

Violence Against Women: Breaking the Silence

Private Sector Project for **Women's Health (PSP Jordan)**

August 2010

Violence against women—Jordan's veiled secret

Fatima feels she has no other option except suicide. She has become increasingly withdrawn, even from her three children, and feels alone with her shame. She is afraid to talk to her family or friends, fearing it will bring dishonor on her and her family. She has no one to speak to; nowhere to turn. One day a Community Health Worker (CHW) visits her at home. The CHW has special training and helps Fatima put words to her suffering - it is not acceptable for her husband to beat or sexually abuse her. The CHW helps her understand that she will not lose her family if she speaks up and seeks help. Fatima is relieved to learn that she is not alone. (summarized from the VAW success stories records, 2009)

JORDAN | CAPITAL: AMMAN | POPULATION: 6,198,677 | OFFICIAL LANGUAGES: ARABIC

ADDRESSING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

- Advocacy
- Strengthening health care providers' capacity for detection & referral
- NGOs capacity building for better service provision
- Outreach for awareness raising & counseling

The Private Sector Project for Women's Health (PSP)
is a 5-year project (2005 to 2010), funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), with a mandate to improve the health of Jordanian women and families. The project uses an integrated approach to increase demand for modern contraception and maternal health services, increase availability of quality private sector health care services, increase early detection of breast cancer, and address domestic violence against women.

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Gender based violence is a reality in Jordan. The 2007 Demographic Health Survey¹ provides sobering statistics on the breadth and scope of violence against Jordanian women. The violence takes many forms: in the last year, one out of five ever-married women in Jordan experienced physical violence while another eight percent were forced to have sexual intercourse without consent. Another fourteen percent suffered from emotional abuse from the spouse.

Violence cuts across socio-economic strata's of Jordan's households. Although violence is more common against women

with lower levels of education living in poorer households, abuse also occurs among women with higher education living in wealthier households. Also, urban and rural women were equally likely to have experienced physical abuse but the highest incidences occurred in the Mafraq and Irbid governorates.

The national statistics on incidences of violence against women became a daily reality for the Private Sector Project (PSP) for Women's Health (see text box on last page). PSP-Jordan sponsors community health workers (CHW) to provide important health information to women age 15 – 60 years old in towns and villages across Jordan through home visits. Increasingly, a significant number of women reported having been physically or emotionally abused. In early 2008 the CHWs detected 242 cases out of all the home visits experienced a form of violence. In 2009, this number grew to 3085 cases.

The sad truth is that most Jordanian women believe that wife beating is justified. In a 2008 survey, two thirds of women interviewed agree that band has just cause to beat his wife under certain conditions (e.g. betrayal, disobedience)².

PSP-Jordan's Accomplishments In Addressing VAW

- ◆ A situational analysis of VAW with a consensus definition adapted to the Jordanian context
- ◆ Multiple government ministries adopted VAW protocol resulting in better coordination in care for the victims
- ◆ Helped establish the health clinic at the first ever shelter for victims and runaway girls—Dar Al Wifaq
- ◆ Seventeen private hospitals now detect and refer women experiencing violence to rehabilitative centers
- ◆ Community health workers reached 46,025 women in their homes to raise awareness and provide basic counseling through a right-based approach
- ◆ Six 6 community based organizations empowered to raise awareness and provide service in local communities through competitive grants.

¹ Population & Family Health Survey, DHS 2007

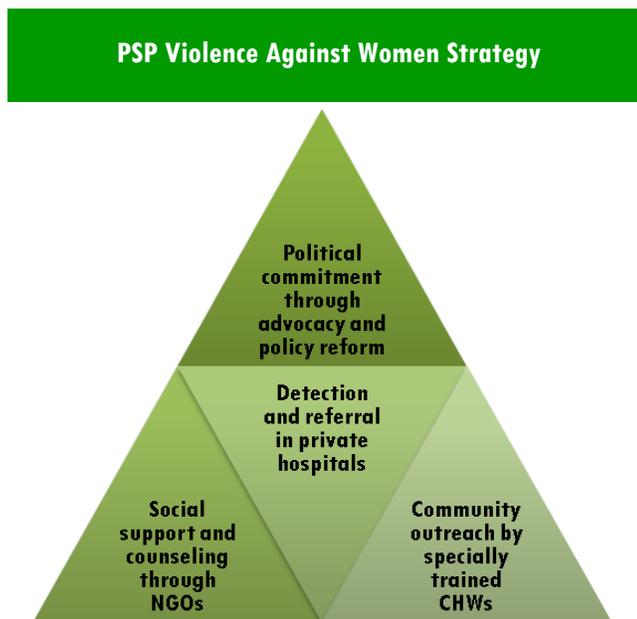
² Johns Hopkins University, 2008 (2005)

Addressing the need, finding solutions, bringing hope

In 2006, PSP, along with several Jordanian institutions, made a strong commitment to address VAW in Jordan. With funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), PSP designed an integrated approach that would harness the private health sector to complete newly launched government and NGO initiatives to address violence against women.

PSP effort's focused on four areas, presented in the diagram below. They include:

- ♦ Building political commitment through advocacy and policy reform
- ♦ Harnessing private healthcare providers to detect and refer abused women
- ♦ Strengthening non-governmental organizations to provide social support and counselling through NGOs
- ♦ Identifying women at risk and raise awareness on their options through community outreach



Building national commitment for VAW

PSP-Jordan's advocacy efforts have raised awareness on the magnitude of the violence against women in Jordan as well as increase understanding of the solutions—both policy and programmatic—to address VAW. PSP-Jordan partnered with the National Council of Family Affairs (NCFA) to carry out a wide range of policy-related activities.

NCFA prepared a situational analysis that contributed towards a common understanding and definition of VAW based on international and regional experience. In the policy arena, NCFA adopted policies and procedures for key ministries like Education, Health, Justice, Religious Affairs and Social Development and trained the respective agencies' staff on how to implement the policy changes. PSP-Jordan also helped the government's Family Protection Team to develop operational guidelines to strengthen coordina-

tion among the different government agencies implementing VAW programs.

PSP-Jordan also helped the Ministry of Social Development open the first ever women's shelter in Jordan—Dar Al Wifaq. The project provided medical equipment and training to establish the Shelter's health clinic. With increased awareness, women have become more willing to seek help. The shelter's number of cases has increased dramatically since its inception. In 2008, the shelter received 501 victims compared to 806 in 2009.. Many of these women are runaway girls fleeing from their abusive homes.

Working with the media, the PSP-Jordan has sponsored many high-level events and media campaigns. Her Majesty Queen Rania officiated the opening of the PSP-Jordan VAW project. The media campaigns informed women on where

Her Majesty Queen Rania officiating the launch of the PSP-Jordan VAW initiative



Mobilizing private hospitals to respond to VAW



Private hospital training

To reach private providers in hospitals, PSP-Jordan launched a program entitled *Preparing Private Hospitals to Manage GBV*. PSP-Jordan contracted Institute for Family Health (IFH), a NGO that delivers comprehensive family health services since 1986, to help implement this new initiative.

The private hospital program is a five step process, including 1) sensitizing hospital leadership of the magnitude of the VAW problem and their responsibility as healthcare providers; 2) assessing hospital staff practices, attitudes and awareness of VAW; 3) reaching agreement to address VAW and formalizing the partnership with a private hospital through MOUs; 4) building institutional capacity through staff training, new policies and procedures and newly created VAW

units; and, 5) monitoring impact of the programs.

The results have been impressive. To date, PSP-Jordan and its partners have:

- ◆ Signed 17 MOUs (See text box on participating hospitals).
- ◆ Pioneered new training materials adapted for private providers on VAW.
- ◆ Trained over 140 hospital staff and 108 private doctors.
- ◆ A case tracking system was established at the hospitals and IFH.
- ◆ The number of VAW cases identified in 2009 since the implementation of the project is up to 58.
- ◆ The program has had an added effect of changing the lives of hospital staff as well, with staff members self reporting cases of abuse.

Strengthening NGOs to provide support and decrease acceptance of violence

PSP-Jordan, through an intensive assessment and competitive award process, identified six community-based NGOs to upgrade their counselling services to female victims of domestic violence and to raise women's awareness of their rights and options if they are experiencing violence.

Jordan selected these NGOs because they are located in high risk communities across the country. These NGOs carry out a wide range of activities such as home visits, awareness raising sessions, and training of trainers on how to manage perpetrators.

The six NGOs are:

1. Al Amani Society for Family Protection and Childhood
2. Family Guidance and Awareness Center
3. Khalid Ibn Al-Walid Society
4. Princess Basma Community Development Center-Irbid
5. Princess Basma Community Development Center-Al-Hasa
6. B'seira Society-Tafeela

In addition to their promising approaches and programs with victims, PSP-

Participating Private Hospitals

Phase 1: Ibn Al Haitham Hospital, Arab Medical Center, Istiklal Hospital, Islamic Hospital/Amman, Rosary Sisters' Hospital, Islamic Hospital/Aqaba, Specialty Hospital, Essra Hospital, Jordan Hospital.

Phase 2: Lozmilla Hospital, Marka Islamic Specialty Hospital, Al-Hamiadeh Hospital, Jordan Red Crescent Hospital, Al Mahabeh Hospital, Italian Hospital, King Abdulla University Hospital & Shmeisani hospital.



Family Guidance & Awareness Center at VAW launch.



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The USAID-funded *Private Sector Project for Women's Health (PSP)* is a seven-year project (2005 to 2012) to increase availability of quality private sector care services, improve knowledge of how to self manage illness, increase demand for modern contraception and related women's health services, increase early detection of breast cancer, and address violence against women

For more information on the PSP-Jordan project, please contact [website: www.psp-jordan.com](http://www.psp-jordan.com)

Identifying women at risk through community outreach

Given the socio-economic profile of most victims of domestic violence, there is also a strong community outreach component with referrals to trained physicians in private hospitals or NGOs.

The PSP partner, CCA, has recruited and trained 30 women to visit women in their communities. Unlike the family planning community health workers, these specialized CHWs have more education—bachelors degree or higher—and their training focuses on providing counseling on domestic violence (see PSP brief (*Community Outreach: Opening Doors to Increase Family Planning Use*)). In addition to the training, the VAW community outreach workers meet weekly to discuss their cases and to problem solve on how to best meet the woman's needs.

The VAW community workers visit all women twice to raise awareness and educate women on their rights. If there is no signs of violence, they do not return. If there are moderate signs, they return one more time. If there is severe signs, they return two times and also provide referrals where a women can seek help.

To date, these specialized community outreach workers have :

- ◆ educated 46,025 women on VAW
- ◆ referred 1,924 women for services
- ◆ 5% of the referrals have asked for help at one of the PSP-Jordan partner NGOs and/or private hospitals.



VAW community outreach worker performs a home visit