



## Knowledge hub - Collection of best practices

### Summary of the best practice

1. Title of the best practice (e.g. name of policy, programme, project, etc.) \*

"Ma' An" (together) Towards a Safe School environment

2. Country or countries where the practice is implemented \*

Jordan

3. Please select the **most relevant** Action Track(s) the best practice applies to \*

- Action Track 1. Inclusive, equitable, safe, and healthy schools
- Action Track 2. Learning and skills for life, work, and sustainable development
- Action Track 3. Teachers, teaching and the teaching profession
- Action Track 4. Digital learning and transformation
- Action Track 5. Financing of education

4. Implementation lead/partner organization(s) \*

Ministry of Education in Jordan

5. Key words (5-15 words): Please add key descriptive words around aims, modalities, target groups etc. \*

To reduce violence against children in MoE schools in host community and refugee camps.

## 6. What makes it a best practice? \*

The programme is a national programme targeting children in MOE schools in host communities and Syrian refugee camps. The programme was developed in response to the results of a national VAC study that Jordan conducted in 2007, supported by the UNICEF JCO. The study revealed the high prevalence of VAC in all settings including schools, thus generating evidence to propel VAC as a national concern. The cumulative results of the Ma'An programme over the past years is evident. There has been a considerable and progressive decrease in the proportion of children who experience verbal or physical violence, from 44.8 per cent (verbal) in 2009 to 15 per cent in the academic year 2018-2019 and from 40.3 per cent (physical) to 8 per cent for the same period. The Ma'An Programme follows a multi-prong strategy which includes (1) Administrative mobilization and advocacy by MoE to promote the programme messages on the new way of discipline in classrooms to all schools (principals, counsellors, teachers, school administrative staff) and municipal administrative staff. (2) Interpersonal communication through formation of Safe School Councils and school-based activities to promote non-violent and positive methods among school-based staff (principals, counsellors, teachers, school administrative staff) and students; (3) Community engagement and shifting of the social norm to promote zero-tolerance on violence against children. The Programme has been implemented in partnership with government, non-profit, and business organizations. These include several ministries and departments; Governorate and sub-Governorate level authorities; UNICEF, UNRWA, non-government agencies; media; businesses; school and camp administration; religious and opinion leaders; students and communities. A comprehensive evaluation of the Ma'An programme in 2017 showed that programme has been effective in reducing violence in schools and it created national momentum on reducing violence against children in schools. The findings of this evaluation are being used in the implementation of the current programme carried out, specifically in terms of development and endorsement of a three-year strategic framework and plan by MoE to strengthen its institutional capacity for institutionalization of this programme. The Programme ensured evidence-based advocacy to mobilize duty bearers and rights holders to act for violence prevention and response and of evidence-based policy advice and programming. The monthly online survey in schools that was developed with UNICEF support as part of Ma'An programme activities allows children to regularly convey their protection concerns and needs, enabling policy makers to inform policies and actions accordingly. The online survey includes an audio option for children with learning difficulties or academically challenged children In order to address the differential vulnerability to school-related violence of marginalized and vulnerable children. Ma'An programme also strengthened the role of MoE within the national framework for protection. The development of internal sectoral SOPs for the MoE on dealing with cases of GBV, domestic violence, child protection and violence in schools in line with the national SOPs, as part of Ma'An programme activities, helped in eliminating challenges related to lack of clarity of the required interventions when responding to violence cases in schools, concerns over bearing responsibility for interventions, and the limited capacity to effectively prioritize the severity of cases and respond to violence cases in a timely manner.

## Description of the best practice

### 7. Introduction (350-400 words)

This section should ideally provide the context of, and justification for, the practice and address the following issues:

- i) Which population was affected? What was the problem that needed to be addressed?
- ii) Which approach was taken and what objectives were achieved? \*

Jordan banned corporal punishment in schools in 1981, under the School Discipline Regulation, Instruction No.4 on School Discipline. However, there is none that prohibits corporal punishment in the home or family. For these inconsistencies, coupled with weaker institutional arrangements, a national VAC study was conducted by the Government of Jordan Support which revealed two-third of Jordanian children aged 2 to 14 years, experience physical, sexual, or emotional violence. To map the forms and extent of violence Jordan undertook a national VAC study in 2007, supported by the UNICEF JCO. The study revealed the prevalence of VAC in all settings, thus generating evidence to propel VAC as a national concern.

([https://www.unicef.org/jordan/VAC\\_Study\\_English\\_FOR\\_SCREEN.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/jordan/VAC_Study_English_FOR_SCREEN.pdf)).

The study findings contributed to the launch of a nation-wide campaign (Programme) - 'Ma'An (Together), towards a safe school environment'. The joint UNICEF-Ministry of Education (MoE) Programme aimed at reducing VAC in schools targeting all children in MoE schools in host community and Syrian refugee camps.

The Programme goals included creation/shifting of the social norm; educating teachers about rights and responsibilities; and fostering accountability.

The Ma'An Programme follows a multi-prong strategy which includes (1) Administrative mobilization and advocacy by MoE to promote the Programme messages on the new way of discipline in classrooms to all schools (principals, counsellors, teachers, school administrative staff) and municipal administrative staff. (2) Interpersonal communication through formation of Safe School Councils and school-based activities to promote non-violent and positive methods among school-based staff (principals, counsellors, teachers, school administrative staff) and students; (3) Promoting the programme's messages through social media channels and the Ma'An website and (4) Community engagement and shifting of the social norm to promote zero-tolerance on violence in schools.

The cumulative results of the Ma'An programme over the past years is evident. There has been a considerable and progressive decrease in the proportion of children who experience verbal or physical violence, from 44.8 per cent (verbal) in 2009 to 15 per cent in the academic year 2018-2019 and from 40.3 per cent (physical) to 8 per cent for the same period.

## 8. Implementation (350-450 words)

Please describe the implementation modalities or processes, where possible in relation to:

- i) What are the main activities carried out?
- ii) When and where the activities were carried out (including the start date and whether it is ongoing)?
- iii) Who were the key implementation actors and collaborators? (civil society organizations, private sector, foundations, coalitions, networks etc.)?
- iv) What were the resources needed (budget and sources) for the implementation?

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As part of Ma'An activities, a strategic framework and plan for the institutionalization of Ma'An programme was developed through the support of the UNICEF, and the MoE started its implementation in 2020. As part of this plan, child protection training materials for school principals, teachers, counsellors were developed and integrated within the MoE for pre-service and in-service institutional training programme to equip them with the needed skills and knowledge to prevent and respond to violence in their schools.

More focus was also given to enforce and strengthen MOE accountability system and responsive procedures (central, directorate and school levels). Identification and response detailed procedures and guidelines within the MoE for Child Protection and Gender Based Violence (GBV) cases in line with the national framework and guidelines have been rolled since 2021. Various legislations of the MoE, including accountability standards, verification and investigation mechanisms were reviewed, the students' discipline regulations were updated, and key practical recommendation on how to strengthen or amend these mechanisms were developed.

As part of the national social behavioral programme to end violence against children in Jordan, school-based EVAC programmes were developed endorsed by the MoE to be implemented at schools and institutions (community centers) in 2022. These programmes aim to provide an educative and entertaining engagement for children to change their knowledge, attitude, and behavior to end violence.

To ensure the right of every child to be heard, a monthly online survey was developed as part of Ma'An programme and rolled out in MoE schools as a complaint mechanism that gives children a voice and allows them to convey their protection concerns and needs. The survey also serves as a strong monitoring tool for the MoE to monitor prevalence and type of violence that children may be experiencing and enables the MoE to provide effective and adequate solutions to ensure safe school environment for all children in Jordan.

For the institutionalization of case management work on national level in the field of protection of women and children from violence and the promotion of cooperation and partnership between all service providers, UNICEF, MOE and other concerned national partners worked on developing internal Standards Operating Procedures (SOPs) for gender-based violence (GBV) and Child Protection (CP) in line with the National SOPs for GBV and CP in Jordan to ensure proper response and care for all CP cases in schools.

Furthermore, to ensure the democratic participation within school communities, Safe School Councils have been established in every school comprised of the principal, the counsellor, two teachers, two parents from the Parent-Teacher Association and four students from the Student Council.

The members act as change agents in the school to promote positive behavior, positive disciplinary methods and school initiatives to address violence in schools.

## 9. Results – outputs and outcomes (250-350 words)

To the extent possible, please reply to the questions below:

- i) How was the practice identified as transformative? (e.g., impact on policies, impact on management processes, impact on delivery arrangements or education monitoring, impact on teachers, learners and beneficiary communities etc.);
- ii) What were the concrete results achieved with regard to outputs and outcomes?
- iii) Has an assessment of the practice been carried out? If yes, what were the results? \*

An independent evaluation was carried out for the Ma'An programme. The evaluation was an ex-post, summative-formative evaluation with the purpose 'to determine the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and impact of Ma'An Programme interventions on reducing violence against children in schools in Jordan. The evaluation covers the entire Ma'An Programme (Ma'An) including all the components and activities implemented from November 2009 until December 2016. (<https://www.unicef.org/evaluation/best-evaluations>).

Main findings of the 2017 evaluation of the Ma'An programme:

Ma'An programme has been effective in reducing violence in schools and it created national momentum on reducing violence against children in schools.

Programme design enabled the delivery of 'most' of the desired results.

The selection of relevant stakeholders for their potential contributions and the envisioned management structure was appropriate for implementation of a programme of this nature.

Ma'An Online Survey System proved a useful tool for tracking VAC situation at the school level.

For parents, the Programme has contributed to heightened awareness of the issue and its implications for children.

Ma'An has given children and parents a 'voice' and understanding of complaint mechanisms.

VAC has gained acceptance as a reality that warrants comprehensive solutions.

Increased awareness of disciplinary rules among teachers and students.

Realisation among education professional for enforcement of disciplinary regulations and guidelines.

Children become more aware of their rights.

Though the role of the school principal and the counsellors emerged as a pivotal intervention, yet accountability of poor performers and recognition for high achievers remained weak.

Main Highlights from the 2017 evaluation of the Ma'An programme:

VAC in schools cannot be eliminated through standalone school-based intervention; parallel work at the community level is required to abandon the existing social norm of using violent means to discipline children.

A balanced approach of sanctions and positive reinforcements for educators is required to achieve better results.

Need for institutionalization of Ma'An programme within MoE to ensure suitability and national ownership.

Need for a wider and greater involvement of a variety of stakeholders.

Need for national strategy on social norms and behavioral changes.

Improving schools' infrastructure and facilities will yield far better results to end violence against children.

## 10. Lessons learnt (300 words)

To the extent possible, please reply to the following questions:

- i) What were the key triggers for transformation?
- ii) What worked really well – what facilitated this?
- iii) What did not work – why did it not work? \*

- The success of such a national level programme is linked with strong will, joint ownership and active participation of relevant parties. Reducing VAC in schools is everyone's business; so all relevant Ministries such as MoE, MoAIA, MoSD, NCFA at National level, and all departments within the MoE are uniformly responsible and accountable for a successful programme. This warrants a system complete with annual budgetary allocations, resource mobilisation and appropriate funding.

- Involvement of the religious leaders (imams or male and female preachers) in the programme implementation proved a success story. Since, they are considered as most respectable and influential people at community level and can reach large number of people through Friday sermons and informal community meetings. Their involvement in the Programme should not have been discontinued after only one year of involvement.

- Standalone school-based intervention will not yield results in the long-term; this will require parallel work at the community level. VAC issue is multifaceted and hence require multidimensional programming approach. It is necessary to deal with all aspects and root causes of the problem in all settings. Since VAC is culturally acceptable in the home environment in Jordan, it is pivotal to keep parents engaged.

- Without proper exit planning, institutionalization will remain a challenge. All long-term programmes require a transition or an exit strategy to inform and manage the move from donor-driven to completely internalise social development. Ma'An lacked before 2018 such a strategy and hence a transition strategy was formulated and the GoJ to enable to eventually institutionalise Ma'An.

- The role of the school counsellor emerged as fundamental to the success of Ma'An and thus controlling the VAC situation in schools. Currently, counsellors are overburdened, and the one-school-one-counsellor rule is not uniformly applied. Hence the role of educational counselling at central, directorate and school level need to be supported, strengthened and regularly followed up.



## 11. Conclusions (250 words)

Please describe why may this intervention be considered a “best practice”. What recommendations can be made for those intending to adopt the documented “best practice” or how can it help people working on the same issue(s)? \*

The programme was launched at National level, all elements of the Programme such as celebrations of National Commitment Days across country and Media activities strongly highlight that programme reached to everyone without any discrimination of race and ethnicity. Inclusion of Syrian children and children with other nationalities living in Jordan in Ma’An programme without any discrimination and operationalization of second shift schools clearly reflect equity focus intent of the programme.

Moreover, involvement of female preachers shed light on gender sensitive approach of Ma’An to mobilize the families, in particular the girls and mothers. Safe School Councils membership also indicates the gender sensitive approach where both male and female members from Counsellors, teachers and parents were involved. No discrimination is noted in the inclusion of schools, both types of schools were made part of the programme. Equitable distribution is also ensured for both Boys and Girls in survey administration.

Accountability mechanisms have been put in place for all actors including the teachers and students. The overall agenda for capacity development revolves around promotion of child rights, better parenting and other aspects of Human Rights based approach (HRBA). Furthermore, to enable greater accountability of the service providers, provision of complaint and response management mechanisms within schools and at MoE level also highlight the HRBA based programming approach of the Ma’An.

Ma’An programme embodies Jordan’s commitment to international obligations such as CRC, CEDAW, SDGs, and to Jordan’s commitment as a pathfinder country and member of the Global partnership to end violence against children. Also aligned to the priority areas stated in the 3RP/JRP.

Ma’An design and approaches continued to be relevant and demonstrated its resolve to ensure that children can learn safely during times of ever-evolving challenges to education and learning due to Syrian crisis and COVID-19 pandemic situation. As part of Ma’An programme activities, a School behavioral transformation programme “Tarbiyah” was introduced in Syrian refugee camps in 2012/2013 to promote positive values and self-discipline and adherence to rules by the children through a positive reinforcement programme that appeals to the competitive spirit of children. Moreover, to support children and parents during and post COVID, MPHSS programme was introduced as part of Ma’An programme including MPHSS training material for educators, interactive videos, and better parenting message for parents through WhatsApp and social media.

## 12. Further reading

Please provide a list and URLs of key reference documents for additional information on the “best practice” for those who may be interested in knowing how the results benefited the beneficiary group/s. \*

-<https://www.unicef.org/evaluation/best-evaluations>.

-[https://www.end-](https://www.end-violence.org/sites/default/files/paragraphs/download/Diagnostic%20Study%20of%20National%20Efforts%20to%20Reduce%20and%20Respond%20to%20Violence%20in%20Schools%20in%20the%20Hashemite%20Kingdom%20of%20Jordan_0.pdf)

[violence.org/sites/default/files/paragraphs/download/Diagnostic%20Study%20of%20National%20Efforts%20to%20Reduce%20and%20Respond%20to%20Violence%20in%20Schools%20in%20the%20Hashemite%20Kingdom%20of%20Jordan\\_0.pdf](https://www.end-violence.org/sites/default/files/paragraphs/download/Diagnostic%20Study%20of%20National%20Efforts%20to%20Reduce%20and%20Respond%20to%20Violence%20in%20Schools%20in%20the%20Hashemite%20Kingdom%20of%20Jordan_0.pdf)

-<https://www.unicef.org/media/101891/file/CSAE-Programme-Review-2021.pdf>

-[https://moe.gov.jo/sites/default/files/esp\\_english\\_final.pdf](https://moe.gov.jo/sites/default/files/esp_english_final.pdf)