trained on violence against women. WCLAC targeted those police in the previous project to raise their awareness and provide them with some training on best practices dealing with GBV victims. State civil police is a critical actor for enforcing protective measures for women subject to GBV includes referring to shelters.

From data collected during this evaluation when cases of violence against women reach the family protection units at the Palestinian civilian Police (PCP), these units apply standardised procedures which seem to operate as a checklist for the essential information that needs to be recorded on the victim and the perpetrator to detect whether the case reported qualifies as gender-based violence. The protocol requires digitizing all the information gathered and is credited for bridging an essential gap in law enforcement agencies' interventions. On the other hand, when a victim of domestic violence was not willing to bring forth a complaint, there would be no recording of police interventions. The automated processing of police reports, regardless of whether a criminal lawsuit is initiated, will make it possible to track a history of domestic violence. Moreover, officials at the family protection units at the PCP met during this evaluation reported implementing specific ways of ensuring the protected hearing of the victim.

Despite these achievements, WCLAC and other experts report that discrepancies persist in how these agencies record, process, and notify to the prosecutor's office women's reports of violence. Information provided in police reports is at times incomplete, vague and lacks the probative value necessary to support the application for a protection measure such as an emergency barring order. Moreover, there are reports which continue to stigmatize women and treat individual cases with a "one-size-fits-all" approach. Flying squads intervening on the spot may also consider the violence as a "family quarrel" and view their role as being one designed to "reconcile" the couple, rather than to protect the victim and support prosecutorial action with the collection of evidence.

WCLAC should advocate relevant authorities to continue to take measures to ensure that victims are heard without delay by specially trained law-enforcement officials, and that law enforcement agencies' handling of cases of violence against women is strongly anchored to a gendered understanding of violence against women and focuses on the safety and the human rights of women and their children.

WCLAC as the leading women organization in Palestine providing legal aid to women victims of GBV should be concerned why a vast majority of reported cases of violence against women "fall out" of the legal system and do not end in a conviction. While a criminal justice response is not the only one to be pursued in cases of violence against women, it is crucial to ensure accountability for criminal acts to build trust in the system and send the message that violence against women is not acceptable. Without a process that holds perpetrators to account, the violence is unlikely to stop, whether it be repeated/continued violence towards the original victim or a new victim. Prosecution and sanctions are, therefore, an essential part of the protection of women. Moreover, low conviction rates may lessen victims' trust in the criminal justice system and thus contribute to low reporting rates. To ensure that criminal acts of GBV and femicide cases are not tolerated, WCLAC initiated strategic litigation in public interest cases requesting civil compensation for victims and their families. WCLAC do raise awareness among the public that GBV should not be tolerated and perpetrators are made accountable for their acts. While these interventions are beyond the scope of the program under evaluation, it complements the work of WCLAC in the provision of individual legal services to victims of GBV. Social and Legal Aid services provided by WCLAC under this program feeds into WCLAC advocacy work on influencing and strategic litigation, ensuring accountability and developing public awareness that such crimes should not be any more tolerated.

### **Social Counseling**

WCLAC provided all women seeking their legal aid with additional social counselling services. Those services were provided by professional social workers and included at least three sessions. WCLAC provided social for 450 women, 80 women received counselling through the helpline, and 15 women received consultations through e-counselling, the consultations focused on divorce, custody, alimony, marital disputes, sexual harassment, sexual assaults, and social empowerment and protection services. Each woman reached WCLAC seeking legal aid support (many were directed by the Sharia's courts) were offered at least three social counselling sessions provided by an expert social worker, experienced in GBV, the counselling meant to help the victims to realize their rights, self-esteem and let them they are not alone. At the end of the three counselling sessions, the social worker developed a protection plan for each one of the victims to help her utilize further support and to have a plan to follow in time of further need.

It was interesting to learn that for most of the women who received social counselling, the legal aid service was the more crucial and significant one. The evaluators understood from the women interviewed that the majority of them approached WCLAC after tolerating violence for long

periods, and thus were grateful to receive free legal aid to end their abusive relationships and sufferings, which they can no more endure. These victims have already reached a stage in their relationship where they are looking for leaving their abusive partner and are less interested in mediation and reconciliation. In other words, the legal aid service was perceived as practical and as providing immediate concrete solutions, while the social counselling was described as enabling ventilation, empowerment and comfort.

Unfortunately, many women considered leaving the abusive relationship either when the partner became aggressive towards their children, or when violent behavior became more dangerous. Other women chose to leave the abusive relationship when their children grew up and become independent. It is a fact that leaving an abusive relationship can be an incredibly dangerous situation; therefore, women decide to take that path only after they feel they have nothing left to lose and are willing to risk their lives.

Some of the women that left their abusive relationship shared with the evaluators their discomfort towards their economic situation. Some of them are dependent on their families' financial support, and some are having low-income professions, while most of them stated that they barely manage to cover the expenses related to raising their children.

After leaving an abusive relationship, some of the victims still decided to return to their abuser since they do not have appropriate conditions and sufficient strength to withstand the numerous uncertainties, economic and social hardships, in addition to the fears they are facing. Therefore, after some time away, they return to an abusive relationship. Professionals and other people who can help a victim have to stay supportive and available, so she or he doesn't feel inhibited or embarrassed about approaching them for help again. WCLAC social counselling team should develop special services tailored to address the unique needs and concerns of such women which are different from those who are looking for ways to leave their abusive partner or have already left.

The WCLAC's reports and data collected during the evaluation show that consequences of domestic and gender-based violence are various and multiple, and some of the victims and survivors could face one of them or more at once. Domestic and gender-based violence can have various effects on the victim's health. The consequences of violence can be displayed in:

- Altered way of thinking, altered perception of self, others, the world, troubles with memory, concentration, low expectations regarding the future
- Altered emotional response
- Physical response, issues, disorders, diseases

WCLAC social counselling services are less effective in addressing the multi-effect of GBV, and mostly focused on the altered emotional responses and support the victims reconstructing their self-esteem.

WCLAC social counselling services are not expected to cover all aspects, and even not the majority of them. It would be essential to enhance the cooperation within the networks of WCLAC to enlarge the scope of services provided for women, including a referral system. One of the evaluators who is a trained social worker and has experience in GBV prevention noticed that many of the survivors she talked to have lost their sense of security, control, and trust which is considered common consequences of violence. This reflects the need for a much more continued social counselling support for women victims of violence which WCLAC needs to address in its future interventions and social counselling. Below are some testimonies and cases shared by women victims of GBV which the evaluators talked to.

*I remember how he used to curse and humiliate me. He used to lock me in the house and monitor my every move. He called me a “whore”. He said that I was not a woman and that I wasn’t able to take care of our children. He was insanely jealous. I felt that everything I ever did was wrong. He was increasingly physically violent towards me. In the beginning, he would hit me once every two months, but the violence escalated and before I left he would hit me every week. In the last eight months of our life together, his violence was getting increasingly worse.*

*In the beginning of our relationship, he would throw objects around the house. Then he started pulling my hair. He would beat me and kick me. Once, he grabbed me by my hair after beating me up, dragged me from the kitchen to the bathroom where he locked me in so that the children would not see or hear me. My daughter was then seven years old, my son only a year. They were both distraught by this event.*

*I was the only provider in the family. He was unemployed for a long period of time. He controlled my spending all the time. He demanded money from me for his personal use. Even after he got a job he didn’t share his money with me and the children. I had to take care of everything with my salary, buy groceries and pay the bills. He kept his salary for himself.*

*I couldn’t talk about the abuse with anybody. I was afraid that my partner would find out and that things would only get worse. Also, I didn’t want my children to feel ashamed or embarrassed of what was going on in our family. I didn’t have any friends left, because my partner did not allow any contact with them. We only had mutual friends. Our neighbours “never” saw or heard anything. They never asked anything.*

The evaluators urge WCLAC to continue enhancing their social counselling services capacity to be able to address the different needs and aspects related to specialized social counselling dealing with GBV, additionally to enhance their network and cooperation with special services providers particularly at the health sector and economic level to provide additional professional critical protection services to survivors and enable them to have a better sense of their future, feeling empowered and independent. The social counseling included family counseling to 450 women within 3 years, as well as referring women to other institutions as needed using protocols in the national referral system (Takamol).

As described above, many of the victims the evaluators met reported that their lack of economic independence and having no income is the major reason why they are reluctant of taking any proactive prevention action including filing complaints against their abusers. Women victims of GBV and experts met during the data collection phase, stressed the reluctance many women have to report cases of violence, and often connected to financial constraints, and risks related to the availability of financial resources, especially to women to pay legal fees. Many victims also feared reduced standard of living - possible loss of home, possessions, and neighborhood and Loss of income or job - possible loss of partner's income, may have to quit a job due to relocation or having to take care of children alone, inability to work due to threats and harassment. WCLAC social counselling services should explore in a systematic way together with the women victims their available resources (supportive social network, housing, finances, employment, information etc.) and the possible steps to stop violence if they opt to leave an abusive relationship. Provide information regarding different programs for help (institutions, non-governmental organizations, procedures).

Access to appropriate childcare services can be decisive in allowing women victims to seek and maintain paid work and support themselves economically. The project reports contain some information on measures to support women in reconciling family life and work, without however



indicating how these measures are tailored to meet the specific needs of women victims of violence.

The evaluators noted that information gathered during the data collecting phase show a steady increase in the number of women who voluntarily give up their rights, or opt to ask for a divorce from their violent partners for reasons such as the high costs of childcare and difficulties in accessing preschool services and lack of livelihood opportunities. This data would indicate that women victims of GBV in Palestine are in continues struggle for surviving.

On the other hand, it should be noted that WCLAC social counselling services do apply best practices across all services they provide. And in most cases primarily related to women who decide not to leave their abusive partner, the counsellor develops a safety plan for victims of violence to enable them in time of emergency to seek support and help in a much more effective way which could provide them with the protection they are in need. Saying that the evaluators would advise the counsellors to revisit those cases every couple of months, by face to face meetings or via telephone to talk to them, and see if the plan was helpful, what has changed and if there is a need for an update or new actions. Such contact gives the victims a sense of not being alone and enhances their confidence.

Knowing what other women victims of GBV faced and how they had pursued priorities and how they resolved problems considered to be vital to the young women, WCLAC social counselling services should consider in the future developing self-support groups each membered by a small number of women victims of GBV already reached WCLAC for social counselling and support. The social workers should then develop and apply facilitated self-support group periodic meetings aiming at empowering the victims, give them the sense they are not alone, get the support from others, enhance their social life and ties and let them learn from each other and most important to come over their sense of loneliness. Moreover, such groups could enable some of the women a safe space to volunteer and help other women based on their personal experience. (WCLAC does have self- support groups and many successful experiences in this regard). But in many cases, such follow up is not welcomed when women decide to return to their husbands.

Finally, some women indicated their readiness and willingness to support advocacy and lobbying efforts done by WCLAC to change systematic structures and laws. Women view some of the laws and court decisions, adding more obstacles to women who are suffering from abusive relationships.

To conclude, three social counselling sessions offered to GBV victims by the social counselling team under this project are too little to cover their needs; there is a need to have this service tailored to the needs of each specific case, and to provide support at as many levels (mentioned above) possible, saying this it does not mean WCLAC should address all needs. However, it is expected to have social counselling team develop their networks, to have memorandums of understandings with other institutions, CSOs and service providers, at health, education (for her children), Technical Vocational Educational Training-TVET and income-generating programs to priorities survivors referred by WCLAC to these institutes. Nevertheless, restructuring the social life and self-esteem of the victims is critically essential, self-supporting groups proved to be very useful in similar cases, and it is recommended to include it in future programs interventions. Last is the continues connection with the survivors after the end of the direct counselling services and agreeing their protection plan, as WCLAC knows than many others, secondary victimization and risk of offence and repeated violence includes the risk to lose their lives is not extraordinary for cases who opt to leave their abusive relationship and chose to go back to their violent partner

### **Prevention: Awareness-raising**

WCLAC is promoting societal change through conducting awareness-raising sessions for 122 women from six different communities in the West Bank and East Jerusalem in addition to Shari'a lawyers' trainees' equipped with skills to advocate for ending gender based violence in their communities in the West-Bank and East-Jerusalem.

Despite some measures taken by the authorities and mainly by women's NGOs and WCLAC in particular in this project and other ones to uproot prejudices and attitudes which perpetuate gender inequality and fuel violence against women, harmful gender stereotypes remain an issue of concern in Palestine.

The periodic report of the CEDAW Committee noted "the entrenched stereotypes concerning the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and society, perpetuating traditional roles of women as mothers and housewives and undermining their social status and educational and career prospects". The report referred to "the growing influence of men's organizations in the media, portraying negative stereotypes of women" too. The key informants met during this evaluation, particularly expressed their concern about the sexist hate speech, misogyny and tolerance towards violence against women which occurs in public debate, whether in traditional or online social media and the negative impact it has on promoting women rights and hindering the efforts they all do to end VAW.

Sexist attacks and smear campaigns against prominent women figures, such as parliamentarians, journalists and personalities of the entertainment world are described in CEDAW shadow report of women's NGOs and were referred to often during the evaluation visit, including some bad examples. Women taking a stand against gender inequality and gender-based violence are often prime targets of organized attacks aimed at silencing them. WCLAC leadership and efforts to continue raising the awareness against VAW, include naming normative behaviors the society needs to change is highly important and courageous, and this practice has been noted and appreciated by all key informants met during this evaluation.

WCLAC work should also invest more in encouraging the public and private authorities to pursue proactive and sustained measures to promote changes in sexist social and cultural patterns of behavior, especially of men and young boys that are based on the idea of inferiority of women. Such measures should include, among other things, investing in a comprehensive public infrastructure that serves as a platform for women's empowerment and gender equality, developing a policy framework on the elimination of sexism and gender discriminatory stereotypes, and providing victims of such behavior with appropriate remedies, including legal remedies.

The promotion of awareness-raising campaigns and programs has been a constant feature of WCLAC's permanent action plan to prevent violence against women. Under this project, awareness-raising activities are foreseen at three different levels:

At the societal level, communication campaigns are envisaged to reinforce the message that a society free of gender-based violence and harmful stereotypes benefit both men and women.

At the institutional level, targeted campaigns are planned to tackle violence which affects women in the public sphere and workplace.

At the individual level, campaigns are conducted to challenge men's views of acceptable violence, abuse and controlling behavior in relationships and to promote and encourage positive alternatives to malicious behavior.

WCLAC has long experience of carrying out successful awareness-raising activities, at the local, regional and national level. Such actions and role have been acknowledged by everyone the

evaluators talked to during the data collection phase. The Council of Europe **Convention** on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, better known as the **Istanbul Convention**, encourages authorities to implement their undertakings under this provision in co-operation with civil society to increase their ability to reach out to the general public. Another requirement stemming from the convention is that campaigns must work with a clear and comprehensive definition of gender-based violence against women. According to this provision, violence against women is to be understood as a violation of women's human rights and a form of discrimination. As such, WCLAC and women organizations particularly the members at the Al Muntada, the Palestinian Forum to Combat Violence against Women, should encourage other (non-women-focused) CSOs to adopt such discourse and more and more correlate the violence against women to the violation of human rights, and not to consider it as a specific, societal, cultural or patriarchal epidemic.

Despite the hard work WCLAC do to raise the awareness of the general public toward the VAW phenomena and the need to end VAW, WCLAC has conveyed their perception as to the inability of awareness-raising initiatives solely to empower victims and unveil the systemic function of violence against women as a social mechanism by which women are forced into and kept in a subordinated position compared with men. In the evaluator's view, this would appear to indicate that the official duty-bearers have not sufficiently involved women's organizations in designing effective policies and initiatives to promote public awareness about the structural causes and consequences of violence against women. This paragraph needs clarification

The impact of anti-gender equality movements is particularly hard felt by women's NGOs such as WCLAC operating at the local level, where some local constituencies have shifted support from long-standing NGOs working in defence of women's rights to more traditional and conservative movements. Following a gender-neutral approach or sympathising the conservative discourse calling for adhering to specific anti-women equal rights traditions, norms which in many times justified as reflecting the religious norms and Sharia's laws correctly.

Moreover, the evaluators consider it crucial to expand the scope of awareness-raising activities to cover certain forms of violence and address specific types of audience. Campaigns and programs should explicitly take up sexual violence and rape, including violence which occurs during dating/engagement period, although many were shocked when last year a young woman (Israa Gharib) suffered from extreme violence by her family and was beaten until death. Unfortunately in the recent weeks, Palestine witnessed a similar case which ended up with a similar result, no conviction of the murderer, tribal law to take effect and public opinion was not supportive enough to counter such behaviour. Such efforts would be vital to encouraging reporting of this form of violence, which remains severely underreported.

Furthermore, awareness-raising activities would be necessary to promote knowledge about the harm caused to children who witness violence, including domestic violence. As evidenced further in this report, the evaluators find that this is an area where greater awareness, including among the professionals concerned, would spare children and their mothers from frequent re-victimisation. Perhaps also focus in the future of more consolidated professional training and follow up for official service providers to ensure that they are aware of the national referral system for women victims of violence and that they deal with those cases with a gender lens. Such training and follow up is particularly important due to the high turnover in professional staff within the official Palestinian institutions.

The evaluators value the efforts and role played by WCLAC to enhance ethical media reporting on violence against women and towards raising awareness of the structural nature of violence against women. It notes, however, that WCLAC and other women's NGOs claim that the sexist

portrayal of women and the normalization of violence against women in the media remain prevalent and often go unpunished. Experts met during the evaluation acknowledged that the authorities' efforts had led to improvements but considered that the authorities lack a robust monitoring system to measure progress achieved. In their view, the existing institutional solutions to monitor and promote compliance with the applicable standards, whether in public or private broadcasting, are not leveraged effectively, and the functioning and creation of independent monitoring mechanisms dealing with the representation of women and gender-based violence in the media should receive more significant support. The evaluators would also stress the relevance of involving the relevant authorities and institutions in these efforts, drawing on existing examples of successful co-operation among stakeholders to ensure gender-sensitive media reporting. This co-operation among stakeholders is especially needed now more than ever to push forward towards the adoption of the Family Protection Bill and a whole protection system for victims of GBV. Such media and awareness-raising campaigns would stand in the face of the counter campaigns led by conservative elements within the Palestinian society and towards winning public opinion that GBV should not be tolerated. ,

Finally, we echo WCLAC believes that awareness-raising efforts should be stepped up as concerns violence to which disadvantaged groups of women and girls are exposed, such as poor women and women belonging to specific communities, women with disabilities, older women and orphan women. This sentence needs clarification.

### **Training of professionals**

The project provided training for relevant professionals dealing with victims of violence. WCLAC draw up a set of training, especially for young Sharia's lawyers, the training developed the skills of 120 Sharia lawyer trainees on court procedures and gender sensitive representation to better provide legal service for women victims of GBV. The training proved to be essential since lawyers confirmed during this evaluation the need for such a training as well as the absence of such training from their university and formal legal study programs.

The project coordinator is responsible for coordinating the drafting of the training guidelines (in support with the specialists), whereas the responsibility to ensure their proper implementation were vested in the different departments or regional offices. At the time of this evaluation, it has been evident that all training were completed as planned. Almost all participants met and interviewed for this evaluation highly valued the special training they have received, especially among the Shari'a lawyers, who could give evidence on how useful and practical this training was to their knowledge, work and understanding, shaping their perspectives on how they could be of help to combat violence against women. Some of the young lawyers met asked for advanced training and adding additional modules to the original set of the training program, justified by the lack of available opportunities where they could be introduced to such knowledge. All participants highly valued the competence of WCLAC's Lawyers/trainers. Below some of the main changes in behavior as reflected by lawyers who took part in the Sharia'a lawyers training organized by WCLAC

*Strengthened research capacity in law – “provided courage to break down the barrier to accepting VAW cases (defendant and victim)”;*

*Experience on how to deal with VAW cases and provide clients with legal and psycho-social support – “in many cases I find myself playing these two roles”;*

*Diversified tools to support victims of VAW – “Before I was only thinking of law and courts. I learnt that there are many options and tools available and different stakeholders, including traditional law and mediation with CSOs. The victim must be at the centre”;*

*VAW has been promoted for discussion with lawyers and judges: “I am encouraged to research more on the subject”.*

*“Previously I was very money driven and focused on building my career. Women’s cases are challenging in terms of fees since husbands usually pay. The training has changed my approach.”*

*“Lawyers don’t like to take on VAW cases because they are usually complex”;*

Training on domestic violence, GBV, intimate partner violence and sexual violence is not an official part of the mandatory curriculum for candidate officials of the law-enforcement bodies responsible for policing cases of violence against women, namely the state civil police and the governor’s office (Ministry of Interior).

Previous training by WCLAC under another project involving police officers has provided support to the implementation of applicable operational protocols, such as the protocol on risk assessment when dealing with gender-based violence cases involving women in need for sheltering.

Although some of the police officers met during this evaluation have confirmed receiving such training by WCLAC, when asked about their practical applications of such procedures, they were complaining about the complexity of such protocols and procedures and preferred non-formal or one appropriate procedure. There is a huge need to continue to support the enhancement for the law enforcement authorities’ officials to understand better and apply gender-sensitive and effective protective measures for women victims of violence. Nevertheless, it is essential to educate and raise the awareness of the law enforcement authorities personal on GBV including actions which positively change their behavior and tendency biases against women in general and women victims of GBV in particular.

Despite the existence of several awareness-raising and training initiatives targeting these professionals, evaluators found that this is an area where the lack of knowledge of existing protection mechanisms and an inadequate understanding of gender-based violence, poses an obstacle to the effective implementation of existing laws and hinders the exercise of victims’ rights.

Scarce information exists as to available initial training for professionals who deal with victims of violence and perpetrators, such as lawyers, psychologists and social workers. The role that universities can play in promoting knowledge about violence against women and in equipping these professionals with the necessary skills is lacking in Palestine. The evaluation noted that the issue of violence against women was addressed indirectly only in a limited number of university courses. The evaluation team underscored that it was desirable to have WCLAC further promote the inclusion of the topic in existing university programs to achieve the cultural change necessary to effectively tackle gender-based violence, especially in social work, psychology and law courses. This was also the view of the representatives of academia, including from the one member of WCLAC’s network, whom the evaluators met during the evaluation.

Women’s victims of violence met during this evaluation mentioned that many of the public servants in general and in the social support services, in particular, do not possess sufficient knowledge on VAW, and do not apply a gender-sensitive approach. Lack of knowledge and experience among public servants leads to improper interventions, including in the context of custody and visitation arrangements, which assimilate violence to conflict and often fail to recognize the consequences of witnessing violence on children. In pursuing training efforts, the evaluators’ stresses the importance of capitalizing on the knowledge and skills of specialist women’s associations such as WCLAC to ensure that the guidelines developed to harmonize and systematize training are adequately enforced.

WCLAC Good practices have been developed by way of self-regulatory guidelines on how to respect gender equality and avoid gendered stereotypes when reporting on instances of gender-based violence. WCLAC supports the dissemination of these guidelines to other groups, especially the members of the forum for combating violence against women as well as through training. WCLAC is further involved in the working groups coordinated by the MoSD tasked with developing operational training guidelines and best practices for protecting women victims of violence.

## Efficiency

This subsection considers the extent program activities and outputs have been in line with plans or not and at changes or delays in program implementation and the explanation for this. It also examines the extent to which resources (human, financial, administrative, time) have been efficiently utilized to achieve the expected results.

In terms of the **alignment of program activities and outputs to plans**, the program plans were in line with the program design with minor changes as reflected in revisions made to the program results framework. The strong alignment and minor changes indicate program responsiveness to changes in the local context. However, it also suggests some strength in results framework design/ development as well as in the M&E systems used to capture changed plans.

WCLAC managed the project in four governorates efficiently, although it encountered some difficulties, however, as a result of their very adequate professional capacity and experience, they could overcome them efficiently, and ensuring their access to victims and providing them with the needed legal and social service is not hampered.

Additionally, to their headquarter office, WCLAC, provided their services through their three regional offices, wherein each one of these offices qualified team members are the charge for operating the project's activities include adequate coordinating, reporting and management and support by the head office team. The existence of regional offices proved to be very useful and critical for enabling easy, smooth and efficient access to women victims of GBV to near services with minimum additional cost and time spent on commuting.

The WCLAC management had to benefit from institutional reputation, connections and signed agreements/Memorandums of understanding with the relevant authorities so that they were able to facilitate its access to the targeted groups and mainly the women victims of GBV. The official agreements WCLAC had with MoSD allow them to have formal, timely and efficient access to courts, shelters, law enforcement authorities and other relevant service providers to women victims of GBV, and WCLAC management could utilize their professional networks to have access to the women victims of GBV and other targeted groups in the project efficiently.

WCLAC also showed compliance with its reporting, timelines of activities, monitoring and evaluation, and communication with the donor, beneficiaries, and stakeholders. All the activities of the project were implemented successfully within the limits of the allocated budget. As for financial management, WCLAC adhered to transparent and accurate budget allocations and expenditures to meet the financial terms agreed upon with the donor to cover all expenses for the proposed activities, outcomes, and outputs of the project.

### **Utilization & combination of resources for the achievement of results**

Several Key Informants pointed to the expertise, knowledge and skills of the WCLAC program Management Team, and particular individuals within this. WCLAC believes that the decision to

rely on in-house capacity has ensured contributions of technical assistance for enhanced program efficiency by the management team.

Nevertheless, Key Informants and the program report evidence that over the program's life-span WCLAC proactive and direct program implementation role in respect to a number of the outputs, including the training, added an extra burden to some key staff members namely the senior lawyers. At the same time, WCLAC reported no major human resource issues over the life span of the program, in particular, no turnover of experienced staff and to no shortage of program staff. Taken together, these two factors have meant that program management arrangements have been very good and to the expected standards.

## **Impact**

In terms of the extent to which the program has contributed (or not) to ensure that women and girls in the West Bank access prevention and protection from violence services (i.e. the desired impact), it is still early days yet to judge. However, to the extent possible, the analysis below considers the program's results contributing to movement towards this desired impact.

The over-riding aim of the criminal justice system in any country is to ensure those found guilty of perpetrating criminal offences, including VAW, are prosecuted and punished. Challenging impunity is seen to have a demonstration effect in that it acts as a deterrent to other members of the society. A first step in the formal justice chain is the reporting of an offence to the police, and the endpoint of the criminal justice continuum is the conviction or acquittal of the alleged perpetrator. The practice of VAW survivors seeking compensation for the violence they have been subject to through the civil courts is not well established in the West Bank but is one that is being explored through "test cases" by the VAW specialist lawyers especially from WCLAC. Achieving criminal convictions at the civil courts is a process and long betel to win, however, a conviction at civil courts for offenders and proper compensation for the GBV victim immune victims and those supporting them with additional effective means which could help them reduce the number of women victims of GBV in Palestine.

### **1) Reporting VAW**

According to the available data, the number of women and girls reporting VAW has increased. Registered cases do not necessarily mean that there are more *incidents* of VAW. Rather they evidence that there is more reporting of incidents to WCLAC, and it reflects the excellent reputation and trust WCLAC enjoys among the general public and women in particular.

Some might argue that although the overall complaints and tendency to be critical toward the PNA justice system. The rise in the number of cases of women seeking legal aid and filing cases in the courts is to some extent also evidence of increased confidence in the formal justice system as a whole as symbolized by public perceptions of the courts. The access to the justice system include prosecution is highly essential for VAW victims; however, it is not less essential to have courts system and judges who are gender-sensitive and in-tolerating VAWG. Hence it's essential to engage justice ministry, judges and courts staff in particular training highlight the societal and economical price of the GBV in Palestine.

### **2) Perceptions concerning "going to court"**

At the other end of the formal justice system, in the courts, some changes are also apparent. Women and legal experts interviewed for this evaluation indicated that victims of VAW would "go more to the courts to end VAW". Although this increase yet (according to experts) is minimal.

However, looking at reasons given for using courts, it seems as if justice institutions did manage to improve their services. On the other hand, go more to the court, is also an indicator of the decrease in the communal/tribal law effect to bring minimum justice to the victims. The recent years showed more societal support and understanding why women victims of VAWA should “go to the court” instead of waiting to informal justice support. Therefore empowering victims of VAW not to comply with the social pressure put on them to agree to tribal law interventions that obstruct access of women to the formal justice system is highly essential.

The general perception of women victims of violence and other direct beneficiaries of this program shows that levels of satisfaction with services provided by WCLAC were high amongst women that had been in contact with legal aid services, this is an indication of trust in services they received. To less extent, women valued the social counselling services they received, and as indicated before this is very much to do with the type of cases the project mostly served, in which most victims approached WCLAC mainly for the legal aid services since they were desperate to get out of the violence circle and many felt imprisoned. They concluded there is less usefulness in addressing the social effects as its mainly associated with cases were victims go back to their partners and try to improve things from there.

The absence of evidence on the effectiveness of the raising awareness campaigns and no link to specific advocacy action hampered the impact it could generate. In the future WCLAC should make sure to give the chance and opportunity to trainees to volunteer and support their advocacy work, e.g. WCLAC missed the opportunity through this project to engage the trainee lawyers in day to day work, campaigns, awareness-raising and advocacy actions around ending VAW. Another missed opportunity was the limited and no direct work with men, male youth and boys.

It is clear from the above that the program has contributed to efforts to enhance women and girls, victims of VAW access to social, counselling and legal aid services in the West Bank. The precise level of the contributions to end VAW made by this program cannot be apportioned easily between the different actors; however, WCLAC’s efforts as a lead contributor to improving the quality and accessibility to protections services for GBV victims has been recognized by all actors, at public and civil society, formal and informal levels. Key informants acknowledged the significant contributions made by WCLAC in providing information about the national referral system for victims of GBV, the relevant law and legal processes; assist with alternative dispute resolution; provide advice on legal and social issues; refer cases through the national referral system.

## Sustainability

1. There is a sense among some experts some of the critical recommendation related to institutional changes to be adopted by the central government of being set up to fail because of no resources for implementation, for example, demands a confidential interview room for clients and most of the police units and courts do not have the physical space to allow this. However, there is a risk of growing dependence on international aid to sustain the services provided by MoSD.
2. Second, a **key imperative moving forward** is to ensure that the benefits contributed by the program to developing WCLAC’s training program legal and social expertise related to combating VAW are maintained since it must now also meet the needs of increases in the number of women victims of violence associated with the COVID-19 lockdown negative impact.

A mechanism is needed to keep track of women and girls who are referred by the police. To ensure that specialized services can meet needs, it is essential to consider how best to



mainstream VAW across the Palestinian civil police, any further deterioration in the overall security situation will influence it, including increased restrictions to freedom of movements, and violence perpetrated by Israeli settlers.

WCLAC currently is playing a key role in the provision of support and other services to VAW survivors and those at risk, through institutions such as shelters as well as hotlines/helplines; training; and more. WCLAC is a highly VAW specialist and together with its in house technical experts has essential contributions to make. Also, it has critically important day-to-day, frontline contact with direct beneficiaries.

3. **Sustainability of political will and legal framework:** Thus far, the PNA has shown promising signs that it recognizes the critical importance of combating VAW and increasing women and girls access to social and legal justice services. However, this commitment will be judged on whether the draft Family Protection and Personal Status Law Bill are passed, how quickly legal aid institutions are established, and the state resources provided for legal aid that women and girls can access. This change and other new legislation represent an attempt by the PNA and civil society to link top-down approaches to access to Security and Justice (S&J) with a bottom-up focus on women and girls' needs. It is critical not only for the continuation of efforts to increase access to justice but also to improve the quality and basic minimum standards of S&J services. A key driver militating against women and girls reporting incidents of sexual and domestic violence, in addition to social stigma, is the lack of legal rights awareness added to family pressure fear that reporting often results in divorce or abandonment of the woman and this means that she loses her rights over her children. Adaptation of the new family protection law reduces the fear and hesitance victims has on approaching the courts. In this regard, WCLAC's awareness-raising and advocacy work are highly essential to ensure the sustainability of the legal protection framework.
4. **Sustainability of capacity development centered on training and sensitization:** It is evident that most of the Sharia'a lawyers trained by the program started practicing or planning to practice Sharia'a Law very soon. All of those met could give significant evidence on the value of the training they received and how it helped them pass the exams to become certified lawyers as well as it raised their awareness on the gaps and challenges women victims of VAW face when they are in need for legal aid. Additionally, many of them expressed their will to volunteer at WCLAC. A significant number of Key Informants within WCLAC pointed to the heavy reliance which exists currently on availability of funds from international donors and experts for the design and delivery of training. One said, "we are 100% dependent on donors for training". Another emphasized that "local experts/ judges/ academics will only share their knowledge if a donor pays them". For longer-term sustainability alternative models such as Trainer of Trainer (ToT) program were suggested to build local capacity. However and given the recent decline in the global economy as a result of COVID-19 epidemic, and the continuous shrinking in the Palestinian economy WCLAC and CSOs working in providing essential services for victims of VAW need to develop alternative resources of income.
5. **Sustainability of existing program management and implementation arrangements:** Currently, the program relies heavily on WCLAC's in house Project staff to implement activities. While this is a good practice, WCLAC should find the time and resource to harvest and document the knowledge and know how-best practices the senior team has gained over the years; such documentation will enable WCLAC in the medium to longer-term, to pass this knowledge to its new staff and junior experts ensuring the sustainability of the excellent quality of work they do.

## Concluding Remarks and Learning

With this report, we wish to support the efforts applied by WCLAC in serving and supporting women victims of GBV and invite them to keep it regularly informed of best practices in combating violence against women. WCLAC looks forward to continuing their fruitful co-operation in particular with the government and the judiciary and other civil society organizations which work in the field of violence against women.

### KEY Lessons Learned

A number of key lessons emerged from this evaluation based on review of program documents, interviews and discussions with key stakeholders, Focus Group Discussions with communities and field observations.

- ✓ Program Design: in designing a coordinated pilot program with a number of initiatives implemented by different partners, there is need to concentrate the whole menu of interventions in a few selected districts than to spread the interventions in several districts where some of the interventions are not available. Multi-Sectoral Approach to GBV: in dealing with a multi-faceted phenomenon such as GBV, the multi-sectoral coordinated approach provides a holistic and effective platform where different key stakeholders with complementary skills, roles and responsibilities come together to respond to GBV in a coordinated manner.

The program highlights the impacts of GBV on women and the multiplied need for their inclusion and protection in such circumstances, offers a legal framework for holding duty bearers accountable, and supports the establishment of supportive structures and mechanisms for channeling needed services. Having said that, it is crucial that the strategy to translate the protection from GBV into local policy and practice must be made relevant to the everyday realities for women by deconstructing the meaning of the terms 'secure', 'protected' from the perspective of women and civil society leaders.

- ✓ Delivering as One Approach: the approach provides an opportunity for the different program departments to leverage on each other's comparative advantages, resources and skills in responding to a multi-faceted and multi-sectoral development challenge such as GBV. Effectiveness of this approach however depends on clearly defined roles and space for each department to utilize the needed resources, recognition and space. However each department needs to focus on program areas within its defined mandate where it has appropriate skills and comparative advantage and to continue develop their service quality and continues learning.
- ✓ The qualitative steps achieved towards greater participation and protection of women must be acknowledged and celebrated, however, noting the added value of maintaining local women's linkages with each other. Challenging the isolation of women at multiple levels and linking them together- local, national, regional, and international- is highly valued and could be critical for many of the GBV survivors to enable them feel empowered and not isolated.
- ✓ Working through existing structures: working through existing government and community structures provides a basis for sustainability as no parallel and sometimes competing structures are set up. Where capacity gaps are identified, capacity strengthening initiatives need to be undertaken to improve effectiveness of program delivery.

- ✓ Men's Involvement: Men's networks if structured in a sustainable manner are key to changing attitudes as well as ensuring that real action is taken against GBV perpetrators and support given to survivors in communities.

## Conclusions Per Evaluation Criteria

The following are the key conclusions of the evaluation:

**Relevance:** the program was found to be largely relevant to the GBV context in West Bank and East Jerusalem. This conclusion is based on the following observations: (1) there was consensus amongst all key stakeholders interviewed on the main causes of the phenomenon of GBV in Palestine and the need to take action to address this scourge; (2) the program holistically addresses the legal, social protection needs of GBV survivors; (3) the program is in strong alignment with national, regional and international frameworks and provisions on GBV such as CEDAW, SDGs, , Anti-GBV Act, Gender Policy etc, and the design was based on a strong evidence base.

**Program Performance and Effectiveness:** the program performed well in terms of meeting its planned outputs and targets despite the fact that there was late start-up. At outcome level, there is evidence of improved access to justice and social protection services by GBV survivors.

**Efficiency:** the program timely implemented with some of the program activities, which necessitated some postponement and diversion from the original plan, however have been completed within the project time with no need for extension. The program implementation was found to be generally efficient which resulted in the achievement of all outputs and majority of outcomes. Coordination was also generally efficient although there were some coordination challenges experienced at lower levels in some of the program districts. The issue of limited financial security at WCLAC has emerged from this evaluation. WCLAC's limited capacity and resources is an issue that underpins many of the efficiency problems, and could significantly improve the effectiveness of the important work that WCLAC has been doing over the past four years. These limitations are likely to continue to impact upon any future programming work.

**Sustainability:** this was entrenched mainly through (1) broad based consultation in the design of the program, (2) working with existing government and community structures, (3) and capacity strengthening of stakeholders. The program has political sustainability, social sustainability and ownership as well as technical sustainability. However, financial sustainability remains a challenge, particularly after program support has ended and this is a threat to the survival of some of the institutions and program activities such as the second time victims.

The approach applied in this evaluation is informed by an awareness of the significant challenges faced by organizations seeking to bring about social change, particularly in a society as complex as that of the Palestinians live in the occupied territories, where internal societal issues such as liberties, rights and women rights, in particular, are considered not a priority as long all Palestinians are yet suffering from the occupation – and hence the challenges in seeking to evaluate the effectiveness of the program.

### Particular challenges include:

1. WCLAC aims to bring about change in people's attitudes and actions. Social change is a process of considerable complexity. It is rarely a linear process, and observers, participants and

analysts rarely agree on what has happened and why. Tracing cause and effect is a major challenge; therefore M&E system should be supported with additional resources to help them track progress, effects and changes beyond classic output tracing.

2. WCLAC is operating in a rapidly changing socio-political environment in which 'progress' is incredibly difficult to gauge. During the three years of the project implementation oPt went through significant political challenges, particularly following the USA president decision moving the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, which led to an outbreak of several clashes between Palestinians and Israeli occupation forces. Later on and toward the last year of the project, Israel and USA declared of their peace plan which meant to annex about %60 of WB lands by Israel an ending the possibility for establishing an independent Palestinian state. This was later used as a double sored edge against women organizations advocating and calling for socio-political change in Palestine to end violence against women, accusing them of promoting external non-priority agenda on the expenses of urgent national matters. As said before, promoting new legislation and policy change was not a priority under this project, however, every single key informant met expressed their worries under the current socio-political added to COVID-19 challenges the government might subordinate to the conservative groups' pressures and not proceed in endorsing the long waiting promised family protection law and might refrain from promoting needed polices to enhance women protection. Without significant lobbying and advocacy efforts by WCLAC and like-minded groups, the risk of this happens might increase.

3. In complex systems and societies, it is difficult, if not impossible, to establish with any degree of certainty which changes can be attributed to which intervention. How can we know with any substantial degree of certainty that identifiable changes in people's attitudes can be attributed to WCLAC's actions and not to the activities of some other agency seeking to promote Palestinian women rights? On the other hand, the program was carried out successfully. All the program's actions and deliverables, completed and beneficiaries reflected their overall satisfaction of the services they were provided by WCLAC team, WCLAC's program might have triggered or planted seeds of change among many of the women and trainees, however, to have it bloom, it needs close treatment and support, which requires investing many resources.

4- WCLAC needs to review their social counselling service carefully, to develop it to address the diverse needs of the potential "clients" and to equip the staff with any needed additional capacity enhancement they are in need for to allow them to apply an effective service.

5- Working with men, male youth and boys to change their attitudes and behaviours are essential to the success of the battle to end violence against women, WCLAC should do more and maybe lead such an effort.

6- Civil and criminal prosecution for abusive men, criminalising their violent acts against women should be reviewed and WCLAC to consolidate efforts with others aiming at challenging the civil courts and force them dealing with such cases includes, but not limited proper compensations for the victims. This is not meant to undermine the good work the legal aid department do but to add to it a new layer. This is done as mentioned above through strategic litigation which needs to be further developed in future interventions of WCLAC.

7- Campaigns and raising awareness of the general public to end violence against women is highly important, however, and as reflected in this evaluation, regardless of the hard work applied, yet it is challenging to measure the impact of such campaigns. There is a need to acritical for innovative methods and more analysis of the different target audience, include tailoring different messaging to a different audience.

8- Trainees are a valuable resource; many of them will be the future leaders of the CSOs, private sector, a public one and maybe the future decision makers. Besides the excellent quality training provided to them, they are often open to learn and do more, some of them happy and willing to help and volunteer too, it is vital when designing new training and does recruitments to consider those interests among the trainees and how possible WCLAC could respond to them. (especially for professionals and official service providers to victims of GBV).

9- Working and cooperating with law enforcement authorities, especially civil police and prosecution authorities are highly important for the protection of women victims of violence, it needs lots of patience, and work in two directions top-down and bottom-up to gain much more sympathy support and professionalism among such bodies when they come to deal with VAW victim. It might be sometimes frustrating and spending valuable resources with very little result, however, a constant continues work will have the requested effect, and unfortunately there are no short cuts but hard work.

## Recommendations Per Evaluation Criteria

### Relevance

WCLAC and similar actors have helped Palestine advance in the area of women protection from GBV, and it is about time WCLAC to expand the scope of need assessments related to VAW to include, health economic and law enforcement sectors in much more comprehensive way.

WCLAC to assess the impact social media and new communication technology use has on the rise of GBV and to develop a unique intervention to mitigate its adverse impact, by education, raising awareness and training (e.g. Cybersecurity).

### Effectiveness

Sheltering- Having regard to the suggestions and proposals made earlier in this report, WCLAC should urge the Palestinian authorities to take the necessary measures to:

- a. expand the coverage and capacity of specialized services throughout the country concerning all forms of violence against women as covered by conventions ratified by the PA;
- b. harmonize the provision of specialized services following a human rights-based approach, grounded on a gendered understanding of violence against women and aimed at preventing secondary victimization, ensuring respect for victims' human rights and safety, and empowering victims;
- c. ensure the provision of services paying due attention to the specific needs of groups of victims who are or may be exposed to intersectional discrimination, such as women with disabilities, as well as hard-to-reach groups and child witnesses;
- d. ensure financial sustainability and the continuity of service provision. It's essential WCLAC to have the needed funding to be able to give the response to the GBV victims and survivors needs.

Evaluators encourage WCLAC to continue to take measures to:

- a. ensure victims receive information which is relevant to their protection and the protection of their families from intimidation, retaliation and repeat victimization.

- b. promote victims' access to existing protective mechanisms meant to secure their testimony in the most suitable conditions, notably by raising awareness among the professionals concerned, in particular the judiciary, as to the traumatizing nature of gender-based violence and the special needs of victims during legal proceedings, and by investing in the necessary material means such as IT equipment and adapted rooms in courthouses intending to make these mechanisms widely available to victims across the country;
- c. WCLAC and allies to take the necessary measures to advocate state's authorities that women victims of all the forms of violence have access to state-sponsored legal aid and that the conditions to access such aid do not place an excessive burden on victims and their legal counsel. In the meanwhile, with the absence of such service by the state, the government and international community should support and provide funding to WCLAC and civil society organizations to carry on their free services to women victims of GBV.
- d. ensure that sentencing in cases of violence against women, including domestic violence, is commensurate to the gravity of the offence and preserves the dissuasive function of penalties.
- e. to continue developing the capacity of the legal aid team include training of the young generation of Shari'a lawyers.
- f. to put pressure over the Bar association to activate their free legal aid services and to priorities women in need, especially victims of GBV.

Social counselling- WCLAC should strongly encourage the authorities to:

- a. reinforce their support and recognition of independent women's organizations, by acknowledging the value and expertise they bring in terms of following a gendered approach to violence against women and fostering victims' trust and promoting their human rights;
- b. strengthen the national and local institutional framework for consulting and co-operating with women's organizations for the purposes of the design, monitoring, evaluation and implementation of measures and policies to prevent and combat violence against women; while ensuring that non-governmental organizations dealing with victims, their children and perpetrators of violence follow a common approach to violence, based on the principles and standards of the international conventions.
- c. to advocate universities to add special courses are addressing GBV and its consequences to students enrolled in social work, psychology and law departments.

As for WCLAC social counselling services:

- a. to tailor special social counselling programs according to the specific needs of each case approaches them.
- b. to develop a referral system and sign memorandums of understanding with other services providers, in education, health, TVET and income generation to refer GBV victims to them when needed.
- c. to activate and facilitate self supporting groups for GBV victims and survivors to exchange experiences, support each other and to reconstructing their social connections and social life.
- d. to revisit safety plans developed for GBV victims who chose to go back to their abusive partners on regular bases, includes keeping frequent contact with the women via face to face meetings and phone calls.
- e. to continue enhancing the staff capacity
- f. proactively reach vulnerable groups of women and girls and address their specific needs

Awareness-raising- Targeted campaigns should be developed both at the national and local level, including with the involvement of grass-roots organizations and other specialist women's organizations, to:

- a. challenge patriarchal attitudes and stereotypes which contribute to the acceptance of violence and tend to blame women for violence;
- b. raise awareness about the harm caused to children who witness domestic violence;
- c. address all manifestations of violence against women, including in particular those forms of violence which remain underreported, such as sexual violence and rape and forced marriage;
- d. convey the notion that under no grounds whatsoever should violence be tolerated, including harmful practices that are often justified through concepts of religion, tradition or so-called honour;
- e. develop a new awareness campaign on the safe use of social media by women
- f. track media misconduct and monitor practices which are harmful to women and encourage SGBV, is possible too to publish a periodic reports includes results based on pre sat gender sensitive markers.
- g. educate men and boys on the negative impact of GBV and have as many of them support WCLAC's ending violence against women campaigns.

Training- The evaluators strongly encourages WCLAC to advocate for:

- a. ensure compulsory initial training in all the forms of violence against women covered by the relevant international Conventions in the vocational and professional curricula for health professionals; social workers, psychologists and expand the available initial and in-service training opportunities for members of the judiciary and legal professionals to address all forms of violence against women;
- b. pursue efforts to ensure that all law-enforcement officials who might enter into contact with victims receive continuous training on violence against women, which places a strong emphasis on the need to understand the dynamics of violence against women and on the role of law-enforcement agencies in seeking evidence to prosecute cases of violence;

Advocacy- Recalling that the hard work done by WCLAC to address violence against women does not diminish the central government's responsibility to fulfil, with due diligence, its international and national obligations to effectively tackle such violence, we strongly encourage to:

- a. step up victims' access to adequate general support services, such as health services, housing services, employment services, public education and training services, financial support and childcare, to address the specific needs of victims of all the forms of violence;
- b. ensure that these services are evenly distributed throughout the country, adequately resourced and provided by staff members trained in the gendered dynamics of violence against women and the need to follow a victim-centered approach so that they can respond to needs of the victims in a supportive manner;
- c. ensure the service provider pays particular attention to the needs of victims who are or may be exposed to intersectional discrimination and/or those groups of victims who are made vulnerable by particular circumstances, including but not limited to victims with disabilities.

## Efficiency

Good program design and Logframe development include verified indicators before submitting a proposal enables the M&E systems used to capture changed plans and the project to be more efficient.

Training of new and junior staff includes coaching by senior ones to share knowledge, and best practices are essential to continuously enhance the performance of WCALC.

## Impact

The practice of VAW survivors seeking compensation for the violence they have been subject to through the civil courts is not well established in the West Bank but is one that is being explored through “test cases” by the VAW specialist lawyers, and WCLAC should continue to be among them.

The limited evidence on the impact of the raising awareness campaigns and no link to specific advocacy action hampers the impact projects may generate. WCLAC should mainstream innovative and effective advocacy actions in all its programs include those engaging men and boys.

## Sustainability

WCLAC together with others should pressure the government to have the draft Family Protection, and Personal Status Law Bill approved as soon as possible, how quickly legal aid institutions are established, and the number of state resources women and girls can access, the more effective combating VAW at the national level will be.

A mechanism is needed to keep track of women and girls who are referred by the police. To ensure that specialist services provided by the civil police can meet the needs of GBV victims, it will be important to consider how best to mainstream VAW understanding across the Palestinian civil police

WCLAC should find the time and resource to harvest and document knowledge the team has to enable it in the medium to longer-term, to pass it to new staff and junior experts.



Annexes

Annexes 1

**Terms of Reference**

**External Evaluation**

***Promote women's access to social and legal services in the West Bank and East  
Jerusalem***

Date: January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020

## 1. Background and context to the project

Within Palestinian society, patriarchal norms place great value on women's roles as mothers and wives. While the average age of marriage for females in Palestine is 19.4, earlier marriage and the corresponding social and psychological risks are not uncommon. The rate of female participation in the labor force 19.4% compared to 25% in the Arab world in 2014 and among the lowest in the world. As a result, women often lack independence and financial leverage, and stereotypes underpinning these trends are perpetuated through cultural traditions, cultural events and in the mass media, enshrining discrimination against women in a vicious cycle. Domestic violence and violence against women (VAW) in general is a widespread problem within Palestinian society. The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics presented the primarily results of the national violence survey for the year 2019, in which the data was collected from both Gaza Strip and the West Bank. According to the statistics 60% of the women reported that they or at least one of their households' members were exposed to a form of violence by the occupation forces or settlers, 15% of the women reported that they faced difficulties in reaching their workplace as for the restrictions by occupation forces and settlers caused difficulties in reaching workplaces at a percentage of 90%. As for the societal violence, 29% of the women in the Palestinian society reported that they were subjected to at least one type of violence (psychological, physical, sexual, social and economic); psychological violence according to the statistics is the most abundant type of violence practiced against women 57% of the women experienced "at least once" psychological violence by their husbands 3% of the women have experienced psychological violence in shopping places, 4% in the street, 4% inside the educational institutions and 2% at the workplace. As for the physical violence 18% of the currently married or ever married "at least once was subjected to domestic violence as for sexual violence 9% of the women experienced it. Moreover 61% of women who were subjected to violence chose to remain silent, 24% resorted to their parents or siblings, 20% didn't leave their houses but spoke about the matter, 6% spoke with a colleague or a neighbor for advice or protection, 3% approached a lawyer to file a lawsuit against their husbands, 1% resorted to a police station or households protection unit to file a complaint and 1% headed to a psycho-social or legal assistance.

### 1.1 Description of the project

This three years project: ***Promote women's access to social and legal services in the West Bank and East Jerusalem*** funded by UN Trust Fund and implemented by Women Centre for Legal Aid and Counseling was implemented from **March 1st, 2017 till February 29th, 2020**. Through project implementation support was provided to 450 women victims of violence, or who are at risk of violence to claim their legal and social rights through direct legal and social aid and empower them through awareness-raising to claim these rights. As a result, women are provided with knowledge and skills to identify, condemn and prevent negative practices against women, including using court proceedings to demand their rights through the awareness-raising sessions and use of awareness raising material as well as demanding advice through

the free help-line and e-counselling. Through interventions the project contributed to developing the existing National Referral System (to better protect women victims of violence, through referring women to the relevant institutions and encouraging partner stakeholders to use it. The project also provided protection services to 90 women within three years through referring them to the Emergency Shelter using the National Referral System in cooperation with other service providers. Through ongoing case conferences partners (family protection unit at the police, Ministry of Social Development MOSD, and the governorate) under the National Referral System invest collective efforts to define better interventions to protect women's lives and to better reintegrate them in their communities.

Through its holistic approach of intervention, the project aimed to create a wide range of community support from different stakeholders to promote women's rights. This included capacity building of 120 sharia' lawyer trainees to improve their skills and knowledge to better present women's cases before the courts using more gender sensitive and rights based approach case laws.

### **1.2 Strategy and theory of change (or results chain) of the project with the brief description of project goal, outcomes, outputs and key project activities.**

Service Unit activities are interconnected, and support all other areas of WCLAC's work. By providing legal and social services, for example, WCLAC seeks to prevent or end individual cases of the abuse of women's rights, and also learns first-hand about the needs and priorities of Palestinian women. This information is used as a platform to direct policy development and advocacy programs. Furthermore, WCLAC seeks to establish best practices in service provision and to create and improve institutional capacity at a national level so that all Palestinian women can access services aimed at defending their rights.

WCLAC also recognizes the need to change the status of women who denounce abuses they suffer – in this way, our service sector work ties closely to components of our awareness-raising, in which we try to change attitudes to women who denounce gender-based violence. These activities are designed to reach a wide range of Palestinian society, from women whose primary work is inside the home, to women working outside the home, to university students and young professionals. Awareness raising targets women who might experience, witness or perpetuate abusive practices, so they help prevent further abuse by condemning practices or knowing about the legal or social help available. As women come to know their rights and spread that knowledge to their families and communities, they and others will seek legal and social services to claim those rights. We also seek to educate men to play a crucial role in supporting women's access to their rights and rightful place in Palestinian society, not only to improve women's lives but also as a necessary ingredient in men's development and the overall development of the Palestinian nation.

**Project Goal:** To contribute to ending GBV through increasing access of 1215 women suffering from gender based discrimination to their social, legal and protection rights in the West Bank and East Jerusalem

**Outcome 1:** Protection, social and legal support available and accessible to end gender based violence for 1215 women in the West Bank and East Jerusalem

Output 1.1: 450 women received integrative legal aid and social services in the West Bank and East Jerusalem within three years.

Activity 1.1.1: Provide legal (through representation in Shari'a, Civil and Ecclesiastical courts) and social counseling to 450 women (150 per year in WB and EJ) including Family Counseling within 3 years

Output 1.2: 90 women whose lives are in jeopardy received protection through the emergency shelter in the West Bank within three years.

1.2.1: Refer 90 women to receive protection services and to the emergency shelter in cooperation with relevant institutions based on Takamol within 3 years (30 women per year).

Activity 1.2.2: Hold 90 case conferences to develop an intervention plan for each client received protection and referred to the shelter, in cooperation with MOSA, police and the governorate within 3 years (30 meetings per year)

Output 1.3: 555 women received one-time social and legal consultation through e-counselling, helpline and individual support in the West Bank and East Jerusalem within three year.

Activity 1.3.1: Refer women to other institutions as needed using protocols in the national referral system

Activity 1.3.2: Provide social and legal consultation to 300 women in the West Bank and Jerusalem within 3 years (100 women per year)

Activity 1.3.4: Provide legal and social consultation through the help line to 240 women within 3 years (80 women per year)

Activity 1.3.5: Ongoing advertising of the help-line in Palestinian media (one time per year for 3 months) and through posters and brochures

**Outcome 2:** Responsive Palestinian communities equipped with skills to advocate for ending gender based violence in their communities in the West Bank and East Jerusalem

Output 2.1: 120 Sharia' lawyer trainees equipped with knowledge and skills to represent women in courts with a gender sensitive approach

Activity 2.1.1: Develop the skills of Sharia lawyer trainees on court procedures and gender sensitive representation to better provide legal service for women (40 lawyers per, 120 lawyers within 3 years in WB and EJ)

Output 2.2: 120 community members (women housewives) have the knowledge to promote women's rights

Activity 2.2.1: Carry out 6 awareness raising activities in 6 local communities within 3 years (2 awareness raising activities per year, 20 participants each)

Activity 2.2.2: Reprint awareness raising materials as needed

## 2. Purpose of the evaluation

WCLAC has developed this three years project to respond to its strategic goal to promote women's access to their legal and social rights. This evaluation comes towards the end of this project through contracting an external consultant to define whether the project managed to achieve its objectives and results and to provide us with findings and recommendations to inform decision-making and good practices to focus on in new interventions, lessons learned

## 3. Evaluation objectives

The main objectives of this external evaluation are:

**To evaluate this three years project (March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017 till February 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020)** against the effectiveness, relevance, efficiency, sustainability and impact criteria, as well as the cross-cutting gender equality and human rights criteria (*defined below*);

**To identify key lessons and promising or emerging good practices** in the field of ending violence against women and girls, for learning purposes (*this is defined under the knowledge generation criteria below*).

In specific this evaluation aims to:

- Examine how WCLAC has implemented project Theory of Change and utilized success stories indicated in this three years project
- Examine project performance in terms of meetings stakeholders expectations (relevance)
- Examine how WCLAC has planned and managed external contextual factors (risks)
- To assess the extent to which the **expected results** have been achieved and the internal and external factors that have supported or inhibited their achievement.
- To assess if the **outputs** have been achieved in a cost-effective way.
- To assess whether project outputs have contributed to anticipated impacts and outcomes, and to identify if the project has contributed towards achieving the overall and specific objectives.
- To assess the **sustainability** of program accomplishments and make recommendations related to strengthening sustainability for upcoming similar interventions.
- To assess if **contributions** have been made to women's empowerment and furthering gender equality.
- To identify the main **challenges** encountered in the implementation of the project and issue adequate recommendations for future strategies to overcome those challenges.
- To observe any positive or negative **side effects** that had not been intended by the projects' activities. How these effects could be encouraged/prevented during the continuation of the project and beyond.

- To identify **lessons learnt** about the intervention strategies used in order to achieve the results.
- To assess the **methodology** applied, the quality of work, and the effectiveness of the implementation of the activities.

#### 4. Evaluation Questions

Evaluation questions must include the following mandatory ones and then be discussed and agreed upon with the Evaluation Management Group and Stakeholder Reference Group. Evaluation questions define the information that the evaluation needs to generate. This section proposes the questions that, when answered, will give intended users of the evaluation the information they seek to make decisions, act or add to knowledge.

Evaluation Criteria	Mandatory Evaluation Question
<p><b>Effectiveness</b>  <i>A measure of the extent to which a project attains its objectives / results (as set out in the project document and results framework) in accordance with the theory of change.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To what extent were the intended project goal, outcomes and outputs (project results) achieved and how?</li> <li>2. To what extent have implementation plan and interventions been instrumental to achieve project goal and objectives?</li> <li>3. What were the main factors influencing the achievement/non-achievement of strategic goals and objectives?</li> <li>4. What methods/interventions defined to achieve project goal and objectives? Were these methods and interventions effective to achieve project goal and objectives defined in the project design?</li> </ol>
<p><b>Relevance</b>  <i>The extent to which the project is suited to the priorities and policies of the target group and the context.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. To what extent do the achieved results (project goal, outcomes and outputs) continue to be relevant to the needs of women and girls?</li> <li>6. Are activities and outputs set in the project plan consistent with the overall vision and mission of WCLAC?</li> <li>7. Are the activities and outputs of the project consistent with the intended impact?</li> <li>8. To what extent did the project respond to the needs of WCLAC beneficiaries?</li> <li>9. To what extent were project goal, objectives and interventions defined in the project responsive to the need of both women victims of violence and target communities?</li> </ol>
<p><b>Efficiency</b>  <i>Measures the outputs - qualitative and quantitative - in relation to the inputs. It is an economic term which refers to whether the project was delivered cost effectively.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. To what extent was the project efficiently and cost-effectively implemented?</li> <li>11. Were objectives of selected programs achieved on time?</li> <li>12. Was the overall programming under this project implemented in the most efficient manner compared with alternatives?</li> <li>13. Were there any alternatives to implement current projects in a more efficient manner to achieve outcomes and impact?</li> </ol>
<p><b>Sustainability</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>14. To what extent will the achieved results, especially any positive changes in the lives of women (project goal level), be sustained after this project ends?</li> </ol>

<p><i>Sustainability is concerned with measuring whether the benefits of a project are likely to continue after the project/funding ends.</i></p>	<p>15. To what extent will activities, results and effects be expected to continue after donor intervention has ended?</p> <p>16. To what extent does the intervention reflect on and take into account factors which, by experience, have a major influence on sustainability like e.g. economic, social and cultural aspects?</p>
<p><b>Impact</b> <i>Assesses the changes that can be attributed to a particular project relating specifically to higher-level impact (both intended and unintended).</i></p>	<p>17. To what extent has the project contributed to ending violence against women, gender equality and/or women’s empowerment (both intended and unintended impact)?</p> <p>18. What are the intended/unintended, positive/negative effects of implementation of the project on lives of target women, and target communities?</p> <p>19. To what extent did interventions and implementation support WCLAC to achieve its mission and vision (improving lives of women)?</p>
<p><b>Knowledge generation</b> <i>Assesses whether there are any promising practices that can be shared with other practitioners.</i></p>	<p>20. To what extent has the project generated knowledge, promising or emerging practices in the field of EVAW/G that should be documented and shared with other practitioners?</p>
<p><b>Gender Equality and Human Rights</b></p>	<p>Cross-cutting criteria: the evaluation should consider the extent to which human rights based and gender responsive approaches have been incorporated through-out the project and to what extent.</p>

## 5. Evaluation methodology

This external evaluations is expected to follow a mixed method in order to ensure triangulation of information that leads to achieving objectives of this final evaluation:

- Review of relevant project documents
- Focus group discussion with different project beneficiaries
- In-depth interviews with project management and key stakeholders
- Survey to collect quantitative data a sample from project beneficiaries through developing a questionnaire

WCLAC project management will provide the evaluation consultant with relevant documents, list of beneficiaries and target locations.

## 6. Evaluation Ethics

The evaluator/s must put in place specific safeguards and protocols to protect the safety (both physical and psychological) of respondents and those collecting the data as well as to prevent harm. This must ensure the rights of the individual are protected and participation in the evaluation does not result in further violation of their rights. The evaluator/s must have a plan in place to:

Protect the rights of respondents, including privacy and confidentiality;

Elaborate on how informed consent will be obtained and to ensure that the names of individuals consulted during data collection will not be made public;

The evaluator/s must be trained in collecting sensitive information and specifically data relating to violence against women and select any members of the evaluation team on these issues.

Data collection tools must be designed in a way that is culturally appropriate and does not create distress for respondents;

Data collection visits should be organized at the appropriate time and place to minimize risk to respondents;

The interviewer or data collector must be able to provide information on how individuals in situations of risk can seek support (referrals to organizations that can provide counseling support, for example)

## 7. Key deliverables of evaluators and timeframe

This assignment will start on February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020 and ends on April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Evaluation deliverables will be as follows:

No.	Deliverable	Deadlines of Submission to UN Trust Fund M&E Team	Deadline
1	Evaluation Inception Report	This report should be submitted by the evaluator after one week of signing the agreement. It will be sent to UN Trust Fund for review. Feedback will be provided by UNTF by March 14 <sup>th</sup> , 2020	Feb. 27 <sup>th</sup> 2020
2	Draft Evaluation Report	The report will be reviewed by WCLAC and UNTF. Feedback will be sent by 23 <sup>rd</sup> , 2020.	April 10 <sup>th</sup> , 2020
3	Final Evaluation Report	The Final Report needs to meet the minimum requirements and structure specified in this guideline for UN Trust Fund's review and approval.	April 25 <sup>th</sup> , 2020

## 8. Evaluation team composition and required competencies

Evaluator/team of consultants will be selected based on competitive bidding based on WCLAC procurement regulations. The Evaluation Team will be consisting of one Senior Evaluator/Team Leader will be responsible for undertaking the evaluation from start to finish and for managing the evaluation team under the supervision of evaluation task manager from the WCLAC, for the data collection and analysis, as well as report drafting and finalization in English.



In specific the Senior Evaluator/Team Leader should have the following competencies:

- Evaluation experience at least **5 year** in conducting external evaluations, with mixed-methods evaluation skills and having flexibility in using non-traditional and innovative evaluation methods
- Expertise in gender and human-rights based approaches to evaluation and issues of violence against women and girls
- Experience with program design and theory of change, gender-responsive evaluation, participatory approaches and stakeholder engagement
- Specific evaluation experiences in the areas of ending violence against women and girls
- Experience in collecting and analysing quantitative and qualitative data as well as data visualization
- In-depth knowledge of gender equality and women's empowerment
- A strong commitment to delivering timely and high-quality results, i.e. credible evaluation and its report that can be used
- A strong team leadership and management track record, as well as interpersonal and communication skills to help ensure that the evaluation is understood and used.
- Good communication skills and ability to communicate with various stakeholders and to express concisely and clearly ideas and concepts
- Country experience and knowledge: in-depth knowledge of Palestinian context is required.
- Language proficiency: fluency in English and Arabic is mandatory.

#### **9. Management Arrangement of the evaluation**

WCLAC will define a focal point with the Evaluator and the team. Services and Community Empowerment Unit Team Leader will be responsible of provided relevant data to the consultants and arrange for the field visits, FGD and the interviews. WCLAC will also define the Director of Programs as a focal point for quality control. The management committee reference to this evaluation process will be Services and Community Empowerment Unit Team Leader, Director of Programs, General Director and Director of Finance and Administration.

#### **10. Timeline of the entire evaluation process**

This evaluation will start on February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020 and end on April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Detailed timeline will be provided explaining dates of submission of each task to be reviewed. This timeline will ensure having enough time for both WCLAC and UNTF to review and send feedback to the evaluation team.

#### **11. Submission of Proposals**

- Interested individuals or companies should submit a complete **technical and financial proposal with detailed methodology and work-plan** in English by **February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020 in sealed separate envelopes for financial (in US \$) and technical offers to WCLAC Office in Ramallah, Batn El Hawa**
- The proposal should be valid until July 2020
- Provide a document on company profile explaining previous experience in doing strategic plans mid-term review
- Provide the CVs of all evaluators involved

## Annex 2

### List of People contributed for this evaluation

WCLAC		
1.		General Director
2.		Director of Programs
3.		Project Manager
4.		Lawyer Ramallah Office
5.		Social Worker Ramallah Office
6.		Lawyer Ramallah Office
7.		Lawyer Jerusalem Office
8.		Social Worker Jerusalem Office
9.		Shelter Manager Jericho
10.		Social Worker Hebron Office
11.		Social Worker Hebron Office
12.		Lawyer Hebron and Bethlehem office
13.		Lawyer Hebron Office

MoSD		
1.		Deputy Minister
2.		Jericho Directorate Manager
3.		Jericho Directorate Social worker
4.		Bethlehem Shelter Manager

Police		
1.		Family unit officer
2.		Family Unit deputy officer
3.		Family Unit Female police

Jericho Governorate office		
1.		Protection unit manager

Academia		
1.		Professor of communication

Al Muntada Coalition for Combating Violence against Women		
1.		Al Muntada Network Coordinator

Direct Beneficiaries (GBV victims)		
28 women (names are kept anonymous)		

**Three FGDs**

**24 Sharia Lawyers** and activists

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## Annex 3

### Documents consulted

- 1- Project proposal
- 2- Results Framework
- 3- Budget
- 4- Narrative progress reports (Year 1, 2 and 3)
- 5- Raising awareness printed materials
- 6- Family protection law draft/proposal
- 7- National reference protocol
- 8- MoSD Procedures Manual on Services Provided by MOSD 2019
- 9- Media reports addressing GBV
- 10- Central Bureau of Statistics report on GBV in Palestine 2019 survey findings
- 11- Essential Services Package for Women and Girls Subject to Violence. UN Women, UNFPA, WHO, UNDP & UNODC. 2015
- 12- Bryman, A. (2012) Social Research Methods 4th Edition, Oxford University Press: Oxford.
- 13- Lincoln, Y.S. and Guba, E. G. (1985) Naturalistic Inquiry, Sage: London, California, New Delhi.

## Annex 4

### Evaluation Questions and Guidelines Semi-structured interview guide

#### RELEVANCE

1. How is ending GBV relevant to women in your country context, especially in recent years?
2. What is your understanding of the WCLAC program? What do you think it aims to achieve?
3. Do you think this program meets the needs of women (beneficiaries)
4. Did you participate in the design and planning of the program? How? [For WCLAC staff: How did WCLAC engage others in the design and planning of the program?]
5. Did you participate in previous evaluation processes or sessions? [For WCLAC: How did you ensure review/evaluation recommendations were followed through?]
6. Do you think that the WCLAC program filled a gap/need on women's protection, security and preventing VAW? Did they have added value compared to other actors? Should they continue or can someone else take over/build on it?
7. What are priorities for women in your country at the moment?
8. Do you think WCLAC should keep working on VAW or move away from it?

#### EFFECTIVENESS

1. Did this program make a difference in your Palestine context? What changes have happened since and a result of the project? (local context level)
2. What have been the effects on the target groups? Do you think women feel more protected?
3. Have there been any unintended effects?
4. Give me one example of what you consider a best practice resulting from this program?
5. Do you think the program outputs were achieved? And from your perspective what were they? (programmatic level-logframe)
6. How do you define (and evaluate) your relationship with WCLAC? how could it have been more effective? [For WCLAC: substitute with 'partners']
7. Does the WCLAC program link to other initiatives you works on? [For WCLAC: Does this program link to other WCLAC work in the country? How?]
8. Does the WCLAC program link to other initiatives working on similar issues in your country context? [For WCLAC: to you knowledge, who are the other key actors working in the field of ending GBV? In what ways do you relate to/cooperate with them?]

## EFFICIENCY

1. How did you implement/resource this program?
2. Any major challenges/obstacles? And at what level? Did you overcome them? How?
3. Were there any external factors that affected implementation of the program? How did you deal with these changes?
4. How did you monitor progress? Can we have a copy of your latest report to WCLAC?

## LESSONS LEARNED

1. What 3 things did you learn from your involvement with the WCLAC program?
2. If you were to repeat this program, what would you do differently? And why?
3. Did you benefit from national platform/work? In what ways? If not, why? What could have been done better? What were shortcomings of national work?
5. How did project's discussions/decisions/documents translate or link with national context? How do you propose the program changes in the future and why?
6. Do you propose the program changes in the future, and why?

## SUSTAINABILITY

1. Will you keep working on/advocating for ending GBV after the program ends?
2. What would prevent you from continuing this work? What would facilitate you continuing this work?
3. Do you feel better equipped/confident to continue working in this direction? Did the WCLAC program contribute to building your capacities? If so, how?
4. Could this program be replicated or scaled up?

## **Women's (program beneficiaries) focus group: interview guide**

### Relevance

1. What needs/problems are being addressed in this project?
2. Are these the most important to the GBV victims? If not, what are?
3. What makes most sense to you if we ask about ending GBV?
4. Do you think that ending GBV is most relevant to women? Should other population groups be targeted by similar programs?

### Effectiveness

5. What changes have happened in the community since and as a result of the project?
6. What have been the main benefits?
7. Have there been any costs to the direct beneficiaries? To the community?
8. What have you learned as a result of the project?
9. How could the project have been more useful to you/effective?

### Efficiency

10. Has the work of the project to date been taken forward in the best way?
11. Is there anything that should be done differently to bring greater benefits?

### Results/Sustainability

12. Do you think you/ the community will continue enjoy the benefits of the project in future years?
13. What can be done to make sure that benefits do not end when the project ends?

## **Staff focus group process guide and main questions**

Introductions and update on evaluation progress

Timeline activity: visualizing and reflecting on the program (2017-2020).

- i) Plot strategic plans developed between 2017 and 2020 by MoSD.
- ii) Plot the various 1325-related program cycles on the timeline.
- iii) Plot when reviews or evaluations of the program were conducted.

Individual reflection exercise on program highs and lows

How you have learned about the program services, activities, interventions?

Was the program/training/raising awareness actions design appropriate to the needs of the target group?

Were the expert team of service provision/training useful and professional?

Did the content of training/social counseling services/ raising awareness updated and in good quality?

Indicate what you think were major achievements of the program,

3-5 strengths of the program that WCLAC could build on in its future program planning.

Challenges faced in the program to be taken into account in future program planning.

Extract key learning based on project timeline cumulative