

Achieving Planning and Land Rights in “Area C”, West Bank, Palestine

Awareness Campaign on People’s Rights to Land
“Support their right”

UN-Habitat, Palestine Office

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A. Acronyms

APLR	Achieving Planning and Land Rights in “Area C”
CBOs	Community-based organizations
EU	European Union
LGUs	Local Government Units
LWSC	Land and Water Settlement Commission
PA	Palestinian Authority
PLA	Palestinian Land Authority
WCLAC	Women’s Center for Legal Aid

B. Background

UN-Habitat and the Land and Water Settlement Commission (LWSC), with financial support from the European Union (EU) are implementing the project: “Achieving Planning and Land Rights in “Area C” (APLR), West Bank (2019-2023)”. Within the ambit of this project, the partners plan to raise awareness especially of Palestinian vulnerable groups about land administration, their rights to land and the political, economic and social benefits of land ownership. The campaign also aims to contribute towards effecting transparent processes of land settlement across the West Bank, including “Area C” that constitutes more than 60 per cent.

Palestinian people, especially in the Israeli controlled “Area C” are faced with many restrictions when it comes to access to land ownership mechanisms, and lack representation in the decision- and policy-making processes at the local level. The Israeli Military Order No. 291 of 1968 suspended land registration in the West Bank, leaving at most 30 per cent of land formally registered at the time. This lack of representation is exacerbated by the following challenges at the level of the Palestinian Authority (PA): (i) lack of capacity, experience and skills in land tenure security; (ii) lack of operational and logistical tools especially for remote Palestinian communities in “Area C”; and (iii) lack of jurisdiction to enforce land tenure security solutions. This needs to be realized within the many strenuous challenges faced in the process of fostering land tenure security for vulnerable groups, including women, youth, and people with disabilities, viz. (i) relative lack of acceptance of women and other groups’ rights to owning and managing of land by some groups as a result of the dominant hegemonic patriarchal social and cultural norms; (ii) male-dominated processes and forums that impede women’s economic and social empowerment and reduce their possibility of accessing land and natural resources.

C. Campaign objectives

The overarching objective of the campaign is to raise awareness on the importance of the land settlement process and people’s individual and collective rights with regards to accessing, owning and inheriting land. The campaign will be co-led by UN-Habitat and LWSC and will be a national campaign that will focus on the Palestinian land settlement project in general. The campaign will also focus on the two governorates which are targeted by the APLR project, namely Hebron and Bethlehem.

The specific objective of the campaign is to mobilize communities with the aim of raising the awareness of different community groups on their land rights, thus contributing to transforming the dominant gendered power relations in the targeted communities which leave women at risk of losing their rights to land and inheritance. Without land to build or maintain a home, to farm or leverage for economic and social gain, and to use as her own – women’s security and prosperity remain compromised. This campaign aims to:

- Establish a network and pool of men and women who will act as pioneers for positive change in their communities, challenging the patriarchal gendered norms which often infringe on women’s rights;
- Empower women to realize their land inheritance rights;

- Empower communities to support each other in accessing their rights, including through community-based organizations (focusing on women-led and youth-led Community-based Organizations (CBOs));
- Empower the younger generations by raising awareness on their inheritance rights and the general subject of land rights;
- Empower Local Government Units (LGUs), customary authorities (e.g. elders and tribal leaders), legal institutions, and LWSC offices to undertake their role to effectively support *anyone* with a right to land to enjoy that right; and
- Empower implementing partners to understand the social aspect of land settlement by enhancing their awareness on the rights of different individuals.

The awareness plan was developed through a participatory mechanism which was based on consultations with the key stakeholders, including LWSC and the main implementing partners which are working within the ambit of this project. The plan was also built on two needs assessments on women's land and inheritance rights; the first was conducted by the Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development and AWRAD which during 2021, and the second was conducted by the Women's Center for Legal Aid (WCLAC) in 2014. The plan is also based on community consultations and analysis of the issues facing women, especially in Hebron and Bethlehem governorates, with regards to land access and ownership.

D. Theory of change

The following theory of change summarizes how the project aims to contribute to the above-mentioned specific awareness objectives, specifically by focusing on pioneers or champions for social change within the targeted communities, coupled with complementary awareness-raising tools to reiterate the messaging:

- **IF** we work with positively deviant men and women in the targeted communities (specifically in the Israeli controlled "Area C" of the West Bank) who demonstrate positive actions towards challenging gendered stereotypes and male-dominated power dynamics with regards to land rights,
- **THEN** we can create a pool of men/women who will follow in their lead by adopting and promoting new gendered norms (non-violent, rights-based, positive masculinities) in the Palestinian society in terms of supporting women's and other marginalized groups' land rights.

E. Campaign slogan

The campaign's chosen slogan is *Support their right* (ادعمهم بحقوقهم) to emphasize that women, minor/young inheritors, and disabled inheritors have a right to own, decide on, access and use land, and that men are responsible for supporting women and other marginalized groups with enjoying this right.

F. Target groups

The campaign will target different groups, and each group will receive different messaging based on their needs and context assessment. Specifically, it will target men, women, youth and people with disabilities. It will involve CBOs (women- and youth-led) as well as the main partners, especially LWSC, the Palestinian Land Authority, Ministry of Women’s Affairs, amongst others.

G. Main messaging per target group

<p>For individuals:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Awareness on the land settlement process - Awareness on the benefits of land settlement especially in “Area C” - Awareness on the benefits of gender equality on the community, and correcting the misconceptions about religious and cultural norms, and knowing the religious and legal rights of women in inheritance - Awareness of the social, economic, climate change and political implications associated with women’s access to and ownership of land, including access to markets that benefit women and their families - Awareness of their legal rights and the land settlement legal and institutional process - Awareness on their informal rights with regards to land access and utilization - Awareness on the tools and support available to them in asserting their rights, including the protection of women - Awareness on the importance of respecting other people’s rights, specifically female inheritors, minor/young inheritors, and disabled inheritors, and the need to address conflicts of interest, remove community pressure on women and use gender sensitive dispute resolution - - Awareness on the benefits of positive cultural change - Awareness on the legal measures to prevent inter-generational inheritance conflicts - Awareness on the importance of land ownership to enhance women’s economic and social positions - Awareness on the importance of women’s land ownership to promote inter-generational equality (where women can bequeath their lands to their sons and daughters) - Awareness on the need and importance of providing gender disaggregated data and information related to gender through data collection tools - Awareness about Palestinian women in relation to land and the issues that need advocacy based on gender disaggregated data
<p>For community-based organizations and champions of change:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Awareness the land settlement legal and institutional process - Awareness on the benefits of land settlement especially in “Area C” - Awareness of different target groups’ formal and informal rights and tools available to them - Awareness on the benefits of gender equality on the community, and correcting the misconceptions about religious and cultural norms - Awareness of the social, economic, climate change and political implications associated with women’s access to and ownership of land, including access to markets that benefit women and their families

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Awareness on the importance of advocating for respecting other people’s rights, specifically female inheritors, minor/young inheritors, and disabled inheritors, and the need to address conflicts of interest, remove community pressure on women and use gender sensitive dispute resolution - Awareness on the importance of their role in pioneering and championing for social and cultural transformation - Awareness on the information and tools available for their use to effect social change - Awareness on the need and importance of providing gender disaggregated data and information related to gender through data collection tools - Awareness about Palestinian women in relation to land and advocating for issues based on gender disaggregated data
<p>For development partners and private sector active in the land sector:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Awareness of different target groups’ legal rights and tools available to them - Awareness on the legal processes that need to be put in place if and when a woman forfeits her right to land due to coercion - Awareness on the benefits of gender equality on the community, and correcting the misconceptions about religious and cultural norms - Awareness of the social, economic, climate change and political implications associated with women’s access to and ownership of land, including access to markets that benefit women and their families - Awareness on the importance of advocating for respecting other people’s rights, specifically female inheritors, minor/young inheritors, and disabled inheritors, and the need to address conflicts of interest, remove community pressure on women and use gender sensitive dispute resolution - Awareness on the importance of recognizing informal land uses and rights during the settlement process through the proper utilization of the Social Tenure Domain Model which identifies the continuum of land rights in any given context (from formal to informal rights) - Awareness on the Gender Evaluation Criteria tool which provides a set of criteria that is aimed at improving access to land and tenure security for both men and women - Awareness on the importance of their role in pioneering and championing for social and cultural transformation - Awareness on the need and importance of collecting and generating gender disaggregated data and information related to gender through the use of data collection and management tools - Awareness about Palestinian women in relation to land and advocating for issues based on gender disaggregated data
<p>For competent local and national governmental and customary authorities:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Awareness on the benefits of land settlement in “Area C” - Awareness on the gaps in the implementation of laws related to women and land - Awareness on the benefits of gender equality on the community, and correcting the misconceptions about religious and cultural norms - Awareness of the social, economic, climate change and political implications associated with women’s access to and ownership of land, including access to markets that benefit women and their families - Awareness of different target groups’ formal and informal land rights

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Awareness on the importance of recognizing informal land uses and rights Awareness on their role in influencing community men to protect the rights of women and the importance of a gender balanced approach - Awareness on the importance of their role in advocating for respecting other people’s rights, specifically female inheritors, minor/young inheritors, and disabled inheritors, and the need to address conflicts of interest, remove community pressure on women and use gender sensitive dispute resolution - Awareness on the importance of their role in pioneering and championing for social and cultural transformation - Awareness on the need and importance of generating gender disaggregated data and information related to gender, through the use of data collection and management tools - Awareness about the need to advocate for Palestinian women in relation to land, the use of gender disaggregated data, and activation of women’s empowerment and gender sensitive regulations, such as tax exemptions and financing options that are considerate of women’s needs, male influences, conflicts of interest, and abilities
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H. Workplan

No.	Activity	Timeline										
		2021					2022					
		Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
1	Develop a comprehensive brochure on legal land rights which can be a reference point for the targeted communities. <i>This will be achieved by establishing collaborations with existing governmental and non-governmental initiatives which work to enhance women’s and other groups’ land rights to reach more people.</i>											
2	Conduct a capacity assessment followed by trainings to all development partners, LWSC Settlement Offices, and community-based organizations on the legal rights of different groups, social, economic, and political implications associated with women’s access to and ownership of land, and the STDM and the GEC tools, at least 50 per cent women											

	<p><i>Establish a mechanism of coordination and complementarity between the different stakeholders to reach more people within the targeted communities.</i></p>											
3	<p>Identify men and women (from various generations and rights groups) as well as CBOs who are the change holders and who actively promote the new norms.</p> <p><i>Champions for positive change will be identified via weekly community mobilization workshops which are planned in the targeted communities. Selection will be based on good practices in terms of commitment to legal rights for all.</i></p>											
4	<p>Develop written stories of positive deviant men and women, including through their “user journeys”, to identify concrete practices and factors that led and influenced the norm/s that they are leading. These stories will be published on social media in a regular story-like and sequential manner.</p> <p><i>User journeys will be developed through active community mobilization and by enhancing engagement with other programmes and forums which work with the same communities in “Area C”.</i></p>											
5	<p>Develop multi-media tools including motion-graphic videos and documentary videos to document legal rights to land as well as best practices existing within the targeted communities or other communities similar in nature.</p> <p><i>Best practices will be developed through active community</i></p>											

	<p><i>mobilization and by enhancing engagement with other programmes and forums which work with the same communities in "Area C".</i></p>											
6	<p>Utilize mass media awareness tools (TV spots, Radio spots and Billboards) to reach more people within the targeted communities.</p> <p><i>This will be led by the LWSC and their Media Consultant to lead a national campaign on the importance of land settlement in addition to highlighting the rights of different groups.</i></p>											
7	<p>Develop interactive communication with local communities via a social media platform to allow them to inquire about any queries or concerns that may arise during the settlement process.</p> <p><i>The individuals will be informed of a WhatsApp group that will be created for their benefit during the mobilization workshops.</i></p>											
8	<p>Develop a policy paper identifying gender gaps and highlighting the main issues constraining different group's access to land rights and produce recommendations for legal reform.</p> <p><i>This will be presented in a designated Expert Group Meeting.</i></p>											

I. Outcomes

The campaign is expected to contribute to establishing a mechanism for mobilizing individuals and CBOs to enhance advocacy and awareness efforts on women's and other group's land rights. It is also expected to establish a network of potential influencers and people who are willing to speak openly about the subject, which is often a sensitive subject in many Palestinian communities. Nonetheless, the process of social change is a time-consuming process and

requires efforts at a multi-stakeholder level, especially at the local level. Therefore, this campaign is expected to contribute towards some positive change towards the transformation of dominant conceptions and norms around women’s right to access, own and utilize land for economic and social gains. The campaign is also expected to generate gender-disaggregated on the unique challenges facing women and other marginalized groups with regards to access to land.

J. Sustainability and Scalability

The awareness campaign aims to ensure that all awareness-raising and advocacy initiatives are led at the community level which ensures local ownership of the process as well as sustainability, and possible scale-up potential. Furthermore, the main implementing government partner, the LWSC, will upscale their national awareness and other advocacy and policy dialogue efforts on the issues of women and land rights given that this is one of their strategic priorities as well as being a strategic priority of the Palestinian government., as exemplified by their National Development Plan of 2021-2023. The awareness campaign led by this project will act as a pilot for leading innovative social change with regards to challenging dominant gender stereotypes and norms and will allow women and CBOs an opportunity to become empowered with regards to discussing issues of land rights openly and utilizing a human-rights based approach. If proven successful, the LWSC and its implementing partners can scale-up this pilot.