

CONNECTING VOICES AND ACTION
to End Violence Against Women and Girls
in the MENA Region

This project is co-funded
by the European Union



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BACKGROUND

The MENA region faces higher than global averages of violence against women and girls (VAWG), with rates of intimate partner violence (IPV) at 35% compared to the global average of 26%. Women and girls across Iraq, Yemen, and OPT face the dual burden of deeply entrenched social and legal discriminatory norms on VAWG, alongside the impact of protracted conflict and militarization at the hands of both state and non-state actors. Internally displaced and refugee women and girls face even greater risks of sexual abuse and rape, forced marriage, and sexual exploitation as their displacement becomes more protracted. Men and boys are also at risk of GBV, and persons with disabilities remain highly vulnerable and in need of specialised interventions. This project is relevant to the unique needs of WROs who nominates VAWG as one of the most pressing issues to work on in MENA at the regional level.

OUTPUTS

- Support 23 WROs to be more effective and independent in their work of providing response to sexual and gender-based violence in conflict settings
- Increase awareness of men, boys, women and girls of their roles in preventing GBV and supporting survivors
- Strengthen the global knowledge on GBV in conflict and support WRO networks at national and regional level

DURATION: 42 months (March '19 – August '22)

BUDGET: € 6.646.471 (90% co-funded by the European Union)

PARTNERS: GDRSC at Sana'a University

Associates: KAFA MenEngage

OBJECTIVES: Overall, Naseej aims at contributing to more gender-equitable societies in **Iraq, Yemen, and the Occupied Palestinian Territory** in which women and girls live free from violence across all spheres of life.

Specifically, it aims at supporting women's rights civil society organisations (WROs) in the target countries to effectively prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) during conflict.

FINAL BENEFICIARIES: **50,000 women and girls** in Iraq, Yemen, and OPT vulnerable or survivors of GBV.

TARGET COUNTRIES

The action will be implemented in 3 countries:

- OPT: Gaza, West Bank, Area C and East Jerusalem
- Iraq: Diyala and Ambar governorates
- Yemen: Sana'a, Lahj, Aden and Taiz

TARGET GROUPS

- Up to 23 small to medium-sized women's rights organizations already existing in the countries
- 1,800 men and boys (estimated: 800 in Iraq, 600 in OPT, 400 in Yemen)
- Up to 150 social leaders, policy and decision makers, including religious leaders and other influential figures

APPROACH

Naseej ('texture', in English) is based on a holistic approach, ensuring coordination and collaboration with relevant sectors and actors. WRO will be placed as active participants, supported and encouraged to use a client-centred approach. This approach is based on supporting women to analyse their problems and needs and make decisions that will help them overcome the effects of GBV while remaining engaged with the life they chose for themselves. This approach empowers women to take control of their lives, identify the services they need and the solution to their problems that are most suitable to them.

IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

Inception. This phase aims at establishing a good understanding of the region to ensure the project is grounded in a gender and conflict transformative approach. During this period, an analysis of existing GBV support services and referral systems will be done. An inception workshop will be held to review the implementation plan.

Establishment of the Grant Scheme. A grant scheme will be established across the three countries and the grantees (up to 23 WROs and/or CSOs) will be selected. The grant scheme will provide three main activity streams:

1. strengthening support and referral services and reporting system for women and girls GBV survivors;
2. transforming the social norms that perpetuate GBV;
3. strengthening development and implementation of national GBV legislation.

Assessment and Capacity Building. As part of the grant scheme, an organizational and technical assessment of the selected grantees will be conducted to establish a mutually

agreed capacity development and support plan. In-country inception workshops will be held with the grantees to discuss Oxfam's and EU's minimum standards on finance, project reporting and visibility. **Implementation of stream 1.** Grantees will be encouraged to create and or strengthen safe spaces for women and to design tools to inform community members with the goal of increasing women and girls' knowledge of GBV support services. Activities will be focused on establishing or improving referral systems for survivors of violence and on strengthening access to appropriate health, legal and psychological support services: this will be done through training and coordinating service providers in clinical management of GBV. Regional meetings and learning events will be organized to share best practices among WROs working on the MENA region.

Implementation of stream 2. Men and boys will be engaged in secondary violence prevention interventions to challenge gender and social norms that perpetuate GBV. Women and girls will be targeted as leaders of change in their communities on shifting and changing attitudes and social norms. Social leaders, influencers and role models will be engaged in local and national dialogue and advocacy to positively influence their position on gender equality and women's rights.

Implementation of stream 3. Sana'a University will lead a research process to produce a multi-country report on GBV in conflict with a focus on the most vulnerable of women (including the ones with disability) and a baseline study to understand community perception of GBV. Testimonies will be collected to advocate against violations of women's rights under International Humanitarian Law. Various learning products will be disseminated to document the impact of the project and advocacy activities to reform national legislation will be supported.

