Protecting women and children

Lessons learned from Jordan

Save the Children
Denmark
When the twenty-one year old woman had been married for only seven months, she had had enough. She was upset and angry about the way her husband treated her. One morning after a fight, she stormed out of the house and reported her husband for abuse at the local police station. When the officer at the police station learned that the accusation concerned a newly established family, the young woman was immediately taken to the Family Protection Department’s unit in northern Amman.

Eight hours later the young couple left the Family Protection Department reconciled and with renewed commitment to act respectfully and considerate of each other’s rights. “I am tired, but glad that my husband is going to treat me better. He has signed a pledge to treat me respectfully – and the police are going to check that he does!”

Making families function without violence

Jordan is currently taking essential steps towards breaking the strong taboo regarding sexual abuse and violence within families. The goal is to protect women’s and children’s rights by making families function without violence, and The Family Protection Department (FPD) plays a crucial role.

Since 1997, FPD has been the one-stop-shop for matters relating to family protection. The department has expanded from one office in Amman to now nine units in all the directorates of Jordan. The number of cases the units handle annually has increased seven-fold, and the clients who have been in contact with the FPD appear to be satisfied with the service they receive there.

So, what has made FPD so successful? And what can other countries, professionals and authorities learn from the Jordanian experiences?

Consultants from FPD and Save the Children Denmark have made a thorough assessment of the pioneer work in Jordan by interviewing FPD-staff, clients and partners. In this publication, we would like to share the central results and best practices with you.

The successful work of FPD can be summed up as belonging to the following arenas:

- Organization and procedures
- Case management
- Policy environment
- Contacts with wider society

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Raising awareness among children in schools is a cornerstone in the fight for children's rights.
“FPD staff members rely on many kinds of investigation – police investigation, medical and scientific investigation, interviews and observations. Our strength is that – together - we can do all these things. And we are very good at them. Sometimes we assist our partners in some techniques.”

- FPD police officer.
Organizing a family protection system

The Family Protection Department units throughout Jordan are staffed with a wide range of professionals: police officers, social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists and medical staff such as forensic doctors. Staff is seconded from various ministries – Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Social Development and Ministry of Health – but they are housed in the same offices and they work as tight-knit teams. Hence, a client is able to see a police officer, a social worker, a doctor, a psychologist and a behavioral expert all within the same office building, all within the same day. Clients do not travel between authorities once they have entered a FPD unit; relevant authorities will come to them. For people needing assistance with family issues, this is a relief. It also means that their issues are resolved more quickly – they will not have to wait for when the next authority has time to see them and there is no need to repeat themselves, perhaps aggravating already painful situations.

No uniform, no weapon, no handcuffs

Walking into a FPD unit, you would not know that you had entered a law enforcement facility. The lobby is decorated with photos of children, posters with smiling adults, of the King and Queen of Jordan visiting with families and children. The receptionist is a trained social worker or police officer, she is calm and will invite you to explain the reason why you are seeking help. At no point will you meet anyone in a uniform and you won’t see weapons or handcuffs. The room you are interviewed in will have comfortable chairs and a low table, which may remind you of your living room. If you are a child, the adult who talks to you will be trained in respecting your sensitivity and your sense of trust. The adult will talk to you in a room, where the furniture is sized for children, where there are toys to play with. All of this is described in the FPD procedures manual. The staff members in all units have been trained in the manual.
Part of the police
The FPD is a department under Public Security Directorate; it is part of the police. Clients – especially women – do get a sense that their problems are taken seriously when their case is followed up by police officers. There is no question about the jurisdiction, the mandate or the authority of the FPD. This is especially important in relation to women and children’s rights, even more so in traditional communities where power-structures are dominated by men.

The leadership of FPD is very visible. If you are a staff member, you will meet your unit chief in the hallways, in the reception room and the case-conference room, and he will be involved in the cases along with case workers, whether they are social workers or case workers. FPD management aims to practice what they preach: active, caring involvement in the protection of clients.

A multidisciplinary approach
The FPD falls under the Public Security Directorate, but it is a true collaboration with a number of different partners under the National Committee for Family Affairs. The National Framework for Family Protection states very clearly that it is a multidisciplinary approach which requires all involved institutions and organizations to cooperate. The partnerships are governed by formal agreements that once and for all designate the ways and means in which the parties cooperate and which commits the parties to the agreement.

“I am glad it is the police who make the call on my ex-husband telling him to get my children to school. He will know that I mean business!”
- Female client.

“The root causes of violence and abuse are complex. Combating them requires the work of many parties; we must work in multidisciplinary teams.”
- National Council for Family Affairs.
Thus, in daily procedures the way has been paved for seamless case handling, information sharing and supportive collaboration for the benefit of clients.

FPD staff members are teamed around cases. They share case files and conduct regular case conferences where the advice of all involved expertise is consulted. The presence of representatives from the various authorities means that decision making can be made and required assistance provided immediately. FPD is able to generate law enforcement, psychological, social and financial assistance if needed. For example, a mother of four had become estranged from her husband who had taken a second wife. When reconciling the two proved impossible, the single mother was helped to move into her father’s house and her family was helped financially. In this way, the physical and financial safety of the woman and her children were ensured and further disruption to the family was averted.

**Training**

Training is a big part of your professional life, if you are a FPD staff member. The Regional Training Unit at FPD Headquarters in Amman organizes training for all staff members and for staff from partner organizations. Some training courses are specific to professions, but most of the courses are given to all staff members. For example, interview techniques when dealing with children is a course that all staff members must take, as is general client communication.

Together with Save the Children Denmark, FPD and partner staff have benefited from a training programme that has brought 50 staff members to Denmark for exchange and training in specific techniques. Importantly, FPD and Save the Children Denmark have also implemented a Training of Trainers programme, so that benefits are spread out to an even bigger number of staff and partners. As part of the effort to be a learning organization, FPD, with the support of Save the Children Denmark, has invested in data bases and in analysis of case statistics. There is a continuous effort made to incorporate the experience and lessons learned in the organization.

**How to organize the family protection system**

- Create multidisciplinary teams – consult across professions extensively
- Create one-stop-shop for clients
- Create strong partnerships with other organizations working in the field of protection
- Have thorough and continuing training program for staff
- Extend ambitious training programmes to all staff members
- Instill mutual respect among staff members, across professions
- Create strong, detailed procedures that cover all aspects and all professions
- Make procedures universal for all staff members/all professions
- Disseminate procedures to all units, all staff – and to partners

"Families and societies keep developing. We must develop our capacities as our surroundings change and develop."

- FPD social worker.
Clients feel secure and supported when meeting FPD staff. The on-going training of all staff and partners in managing the different categories of clients is one of the reasons for this. The different professions in the FPD teams inspire each other and learn from each other’s approaches. The police officer will take on some of the social worker’s techniques and the psychologist will apply some of the police officer’s investigative methods. Both victims and their aggressors express appreciation for the way they are treated. This is essential for conflict resolution and sustainable solutions to family issues.

24 hour service
Clients can expect immediate action when they contact FPD. FPD offers 24 hour service and it is standard procedure that whenever an individual contacts FPD, a security assessment is made immediately as well as plans for adequate protection. Even when there is no immediate security threat, a case is
activated immediately when a person makes contact. If there are accusations made against a family member, the person is immediately brought in for separate interview.

The benefits of prompt action are many; a situation may be defused if addressed instantaneously, evidence may be gathered more readily and potential harm to clients may be averted.

FPD receives many types of cases, and the multidisciplinary teams use a variety of methods and techniques to help them understand the nature of the cases. Some cases are very severe – like assault or abuse- and if there are grounds to bring charges, cases will be referred to court. But FPD resolves many of the cases within the units or with other partners. “Families are better off if they can resolve their differences, if they can stay together,” as an FPD officer expresses the thinking. “If the breadwinner leaves, what will happen to the rest of the family? Financial trouble will only lead to more suffering,” he says.

Involving the whole family

FPD units are able to solve over 60% of the cases brought to them outside of court. Why are so many cases resolved within the unit? Because FPD and partners take point of departure in the family unit rather than the individual. When an individual contacts FPD with a problem, the investigation into their case will involve the whole family. For example, when a teenager acts out, runs away from home, makes trouble, both parents and child are consulted and helped to find appropriate ways to live together.

But the family is not seen in isolation. Family and community are viewed and respected holistically. If the solutions found do not resonate with the local community, the changes for the family won’t be sustainable.

Cases are followed up with therapy, support and home-visits until the team of case workers agree with the family in question, that the case has come to a successful resolution. This may take years or it may take only a short period of time.
"The best thing for children is to stay within the family. If it is safe for them there, they are better off with their parents. If not, another family member."

– FPD police officer

"I feel good that FPD will follow up with visits to my house. This way I know they support me in my claim that my husband has to treat me respectfully."

– Young woman in abusive marriage.

How to handle cases in the family protection system

- Take action immediately with new cases – protection before treatment
- Provide 24 hour service
- Have a forthcoming and supportive approach to clients
- Have a holistic approach to clients; look for family dynamics, social dynamics to be addressed
- Focus on abusers as well as victims
- Provide all necessary support to clients – maintain holistic approach when providing support
- Follow cases up systematically and over extensive period of time
CASE MANAGEMENT

Protecting women and children

The FPD focuses on victims as well as abusers.
Promoting a family protection system

The FPD was established under the umbrella of the National Council of Family Affairs, chaired by her Royal Highness Queen Raina. Protecting the family unit, specifically women and children, is a clearly worded goal within the decree establishing the Jordanian government. The policy guidance concerning protecting women and children is clear-cut and unequivocal; and FPD is charged with enforcing it. The solid policy platform has made the job for FPD less complicated; when establishing partnerships, when making ambitious work plans, when budgeting and staffing, there are few and very transparent pieces of legislation for FPD to relate to.

Apart from implementing the family protection policy, the FPD also helps form policies promoting the rights of women and children. Management has made sure that the experiences of FPD are fed back to the policymakers so that lessons learned will be turned into better legislation for women and children. So, when FPD found a way to alleviate the trauma for children in abuse cases who have to witness in court, they advocated for amending existing legislation to allow videoed interviews as evidence in court – and they helped in drafting.

The idea for using video interviews came from British and Danish law enforcement. With support from the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FPD visited colleagues abroad, learning from what they were doing and how they worked. This willingness to learn from others meant that FPD was able to gather quickly many of the methods and techniques in working with women and children’s rights and adapt these to suit the Jordanian context. The FPD continues to have collaboration with many countries and seeks opportunities for exchanges. FPD is currently collaborating with Save the Children Denmark with support from Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The project has been operating since 2007 and involves exchanges, training, studies and unit expansions.

How to promote a family protection system in the policy environment

• Be open, learning, and focus on dialogue
• Participate in networks
• Formulate solid and clear cut policies on women and children’s rights, mandates and responsibilities for implementing these policies
• Make a strong, enforcement-mandated organization the lead agency in the collaborative network
Apart from implementing the family protection policy in Jordan, the FPD also helps form policies promoting the rights of women and children.

“We have the mandate to protect the family. Everyone knows this.”

- FPD police officer
“Girls participate actively in discussions about children’s rights, violence and sexual abuse in Jordanian schools.”

“Protecting women and children.”

“We are getting requests from women’s groups to come repeat our talks. And now they bring their husbands!”

– FPD social worker.

“In the beginning, people didn’t believe we could make a difference. But when more and more cases were known, when people saw what kind of work we did, they started asking for our assistance.”

– FPD police officer.
Changing attitudes community by community

Traditional power structures have made it very important for FPD to act in culturally sensitive ways when advocating for the rights of women and children. The nine FPD units across Jordan work with very diverse communities. The FPD has found ways to consult with traditional community leaders in order to make case resolution durable and realistic. Asserting a woman’s right at the FPD unit won’t have lasting effect unless this is recognized in her family and in her community. For each case the FPD solves to the satisfaction of a woman, her family and their traditional community leaders, the acceptance of women’s rights is enhanced in the wider traditional public - and may have effect on traditional leaders' approach to conflict resolution in the future. For FPD and Jordanian society there is a lot at stake in each and every case; their performance has direct impact on protection and promotion of rights.

Working in creative and innovative ways to engage traditional communities is part and parcel with the successful awareness raising that has led to the FPD getting more citizens to approach them. There is no formula for how to achieve this; FPD staff makes it their task to understand the community they are dealing with and on the basis of this understanding devise the best possible way to empower women and children.

But the FPD does not rely only on word of mouth to disseminate information about the rights of women and children and about family protection to the communities. National media-campaigns carry newspaper advertisements with the hot-line number providing 24 hour access to assistance. In addition, each unit has an awareness raising programme that involves school-visits, talks at women’s groups and other community groups multiple times weekly.

How to work with wider society for enhanced family protection
- Have strong information campaigns in relevant media
- Have a solid and insistent community outreach programme for schools, women’s groups, local communities
- Involve community leaders
- Be culturally sensitive – and creative – in ways to advocate the rights of women and children
The Danish-Arab Partnership Programme

The cooperation between Save the Children Denmark and the Family Protection Department is partly financed by the Danish-Arab Partnership Programme (DAPP).
DAPP was launched in 2003 by the Danish Government with the objective to establish a basis for improved dialogue, understanding and cooperation between Denmark and the Arab region and to support existing local reform processes in the Middle East and North Africa. More than 120 Danish civil society organisations and public institutions are currently engaged in professional partnerships with an even greater number of Arab partners.

Save the Children Denmark in the Middle East

Save the Children Denmark is guided by the fundamental values expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Our vision is a world in which every child attains the right to survival, protection, development and participation. Our mission is to inspire breakthroughs in how the world treats children, and to have an immediate and lasting change in their lives.

Our work is demand driven. All activities are identified, designed and implemented in close collaborations between Arab and Danish governmental and non-governmental partners.
We establish partnerships with a perspective of sustainable long lasting cooperation. Our work is based on equal partnerships – with particular focus on professional cooperation, exchange of knowledge and sharing of experience and professional expertise.
“I am proud of being with the FPD. My work in peacekeeping and the training inspired me to work with the sensitive issues of women and children’s rights”

- FPD police officer.
“...We rely on FPD as the final expertise for determination in many of our cases.”

- UNHCR, partnership organization.

Save the Children contributes to a sustainable and long term capacity building of governmental and civil society organizations.
The benefits of entering into partnership with Save the Children Denmark

Accountable governments and a vibrant civil society are essential for the wellbeing of children. We contribute to a sustainable and long term capacity building of governmental and civil society organisations through:

1. Professional multidisciplinary training modules - carried out in Jordan in close cooperation with the FPD - target police officers, social workers, medical personnel, schools and universities and other relevant stakeholders in governmental, civil society organisations, private sector etc.
2. Exchange programmes in Denmark to enhance the professional learning and dialogue in Arab and North African institutions and organisations dealing with family protection.
3. Strengthening multiple partners working with children within civil society through establishing rights based partnerships, and referral mechanisms.
4. Building the capacity of partners in advocacy and awareness campaigning enabling them to speak out for their rights.
5. Building family protection systems that fulfil children's rights: supporting governments that take responsibility for implementing children's rights, and a civil society that stands up for those rights and holds governments responsible.
6. Addressing fundamental root causes for child rights abuses that are related to knowledge attitude and behaviour.
Save the Children is the world’s largest independent child rights organisation. Save the Children fights for children’s rights. We deliver immediate and lasting improvements to children’s lives in Denmark and worldwide.