



Become The Voice Palestine 2018

Full Report



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Summary

BTV spent four months in Hebron, West Bank working with 33 young people to promote gender equality through social media and delivering community awareness workshops.

Eight young women were trained to use social media to spread awareness of women's rights issues facing them in their communities.

- The participants work reached over 2,000 people through Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.
- Participants reported feeling more empowered and supported to make a change.
- Participants showed an increased interest in understanding issues of injustice and a will to continue work in the field.

Twenty five young people (male and female) were trained in how to deliver domestic violence awareness workshops.

- Participants reported an increased understanding of women's rights, a willingness to make a positive change in society and an appreciation of learning new skills in presenting and communication.
- A community group who received a workshop from two of the participants responded to the training saying they did not know there was any support available for victims of domestic violence and requested that the pair come back and deliver more training to more women.

We partnered with six organisations in the course of the programmes: Roles for Social Change Association (ADWAR), Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling (WCLAC), Women's Studies Centre (WSC), Palestinian Planning and Protection Association (PFPPA), The family planning unit in the police and successful business woman, Fadia Zahdeh. These organisations helped to build awareness of women's rights issues with our participants; built a network of professionals and participants working together to forward gender equality and greater exposure, through the work of the participants, to the organisations partnered with.

BTV Palestine

The Voice Palestine (BTV Palestine) Women's Rights Programme aimed to

1. Identify the issues facing women in Hebron, West Bank.
2. Build awareness in the participants of said issues and the front line support organisations available.
3. Equip and empower the women with skills in social media and campaigning to actively push for change.



BTV Palestine focused purely on women's rights. Women's rights fall within the remit of working towards progressivism, a key organisational aim of Become The Voice. Any work in gender equality naturally opposes extremist, regressive practices and ideologies.

This Report will outline and evaluate the work done in the initial investigative stage; evaluate the establishment of the course content and recruitment phase; outline and evaluate each session with the group while showcasing their work, this will include their feedback on the programme. The report will conclude with successes, barriers and future recommendations.

Background & Set up

Investigation Stage

Combining relevant available research papers and interviews with local organisations, BTV Palestine aims to build a picture of women's real and perceived priorities in Hebron. The perception and the reality may or may not be the same.

By combining both perceived and real needs, the programme will both **address frustrations** felt by the participants and **empower** them to effectuate pragmatic change as needed. This report will include all opinions put forward in the interviews with no comment as to their factual basis; this is because it is important to gather the perceived risks as well as the actual.

Key Learning & Sources

Domestic Violence in numbers

Violence in the home	West Bank	Gaza
Ever-married women have been subjected to a form of violence within the household	29.9%	51%
Psychological abuse reported	48.8%	76.4%
Physical abuse reported	17.4%	34.8%
Sexual abuse reported	10.2%	14.9%



Women's Rights	Psychological abuse	Physical violence	Sexual harassment
Abuse by soldiers at barriers and inspection point	3.3%	0.6%	0.2%

Dealing with domestic violence	Prefer to remain silent	Recourse to their family	Sought assistance of an organisation
Women who were exposed to violence by their husbands	65.3%	30.2%	0.7%

Support for victims of domestic violence:

- **Legal support:** There are no specific laws or provisions that women against domestic violence and sexual violence. Passing new laws, notably to protect women against domestic violence, or the amendment of existing laws are deemed discriminatory towards women and in contradiction to human rights, remains hampered by the paralysis of the Palestinian Legislative Council, which has been closed since 2007.
- Penal code: Provisions of the Penal Code in force in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip contain **discriminatory provisions** for women in relation to rape, adultery, and sexual violence committed in marriage. For example, if women are not able to provide/show evidence of “force”, “threats” and/or “deception” to support rape claims, they risk being criminalized for “adultery”.
- **10 specialized Family Protection Units (FPU)** operating in 10 districts of the West Bank - Hebron, Ramallah, Bethlehem, Jenin, Nablus, Jericho, Salfeet, Tubas, Tulkarem and Qalqilya - with the specific mandate to protect families, specifically women and children, and ensure the rule of law is upheld.
- **4 anti-violence centres/shelters in Palestine:** Mehwar Centre in Bethlehem, functioning under the umbrella of the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Family Defense Society shelter in Nablus, the Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling emergency shelter in Jericho and Al-Hayat Centre in Gaza.

Further Literature/ Partners:

- Donia Al Amal Ismael, Women's Studies Centre, Palestinian Women in the Cycle of Violence
- Women's Studies Centre, Compatibility of Women and Female Children Rights Legislations Enforced in Palestine.
- Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, on her mission to the Occupied Palestinian Territory/State of Palestine A/HRC/35/30/Add.2.
- <http://palestine.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/facts-and-figures>
- Palestinian National Authority (2011), National Strategy to Combat Violence against Women 2011-2019.
- PCBS (2012), Violence Survey in Palestinian Society 2011.



Interviews With Local Organisations

Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling:

'The largest issue facing women in Palestine is *freedom from the occupation*, which, in turn, effects economic opportunities and increases the risk of violence. The other big concern is *Parliamentary inactivity*; It has been closed since 2006 and, therefore, bringing about legal change is nearly impossible.'

Hebron Governorate:

'The most prominent issue facing women in Palestine is the *occupation*. It is connected to the tragedy of sons being killed (shared belief women have a stronger bond with their children and are more affected by losing children than men.) Secondary to this, *traditions enforce a culture* of women not working or leaving the home.'

Comment: Could not see the secondary issue is being re-enforced by holding beliefs akin to believing mothers have a stronger bond with their children than fathers. Did not believe honour to be an issue. Believed marriage should be forced if virginity is lost.

Police, Family Planning Unit:

'The big problem for Palestinian women is domestic violence as a reality. 1,620 complaints of DV made it to the court in 2017. 51 cases went to the safe house.'

Comment: Did not consider honour and meerath (prevention of taking inheritance) issues to be significant.

ADWAR (Palestinian Family Planning and Protections Association):

'The biggest problem women in Palestinian society face is that there is no law to protect them. There is also discrimination in the law as it is an old Jordanian one that does not guarantee any rights of women. In addition, the police do not take any procedures to protect women. We believe that the issue of killing women has recently been increasing in our Palestinian society because of the absence of the law.'

'The societal changes we need in Palestinian Society include:

- President Mahmoud Abbas is required to ratify the Personal Status Law and the Family Protection Law
- The president should also approve the new laws prepared by the Palestinian National Committee, through which the rights of women can be protected.'

Mazen Alzaro, Imam and lawyer, Hebron

'The largest issue facing women is that they are seen as not equal to men, this has resulted in her being given lower salaries and not holding leadership positions.

Legally they suffer from old laws that aren't compatible with our life particularly; family laws that treat women inequality eg the personal status law is a Jordanian law which was issued in 1976.

There needs to be greater awareness of women rights and gender so that society can begin to help itself.'



Establishing Course Content

ADWAR, PFPPA, Family Planning Unit and WCLAC invited to contribute to the programme. The Hebron organisations were very generous with their time and eager to collaborate:

ADWAR	Session on the stigma of divorce with a divorcee speaking on her experience and now successful business and family life.
PFPPA	Session on abortion rights, the law, and what needs to change.
WCLAC/WSC	Session on gender roles and gender-based violence.
Family Planning Unit	Invited BTV participants to visit the office to learn about the support the police can offer to women who are victims of violent abuse.

The model of identifying issues and then inviting experts to deliver sessions worked to full effect.

Only one organisation charged, the cost of which was covered by local fundraising organisation HIRN. We found out there would have been alternative organisations who did not charge for that training, should we repeat the programme this would be a more cost effective avenue.

Recruitment

The Excellence Centre (EC) was contracted to advertise and recruit an appropriate group of at least fifteen girls aged 16-25.

Unfortunately, EC broke their contract and advertised an English language course instead of a women's rights course. This meant some of the group were not prepared to take part in a women's rights course which resulted in a huge drop out rate. It started with 30 and finished with 8.

For our alternative domestic violence awareness course, we recruited via the law school at the University of Hebron. This gave us **a group of strong, dedicated 30**



participants with 25 completing the full programme. If we were to repeat the programme, we would recruit through universities.


Sessions

Workshop: Social Media Training

We trained the girls in social media as an effective tool for activism:

- Creating and using hashtags to make content visible online.
- Taking effective photos to drive engagement on different platforms.
- Concise and consistent copy, both in tone and length (performance-optimised).
- Scheduling content: time their posts according to when people are most active, with the help of industry-insights and third-party tools like Hootsuite.


They went on to create posts centred on tackling forced marriage:

**Become The Voice**

Published by Scarlet Littlewood [?] · April 28 at 2:46pm · 🌐

Like Page

BTVPalestine social media training in action. Follow them at #becomethevoice and #BTVPalestine UnitedNations



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When you boost this post, you'll show it to more people.

👤 1,051 people reached

Boost Post

1,051 People Reached

60 Reactions, Comments & Shares ⓘ

41 Like	4 On Post	37 On Shares
4 Love	0 On Post	4 On Shares
14 Comments	0 On Post	14 On Shares
1 Shares	1 On Post	0 On Shares

124 Post Clicks

71 Photo Views	0 Link Clicks	53 Other Clicks ⓘ
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NEGATIVE FEEDBACK

0 Hide Post	0 Hide All Posts
0 Report as Spam	0 Unlike Page

Reported stats may be delayed from what appears on posts



'I am afraid of being urged to marry at an early stage of my life or being urged to get married to someone I don't like' School girl, Ramallah

5% of women in the Gaza strip are married under the age of 15. Guardianship laws mean a male member of the family signs you over to your husband. Honour killings are on the rise making refusal to oblige a potential threat to ones life.

Become The Voice Palestine stands together to say they are not for sale. They are not their family's property. They are not a commodity.

#wearenotforsale #BTVPalestine

"أنا خائفة من أن أجبر يوماً على الزواج المبكر، خائفة من أن أجبر على الزواج من رجل لا أريده" تبلغ نسبة الفتيات اللواتي يجبرن على الزواج وهنّ لم يتجاوزن بعد الخامسة عشر ما يقارب الخمسة بالمئة .

قانون الولاية يعني ضرورة وجود رجل من العائلة يوقع على وثيقة الزواج

نسبة القتل على خلفية الشرف في تزايد مستمر

كن صوت فلسطيني" يقفون معا وسويا ليقولوا أن الفتيات لسن للبيع ويأتهنّ لسن ملكا للعائلة هنّ لسن سلعا



40 Reactions, Comments & Shares

26 Like 3 On Post 23 On Shares

5 Love 0 On Post 5 On Shares

1 Wow 0 On Post 1 On Shares

6 Comments 0 On Post 6 On Shares

2 Shares 2 On Post 0 On Shares

220 Post Clicks

128 Photo Views 0 Link Clicks 92 Other Clicks

NEGATIVE FEEDBACK

0 Hide Post 0 Hide All Posts
0 Report as Spam 0 Unlike Page

Reported stats may be delayed from what appears on posts

Workshop: The Stigma of Divorce

To be divorced in Palestine means being branded as unworthy. Women have to declare themselves as divorced on their ID cards, which creates problems in getting a job, harming women both economically and psychologically. Traditionally, divorced women move from the control of their husband back to the control of their family. Their family tracks where they go, who they talk to, what they wear and then who they marry, if they remarry.

"It is really great to have the opportunity to be a part of this awesome project. I am really proud to be a voice for change and hope. Become The Voice will shape me into a positive voice for a more positive future."

Ibtisam Awadah, 20, from Hebron, studies midwifery



We collaborated with ADWAR, an organisation that works to redefine gender roles, promoting equality between the sexes and equal opportunity for all. ADWAR invited Fadia, a successful international businesswomen, to join us and talk to us about her experience of being divorced.

We then heard from lawyer Mazen Alzaro, who got us debating over the value of women having equal opportunities in work:

Become The Voice
Published by Scarlet Littlewood [?] · 3 hrs · 🌐

Her husband wanted to keep her in the home, his family forced her to obey but she had a big dream. **Fadia Zahdeh** you are a true inspiration. Entrepreneur. Business woman. Mother. Free woman. Divorcee? who cares?! Fadia, since leaving her oppressive husband, has opened her own business and is now world renowned for her incredible origami. www.instagram.com/wonders_paper/

Today was an incredible day at @RolesForSocialChangeAssociation who are working tirelessly to end the stig... [See More](#)



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👤 127 people reached

Boost Post

Performance for your post

127 People Reached

18 Reactions, Comments & Shares

12 Like 3 On Post 9 On Shares

4 Love 1 On Post 3 On Shares

0 Comments 0 On Post 0 On Shares

2 Shares 2 On Post 0 On Shares

49 Post Clicks

30 Photo Views 0 Link Clicks 19 Other Clicks



Liked by [marwa_abudayyeh](#), [smile_578](#) and 119 others

[asmaa_hasasnah](#) We heard today from "Become the Voice" and "Roles for social change Association _ADWAR" on how to overcome difficulties, think about solutions and strive for goals.

#BTV_Palestine

#Women_rights

#Womenwhowork

Thank you [@smile_578](#) ❤️

[@becomethevoice_director](#)



Liked by [_ofwanderings](#), [mazenalzaro](#) and 12 others

[becomethevoice_director](#) Forced to stay in the home. Kept from studying. Barred from working. But this woman escaped- she left a life of servitude to realise her dream. NOW a successful origami artist with her own shop in the heart of Hebron. You are an inspiration [@wonders_paper](#) [#womenwhowork](#) [#personnotobject](#) [#womensrights](#) [#endthepatriarchy](#) [#becomethevoice](#) [#BTPalestine](#) [#endstigma](#) [#personnotdivorcee](#) [#divorceisnottheend](#) [@amoon_owidat](#) [@aziza_rizk](#) [@mryanafarajallah](#) [@asmaa_hasasnah](#) [@jenan_aq](#) [@marwaabudayyehbll](#)

[asmaa_hasasnah](#) Strong woman ❤️

[amoon_owidat](#) It has a positive energy 😊😊

To hear Fadia's inspirational story head to [Divorced - Fadiah](#).

"Through Become The voice I'd like to become a voice for freedom and human rights especially women rights. I want to be more aware of injustice and to be a stronger voice. [#womenarenotdolls](#)"

[Hiba Al-Sharahaa](#), 20, studies nursing, wants to be an academic

Workshop: Abortion Rights

Abortion is illegal in the West Bank under the assumption it is against Islam. Not the case, says abortion rights expert, Mohammed from PFPPA (Planned Family Planned Parenthood Association). He quotes the hadith:

"(The matter of the Creation of) a human being is put together in the womb of the mother in forty days, and then he becomes a clot of thick blood for a similar period, and then a piece of flesh for a similar period. Then Allah sends an angel who is ordered to write four things...then the soul is breathed into him" [Sahih al-Bukhari, 4:54:430](#)

This is considered to be around four months into gestation.

The prohibition of abortion pushes women to seek unsafe means of abortion, putting their lives at risk. Or they are forced to keep the child, which in extreme cases can mean bearing a child out of incest rape.

Mohammed shared with us one story where a woman was forced to keep the child conceived by her uncle raping her. She had to be moved to a safe house out of fear of violence from her father because of the 'dishonour' she had brought onto herself and the family as she was no longer a virgin.



After hearing from Mohammed the girls worked to support PFPPA/ IPPF's endeavour to get the law changed:



Performance for Your Post		
72 People Reached		
7 Reactions, Comments & Shares		
4 Like	4 On Post	0 On Shares
2 Love	2 On Post	0 On Shares
1 Haha	1 On Post	0 On Shares
0 Comments	0 On Post	0 On Shares
0 Shares	0 On Post	0 On Shares
28 Post Clicks		
17 Photo Views	0 Link Clicks	11 Other Clicks
NEGATIVE FEEDBACK		
0 Hide Post	0 Hide All Posts	
0 Report as Spam	0 Unlike Page	



Liked by msamyalexander, marwa_abudayyeh and 7 others

becomethevoice_director MY BODY MY RIGHTS. BTVPalestine getting active and pushing to change the law around abortion to save women from life threatening illegal abortions. Raped by her Uncle, afraid of being killed by her father, but forced to stay pregnant. Get the law off her body @president_abbas @ippf_global #becomethevoice #mybodymyrights

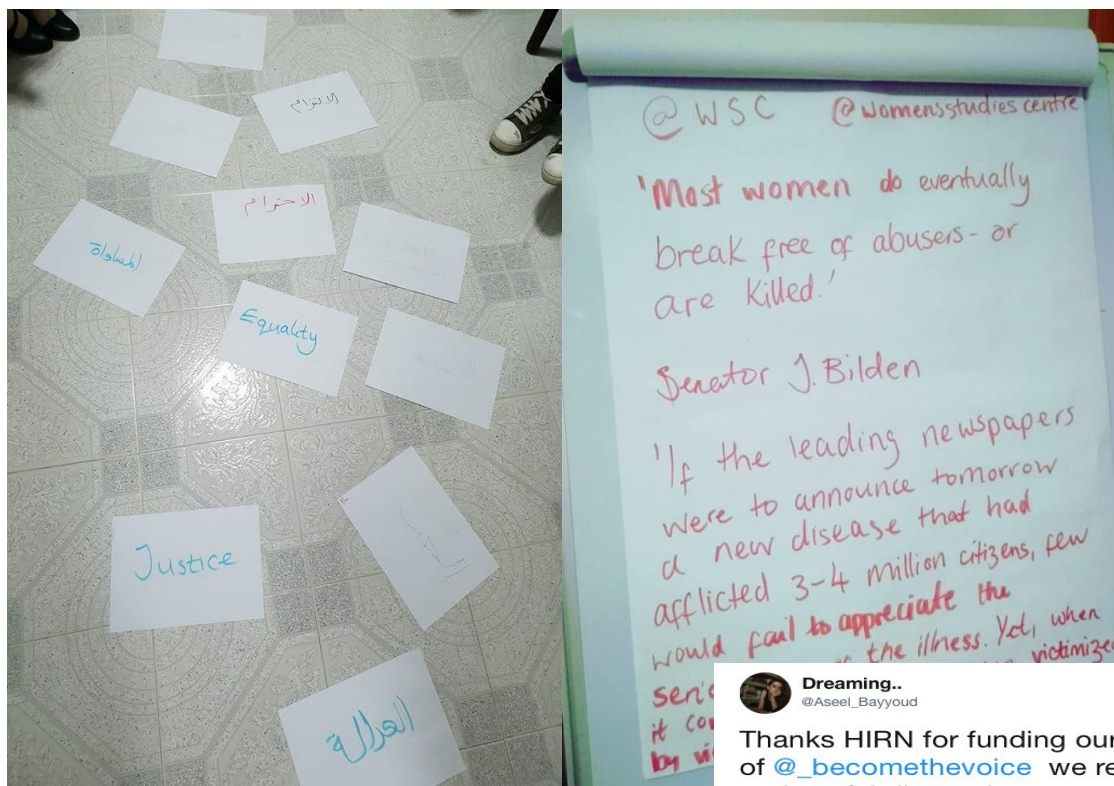
Workshop: Domestic Violence Awareness

The Women's Studies Centre delivered a session on gender roles and gender-based violence. Despite Palestine being a signatory to CEDAW or the *Convention to Eliminate all Discrimination Against Women*, **29.6% of ever-married women in the West Bank and Palestine faced domestic violence in their lifetime**. of the women who have come forward as victims of violence in the West Bank only **0.7% have sought assistance**. According to UNHRC between **2010-2015 50 women were killed by domestic violence**, in the name of so-called 'family honour'.





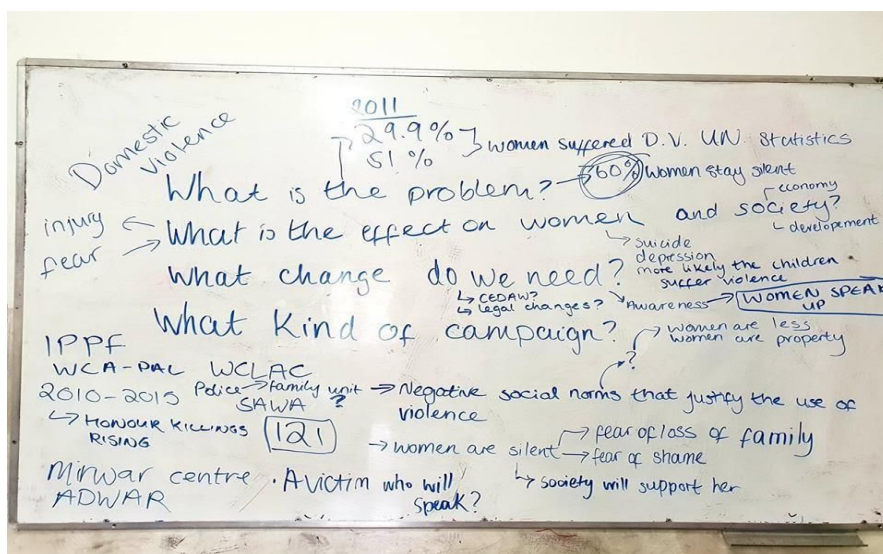
The session focused on gender roles and started with how the girls saw themselves and the futures they would like. It then moved on to explore the roots of gender inequality and ultimately violence:



PM - 9 Jun 2018

"I want to be a positive influence on others and to be energized to be a changemaker. I want to change negative perceptions of Islam and Arab life as well as challenge negative interpretations of Islam. I want to spread peace in every way to be a beautiful colour in this life."

Ruba Fares Al Omur, 19, studies English, wants to be a teacher



"Over the next coming weeks, I would like to be heard to say 'All women don't stop fighting for what you want to be; make your dreams true.' We are a big force in this world so we will #BecomeTheVoice."

Marwa Mahmoud Aizamareh, 19, studies English and teaching

Campaign Choice:

Having heard Fadiah's story, learned about Abortion and other issues facing women in their community, the group voted to focus on 'Domestic Violence' for their campaign, the topic resonated deeply with them and over a series of three sessions we selected, prepared and rehearsed our campaign:





becomethevoice_director @aseel_r_bayyoud calls the head of the family safety unit in the police to research how the police handle domestic violence in Hebron. #enddomesticviolence #becomethevoice #BTVPalestine #hebron

The team contacted and then visited the family safety unit and Palestinian Family Planning and Protection Association (PFPPA). They got the information they needed to create an awareness raising film on domestic violence, how to seek help and what help is available.

Unfortunately, at this stage, we could not continue with our current set up. Our partner the Excellence Centre broke contract, threatening and intimidating the participants for work two of them had chosen to do on tackling honour culture. This caused a number of the girls to drop out in the final week of the programme and with no funds to extend our stay in Palestine we had to return to the UK to await further funding.

Fortunately, HIRN chose to fund our return and the creation of a short film and training package intended to raise awareness of domestic violence in Hebron. Read our short statement [here](#).

"I am very pleased to join a team that cares and dedicates itself to human rights. I am really proud to be a BTV participant, becoming a voice for change in this society."

Aziza Rizk Mohammed Abu Aisheh, 19, studies translation



Back on track: Campaign Planning, Creation and Training

With all the research in place and the focal point selected as tackling domestic violence, we collaborated with local actors and videographers who volunteered to create a short film. The film showcased a scene of domestic violence, and signposted towards local organisations who help victims.

The film is in Palestinian Arabic as it was used by participants to deliver to community groups and their universities.

It can be viewed here:

<https://www.facebook.com/BECOMETHEVOICECIC/videos/660964810926501/>

A group, recruited from the local university (including some of our original BTV participants), were then trained in domestic violence awareness, presenting skills, and supported to create and then deliver a domestic violence awareness training on their own.

Feedback: Workshop on Domestic Violence

What is most interesting about Become The Voice's Domestic Violence Awareness training?

'We are talking about something that is taboo and cannot be talked about in the society here.'

'I have learnt new terms and definition- equality, equity, justice; what they mean and what the differences are between them.'

'Learning how big the problem is here but also something can be done. I have learnt how important it is to raise awareness that violence should not be accepted. I now know how important it is to advise women who are to marry - even children- they should all know their rights.'

Who wants to deliver training in the future? Why? What do they most want to tell people?

19 want to deliver in the future out of 25. (We had 30 but 5 women walked out because they disagreed with the notion women should be equal to men.)

Why?

'Build self-confidence and presenting skills.'

'Very good way to raise awareness especially in villages and smaller communities.'

'Wanting to be an initiator and positively impact on society.'

'We want to reach and improve the society.'



‘I don’t want to just be a taker of training I want to make and effect change.’

‘There are a lot of people who face violence and they do not know it is wrong; I want to help society release this is wrong.’

‘Violence is harming all of us so it is our responsibility to challenge this to protect our families and ourselves. This is a humanitarian issue.’

‘We want to create a society free from violence.’

Male teacher- ‘Kids in the school suffering violence- wants to teach the boys in his class not to continue like this.’

Feedback: Training of Trainers (TOT) session

What have you enjoyed about the two days?

- New information and new cases – case studies of domestic violence:
 - Case about a husband who has beaten his wife with the curtain rail
 - Case study where man hit wife and she had to have surgery.
 - A bride in the wedding night was beaten – she needed the hospital- he did not take her he asked for her family to come.
- How to give a session and be a trainer.
- A lot of information on the issues and new methods on giving training.

How will this help you?

- Improving our skills and knowledge.
- Give us the ability to make presentations in our universities.
- We will expand our knowledge on this important topic.
- Gives us the skills to face our problems more positively and actively.
- Gives us the skills to debate and discuss other opinions positively.
- We recognise women’s rights that we did not know about before- right to seek help.

Hear interviews with two of the participants on their experience:

<https://www.facebook.com/BECOMETHEVOICECIC/videos/655835924772723/>

<https://www.facebook.com/BECOMETHEVOICECIC/videos/657062187983430/>

21 out of 25 present want to attend the drop in sessions to support them create a presentation and organise presentations with local organisations and/or their universities.

Outcomes:

- 10 turned up to the presentation support session. Two participants co-delivered a training to 15 older women in Halhoul. This was the first in a number of sessions the 25 plan to deliver.
- Halhoul, is an area considered particularly at risk from domestic violence. Three other BTV participants attended to learn from the two who opted to deliver.



- 15 women turned up to receive the training from this training we received a disclosure of domestic violence and were able to signpost them towards available support.
-

Feedback: BTV-trained trainers' delivery of session

When asked what the women's thoughts were before and after the training they said:

'We now know there are organisations and associations defend women's rights and can rely on them in solving problems related to gender. Before this we thought oppressed women could only stay at home with no-one to tell.'

Outcome: The women asked for the pair of BTV trainers to return to deliver the same presentation again to a larger group. A disclosure of DV was made and the woman was signposted towards available support.



Conclusions

Successes

- Built awareness amongst a group of young women around relevant women's rights issues.
- Supported the group to become active and have impact on social media, raising wider awareness amongst their community in regards to women's rights issues.
- Built awareness in a mixed-gender group as to gender norms, equality and domestic violence.
- Equipped and supported the mixed-gender group to deliver awareness raising presentations of their own.
- Built critical thinking skills and presentation skills in participants.
- Supervised the delivery of one DV awareness training in which the women reported an increase in awareness and invited the trainers back to deliver more widely.

Barriers

- Inappropriate recruitment.
- Language barriers making in-depth evaluation difficult.
- Disruption of programme by partners who were ideologically opposed to our work.

Recommendations for future programmes

- Conduct recruitment through the universities and current BTV network. Ensure recruitment is clear and transparent as to what they will be participating in.
- Budget for a translator.
- Budget for a bilingual evaluator and report writer. *Evaluation to include before and after surveys that measure awareness and skills development. Quantitative and qualitative evaluations of social media output. Detailed note taking of responses to sessions.*
- Ensure all partners are ideologically aligned. *The second programme successfully ran from the library (free of cost) and experienced no disruptions.*