



# The Mehwar Centre

## GOOD PRACTICE FROM THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY FOR RECRUITING ANTI- VIOLENCE CENTRE PERSONNEL

*Based on the experience of the “Mehwar Centre for the protection and empowerment of women and families” project (2006-2012), executed by UN Women (2008-2012) thanks to the support of the Government of Italy*



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Addressing national priorities, the financial support of the Government of Italy has contributed to improving the effectiveness of national responses provided by the Palestinian Authority and civil society organizations to prevent and fight violence against women. As of mid-2012, the project has contributed to saving the lives of and empowering more than 200 women.

UN Women expresses profound gratitude to the Government of Italy for its long-lasting support in the challenging establishment and institutionalization of the “Mehwar Center”, first anti-violence center in the occupied Palestinian territory complying with high human-rights standards of professionalism and international good practices.



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## CD

### The CD, part of these Guidelines, contains:

- a. Vacancy Announcement
- b. Application Form
- c. Mehwar Centre Staff Job Descriptions (updated version - October 2009)
- d. Orientation Programme for job applicants at the Mehwar Centre
- e. Case Studies and other materials for use in the Orientation Programme
- f. Narrative Evaluation Report of the short-listed candidates who attended the Orientation Programme
- g. Scoring Sheet
- h. Training Programme for newly hired anti-violence centre staff
- i. Evaluation Form after probationary period

## List of Acronyms

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
DD	Differenza Donna
MoSA	Ministry of Social Affairs
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-governmental organization
oPt	occupied Palestinian territory
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
VAW	Violence Against Women
WCLAC	Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling



## Glossary

**Anti-violence centres:** centres of various legal status that aim to protect and empower women and children victims of all forms of gender-based violence through the provision of integrated services such as safe accommodation; social counselling and solidarity; psychological support; legal advice and representation; referral for medical treatment; and support towards a safe reintegration into society. According to their mandates and resources, anti-violence centres may also carry out prevention and advocacy programmes with families in difficulty and with the society in general. Within this guide, this definition includes any kind of anti-violence centre, whether multipurpose or limited to one specific field of intervention.

### The following terms refer to the context of anti-violence centres:

**Contract:** a formal, legally binding agreement between the employer, usually the ultimate responsible of the anti-violence centre's management, and the employee, through which the rights and duties of both parties are outlined and agreed upon. After interviews have been conducted and the final applicant chosen, reviewing and signing a contract is the last step in a successful job application process.

**Employee:** a person hired by the decision of the relevant hiring authority on the basis of her/his competencies, skills and motivation to carry out a professional activity in an anti-violence centre according to assigned terms of reference in exchange for financial compensation.

**Employee evaluation:** a tool used by employers to measure the capacity and performance of an employee in fulfilling his/her job requirements. An employee evaluation is also used after an initial probationary period to confirm the job appointment. It often includes a review of the challenges faced by an employee in the performance of his/her work during the most recent working period. The employee's strengths, weaknesses and development over time are assessed in order to highlight areas for improvement in his/her job performance.

**Job advertisement:** a public notice or announcement in the media, often placed in local newspapers or websites, outlining the specifications and requirements of a job vacancy, together with general professional, personal and ethical requirements expected from all employees working in an anti-violence centre.

**Job application:** a form to be filled out by candidates for job vacancies that provides an initial assessment of their competencies, knowledge, motivation, as well as social and cultural beliefs relevant to the work carried out in anti-violence centres with women victims of violence.

**Job description:** a formal account of the functional tasks and responsibilities assigned to an employee working in an anti-violence centre under his/her job contract, within the framework of concerned laws in force and any other relevant instructions or administrative decision. Job descriptions also specify a standard of professional ethics and working values to which employees are expected to comply in order to carry out their work effectively. This standard refers to issues such as guaranteeing confidentiality, privacy, respect for others and for diversity, the granting of beneficiaries' right to self-determination, empathy towards beneficiaries, professional integrity and independence.

**Interview:** a meeting with a job applicant where the appointed interview panel, through focused questions built upon the revision of the candidate's CV, application form, and orientation programme results, conducts a final examination of his/her suitability for the job.

**Orientation:** an interactive programme targeting short-listed candidates. Through workshop-based activities, such as role-play and the presentation of case studies, as well as individual and team-based assignments, the programme aims, on one hand, to help candidates familiarize with the context of anti-violence centres and with the tasks required for the position. On the other hand, it allows a team of evaluators to carry out an accurate assessment of the candidates' relevant skills, knowledge, professional capacities, motivation and predisposition towards the required work.

**Professionalism:** the relevant knowledge, experience, competence, skill, motivation and performance expected of a professional working in an anti-violence centre, based on principles of ethics and in accordance with International Human Rights standards and practices, free of personal bias or entanglement.

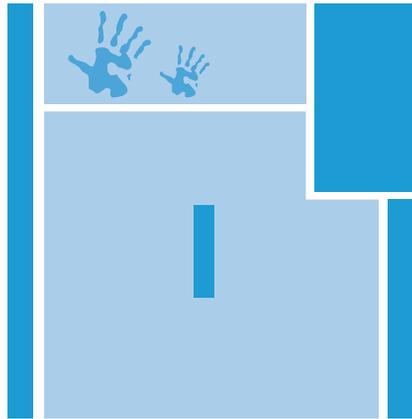
**Short list:** a small number of selected applicants for a certain job vacancy chosen from the initial pool of applicants by the appointed selection committee to participate in the final selection process on the basis of the evaluation of their CVs and application forms.

**Scoring sheet:** a form used for the evaluation of job applicants within specific criteria and within a specific scale.

**Staff supervision:** a professional practice meant to help staff express their feelings and share the difficulties and challenges they face in their work, especially in addressing particular cases and in their professional relationships.







# INTRODUCTION

## Introduction

Specialized, motivated and talented staff constitutes the real capital of an anti-violence centre. To guarantee such capital means the ability to minimize to the maximum extent possible, the risk of re-victimization for women and children survivors of violence and further threats to their lives. An anti-violence centre's first responsibility is to provide, maintain and protect specialized and appropriate human resources for fulfilling its mandate to provide protection and respect for human life.

These guidelines aim to support organizations and institutions responsible for the management of anti-violence centres in the process of selecting staff candidates with the appropriate professional capacities and personal qualities to carry out the various professional jobs required to operate the centres' services.

The problem of violence against women (VAW) is complex and multidimensional in all societies. In the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), characterized by a strong patriarchal culture, VAW appears exacerbated in its dynamics and consequences on victims. Prevailing cultural beliefs and stereotypes, in fact, still consider domestic violence to be an acceptable practice and a private family matter rather than a community problem. Blame and accountability are most often placed on battered women and other victims of violence, while perpetrators of violence are often presumed to be justified in their actions and therefore usually go unpunished.

Those professionals who aim to work with women and children victims of violence in the oPt should thoroughly understand the VAW phenomenon both in its global cultural dimension and in its specific manifestations in the Palestinian context. They should be able to identify and confront incorrect assumptions and beliefs, and replace them with an appropriate understanding of the problem. They should have the strength and ability to stand with victims of violence and advocate for their rights, while also being prepared to face the conflict, rejection and isolation, both professional and personal, which is often inevitably associated with working to achieve significant social change.

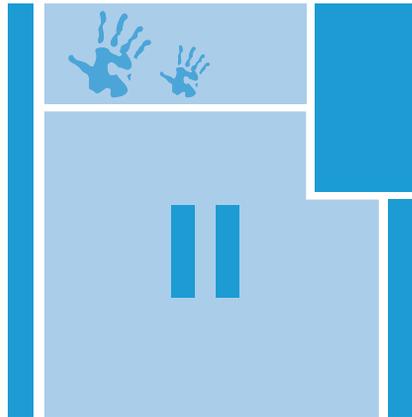
This highlights the need for such work to occur within a team in which staff can provide support to one another and can rely on the support of their supervisors in order to overcome disturbing situations and deal with difficult emotions. On the personal level, qualities such as understanding, acceptance, commitment and willingness to participate in a sympathetic way in the process of victims' recovery from trauma, empowerment and safe reintegration into society, are key for achieving effective results.

Because of the problem's complexity, working with women and children victims of violence is distinguished by the need to integrate a variety of different concerns, including cultural, social, legal, medical and psychological considerations. This is why protection and empowerment centres for victims of violence often provide integrated services such as safe accommodation; help-lines; social counselling; psychological support; referrals for medical treatment; legal advice and representation in courts; as well as prevention and advocacy programmes targeting families in distress and society at large.

All of these services require the professional competencies and personal skills of very specialized and talented service providers. Ad hoc training programmes need to be undertaken by all newly appointed anti-violence centre staff. Evaluating candidates' abilities to learn new knowledge and skills, and to develop a new understanding of their society while constructively challenging their own cultural backgrounds, is key to a successful selection process for anti-violence centre staff.







## **BACKGROUND:**

**THE “MEHWAR CENTRE FOR THE  
PROTECTION AND EMPOWERMENT  
OF WOMEN AND FAMILIES” PROJECT  
IN THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN  
TERRITORY (2006-2012)**

## Background

The “Mehwar Centre for the protection and empowerment of women and families” was established in Bethlehem governorate and inaugurated in February 2007 as the first anti-violence centre in the Middle East offering integrated services to combat VAW, while working towards the adoption of International Human Rights standards and best practices. Twenty-six staff members with various expertises in the fields of social work, social sciences, management, administration, law, education, fitness and security were hired in August 2006 after an experimental hiring process took place.

Based on the understanding that workers operating in the field of combating VAW need to possess certain relevant knowledge and professional experience, as well as a very specific set of personal skills in order to properly carry out the required jobs and avoid serious harm to beneficiaries’ lives, ad hoc hiring guidelines, procedures, tools and criteria were created to enable selected evaluators to assess candidates capacities, competencies and motivation.

The recruitment guidelines were elaborated in 2005-2006 by the Palestinian NGO WCLAC, Women’s Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling, and the Italian NGO, “Differenza Donna”. Both NGOs were partners in the first phase of the implementation of the “Mehwar Centre” project. These two women’s organizations worked in close consultation with the Palestinian Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA), which endorsed the guidelines, and also benefitted from the experience and cooperation of relevant local organizations and professionals active in the field of combating VAW.

In the context of the “Mehwar Centre” project, the special hiring guidelines designed to recruit the Centre’s staff has successfully supported the pilot Centre’s establishment by providing it with a strong, motivated and capable team from its inception. The appointed staff team has been able to make the best use possible of the specialized staff training offered after the hiring process and has started pioneering work with both women victims of violence and the local society.

Throughout the seven years of operation of the “Mehwar Centre (2006-2012), these successful recruitment guidelines have been adapted and improved on several occasions under the leadership of the MoSA.

This guide aims to collect, homogenize and document the recruitment guidelines, so as to share their benefits with other organizations and institutions working in the oPt to protect women, children and families from all forms of violence. While these guidelines have been designed with the specific structure and services of the “Mehwar Centre” in mind, they also have the potential to serve as national guidelines for hiring anti-violence centres staff and thus remain open to further improvements according to emerging needs.

### ***The “Mehwar Centre for the Protection and Empowerment of Women and Families”***

*The “Mehwar Centre for the protection and empowerment of women and families” project is funded by the Government of Italy and operates under the auspices of the Palestinian Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA).*

*Its establishment benefitted from the commitment and technical expertise of two women’s organizations: the Palestinian NGO WCLAC, Women’s Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling, and the Italian NGO “Differenza Donna”.*

*Since 2009, the project has been executed by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (UN Women).*

*The “Mehwar Centre” is located in the Bethlehem Governorate in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) and provides integrated services on the basis of principles of justice, equality, respect for human dignity and rejection of all forms of violence.*

#### **Mission and Vision**

-  *The “Mehwar Centre” aims to protect and empower women and children victims of violence*
-  *The “Mehwar Centre” works to prevent violence by challenging abusive attitudes and behaviours in the Palestinian society*
-  *The “Mehwar Centre” believes in equal rights for women and men*
-  *The “Mehwar Centre” believes that it is important to support and defend women and children’s rights in order to enhance safety and justice in the Palestinian society*
-  *The “Mehwar Centre” believes in family relations based on families’ willingness to reject all forms of violence and abuse against women and children*



## Services

### **For women:**

-  *Safe hospitality for women victims of violence and their children*
-  *Legal counselling and representation in court*
-  *Individual and group counselling*
-  *Safe hospitality for women victims of violence and their children*
-  *Legal counselling and representation in court*
-  *Individual and group counselling*
-  *Psychological support*
-  *Health-care services through cooperation with specialized institutions*
-  *Vocational training and job orientation*
-  *Fitness and wellness programmes*
-  *Cultural, educational and recreational activities*

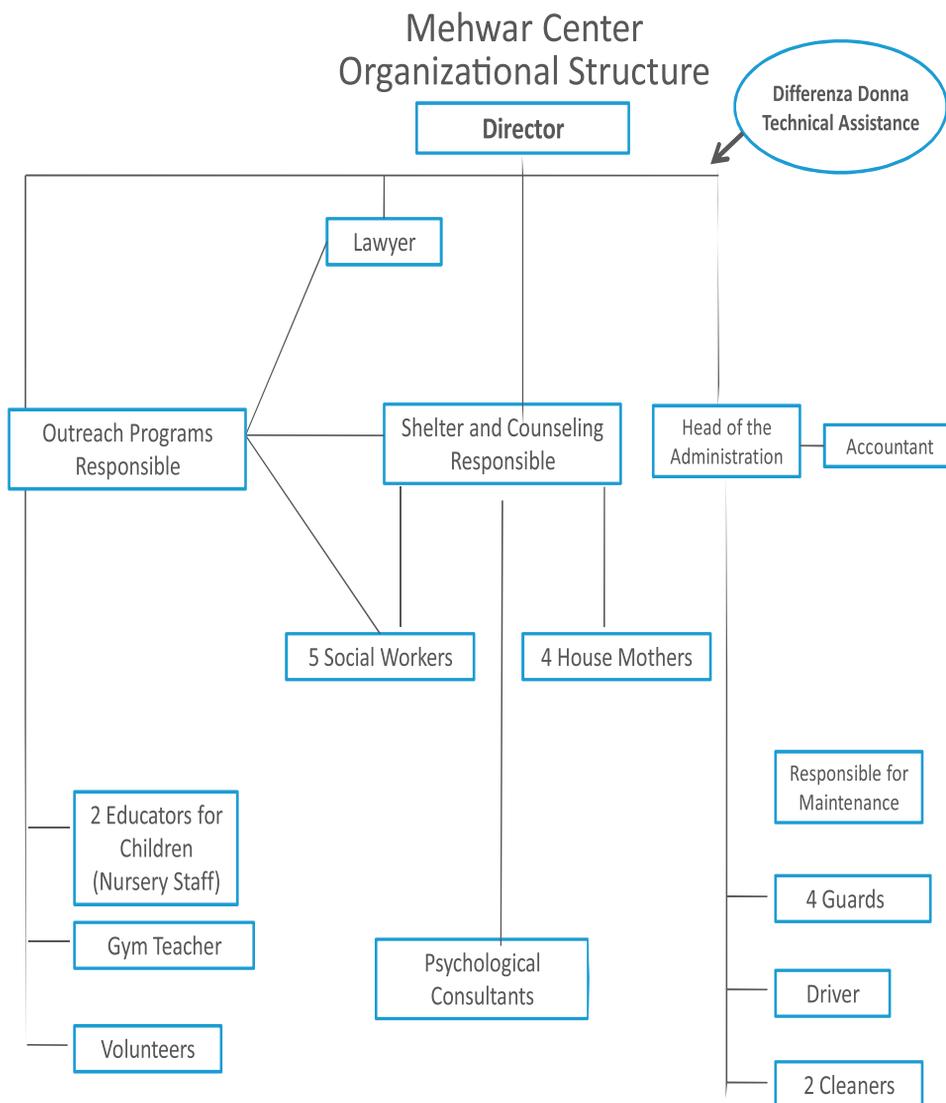
### **For families:**

-  *Legal counselling*
-  *Individual and group social counselling*
-  *Nursery services coordinated by specialized educators*
-  *Parenting support*
-  *Cultural, educational and recreational activities*

### **For the society:**

-  *Cafeteria*
-  *Multipurpose hall for community activities*
-  *Outdoor playground for children*

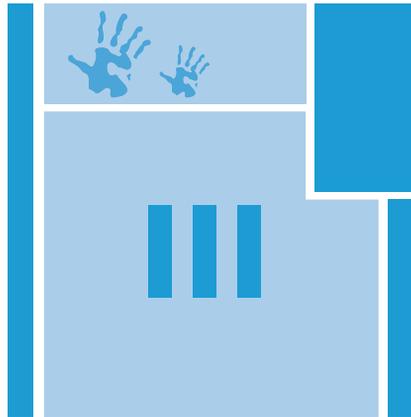
## Organization chart of the “Mehwar Centre” (2007-2008)<sup>(1)</sup>



(1) On the 12<sup>th</sup> of March 2008 the Palestinian Cabinet, through its decision 14/55/12 - 2008 regarding the structure of the Ministry of Social Affairs, approved the inclusion of the Mehwar Centre within the Ministry's organization chart.







# **RECRUITMENT GUIDELINES, PROCEDURES AND TOOLS**

## ***1. Organizational decision to recruit staff***

In order to activate the recruitment process, the relevant hiring authority, or the ultimate responsible of the anti-violence centre's management, must identify the need to fill a job vacancy depending on the centre's administrative structure, services and mandate.

Organizational decisions to recruit vacant posts may occur:

- In the case of the establishment of a new centre, thus requiring the appointment of the whole centre's staff;
- In the case of the resignation or dismissal of one or more employees;
- In the case of the creation, upon organizational decision, of one or more new posts.

The decision is taken through formal means (in the minutes of a meeting, via a formal letter, etc) by the highest decision-making body within the managing organization or institution. This could be the board of trustees or steering committee in cases in which the centre is managed by a non-governmental or semi-governmental organization, or the Minister of Social Affairs (MoSA), in cases in which the centre has governmental status. In cases in which the anti-violence centre is established or run within a project framework, representatives of the project management (if project management and centre management do not coincide) should also be consulted in formulating the decision to recruit centre staff members.

## ***2. Formation of a Recruitment Committee***

Following the organizational decision to recruit needed staff members, the hiring authority's highest decision-making body appoints a Recruitment Committee that will be responsible for the implementation of the recruitment process, and ultimately, for the evaluation and selection of the candidates who best fulfil the various job requirements.

In case of governmental centres, the Recruitment Committee will be appointed by decision of the General Personnel Council in coordination with the competent governmental department (under which the centre is operating) and the centre itself.

The Recruitment Committee is composed of a Chairperson and other members, which can range in number as long as the final number of Committee members remains odd. The optimal number of Committee members is generally between 5 and 7.

The Chairperson of the Recruitment Committee should be a senior staff member within the hiring organization, and s/he should meet the following criteria:

- Knowledge of and sensitivity towards violence against women (VAW) and children;
- Proper knowledge of the centre's administrative structure and work requirements, and of the role of the hiring authority vis-à-vis the centre;
- No fewer than five years experience in staff recruitment and management;
- Ability to make decisions (decision-making power within the hiring authority);
- Ability to formulate impartial judgements;
- Known integrity and professionalism;
- Familiarity with the available services offered to victims of violence in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt);
- Familiarity with the penal and civil laws applied in the oPt in relation to family affairs and VAW and children.

The Chairperson's role is to guarantee that the recruitment occurs through a fair process and according to the set procedures. S/he represents the hiring authority and as such, must be knowledgeable about the administrative structure and work requirements of the centre and able to ensure that the staff recruitment complies within that framework.

The Committee members should ensure that the overall expertise behind the management of anti-violence centres is represented and utilized for the purpose of staff recruitment. They should be fully aware of the specific professional and personal skills required to work with women victims of violence, and they should demonstrate the ability to evaluate human



resources deployed within social services. They should also demonstrate proven personal commitment towards combating VAW.

The Committee members should be identified and appointed according to the following criteria:

- No fewer than five years of professional experience in dealing with cases of women and children victims of violence (from various angles: social, legal, psychological, medical, advocacy);
- Direct work experience in anti-violence centres is highly valued;
- Sound experience in the management and/or evaluation and/or supervision of social service providers, and in staff recruitment;
- Known integrity and professionalism;
- Ability to formulate impartial judgements;
- Familiarity with the penal and civil laws applied in the oPt in relation to family affairs and VAW and children;
- Familiarity with the available services offered to victims of violence in the oPt;
- Familiarity with the code of ethics applied by the Palestinian Union of Social Workers and Psychologists;
- High-level communication skills.

One member of the Committee should be temporarily appointed, thus rotating during the interviews, for the recruitment of staff members that require a specific expertise beyond that of combating VAW. For example, a senior lawyer should evaluate the competence in law and familiarity with the judiciary system of applicants to the post of lawyer. Or similarly, an experienced technician should select the most appropriate candidate for the post responsible for the centre's maintenance.

### ***3. Announcing vacant posts***

Upon the organizational decision to recruit a number of vacant posts, a related Vacancy Announcement is made in the local media.

The Vacancy Announcement is composed of one section containing general requirements for applicants to all vacant posts, in addition to another section mentioning, one by one, the required job posts with their specific requisite qualifications. In this way, applicants will clearly understand that there are prerequisites for applying to any post, and that their professional experience alone will not be enough to ensure their selection. This procedure will thus minimize the chances of receiving applications from inadequate candidates.

General requirements (prerequisites) for workers employed in anti-violence centres include:

- Interest in and knowledge of International Human Rights;
- Motivation to work with and for women, and to advocate for their rights;
- Commitment to confidentiality;
- Willingness and ability to work within a team;
- Willingness and ability to learn and develop new competencies through participation in specialized training;
- Computer literacy;
- Willingness to work night shifts (on rotation with all staff) and extra hours when necessary;
- Willingness to live in the same area where the anti-violence centre is located, if required;
- If short-listed, willingness to participate in an orientation programme as an essential part of the recruitment process (short-listed candidates who do not attend the orientation programme will not be considered for the post).



The Vacancy Announcement is drafted by the Chairperson of the Recruitment Committee and submitted to the other Committee members for finalization. The Vacancy Announcement is shared with legal advisor(s) within the hiring authority before finalization. If the hiring authority has a Public Relations and Information Department, this should ideally be consulted as well. For governmental centres, the General Personnel Council should be notified of the Vacancy Announcement.

The Vacancy Announcement should be given maximum exposure in the local community. Any means for publicizing the Vacancy Announcement are welcome in order to maximize its exposure and allow the largest number of people possible to become aware of it. Publicity can also be done through verbal and/or written announcements circulating within the hiring body's working networks, and during special occasions or activities. As the minimum standard required for exposure and transparency purposes, the Vacancy Announcement should be advertised in at least one of the most popular local newspapers for a period of no less than one week. Preferably, it should also be advertised through the hiring body's website, if this option is available.

In addition to the above-mentioned general requirements, the Vacancy Announcement includes the following information:

- Vacancy Announcement reference number;
- Number and type of vacant posts (as per organizational decision), including job titles, working hours (full-time or part-time) and relevant requirements for each post;
- Full name of the hiring body;
- Location of the anti-violence centre (work station);
- Type of contractual agreement with selected candidates: 3-month contract with possibility of extension, upon positive evaluation, to one year, renewable;
- Type of wages: salaries to be within the scale of the hiring body, yet appropriate to the level of professional experience and expertise required;

- Submission of Application Form, together with the CV, is obligatory;
- Contact details for receiving and for submitting Application Forms and CVs.

**A sample of a Vacancy Announcement and the Application Form used in the recruitment of “Mehwar Centre” staff is included in the attached CD.**

The hiring institution should appoint one or more administrative staff members who, under the supervision of the Chairperson of the Recruitment Committee, collect the submitted Application Forms and CVs, order them by job vacancy, and generate a list mentioning, per applicant: the Vacancy Announcement number; the candidate’s name, address, type of degree and year of graduation; the number of years of relevant experience; and relevant training courses. The hiring institution, through the Chairperson of the Recruitment Committee, will guarantee maximum accuracy and professionalism in the collection and categorization of all received Application Forms. An ad hoc file will be created to archive the received Application Forms with clear reference to the Vacancy Announcement number and date. The file should be kept in the hiring institutions’ archive for a period of no less than ten years.



#### ***4. Candidate short-list***

After the first three steps have been completed, the Recruitment Committee is notified and given the list of applicants generated by the hiring authority.

By invitation of the Chairperson, the Recruitment Committee meets and reviews the Application Forms and CVs in light of:

- The general requirements for all job vacancies;
- The educational background and years of relevant working experience required for each vacant post.

On the basis of the above criteria, the Recruitment Committee selects only those candidates who:

- Demonstrate sufficient relevant experience and expertise;
- Appear motivated to work with women, open to acquiring new knowledge, and open to accepting cultural challenges.

The selected candidates will form the candidate short-list. The short-list should include no less than five, but no more than ten applicants for each job vacancy advertised. The short-list must be approved and signed by all members of the Recruitment Committee. The Chairperson will draft minutes of the Recruitment Committee's meeting documenting the selection of the candidate short-list with proper justification. All Committee members must subscribe to the minutes.

The Chairperson or another appointed Committee member will then inform the short-listed candidates of their selection and ask them to attend the Orientation Programme as the next step in the recruitment process.

In the absence of a sufficient number of suitable applicants to a specific job vacancy, the Recruitment Committee is required to advertise the vacant post again. Head-hunting in order to identify suitable candidates can also be performed, but only after the post has been re-advertised.

**The Job Descriptions developed for the Mehwar Staff (2009) are included in the attached CD.**

## **5. Orientation Programme**

### **a. Purpose**

As mentioned in the introduction, the main difficulty in selecting anti-violence centre staff members stems from the need to identify specific personal skills and potential within job applicants, as well as cultural perspectives and attitudes, which play a very important role in the survival of anti-violence centre beneficiaries, and even the centre itself. In cases in which these characteristics are incorrectly assessed, in fact, consequences can include direct threats to beneficiaries' lives, in addition to staff members' psychological burn-out and the loss of institutional credibility/legitimacy for the anti-violence centre, potentially endangering its continued operation.

Another necessary consideration in the selection of anti-violence centre staff is that the aim is to select a "team" rather than a group of individuals. Given the sensitivity, intensity and challenging nature of the work, the ability to perform "together," based on mutual trust and support, and on complimentary levels of competence and understandings of VAW, is vital for staff members to be able to succeed and last in their assignments.

This is the reason why it is essential, through a proper recruitment process, to try to minimize the risk of appointing inadequate staff members, as well as team members unable to empower and protect each other throughout the course of their work.

### **b. Background and Definition**

The Orientation Programme is a particular staff recruitment tool that was developed on an ad hoc basis in 2006 for the selection of the "Mehwar Centre" staff, building upon similar successful international and national practices. Since then, the Orientation Programme has been conducted several times by specialized professionals, and has thus been refined through experience to best serve the specific needs of anti-violence centre staff recruitment.



The Orientation is an interactive, workshop-based programme targeting short-listed candidates as a group, as well as individuals. Its duration can vary from one to two days, in which participants are supported to:

- Become familiarized with the complexity and challenges of anti-violence centre work, and with the work of women’s rights advocates more generally;
- Get acquainted with each other and test themselves within the group;
- Express their skills, knowledge, professional capacity, motivation, as well as personal beliefs, fears, doubts and questions that are relevant to the work.

The Orientation Programme is prepared and conducted by a team of facilitators/evaluators who combine expertise in combating VAW and staff supervision/evaluation.

### **c. Benefits**

#### **In depth assessment of candidates – individual level**

As opposed to simple face-to-face interviews, the Orientation Programme allows the use of a broad range of tools throughout a longer and continuative time frame, introduces candidates within a “public” framework, gives them a space for group interaction, and thus offers the chance to develop a much more accurate and comprehensive assessment of their expertise, skills, mindset and potential. The findings of the Orientation Programme may confirm or contradict the initial evaluation of a candidate made upon review of her/his Application Form and CV. Aspects such as a candidate’s self-confidence, leadership, ability to handle power without authoritativeness, ability to share emotions and trust with colleagues, ability to question prevailing social and cultural patterns, ability to feel empathy with beneficiaries, in addition to her/his capacity to use knowledge and experience in the best interest of women and children, are brought to light during the Orientation Programme by skilled facilitators/evaluators.

## In depth assessment of candidates – team level

By stimulating group interaction and observing group dynamics, the Orientation Programme also provides the facilitators/evaluators with a glimpse into which candidates could potentially work well together as a team, and what kind of support might be needed to bolster team identity and strength. In cases involving the recruitment of missing staff members when most of the anti-violence centre team is already in place, facilitators/evaluators must accurately assess potential difficulties caused by the inclusion of the new staff member within the existing team, as well as determine if and how a new member's inclusion may contribute to an inappropriate work culture.

All professional workers that are part of an anti-violence centre's staff, including administrative and community services staff, must participate in the Orientation Programme. Any person working within the anti-violence centre interacts, to a certain extent, with the centre's beneficiaries, and also has a broader role as a member of the local community in advocating on behalf of the beneficiaries' rights and the centre's credibility and protection. While participating together in the Orientation Programme, the various anti-violence centre staff members will be stimulated to learn from and support each other, to understand the sensitivity of their work, and to take responsibility for their work. For example, guards will have the chance to fully understand visitor policies, and cleaners to be aware of the importance of confidentiality. Obviously, candidates who may appear closed off or reticent towards interaction with others, or who interact in the spirit of competition rather than curiosity and cooperation, would not be recommended for hiring.

## Identifying capacity building needs

At the end of the Orientation Programme, the team of facilitators/evaluators will be able to provide overall recommendations on the kind of training and coaching candidates would need to undergo, if hired, to improve and consolidate their capacities during the job's initial probationary period.

#### **d. Teaching model**

While combining notions related to the fields of training, education and development, the Orientation Programme adopts a democratic teaching model which is based on the principle of power-sharing in decision-making and aims to encourage active and responsible learning. Participants are stimulated through participation, interaction and self-awareness, to develop confidence as well as commitment to the learning process. Benefiting from a variety of communication tools, the facilitators are able to address different issues in a manner which is entertaining and challenging at the same time, thus leading participants' rational and emotional focus to the heart of the issues.

The use of this method in the field of human resources is based on cognitive behavioural theories and suits the process of acquiring the atypical body of knowledge comprising anti-violence centres' expertise, which matches professional knowledge and skills with a specific range of values.

The expected result is to facilitate and fasten participants' understanding of new concepts and assimilation of a complex set of information. Participants' emotions and projections related to work matters are given space for expression, discussion and elaboration. In this way, participants' strengths and potentials to positively address work issues are emphasized, as well as fears and doubts which may represent obstacles to learning and, ultimately, to qualitative professional performance. For staff selection purposes, all kinds of participant responses are equally valid and useful. Participants who may react by withdrawing from active participation in learning, highlighting insufficient motivation and/or potential to develop, also provide very precious information to the team of evaluators who carry out the recruitment process on behalf of the hiring authority.

This approach ultimately aims to support anti-violence centres' staff internalizing the need for lifelong learning and constant knowledge updates.

## e. Orientation Committee

The Orientation Committee is responsible for preparing and facilitating the Orientation Programme, in addition to providing a written evaluation of each short-listed candidate who participated in the Programme according to a specific set of criteria.

The Orientation Committee members are identified and appointed by the Recruitment Committee from among independent national and international experts. The hiring authority must be notified of their names, or the General Personnel Council in the case of governmental anti-violence centres.

The experts identified must be free from any contractual obligation with the hiring authority. Their judgment in evaluating the job applicants is, indeed, requested to be impartial and to build exclusively on professional considerations. The number of Committee members will vary according to the number of short-listed candidates who will participate in the Orientation Programme, but should be no less than two. For each group of up to fifteen participants, a team of two experts should be appointed.

The Orientation Committee members/experts are selected according to the following criteria:

- Educational background in fields relevant to combating VAW (a background in psychology and/or psychotherapy is highly recommended);
- Minimum of five years of experience in the field of combating VAW, preferably with experience in anti-violence centres;
- Minimum of five years experience in managing and/or supervising and/or evaluating working teams;
- Experience in recruitment processes, especially if applied to the social services sector;
- Experience as a trainer;
- Strong communication skills.

According to the principle of social responsibility and professional cooperation, and considering that anti-violence centres do not usually



operate on large budgets, experts identified as Orientation Programme facilitators are asked to perform their assignment on a voluntary basis. Requests for training fees by experts may be considered by the individual hiring authority that will ultimately decide whether or not to enter into a formal contractual agreement with them. However, the hiring authority shall surely reimburse the experts for expenses accrued from travelling to and staying in the location assigned for the Orientation Programme.

## **f. Building and conducting the Orientation Programme**

### **Forming the group(s) of attendees**

As previously stated, applicants to different job vacancies advertised by an anti-violence centre should be combined to form the group of Orientation Programme attendees. The more diverse the group is, the greater the benefit for the participants will be. The number of participants in any given Orientation Programme should never exceed fifteen, to enable the facilitators to adequately perform and observe the candidates' interaction, as well as their individual capacities, skills and qualifications. In cases in which more than fifteen candidates have been short-listed for various job vacancies, two or more attendee groups should be formed and facilitated by separate teams comprising two experts/facilitators, which will each perform the agreed-upon Orientation Programme activities in parallel. The Recruitment Committee is responsible for contacting the short-listed candidates to request their attendance in the Orientation Programme.

### **Duration**

The Orientation Programme time frame can vary from a minimum of one to a maximum of two days. As previously mentioned, if more than one attendee group is formed, the optimal scenario is that the various teams of facilitators perform the Orientation Programme in parallel, so as not to delay the overall schedule of the recruitment process. If this is not possible, then different dates should be fixed close to each other for the different groups of attendees.

## Location

The Orientation Programme should take place in the anti-violence centre itself to give participants the opportunity to become acquainted with the environment in which they are supposed to be working. The working environment of the anti-violence centre will support the Orientation Programme process, as it embodies many of the notions that will be introduced to the participants during the Programme. If appropriate space is unavailable within the anti-violence centre's facilities, the Orientation Programme can be held in any equipped training hall. Hotels represent a good option if participants need to stay overnight for a two-day Orientation Programme.

## Programme

The Orientation Programme consists of a sequence of workshops, role-playing exercises, case studies, and team-building exercises carried out while alternating between plenary discussions and small working groups. The candidates will be required to actively perform and participate within the team; share knowledge and information, as well as personal beliefs and emotions; openly analyze and discuss cases; and identify with the women victims of violence, while also understanding the role of the various stakeholders involved in the protection of women.

Experts are encouraged to utilize to the maximum extent possible, though with respect to confidentiality, actual work information and case studies. Coordination with the anti-violence centre team, if already in place, for collecting information and data, has to be ensured by the hiring authority. Within the Orientation Programme, attendees are requested to carry out individual, as well as team-based assignments.

The Orientation Committee will need a minimum of two weeks to prepare the Programme and its related materials. The Orientation Committee will then notify the Recruitment Committee of the Programme details.

The sequence of activities comprising the Programme should include, though are not restricted to, the following steps:

- Participants self-presentations and statements of expectations;
- Facilitator overview of combating VAW in the Palestinian context, including both achievements and challenges, for group discussion;
- An exercise for building team spirit and solidarity, and to test candidates' propensity for team work;
- Facilitator introduction to notions and practices of gender-based analysis and explanation of the concept of social change as a core element of work with women victims and survivors of violence, for group discussion;
- A team exercise that highlights candidates' leadership abilities and stimulates a feminist approach to leadership;
- Facilitator presentation on the anti-violence centre as an advocacy tool, from service provision to policy, for group discussion;
- Presentation of case studies from the experience of the anti-violence centre, for group discussion;
- Role-play that invites candidates to alternatively perform as beneficiaries, perpetrators of violence, anti-violence centre staff and institutional officers (police, judges, etc);
- Exercise testing candidates' ability to work under pressure.

**A sample of the Orientation Programme, in addition with Case Studies and other Materials developed in the recruitment of the Mehwar Staff are included in the attached CD.**

### Logistics and costs

The Recruitment Committee, on behalf of the hiring authority, should provide all necessary logistical coordination and support for the conduction of the Orientation activities. The hiring authority, through its own financial resources, or through relevant project funds, has the responsibility for covering all costs foreseen by the Orientation Programme. Such costs may include:

- Stationary and photocopying;
- Hospitality;

- Training hall rental, in cases where it is impossible to utilize the anti-violence centre facilities;
- Hotel room costs, in cases where attendees need to stay overnight at the location where the Orientation Programme is taking place;
- Facilitators' travel and accommodation expenses;
- Facilitators training fees, if any.

### Candidate evaluation

At the end of the Orientation Programme, the facilitators must be able to jointly define each candidate's weaknesses and strengths, and make recommendations about the candidate's needs in terms of capacity building. Facilitators will document their assessment on a specific evaluation sheet, including both a narrative and a numeric score for each candidate.

The scoring system will utilize the same format adopted for candidate evaluation in the face-to-face interviews detailed in Chapter 6.

The compiled evaluation sheets will be signed by the facilitators and delivered to the Chairperson of the Recruitment Committee. The score obtained by each candidate in the Orientation Programme constitutes 40% of the overall scoring received throughout the whole recruitment process. Per each job vacancy, the three candidates who received the highest score based on their performance in the Orientation Programme will be invited to attend an individual, face-to-face interview, which is the final step in the selection process.

Applicants attending the Orientation Programme will be evaluated on the following seven areas of competence:

1. **Gender sensitivity:** How does the candidate address the cultural dilemmas arising between the prevailing traditional culture and the feminist/Human Rights-based approach of anti-violence centres? To what extent is s/he able to elaborate and implement a gender-based analysis of individual cases and of the local context? Does the candidate understand the importance of confidentiality in protecting women victims of violence?

2. **Human approach:** Is the candidate able to approach women victims of violence with humanity, sensitivity, understanding and a non-judgmental attitude? Is s/he able to prioritize women beneficiaries' needs?
3. **Personal motivation:** What is the candidate's personal commitment to and interest in working to combat gender-based violence?
4. **Open-mindedness - ability to learn:** Is the candidate willing and able to learn and experiment with innovative practices, and to engage in challenges and unfamiliar scenarios, some of which may involve crises, disagreements and personal dilemmas?
5. **Dynamic team player:** What is the candidate's propensity and ability to engage in teamwork? To what extent will the candidate be willing and able to prioritize professional sharing and cooperation, versus competitive and career-oriented attitudes?
6. **Ability to take initiative – leadership:** Is the candidate able to take personal initiative, or is s/he rather a passive implementer of others' directions? Is the candidate able to follow up on interventions against set priorities? Does the candidate – especially referring to applicants for management positions – have strong, positive democratic leadership skills with which to promote or contribute to the implementation of a participatory and horizontal management style?
7. **Advocacy skills:** Does the candidate have the ability to credibly present the work accomplished by the anti-violence centre, even amidst disagreement and conflict? Does the candidate have the ability to positively communicate with external parties, while remaining focused on women's needs? Does the candidate – especially referring to applicants for management positions – have the ability to build consensus among very diverse partners at all levels, from government organizations to non-governmental organizations and civil society groups?

**A sample of the Narrative Evaluation Report of the short-listed candidates who attended the Orientation Programme is included in the attached CD.**

## ***6. Face-to-face interviews***

The Recruitment Committee meets by invitation of the Chairperson to review the results of the Orientation Programme and to prepare for the conduction of face-to-face interviews with the selected candidates. If the Orientation Programme facilitators recommended excluding one or more candidates from the interview process based on their negative performance during the Programme, the Recruitment Committee retains the final decision on the appropriateness of interviewing those candidates. The interview process should commence no later than fifteen days after the completion of the Orientation Programme.

### **a. Setting the questions**

The Committee members agree on the set of questions to be asked to the candidates. The assessment of each candidate provided by the Orientation Programme facilitators constitutes a valid basis for choosing the most appropriate questions. All candidates should be asked the same questions, though space will be left for additional questions that may be deemed relevant during the interview. The questions should fit within the below interview structure:

- Ice-breaking;
- Assessing the candidate's knowledge of the required job, of the employer and of the work environment;
- Assessing the candidate's work experience and related, acquired knowledge;
- Assessing the candidate's gender sensitivity;
- Assessing the candidate's personal perception and understanding of VAW;
- Assessing the candidate's knowledge of International Human Rights frameworks, notions and norms;
- Assessing the candidate's knowledge and understanding of the general cultural context in the oPt, as well as cultural dynamism;



- Assessing the candidate’s willingness and ability to change work environments, experiment with innovative work frameworks, and acquire new knowledge;
- Assessing the candidate’s motivation to achieve social change versus accomplishing a professional career or satisfying mere employment needs;
- Assessing the candidate’s management/administrative/logistical capabilities. A written test, to be defined according to the particular post applied for, is highly recommended to assess skills related to reporting, planning, monitoring, etc.

## **b. Interview arrangements**

The hiring authority, through the Chairperson of the Recruitment Committee, is responsible for all necessary arrangements for the conduction of the interviews. The hiring authority will provide the needed administrative, logistic and financial support in order to ensure the completion of all interview arrangements according to the below schedule:

- The hiring authority sets an interview calendar, in consultation with the Committee members;
- The hiring authority sends each candidate, by fax or e-mail, a formal invitation letter to attend the face-to-face interview, specifying the place, date and time of the interview;
- The hiring authority contacts all of the candidates by telephone to confirm their attendance and to inform them of any further details, if needed;
- The hiring authority makes sure that a suitable space for conducting the interviews is made available and adequately equipped. It is highly recommended to post a sign at the entrance of the facility to be used for the interviews, specifying the floor and the room where the interviews will take place;
- The hiring authority ensures that all of the Committee members are provided in advance with a complete list of the interviewees, with the agreed-upon set of questions, and with the scoring sheet;

- The Recruitment Committee members agree on the division of roles during the interviews, with each member focusing on certain aspects according to her/his own expertise, and according to the various job requirements.

### **c. Interview guidelines and procedures**

- Members of the Recruitment Committee should sit in a position where they can see the candidate at the same level;
- The candidate should sit across from the Committee members;
- The Chairperson of the Recruitment Committee should open the interview with a brief explanation about the job, also mentioning the contract type associated with the job;
- The candidate should then be asked to introduce herself/himself in both Arabic and English (age, education, work experience, etc);
- The Recruitment Committee asks the candidate to answer the agreed-upon set of questions according to the decided division of roles. Each Committee member takes up a certain aspect of the interview according to her/his specialization;
- All applicants must be given approximately the same time allocation for the interview, which should not exceed 40 minutes in total. Applicants should also not be deprived of their right to conduct the full interview;
- In case the applicant has special needs, the hiring authority will ensure access to the interview location.

### **d. Compiling the scoring sheet and calculating the final ranking**

At the end of the interview, each Committee member documents her/his evaluation of the candidate on the scoring sheet (the same form used by the Orientation Programme facilitators). The score is composed of the below percentages per area of required capacity:

- Character: 20%
- Commitment to defending women’s human rights: 20%

- Professional experience and skills: 15%
- Knowledge and understanding of gender-related issues: 15%
- Professional values (work ethics): 15%
- Capacity of professional/personal development: 15%

**The Scoring Sheet used in the recruitment of the Mehwar Staff is included in the attached CD.**

The above areas of competence and the related ratings were identified as a result of the experience of relevant governmental and non-governmental institutions working, both locally and internationally, in the field of protecting women victims of violence, and especially upon the experience of the “Mehwar Centre”.

The Recruitment Committee is engaged not to disclose the interview results to the candidates during or at the end of the interview.

The total score obtained by each candidate in the face-to-face interview constitutes 60% of the overall scoring received throughout the whole recruitment process, while the remaining 40% is provided by the score received in the Orientation Programme. The final ranking is therefore calculated by adding the 60% from the interview score and the 40% from the Orientation Programme score. For example, if a candidate received a score equal to 75% in the Orientation and a score equal to 68% in the interview, the final ranking is calculated by multiplying  $75 \times 0.4 (=30\%)$  and  $68 \times 0.6 (=40.8\%)$ , and adding the two results:  $30\% + 40.8\% = 70.8\%$ .

The Chairperson collects the scoring sheets from the Committee members, making sure that all of them are signed. The Chairperson is also responsible for calculating the final ranking of each candidate and for compiling a final graded list that includes all interviewed candidates. The Committee members are then notified of the graded list and must subscribe to and sign it.

In the case of a tie in terms of equal formal qualifications, the candidate who has received higher scores in the areas of “work experience” and “character” should be preferred.

## ***7. Finalization of the recruitment process***

The Chairperson of the Recruitment Committee prepares a **final recruitment report** addressed to the head of the hiring authority, documenting the recruitment process and its outcomes, and requesting immediate action to contract the successful candidate(s). Together with the report, the Chairperson will attach the following documentation:

- Decision to form the Recruitment Committee signed and approved by the head of the hiring authority;
- Minutes of all the Recruitment Committee meetings;
- Vacancy announcement(s) (as published in the newspaper and/or other media channels);
- Overall list of applicants with their qualifications;
- Short-list of candidates with their qualifications;
- Candidates' evaluation by the Orientation Programme facilitators (narrative and numeric scoring sheet);
- Candidates' evaluation by the Recruitment Committee after face-to-face interviews (scoring sheet);
- Graded list of candidates with final scoring.

While revising the final recruitment report, the head of the hiring authority verifies that the standard recruitment procedures were implemented properly and, if so, validates the recruitment results and activates the contractual procedures for the successful candidates. If no procedural breaches were found, the head of the hiring authority must preserve division and delegation of roles, thus confirming the recruitment results. The head of the hiring authority is entitled to request two letters of recommendation from previous employers of the selected candidates. In cases in which an unequivocal negative evaluation is received instead of a positive recommendation, the head of the hiring authority will discuss the matter with the Recruitment Committee and decide accordingly.



## **8. Employment procedures**

After all of the steps in the recruitment process have been completed and the highest decision-making body of the hiring authority is notified with the results of the selection, the hiring authority proceeds with the employment of the selected candidates according to the below steps:

- Notify the selected candidates that they have been selected for the job for which they applied;
- In case of governmental centers, the General Personnel Council shall be notified of the candidate's appointment by the concerned governmental department and I should approve the appointment;
- Convey to the selected candidate a formal job offer (via e-mail or fax) which includes the full terms of reference for the job and the related financial offer;
- Acknowledge reception of the candidates' acceptance or rejection of the job offer (via e-mail or fax). At this stage, candidates may want to negotiate the financial offer. It is recommended that salaries, after being fairly calculated, remain fixed and equal among staff members covering the same positions. Fair salaries should be part of the hiring institution's policy for managing anti-violence centres. Due to the high qualifications and responsibility required of the centre's manager(s) though – thus implying that only a few candidates may be found appropriate for the post – a space for salary negotiation may be allowed according to the hiring authority's available resources;
- The hiring authority requests the selected candidates to provide formal documentation testifying to their identity, educational background and working experience, as well as their status of good health and their bank details. These documents will be considered an integral part of the contract. In specific, the following documents will be requested:
  - Copy of identification card or passport;
  - Copy of birth certificate;
  - Copy of high school certificate and academic degree;

- Curriculum Vitae;
  - Certificate of membership in a trade union or professional organization, for jobs that require it (i.e. National Union of Social Workers, Bar Association for lawyers, etc);
  - Copy of expertise and of training certificate(s);
  - Certificate of good health;
  - Bank statement;
  - Criminal record<sup>(2)</sup>
  - Security clearance
  - Personal photos
- The hiring authority, through its legal unit, drafts the employment contracts, developed upon a standard format previously agreed upon, in order to enter into agreement with the selected candidates. An employment contract is a formal, legally binding agreement between an employer and an employee through which the rights and duties of both parties are outlined and agreed upon.
  - The contract should be made for a probationary period of three months, with the possibility of extension for up to one year, and for renewal on a yearly basis, upon positive evaluation of the employee's professional performance and motivation.
  - The contract should include the following information:
    - Full name of the employee according to her/his identification documents;
    - Full name and logo of the hiring authority;
    - Compendium of the vision, mission and mandate of the anti-violence centre;
    - The date of commencement of the work;

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(2) Women victims of violence are often legally accused by their perpetrators in order to be publicly discredited and to prevent them from filing a complaint. Because of such charges women victims of violence may also be arrested before proving their innocence. In order to avoid any discrimination, it is recommended that the hiring authority takes into consideration such issues and, in case of candidates with equal competences, adopts affirmative action towards professionals who may have experienced violence.



- Duration of the agreement: three month probationary period; possibility of extension of the contract up to one year based on the positive evaluation of the employee's performance during the probationary period;
  - Detailed terms of reference for the post;
  - Working hours;
  - Monthly wages and mode of payment;
  - Reference to the relevant articles of the applicable Labour Law;
  - Confidentiality agreement;
  - Employee's commitment to the professional code of ethics adopted by the anti-violence centre;
- The head of the hiring authority signs the contract and stamps it with the institution's official stamp. In case of governmental centres, employment contracts will be signed by the Minister and stamped by the seal of the Minister's office;
  - The hiring authority forwards the signed contract to the candidate for review and signature;
  - The hiring authority encourages the selected candidates to request further explanation on the terms of the contract, if needed. In case concerns may be expressed by the candidates on the terms of the contract, these should be discussed with the hiring authority, and any issue clarified and settled before finalization and signature of the contract by the two parties;
  - The candidate signs the contract, after review and approval;
  - The original signed contract should be kept in the hiring authority's personnel archive, while copies should be given to the employee and to the anti-violence centre administration;
  - The employee's file should contain the following information and documentation:

- a. Recruitment process:
  - Application form;
  - CV;
  - Evaluation and training recommendations made by the Orientation facilitators;
  - Employee's letter/e-mail accepting the job offer.
- b. Contract:
  - Signed contract with all its Annexes (terms of reference, confidentiality agreement, etc);
  - Certificate of good health;
  - Bank statement;
  - Letter(s) of recommendation from previous places of work;
  - Payment statements.
- c. Personal information and documentation:
  - Copy of identification document;
  - Copy of birth certificate;
  - Copy of high school certificate and academic degree;
  - Curriculum Vitae;
  - Certificate of membership in a trade union or professional organization, for jobs that require it (i.e. National Union of Social Workers, Bar Association for lawyers, etc);
  - Copy of expertise and of training certificate(s).
- d. Holidays and leave days;
- e. Monthly work report, including the employee's monthly work plan;
- f. Official communications between the employee and the employer;
- g. Letters of attention and warnings;
- h. Employee's yearly evaluation reports;
- i. Employee's capacity building reports.



## ***9. Probationary period: between assessing and empowering capacity<sup>(3)</sup>***

### **a. Definition**

A “human resources management” system should determine all methods and actions that the hiring authority uses to train and develop the anti-violence centre’s staff so as to attain its organizational goals. Upon advanced international practices, human resources management, especially when applied to social services, is no longer concentrated only on the individual employee’s administration and training. It has evolved towards a form of specialized advisory support to the entire centre in its struggle for performance improvement. Accordingly, staff capacity building is planned and conducted using an outcome-based educational model, which has specific learning objectives as its determinants.

It is vital, especially within the sensitive framework of anti-violence centres, to provide staff members with an ad hoc capacity building programme, as they constitute the centre’s core resource.

The “probationary period” consists of a gradual assumption of duties and responsibilities by a new employee, throughout a timeframe of three months, during which s/he is given the opportunity to benefit from various capacity building tools, such as training, mentoring, technical supervision and peer support, under the overall supervision of the hiring authority.

The probationary period primarily aims to improve and consolidate the new employee’s capacity and motivation, and to enhance staff’s awareness about various aspects of the required job. At the same time, it preserves the right of both parties, the employee and the employer, to withdraw from the employment agreement in case of different assessments after the probationary period.

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(3) In case of governmental centers, this period is referred to as “the experience period” and it should take into account provisions mentioned in the Civil Service Regulations for governmental personnel.

## b. Capacity building tools provided during the probationary period

### Training

Training is an applied science, grounded in theories of psychology of learning, through which untrained employees become productive workers in pursuance of the anti-violence centre's goals.

Within this framework, “learning” is defined as an attitude-change provoked by induced experiences, activities, and disclosed information. Based on the assumption that every woman has experienced, at certain stages of her life and in various forms, gender-based discrimination and abuse, and that every man has witnessed and perpetrated it, even if unintentionally, the training provided should stimulate a collective in-depth analysis, through gender lenses, of social and personal experiences which, if successful, will lead to modified gender-sensitive attitudes, beliefs and professional behaviours. Anti-violence professionals are supposed to be selected on the basis of their openness and strength in achieving this change. Ultimately, training of anti-violence centre professionals aims to enable them to activate engendered social changes, thus combating the incidence of gender-based violence.

Although a major, comprehensive training programme should be implemented during the probationary period of the newly hired staff, training for anti-violence centre professionals should be considered an on-going and long-term process. Employees should receive thorough explanation of the developmental concepts informing the training programme, so that they will fully understand why it is vital for their job. The training programme must be planned and structured in progressive stages of learning, although its structure should remain flexible.

When shaping the training programme, the following statements should also be kept in mind:

- Training is a process whereby training needs are analyzed and established;

- Training produces the primary inputs to be transformed into outputs through team’s work;
- Training is a subsystem and is influenced in its role and function by internal and external phenomena, which include socio-political, economic and legal constructs;
- Training helps to evaluate the weaknesses and strengths of assigned personnel.

**A sample model of Training Programme for staff members newly assigned to work in an anti-violence centre is included in the attached CD.**

### Mentoring

The specific expertise required of professionals working in anti-violence centres, particularly in shelters, is practice-oriented rather than based on theoretical knowledge. This is the reason why exchanging experiences, case studies, and direct testimonies of professionals as well as survivors of violence, are key tools of such specific training programmes. This also explains why the tool of “mentoring” or “partnering” new staff members with staff who have already experienced working in an anti-violence centre, is crucial during the first months of work for a new team or new staff members.

“Mentoring” is a coaching methodology that proved successful over many years, both with local and international anti-violence teams. With regards to the “Mehwar Centre” team’s capacity building, mentoring represented a key process that significantly facilitated the staff’s consolidation of acquired notions and skills.

This methodology entails external experts and/or experienced staff from the anti-violence centre team joining the newly hired staff members in their daily routine, sharing their tasks and duties, contributing to problem solving, analysis of cases and jointly developing plans for intervention. This methodology ensures from the very beginning the quality of the interventions, on one hand, and on the other, a competent assumption of responsibility towards the cases. It also ensures continuous critical

and gender-based analysis of cases, which is the added value of any anti-violence centre, thus differentiating anti-violence centres from traditional and assistance-oriented social services.

## Supervision

### Background and Definition

In 1981, the American Association of Psychiatrists defined psychological counselling as the services provided by specialists in counselling psychology in accordance with the principles and methods of studying human behaviour through the different stages of growth. This service confirms the positive side of a beneficiary's character, helping her/him to achieve new skills necessary for growth, coping with life, and making decisions.

The philosophy of counselling is based on giving the beneficiary the opportunity to choose what is best for her/himself and bear the responsibility for her/his decisions. Counselling is a personal interaction focused on the individual's behaviour in the past and what s/he expects or wants for the future. Counselling enables individuals to relieve stress and discuss problems and patterns of thought, and to form new ways of thinking that allow the individual eliminate emotional attitudes that impede self-expression and the examination of feelings.

“Supervision” services in anti-violence centres are based on an interactive, empathic relationship between the staff and the supervisor, following the counselling model.

Supervision is carried out through team sessions, preferably every two or three weeks, during which team members discuss cases, share challenges, and improve their professional relationships, while strengthening mutual trust, acceptance, understanding and support. It is essential to include all staff members in the supervision sessions.

Additional sessions may be held only between the supervisor and the direct help-providers (social counsellors, lawyers) if deemed necessary.

Staff supervision can also be offered on a one-to-one basis, if needed.

In any case, the aim of staff supervision is to help the employee cope with difficulties and challenges of her/his work, while serving the employee's professional growth, both on an individual and team level, and helping her/him develop healthy attitudes and make wise decisions.

### **Objectives**

Through providing a safe setting characterized by neutrality, confidentiality, professionalism and objectivity, in a spirit of empathic sharing and support, the staff supervisor in an anti-violence centre aims to:

- Support staff in achieving the institutional goals and in delivering effective services. The supervisor must work within the frame of the guiding principles and internal regulations of the anti-violence centre, and commit to its goals. Due to staff burnout, employees may encounter difficulties and controversies in the application of those principles and rules. The supervisor will help them find alternative, viable ways to implement the centre's institutional mission;
- Facilitate staff's professional growth, through in-depth analysis of professional experiences and increased awareness about employees' resources for carrying out their work;
- Support staff in developing coping mechanisms and strategies to avoid burnout;
- Offer a safe and confidential space for expressing and elaborating personal dilemmas caused by the sensitivity of the work in anti-violence centres;
- Convey notions in order to increase specific areas of expertise, as required by the work.

Financial constraints and time management problems may sometimes lead to the delay or even perhaps cancellation of supervision sessions. However, the importance of supervision cannot be stressed enough. Priority should be given to supervision under all economic and time frame conditions.

## ***10. Decision to confirm employee appointment***

### **Staff evaluation after probationary period**

Within the context of anti-violence centres, staff evaluation is far more than a tool for job confirmation or termination. Periodic staff evaluation is a tool for improving staff performance through self-assessment as well as external professional assessment. It supports the individual employee in her/his professional development, and, at the same time, assists managers in increasing their understanding of what is needed to empower the centre staff.

After a three-month probationary period, the newly hired staff members are requested to undergo an evaluation. Such evaluation should surely be compulsory for contract extension or renewal. Yet, considering the above perspective, the evaluation is also a great opportunity for each new staff member to openly share her/his work experience with senior staff and professionals. The employee will be given the occasion to focus on the challenges encountered, on how they affected her/his work, and on the strategies or tools utilized to overcome them.

For the anti-violence centre management and the hiring authority, the evaluation process primarily provides an assessment of the new employee's performance and whether it suits the work environment and purpose of the centre or not. It secondarily provides important information on sensitive and emerging protection issues that may require intervention for the best interest of both the centre's beneficiaries and staff.

The evaluation process therefore tackles more than one level. It starts from the "individual employee level," analyzing how duties and responsibilities related to a certain job post were carried out, and if the job requirements were actually met by the new staff member. It then refers to the "employee within the collective work environment," while assessing the employee's performance and professional growth against team dynamics, internal procedures and management systems. Lastly, it opens a window on emerging protection issues that may have been highlighted through the work of the anti-violence centre.



It is crucial that personnel understand that the evaluation process serves to improve employees' professional input and not to criticize them personally. It helps staff members better understand their job title, position, duties, roles, and responsibilities. It is healthy to disagree during the evaluation, but it is very important to maintain a professional atmosphere in order to lead to an effective and organized anti-violence centre team.

The evaluation results will provide the information needed to confirm a new employee in her/his position or not. It will also highlight the areas of competence in which the newly hired staff member, and the anti-violence centre team as a whole, need additional training.

The team of staff evaluators should be appointed by the head of the hiring authority and shall include:

- The anti-violence centre manager or director;
- A representative of the hiring authority with competent background;
- One or two national and/or international experts in the field of combating VAW and experts covering the areas of expertise of the various employees. One expert position could rotate according to the field of expertise required for the evaluation by each employee.

**The Evaluation Form used to evaluate newly recruited staff at the Mehwar Centre after probationary period is included in the attached CD.**



