Empowering Women in East Jerusalem and Increasing Access to Justice through Legal Education

Final Evaluation Report

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Introduction

This report is an assessment and evaluation of the project “Empowering Women in East Jerusalem and Increasing Access to Justice through Legal Education”, which was designed and implemented by the Jerusalem Center for Women (JCW) in 2020, and funded by the Canada Feminist Fund (CFF). This report aims to show what was achieved, when, and how. It aims to fulfill two specific goals: first, it is an evaluation of the work achieved throughout the project, and the social impacts it carries; and secondly it is a reflexive work made for internal purposes in order for the JCW to learn from its own achievements and possible “flaws”. This to later improve its own operations for future projects. It is written in a narrative way, to ease reading, and focuses on qualitative data analysis, while still taking into account quantitative data in its frame.

The project was carried out through two different phases, each one having its own specific objectives, aiming to reach different specific targets. All phases will be detailed later own in this report, and all outcomes noticed, generated impact “on the ground”, will be shared as well.

It is also important to mention that 2020, was a year marked worldwide by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic impacted severely the JCW’s operations on the ground, and delayed this very project as well, especially during Phase I. As such, the report also includes a part on the consequences of the COVID-19 outbreak in Palestine, and the steps undergone by the JCW to ensure the project’s continuity, and that all targets were met. For safety reason, even when corona cases rates went lower in Palestine (in June 2020), it was decided to continue the learning workshops online until the end. The full impact of COVID-19 on the project’s continuity, implementation and evaluation, as well as its effects on the staff and trainers’ work, will be detailed later. In relation to this, a small part will focus on the “lessons learnt” by corona, and will give suggestions for possible improvements necessary to be done to adapt future projects while facing similar exceptional situations.

Context and Project Description

“Empowering Women in East Jerusalem and Increasing Access to Justice through Legal Education” was designed based on previous projects implemented by the JCW, which also involved the trainings of young women from East Jerusalem about their rights and the basics teachings of gender. After evaluation of these projects, while it was positively asserted that objectives were met by the JCW, a desire was expressed to implement new projects that will allow women to go beyond the simple framework of passive learning, by allowing them to actually become “active resilient of change” within their own community.

In more details, previous projects showed that most women of Jerusalem lack the basic knowledge to understand gender and its ramifications within the Palestinian society. It was also noticed that most of women were not fully aware of their rights, the laws governing them, or even the protection tools available to them in case of human’s rights violations or even organizations that could help them (such as domestic violence, divorce, Israeli’s violations on properties, and so on). While workshops and trainings provided gave them basic knowledge on gender and women’s rights, it was later assessed by the JCW team that this knowledge gained was useful mostly at an “individual” level. The knowledge was thus, not shared at a community level, but remained “isolated” within a group of individuals or family.

In top of that, women living in the Eastern governorate of Jerusalem are facing a unique situation, as they are living in one of the most disputed area of the Israeli Palestinian conflict, where outbreaks of violence and Human’s rights violations are numerous. While still Palestinian, women from East
Jerusalem are not just living under a constant state of military occupation, but are actually governed by Israeli laws. The result is that most of Palestinian women living in Jerusalem are estranged to the laws they are living under. Worst, they will not seek any help if harmed in any way, and will silence themselves, due to the fact that Israeli authorities, and more specifically the Israeli police, are also the ones oppressing them.

Due to the lack of social interventions and safe infrastructures, it is still yet almost impossible to assess the rates of domestic violence, social and structural violence and Human’s rights violations in the governorate of East Jerusalem. Even Palestinian NGOs, working in the field of GBV and/or sexual violence, cannot fully know the impact and consequences of GBV within the area as well as the consequences it has on families and communities.

It was then, after careful analysis of the situation, that the current and main objectives of this project were thought. In it, groups of women would be trained, and become more active and visible within their own communities. As stated in the original proposal, the main objectives of the project were to:

- Empower women in East Jerusalem by providing them with in-depth legal education training that will focus on GBV and the teachings of laws, understanding the judicial system and protection procedures and mechanisms available in Palestine.

- Run a paralegal programme that trains women who are interested in human rights and the law to become paralegals. In it, women would be trained to collect data and advocate within their communities and to provide legal assistance to other women who have experienced gender-based violence, human trafficking, or other human rights violations.

By designing the project, the JCW’s staff thought to create few different precise outcomes, more or less visible on the short or long-run, that would create a significant impact when it comes to GBV, and public policy implementation in East Jerusalem. On the short-term, workshops, training and activities, were designed to give women an understanding of GBV and the social context they are living under, with a basic knowledge about the laws and the judicial systems in Palestine and Israel. With this knowledge, those women will be able to protect themselves better (e.g. in case of divorce or marriage for example), but also will be able to advise, guide and help other female family members, relatives or friends if needed.

On the long-term, the aim is that women by training women on local legislation(s), lobbying and policy advocacy, gender, and gender-based violence (GBV), they will be able to become certified paralegals and will thus have increased access to justice for both themselves and their communities - particularly in East Jerusalem. To achieve this, women selected to attend the workshops were mostly already active in the field of gender, law, or GBV etc. (working in women’s center, advocates, activists), or female students who expressed a desire to work in the fields of human’s rights, and women’s rights in particular.

The difference between this project and regular law degree or courses already available to student in Palestine, is that this project kept an emphasis on “gender”. It gave women with what could be refer a “gender analysis lens”, and taught how to be gender-sensitive. Gender is a component often forgotten, even dismissed, within regular cursus or studies, making that too often the specific difficulties, even dangers, encountered by women trying to take their rights, or seek help, are not properly understood or taken into account.
Another outcome that can be expected on the long term, and which is surely one of the most expected outcome by the JCW, is that, through the project, we aim to give those women the means and tools, to be able to collect and gather information about the extent of GBV within their own community. The main idea here is that some of those women, will stay involved with the JCW, by being engaged in future projects, or other women’s centers (mainly the one that were included as partners during the projects). Through them, data and information (when, where, how...) about GBV in East Jerusalem, would be gathered to provide accurate analysis and rates of the situation of women for the first time in this area of Palestine. As such, our aim is that the work of these women, will help later to develop more efficient strategies for interventions and prevention of any forms of GBV (including the ones caused by the military forces) in East Jerusalem. Ideally, the same process of female community engagement network could be implemented later on to other sensitive areas of Palestine, such as Gaza for example.

Short-terms outcomes are already apparent and could be easily assessed even before the end of the project’s implementation. However, long-terms objectives are still yet to be fully evaluated after few months or a year from now, even later if necessary, to understand the full involvement of the women engaged in this project, and how they started or stayed engaged to this cause in the future.

As a result of all of what is written above, a proposal was submitted to the Canada Feminist Fund which was then approved for funding. By the end of November 2019, an agreement was sign between the JCW and the CFF, which allowed to start the organization and implementation of the present project, which ended in August 2020.
Evaluation Methodology

In order to fully assess the impact and outcomes of the project, an external Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist (M&ES) was hired by the JCW. While external, the M&ES is accustomed to the work of the Jerusalem Center for Women, and already conducted few evaluations for the center in the past. In addition, the M&ES was already aware that the present project was being submitted to the CFF, and when the project was approved, the evaluator already had knowledge of the project details, prior to its implementation.

To be aware of the project’s goals and original objectives allowed the M&ES not to simply conduct an evaluation when requested, but to actually constantly advise the team on monitoring steps in order to gather a maximum of relevant data whenever possible. It also allowed to give insights on how to improve the program’s content, and to regularly check if activities were properly implemented and targets being met.

In April 2020, a small assessment report on the project’s situation was requested by the CFF. The intermediary assessment was made after the completion of the first phase of the project, which marked a critical step in the project as a whole, as will be described later. For objectivity reasons, feedbacks received in April and May 2020, were re-analyzed, and then compared with new data and feedbacks provided by participants. The aim was to calculate the true impact of the project over the months, in the most objective and neutral way possible. Apart from this, the intermediary assessment report, was also very beneficial to the team in regards of the COVID-19’s response, and the digitalization of the project’s activities: questions on how to improve the workshops and trainings online, how to make the Zoom meetings more attractive, were sent to all staff and participants. Answers, comments, remarks, and suggestions were all taken into account to improve the online trainings for the rest of the project.

Presence of the Evaluator

Due to the outbreak of COVID-19, the work of the evaluator was impacted as well as most of the usual ways to collect data, such as interviews, group discussions, questionnaires, usually made on the spot or with direct encounter with people, were not possible due confinement measures imposed by the authorities. As such, collecting data took longer in some instances, especially with questionnaires sent by email, which participants, sometimes, took time to send back.

Apart from this, the evaluator attended all online workshops on Zoom, this with the aim to get a better understanding of the topics taught and to have an overview of who was participating, how, in the workshops. This was also useful to directly assess and check participants’ knowledge, as well as to take notes of participants’ behaviors and responses by listening to discussions and debates. Knowledge of participants and improvements during the trainings could also be assessed easily by their own comments and participation all throughout the workshops.

In addition, the evaluator was also a member in all WhatsApp groups created (to communicate training schedule and share content with participants). As will be shown later, WhatsApp groups were also useful to gather some comments and feedbacks directly after each training.

Data Collection:

Efforts were made by the team of the JCW to focus on the collection of qualitative data whenever possible. This choice was related to the fact that the JCW wanted to give voices to the women
themselves, and listen to their points of views as much as possible. That way, through their own experience, they could also give ideas on how to develop further strategies or activities for future projects as well. It was believed that to gather their points of view of the current status of the project, on a regular basis, could help the entire team of the JCW to develop the project continuously, by reassessing the women’s needs when necessary, and find new ways to attract more participants if needed. As such, especially after the completion of Phase I and after each workshops of Phase II, small and quick questions were asked directly to participants at the end of each sessions: positive vs. negative, difficulties, feelings etc.

During Phase I, prior to each workshop, a small questionnaire to be filled was sent by one of the trainers. This helped to analyze the actual knowledge of all participants from the start. Such data could then be used to compared the end-results and knowledge gained after the end of each workshop. At the end of Phase I, another questionnaire, longer and more detailed than the first one, was sent to the participants via emails. This included questions about the program content itself, knowledge gained, difficulties experienced etc. Some questions were also aimed to gather possible suggestions and ideas on how to improve activities, training content’s, or be more attractive and inclusive in the future. A total of 13 fully completed questionnaires were sent back to the evaluator by email.

Quantitative data were also collected for important information. As such, number of participants were tracked, along with their age, level of education, work or studies, and the area of living. Regarding attendance, connections were also checked in order to know accurately the number of participants, but also, the number of drop-offs.

For Phase II, as the number of participants was lower than in previous training, evaluation could be made directly on Zoom, combining questions asked by the trainer or the evaluator. At the end of each training, beneficiaries were asked to share with the trainer and the evaluator their impressions regarding the topics taught. In addition, participants were asked to share what they would think was positive or negative in what they learnt and how, and how the information they just acquired will be useful for them, and in which aspect of their lives.

At the end of Phase II, a google drive questionnaire was sent to participants via Zoom, to collect specific information that could be easily quantifiable (e.g. length of training, numbers of training, topics hard to understand), or information that was deemed “critical” or hard to share in front of others (e.g. feeling respected by the trainer and others, ability to share their own point of views freely etc.).

Self-Evaluation and Partnership Evaluation:
In addition, a series of specific and detailed questionnaires were sent to the trainers, the coordinators, and the partners working with the JCW, this in order to gather external and more objective point of views regarding the trainings than participants’ responses. In addition, the questionnaires also included questions regarding other aspects of the project, such as communication, collaboration and partnership, and implementation. No negative feedbacks were received by the evaluator regarding the partnership between the different staff or people involved in the organization of the project. It was noted, nonetheless, that communication between the different parties involved in the project could be improved and fastened for future projects.

Regarding obstacles and difficulties encountered in regards of the project’s implementation, all feedbacks or emails received by the evaluator mentioned the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and
the delays caused by it. The COVID-19 full impact will be described in more detailed below in this report.

At the mid-term of phase II, objectives stated in the original proposal were reviewed, and analyzed in accordance to what was achieved so far by the JCW. Discussions took place between Luna Orikat (trainer, advocate and gender expert), the project coordinator Abeer Abu Ghosh, JCW’s chairperson, Fadwa Shaer Khawaja, and the evaluator to discuss results, personal views, each own’s impressions about the overall state of the project’s execution and implementation at this stage.

Direct outcomes observed were evidenced, combined with an analysis of the difficulties encountered by the beneficiaries during the teaching workshops. Feedbacks received previously were thus taken into account, to assess which topics had to be deepened or review quickly during the last week, for women to be more comfortable and to gain a proper understanding of everything they learnt since the beginning of the project.

Following this, the last remaining training were designed by Luna O., to include all of the remaining topics to be taught, with, when necessary, a quick revision of the different subjects which women had the most difficulties to grab fully.

In relation to the questionnaires sent to the participants mentioned in the previous part, few questions were also meant for self-evaluation purposes and to evaluate the JCW overall’s performance in implementing programs. While some women provided some suggestions to improve training online, or to improve teaching contents and methods, no negative feedbacks were received by them. Similarly, 100 % positives answers were given when asked about respect, understanding, and the clarity of topics presented.
Project Implementation

Project - PHASE I
Location & Partners
A series of four workshops was conducted, with participants from different locations of the governorate of East Jerusalem, mainly: Eizariya, Beit Adnan, Shuafat Camp. In order to reach women from each of these locations, the JCW contacted women’s organizations already active in those areas of Jerusalem. Partnership was then set-up with the following organizations:

- Shorouq Society, in Eizariya
- Women Forum Center, in Beit Adnan
- Women’s Center, in Shuafat Camp

In addition to the above organizations, Al Quds University was also contacted, in a desire to integrate students within the project. Students were from different locations of Jerusalem or the West Bank.

All of the partners were essential in finding participants to attend each workshop by using their own community network, and reaching participants themselves. It was planned at first that all partners will provide some safe place for the JCW to conduct the trainings within their own facilities. Unfortunately, as will be detailed later in this report, due to the outbreak of COVID-19, only the workshop with our partner Shorouq Society could be conducted physically. The rest of the workshops, were then conducted online, via the Zoom application.

Nevertheless, even without the possibility to conduct “physical” meetings, partners’ help with the coordination of the online workshop was easing and fastening the all process of implementing the workshops. They could provide the JCW with the participants phone’s numbers in order to create WhatsApp groups, and also helped with communication and organization in setting the schedule of each workshop.

Training Content & Set-up

1 Organization’s website: [https://shorouqsociety.org/](https://shorouqsociety.org/)
2 More information about the Women’s Center can be found on the following link: [http://www.enjoyjerusalem.com/people/organizations/woman-center-shufat-camp](http://www.enjoyjerusalem.com/people/organizations/woman-center-shufat-camp)
The first phase was a key step of the entire project, as this only would allow the JCW to select women to continue to work with on the long-term. It consisted in a series of trainings that will approach specific subjects (see table below) deemed necessary to be known and understood well by the beneficiaries, for them to be able to be part of Phase II. Trainings were designed with the help of two trainers, that already cooperated on several previous projects with the JCW: Luna O., and Lamya S. Both Luna O. and Lamya S. are well trained trainers, gender experts, with a deep knowledge of the situation of women and the challenges faced by them in Palestine.

The topics taught were the same in every workshop made in all of the locations mentioned above. The only difference that could be noted was in the debates and participation of women themselves, which depending in the area and/or level or education, and past experiences, were more or less accustomed to the topic presented below.

To taught during each workshop the same topics, whatever the background of the participants was a strategy to ensure that all women that will later continue the work with the JCW have the exact same basic knowledge before starting the “Training of Trainers” (TOTs) during Phase II.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Session content</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Gender-based violence (forms and phenomena)</td>
<td>The reality of discrimination suffered by Jerusalemite women. Analysis of the local phenomena that afflict women and girls in Jerusalem and its suburbs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The rights of women and girls within the framework of international conventions (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women as a model)</td>
<td>Monitor cases of violence and discuss contentions and justifications</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Protection of women in the system of laws applied in Palestine</td>
<td>Presentation on articles related to violence in both the penal code and the personal status law. Protection mechanisms in special laws and regulations (safety houses, conversion system, protection services, procedures) A draft law to protect the family from violence</td>
<td>The groups will work on a broader understanding of the law, through different case studies and their approach to applicable laws. In addition to group discussion and PPT presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Working mechanisms for the protection of women: &quot;practical applications&quot;</td>
<td>Contribute to writing international reports (documentation) Advice and transfer mechanisms Support groups and organized campaigns</td>
<td>Work will be done in groups and in practice on each axis. In addition: group discussion and PPT presentation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Furthermore, the workshops contents were specifically designed so as to give a practical and necessary knowledge to the women involved that would be useful even if they were not to be selected during Phase II. It is important to underline here that a significant and essential knowledge was gained by all direct participants, that will not be at loss in any case. Based on the feedbacks received after the end of Phase I, it appeared clearly that one of the direct outcomes was that women got access to information that will help them later on in their entire lives. It was also noticed, that the educative aim of the workshops, women earned precious debating and discussing skills. They were able to speak freely about some taboos and personal issues, which also led to an increase in self-confidence.

**PROJECT PHASE II**

**Women’s selection & Beneficiaries Description**

The following criteria were taken into account to select women who could participate in the second series of trainings: attendance, participations, and personal interest.

1. **Attendance**: Online records were used to check which women attended every sessions, and stayed connected from the beginning until the end of the sessions’ hours, but also who attended all sessions.

2. **Participation**: Participation was considered one of the key elements to be taken into account. Participating actively during the workshop was seen as a form of interest in the topic taught. The quality and accuracy of the remarks and debating arguments were also taken into consideration by the JCW’s staff.

3. **Personal Interest**: Women who expressed the biggest interest and motivation regarding the possibility to take part in Phase II were first given consideration.

In addition to the above, selection was also made according to the following questions: how the woman was engaging with the others? Respect, understanding and the ability to listen to others, even when disagreeing, was seen a necessary quality to be able to continue the project.

Following those afore-mentioned criteria, a total of 9 women were selected, all of them aged between 20 to 29 years old, with the exception of one (47 years old). While half of the participants were from East Jerusalem, it was also noted that the other half came sere originally from other areas of the West Bank: namely, Hebron, Bethlehem, Ramallah and Jericho. It was recorded that all of them achieved at some point in their curriculum a university degree, mostly from Al-Quds University, although one of them completed her Bachelor’s degree in the UK.

**Course and training content (First Part)**

As briefly mentioned in the introduction, Phase II was built on the results obtained during Phase I based on answers in the questionnaires sent back to the evaluator. Meaning that, while training was designed for the JCW to achieved its objectives, answers by participants were read and taken into account. For example, a large number of participants stated that they had difficulties to fully understand CEDAW agreements. As such, during an online session, one of the women was chosen to make herself a presentation of CEDAW to the others, while others were presenting other topics related to women’s rights worldwide or in Palestine.
Based on feedback, women were also expressing their need and envy to gain skills that will also useful in their professional life, and not just at the level of their family, or daily life. Following this, as is shown in the table below, emphasis was made on communication and leadership skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Session content</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Connection and communication 1</td>
<td>• Effective Communication,</td>
<td>Work will be done in groups through exercises, and the presentation of paper clips in addition to group discussions and PPT presentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Communication Styles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Communication Skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Body language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connection and communication 2</td>
<td>• Elements of Communication</td>
<td>Working in groups will take place through group exercises, role plays, in addition to debates and a PPT presentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Barriers to Communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Address an audience (presentation skills)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching, training and facilitating dialogue</td>
<td>• Organize and design a training session</td>
<td>Role play will be done in groups In addition: group discussions and presentation PPT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Prepare training material and lead a training session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership skills mechanisms</td>
<td>• Group leadership skills (the art of leadership)</td>
<td>The work will be done in groups: Participants will choose a topic and present it to the group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Practical applications</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After those workshops were completed, a quick review of the project’s activities was made by the evaluator. As mentioned previously in this report, from there a discussion took place between all of the JCW’s staff, reviewing outcomes, activities implemented, and the project’s final expected objectives, in order to make sure the JCW was achieving its goals.

As such, from the 10th to 14th of August, four final training sessions, two hours long each were set-up to complete the project’s teaching period. Topics taught were focusing on advocacy techniques, the notion of development and human rights, women’s rights worldwide and the UN. For the last training on the 14th of August, the women themselves were asked to present a specific topic in 15 minutes to the others.
**Topics chosen included:**

- Women Rights as Human Rights (with an emphasis on CEDAW agreements)
- Divorce law in Palestine
- Heritage according to the Islamic Law
- Physical Gender-Based Violence and Trials Procedures
- Women’s Economic Rights within the Marriage (alimony, dowry, dependencies, family property)
- Children’s Rights within the Family
- Sexual Violence and Sexual Abuse

The topic to be presented were deliberately complex, from which a huge amount of literature, data and sources can be found, especially on Google. The main goal of the exercise was that women will have to categorized and select the most relevant and important information, to later share it with the other in a clear and concise manner. This exercise was particularly useful at a professional level, or for advocacy and communication campaigns, or for interventions in conferences for example, as it is often asked to present complex issues in a limited amount of time.

**Project Final Activities:**

**Writing workshops:**

On August 24th and 26th, a writing workshop was conducted at the JCW’s headquarters in Ramallah. A total of 15 women participated in the writing workshop, so that some women who were present in Phase I could also join if they wanted to. Each session was conducted respectively by Luna O. and Lamya S., as the two trainers have different expertise, and did not taught the same topic to the beneficiaries. The writing workshop first aim is for the direct beneficiaries to produce a brief factsheet about Palestinian women’s rights, challenges and obstacles encountered by them within the society and the legal system.

The writing workshops were used as a way for the beneficiaries themselves to express some of their main concerns related to women’s rights, gender and safety in Palestine, while learning how to frame those concerns and demands in an official, logical and clear way. It also taught the participants to work in a group, and how to agree on how to set up a list of demands and priorities.

**Video Making and Editing:**

Started from mid-July 2020, a small video, 4 minutes length approximately, was created to promote the work of the JCW, the project itself, as well as the participation and contribution of the CFF. The video will be shared widely on social media (YouTube and Facebook) and the JCW’s website, so as to reach a wider audience. The video is free to access online, and the participants, will also be able to watch it at their convenience, and show it to their family members or friends whenever it pleases them.

As it is intended to share this video to an audience inside and outside of Palestine, two versions were edited, in English and Arabic language. Both versions of the video can be accessed through the following link:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1movg9UxVnWyuyY586w4yW0pNWS8Wv_Ox
Certifications:
As shown in the pictures below, all participants were given an official certificate as a proof of their engagement and involvement in the project. The certificates are authentic, and can be used on the women’s CV; and can be used as well, if needed, as a proof of expertise to employers or others organizations.

Certificates were stamped, signed by the chairperson of the JCW, and then distributed to women on the days of the writing workshops mentioned above. The certificates were also given as a kind of “reward” for the women’s hard work and participation in the project, certifying their presence and participation in the project’s main activities.
COVID-19 Impact and Issues Related to It

Main Obstacles Encountered

The main problem encountered during the implementation of the project was related to the COVID-19 outbreak worldwide. The pandemic delayed the entire project. While it was expected that the first series of trainings/workshop to be conducted was expected to be finished by the end of April but due to the situation, the workshops were finished by mid-May 2020 only.

From the four workshops that would have been part of the first phase of the project’s completion, only one was conducted “physically” with participants (with Shorouq Society, in Eizariyya, on the 15 and 22 of February, and 9 and 16 of March). Eventually, the last day of this training of this workshop was done under the curfew.

At first, nobody could prevent the full impact of this worldwide pandemic, but it was soon obvious that the situation will last longer than expected, and the JCW worked to review its strategies and looked for solutions to continue the implementation of its ongoing projects.

As a response to the pandemic, it was thus decided to “digitalized” the project as much as possible. This by using communication technologies and online tools whenever possible. Following this, it was decided to conduct the trainings related to the first part of the project online, via a series of Zoom meetings. Below are the dates:

1. Women’s Center, in Shuafat Camp: 29-30 of April, and 2nd and 4th of May 2020
2. Women Forum Center in Beit Adnan: 9-10-11, and 13th of May 2020
3. Quds University, in the Old City: 16-17-18 and 20 of May 2020

To help the organization of the online trainings, a WhatsApp group was created for each workshop. The WhatsApp groups were reported to be very successful by all people involved directly or indirectly in the project. It allowed to have a faster communication and response between all parties involved within the project, participants included. This would not have been possible with regular emails in which exchanges takes longer. WhatsApp allow direct, smoother and easier communication, less formal than emails, which was good, as it made the workshops themselves more “personal” and friendly.

WhatsApp was also used to share material (videos, CEDAW agreements and others links), for the participants to watch at their convenience when they had time. This added a component of continuity to the online trainings, which had a positive effect overall, as it allowed participants to get the same amount of information and learning, if not even more, than the women from Eizariya for example.

Online Attendance Regularity & Other Issues:

To implement training online also caused some challenges. It was noticed that attendance was harder to track in general. The main difficulty is that Zoom meetings are much less engaging in general than physical encounter. Similarly, participations, discussions and debates were also harder to foster, especially during the first day of each workshop, as online trainings were much less personal. The lack of physical encounter, made that the workshops were seen as less engaging and
attractive. Groups exercises and discussions were not possible via Zoom, which made that women were “alone” in front of their screens, away from the others.

Especially during the training conducted with the Women’s Center in Shuafat Camp, a high number of drop-off was recorded, as well as a significant inconsistency in attendance: women from one day to another were not the same.

When noticed, the JCW changed its global approach. For the next sessions to be conducted, quick votes were sent to participants via a google drive (see link here for an example of vote sent to participants: Schedule Vote) to choose the best time for them to attend the training. This increased the number of participants. It was then decided to share more details about each training content within the WhatsApp group to enhance participants curiosity.

From there, attendance was more regular, and numbers of participants globally higher (from 6 to 8 participants). It is true that the number of participants online is lower than the one conducted in Eizariya, or other previous trainings implemented by the JCW. However, it was noted that it is less practical to conduct training via Zoom with a large number of participants, due to communications and visibility issues. It is much harder to create online debates on Zoom with more than 10 participants, as sometimes participants want to speak in the same time, and cannot properly see each other to acknowledge each other participation. Keeping participants to a lower number, proved to foster more quality exchanges and discussions in general.

**Connectivity Related Issues**

Connectivity issues, were one of the biggest problems faced during online trainings, and based on feedbacks given by participants after Phase I, it was the most “annoying” faced. Besides troubles in joining on Zoom, low connectivity can also hamper the quality of the sounds and of the video in general. However, it was properly communicated to everybody that it was better, whenever possible, to connect from a laptop and not from a phone in order to get a better and stronger connection. Of course not all participants had a laptop, and it was thus also advised, to connect to a strong WIFI connection from home, or the workplace (in some cases), and not to be connected through a public network.

It happened few times, that women could not access the Zoom link sent to them. However, if so, they were able to directly write to the WhatsApp group in which they were in, and get help from our IT online coordinator Saeed F., present in every single online training. Other women present in the WhatsApp group could also advise the others on how to connect or join when they saw the issue was quite simple.
Positive Outcomes of the Online Trainings:

Budget Expenditures, Time and Safety:

While the pandemic affected all aspects of the project, online trainings also had positive aspects when conducting trainings in an area such as Jerusalem. First, timing in implementing online trainings is lower as it is much faster and easier to organize. No need to plan for authorizations to enter Jerusalem, no need to find safe-places to conduct the workshops etc....

Therefore, while at first the project was delayed due to the COVID-19 outbreak, in just less than a month, three workshops were fully completed. This can be considered a time record, but is also related to the fact that there was no need to rent place, or to make sure that spaces available at our partner’s locations were free. In addition, as Phase I trainings were set-up at the heart of the confinement period in Palestine, there was no conflicting schedule as, except for a few women, all of them were already at home everyday day.

Another clearly visible outcome was that the online workshops were perceived as extremely safe by both the participants and JCW’s staff. In more details, East Jerusalem is the most disputed area within the conflict between Palestine and Israel, and clashes there happen on a weekly basis. Since the construction of the Separation Wall by Israel in the early 2000s, movements in this governorate are constantly and severely controlled through checkpoints. Checkpoints closure are random, and it is not uncommon that some Palestinian are simply denied passage to checkpoints without justifications. When workshops were set-up on Zoom, the issue of crowded checkpoints, passages and accesses were not an issue anymore, and it made it easier for everybody to connect themselves on time, from their home, or workplace.

WhatsApp Use:

In addition, at the time of the writing of this report, it was noticed that the WhatsApp groups are still more or less active, with women still communicating and sometimes sharing ideas, content, even asking advices and questions to each other. A good example here can be the WhatsApp group created with women from the Shuafat Camp, which after the end of the workshop, renamed the group at their convenience: “Jerusalem Women for Social Work”. Trainers, staffs from the JCW and the evaluator were removed from this group, and only women from Shuafat Camp, related directly or indirectly to the Women’s Center, are now able to see it. It appears so far that this group of women from Shuafat created their own small network to continue their own work or activities. Other groups that are still particularly active are the ones created with the students from Al-Quds University, and for the Phase II trainings.

The WhatsApp groups and their activity can be described as an unintended impact created by the project, in which women created by themselves their own community network. It could be a good idea here, to later (after few months for example) to assess once again those networks, to see the impact they have, and how women are communicating in those, as well as their engagement.
Participants Feedbacks:

Surprisingly, when gathering feedbacks, especially during Phase II, some women also shared with us some positive aspects of the online trainings. While they were all acknowledging that online meetings could not replace physical trainings, they also stressed the fact that they were gaining new personal and professional skills. After a while, women reported that they got more and more used to trainings online. They felt more comfortable speaking, and were able to listen more to the others. Along with these remarks, they also all agreed on the “easiness” to attend online trainings: no need to take transports, attend from the comfort from your own house, no lateness etc.

Especially during Phase II: emphasis was made on the fact that some computer skills were gained as many never used Zoom before, or were not familiar with the use of computer in general. A positive outcome of the training is that many reported having gained significant confidence using information technologies (sharing videos or PowerPoint online, presenting online etc.). In this regard, some stressed that the skills gained would be useful later on for them professionally. It is nevertheless important to note that some women, were already used to the use of computer on a daily basis (notably students from Al-Quds university and some active women). However, all of them reported that they gained new knowledge and skills by working with the JCW online, notably on how to set-up and attend meetings online, and that the whole situation was a new experience to them.

In that sense, the use of Zoom helped them to listen and engaged in a new way with other people. People that were not sitting next to them physically, and they could barely see each other. As stated by one of them, Zoom was useful in the way that it taught her to allow the other to speak:

“I am always speaking, always. (…) I don’t really listen to the others. And through the internet, you cannot see, so I had to wait and to listen, so it was good because it taught me to listen to the others more carefully.”

During a group discussion following a session in Phase II, the women particularly stressed the importance of being able to participate and converse during online meetings for later opportunities at work. One is particular said that working online will be useful at her workplace, were communication had a big importance business wise.
COVID-19: Additional Activities Implemented

In the middle of the pandemic, while the JCW still tried to maintain its operations as normally as possible, an urgency arose to respond to the spread of the virus. East Jerusalem is an area characterized by a fundamental lack of health infrastructure, and the with military occupation, combined with the presence Wall and numerous checkpoints, makes it harder for the population to access proper medical services in general.

To respond as best as it could, while still implementing this very project, the JCW redesigned some of its activities and priorities, so the COVID-19 impact and response could be integrated as a full component of the project’s development.

Distribution of Medical Kits

One of the first decisions undertaken by the JCW, was to prepare some medical kits to be distributed to the women from the most marginalized areas of East Jerusalem. A total of 95 medical kits were created, containing protection items against COVID-19 (masks and gloves), and basic hygiene items related to women’s health needs (protection for period, shampoo etc.)

The distribution was made through the very own same network created within this project. The same organizations and women that were part of the project in Phase I were given a certain number of medical kits that they will distribute and give to women living within their communities.

Sessions for female teenagers with Layla A.:  
On May 16th and 22nd, two online sessions via Zoom, were conducted with high school girls (aged between 15 and 16 years old) from Abu Dis school in East Jerusalem. The aim was to help them with stress management during the COVID-19 lockdown. Abu Dis is a town that was previously part of Jerusalem, but is nowadays separated by the Wall. The lock down added up much stress in the community, families, teachers and children, in an area that was already characterized as unstable due to a constant military presence and regular clashes of violence. The targeted beneficiaries were chosen based on the fact that Abu Dis was considered a priority area for interventions, and because, as explained by Layla A.: “Being a teenager and a woman is tough everywhere. But more difficult in traditional contexts.”

The sessions aimed to provide a safe space to the teenagers, so they could share some of their concerns and the challenges they had to face daily since confined. Indeed, through the discussions, it was noted that girls tended “to get an extra dose of frustration due to the confinement during such times”. The main following reasons were given for this frustration:

- Some felt bullied by family members, especially males older than themselves.
- Some felt criticized because of weight gain during lock down.
- Online studying was a problem for many, especially because of the absence of decent WIFI service. Or due to the fact that they had no private or quiet space available at home.
- Some expressed fear of dreaming or ambition; as their social environment would not allow them to thrive.
Apart from listening to them, Layla A. gave the teenagers techniques to cope with stress: such as writing, drawing, sharing with a trusted friend, exercising. Remembering them that this lock down is only temporary. The importance of creating a routine, getting up and getting dressed, was also stressed, for them to cope with the entire situation.

The whole idea helped the teenagers to decrease their isolation, and to connect with some of their school’s peers, as well as teachers. It allowed them to “dream again”, and as stated by Layla A. to “give them hope when hope seemed behind the sun”. The following conclusions and suggestions were sent by Layla A. the evaluator and the JCW’s chairperson:

“Like most areas near the separation wall, Abu Dis endures many political and socioeconomic problems. In such oppressive contexts, families get affected, women and girls tend to pay a higher price. COVID-19 exposed and exaggerated problems; especially gender related. The future of Girls from broken families or enduring domestic violence tend to be at stake. It is thus suggested:

1. To continue working with girls, especially teenagers. Since they are at risk of isolation and deprivation.
2. Work with their parents. On parenting skills, adolescence, communication skills and stress management.
3. Conduct workshops with fathers. On modifying their father role from a traditional one to a more empathic one. Thus, humanizing them through self-understanding.
4. Work with teachers to play a supportive role in the class room; and bridge between girls and their families.”

Writing of a Pamphlet
In its response to the COVID-19, the JCW redacted a pamphlet named: “The Impact of the COVID-19 crisis on gender-based violence within the Palestinian society and its relatedness to the ongoing crisis of the occupation.”

The pamphlet analyzes the consequences and impact of the COVID-19 in the Palestinian public and private sphere and its relation to the rise of GBV in the oPt, especially during the confinement period. It offers a careful analysis of the link between COVID-19 and the Israeli occupation, and addresses structural, physical and psychosocial violence that result from gender-based inequalities and differences in power, privileges and opportunities.

The pamphlet can be described as having several objectives. First, it shows the importance of conducting educative and informative program at a national level to counter GBV and gender inequalities in Palestine. Secondly, it reasserts the need to continue work operations, even and especially in times of confinement and pandemic. Finally, it puts an emphasis to the need at a national level to strengthen protection mechanisms available to women.

The final version of the pamphlet can be accessed through the below link: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FyOf8XzgPHiC43o4WrNtpw92bfHGmpSE/view?usp=sharing
Outcomes & Lesson Learnt:
(All of the below remarks and suggestions are based on the feedbacks and questionnaires from the staff and participants, received by the evaluator.)

Visible Impact and Outcomes:
According to feedbacks received, from staffs, trainers as well as beneficiaries, the following were the main direct visible outcomes of the training sessions:

- **Marriage:** It was noticed by all, that all women, but mainly unmarried women were more aware of wedding contracts and conditions, rights and demands after Phase I. Marriage was the topic which engendered extensive debates and discussions among participants.
- **Divorce:** All women gained knowledge about their rights when asking for a divorce, regardless of the difficulties they might encounter during the procedure.
- **All women were more confident to speak about topics deemed as taboos in the Palestinian society.**

It was also underlined by the trainers and the project coordinator that the information provided would be useful for their entire life. Besides the individual level, the change in behaviors (and beliefs) will also affect the family and close relatives. The most noticeable of this being the notion of gender, and the education of the kids at home. One of the best examples is one of the participants, who wrote the following in an email:

“I am 28 years old. I am married and I have three daughters (...). The project was wonderful because it is interesting and empowers women, and I have a passion and interest for this topic. I was married at 15 years old. I suffered a lot because [at that time] I did not understand what the word marriage meant and what responsibilities will fall on me, and my childhood was stolen. I wish I had more awareness, or that someone would tell me about the troubles of an early marriage. (...) Now, after this experience, I am strongly committed to provide advices and awareness to every girls less than 18 years old about to get married, and to tell her that education is a weapon.”

Phase II: As already mentioned previously, during phase II, beneficiaries stressed more the fact that the training on line will or would be useful at a professional level. But in addition to computer and professional skills, it can also be noted that:

- The women were able to speak and present complex and controversial topics to other persons, and this through different communication techniques: debates, PowerPoint, games
- Advocacy and communications trainings were seen as the most efficient and useful by the participants, as they could apply (daily) to many situations in life.

Lessons Learnt and Suggestions:

**WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION:** Throughout the project’s implementation, it was noted that active and working women were harder work with, notably due to the fact that they are already working during the day and have little time to fully participate. For example it was noted that one lawyer was always late to connect herself, as she was still working when the training started. Another one, reported that many times she was connected through her phone, while driving back home, or in the bus, which hampered her ability to participate and debate with the others because of the people or noise around her.
During the sessions on Zoom, it was also noticed that married women and/or with kids were also harder to reach, especially in the evenings or during the confinement period as, for some of them, they were the main ones in charge of the kids at home. Therefore, while setting-up the dates and hours of each workshop, there was some conflicts schedule occurring between participants sometimes. While working/active women preferably wanted to attend the training during the evenings, this was not possible for women with kids, due to family “obligations”.

However, it is important to mention that this issue, only happened within two workshops, conducted with women from Shuafat Camp and Beit Adnan. As participants from Quds University were mostly younger and/or students, and as the university was closed, they had less difficulties to attend trainings, and were more flexible with the hours proposed.

To counter this issue, it is therefore suggested that schedules should be thought much more in advance, maybe with a deep analysis of the targeted beneficiaries, prior to any intervention with them. Schedules vote through WhatsApp were effective in finding the best slots for training, however, it happened that one or two women could not attend at all the workshop as they were not available during the timeframe selected. It could be also an option to propose more training hours on week-ends when necessary.

**TEACHING METHODOLOGY:** Based on feedbacks received, many women from all workshops expressed that they had some difficulties in understanding the concept of gender, or in learning CEDAW agreements, and they wished they could have spent more time on those topics. After reflecting on this, it might be that for the women themselves, gender and CEDAW are abstract concepts, while laws on divorce and marriage, are something that might be perceived as more concrete and real for them. It was also noted few times, that some women feel estranged to CEDAW agreements, as they refer to it as something “foreign”, not applicable to them as Arab women.

In relation to this, CEDAW especially, was the most difficult topic for all of them, and it is suggested that this topic should be taught later on in two sessions, while also give more explanations of the context and actions built around the agreements. In more details, a short introduction to the creation of the UN and its role internationally would help participants to have a better understanding of the context in which CEDAW was written. In addition, the mention of other conventions, state parties’ roles, should give students a better understanding on the roles and goals of such conventions. The teaching of CEDAW could be complemented with deeper focus on what are the “National Actions Plans” and country report(s), with pragmatic examples could also give them more practical knowledge of CEDAW.

**EXPANDING ACTIVITIES TO MORE REMOTE LOCATIONS:** After consultations with the trainers, it was noted that even if somehow harder, teaching and training online could also be useful and allow the JCW to reach women in more remote locations. For example, women living in the Gaza Strip are isolated from the rest of the oPt. Online training was seen by both trainers, as a possibility, or even opportunity, to provide training to women in those areas if given the chance.
**ONLINE TRAINING**: Related to the previous paragraph, online techniques for teaching could be further improve in the future. Mostly, according to the JCW’s online coordinator and participants feedbacks, participation rate, and curiosity could be enhanced through several means. Therefore, while planning future online training, the following should be taken into account:

1. Schedule/dates should be shared more in advance, not the day before, and whenever possible the training content of each session should be shared as well.
2. Trainers could be more involved in the WhatsApp discussions, by sharing content and explain the aim of each sessions themselves to participants.
3. It should be clearly communicated from the start that a certificate will be given to the beneficiaries. Similarly, some rewards could be given after completion of the training to motivate people even more.
4. A WhatsApp group including only the JCW’s staff and trainers should be created to foster internal communication, and fasten actions.

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3 As the JCW conducted a mid-term evaluation, the suggestions listed in regards of the online trainings were already taken into account and started to be put in place before the end of this project.