Making Psychosocial Support Programming More Inclusive

To Inclusion...and Beyond!
When a flower doesn't bloom you fix the environment in which it grows, not the flower.
“The worse about a disability is that people see it before they see YOU”
- Assess and analyze existing guidance, tools and training resources related to GBV, CP and PSS for disability inclusion;

- Identify gaps and opportunities to strengthen the inclusion of women, children and youth with disabilities in CBPSS and FPSS initiatives, and GBV prevention and response activities;

- Define the capacity development needs and priorities of selected GBV and PSS actors on disability inclusion
PSS Activities and Children with Disabilities

- Group discussion with women, children and youth with disability  (44 in total)
- Group discussion with caregivers of children with disability  (57 in Total)
- Group discussion and interviews with case workers & community volunteers  (74 in total)
- Meetings with relevant Working Groups and Task Forces
PSS Advisors and Children with Disabilities

- HARM
- An expert
- Not an expert
- Can you spot the difference?
- NO ACCESS
- RAISE AWARENESS
Preliminary Findings From the Field

Gaps and Opportunities
Psychosocial Risks and Needs

- Risk of Sexual Harassment and Physical Abuse
- Sadness and Frustration
- Isolation
- Suicidal ideations and attempts among adolescents and youth
- Deterioration in Cognitive and Daily functioning – Regression
- Stress on mothers and households of children with disabilities
Children with Disabilities & Participation in PSS activities

- Physical barriers to accessing programs
- Lack of information about PSS activities
- Parent’s often prioritize Medical and Health interventions & Specialized Services over PSS activities.
- No specific messages to share with parents of children with disabilities about the importance of PSS activities.
Children with Disabilities & Participation in PSS activities

Community Volunteers are motivated to include children with disabilities

Children with disabilities participated more in recreational activities.
“I had to send him to a boarding school, because people were so terrible to him, they would beat him in the streets for no reason, and they would tease him and our whole family.”

“In Syria, he used to go visit his aunt, but his health deteriorated when he heard the shelling. He used to go shower himself, and now he is not even going to the toilet on his own.”

“Refugees described how the added socio-economic stress they face contributes to violence inside the home against children with disabilities, and girls with disabilities being married before 18 years.”

“Children with disabilities are told they need to stay home – to not get hurt and not get sick – they are sometimes told they can’t play with other kids or go to the activities with other kids, because they are too fragile, or people will be mean to them.”

“"I got so tired of people being sad for me that I think that is what made me sad for myself.”"
After...

“Now I see that when they come home, they are more at ease. They talk to me more. They used to be so sad and so shy. I knew they had many things in their head.”

“She feels happier. She likes these types of activities. She feels that she has made a big achievement, when she makes this piece of art and can show people.”

“Now she can cope better with noise. Before she was on her own all the time, but now she likes to be around others.”

Despite concerns from facilitators and Parents about bullying and discrimination, there were no negative outcomes reported by children or parents because of participating in PSS activities.

A Facilitator: “We talked to him, and I watched how she held his hand. He looked at me and smiled and waved when he left … [laughing] … I was not scared anymore! They are breaking the ice with us, more than we are breaking the ice with them.”
Positive Strategies

- Sharing information with children with disabilities and their families through house-to-house visits (50% of respondents)
- Provide transportation
- Build activities around skills and capacities of those with disabilities
- Attend with siblings
- Attend with family member to support who need assistance in toileting and personal hygiene
“Working on the needs assessment on disability inclusion in PSS programming was an eye-opener, since it made me realize that no additional or specialized skills are required when dealing with disabled children. All you need is to eliminate prejudices and move forward! “ Reem Masri
"Start by doing what is NECESSARY; Then do what is POSSIBLE; and suddenly, you are doing the IMPOSSIBLE."

- St. Francis of Assisi