

Who we are



Stars of Hope Society is a lead organization for women with all types of disabilities in Palestine. It is a woman-centered organization, which works on a collective model. Women with disabilities run our organization, to help and empower other women with disabilities. It is the only organization of its kind in Palestine and one of a very small number internationally.

Stars of Hope Society (SHS) was founded as an effort to address the needs of women with disabilities and support them in realizing their rights, since its foundation in 2007.

SHS has been successful in increasing awareness among women with disabilities on their rights, as well as building their capacities and developing their professional skills to increase their chances when demanding equal job opportunities.

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Stars of hope Society

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Our Vision

Equal rights and opportunities for women with disabilities.

Our Mission

Our mission is to improve the lives and life chances of women with disabilities.

☉ Actively promoting the participation of women with disabilities in all aspects of social, economic, political and cultural life.

☉ Advocating on issues of concern to women with disabilities in Palestine.

☉ Seeking to be the national representative organization for women with disabilities in Palestine by undertaking systemic advocacy; providing policy advice; undertaking research; and providing support, information and education.

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Alliances and Coalitions:

- Member of the NGO Forum on Violence against Women.
- Member of the Palestinian Coalition for Economic, Social & Cultural Rights.
- Member of the National Coalition for the Employment of PWDs.
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- Member of the National Coalition for Monitoring of Legislation.
- Member of the Palestinian National Coalition for the Employment of Persons with Disabilities.
- Member of the “Raise Your Voice” Forum of Disabled Persons’ Organizations (DPOs).

“To promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity”

Article 1 of the UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities



Target groups and geographical coverage:

Girls and women with disabilities in both West Bank & Gaza, including the most marginalized areas including Refugee Camps, Area C and Jerusalem.

The number of direct beneficiaries of Stars of Hope reaches approximately 9000 women and girls with disabilities, and the total number of beneficiaries reaches about 50,000 including their families.

Code of Conduct for working with children with disabilities:

Stars of Hope Society code of conduct aims to protect children from violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation. It also aims to protect people who work with children from false allegations.

The code of conduct sets appropriate and inappropriate behaviors.

Fields of work:

- Holding specialized awareness workshops.
- Capacity building - training for women with disabilities and staff.
- Raising the capacity of CSOs and DPOs.
- Jobs creation for women with disabilities.
- Holding press and technical conferences.
- Holding lobbying and advocacy campaigns for the rights of persons with disabilities in general and women in particular.
- Issuing legal studies and reviews of national laws and policies concerning the rights of women and girls with disabilities.
- Producing documentary films that reflect the success stories and reality of women and girls with disabilities.
- Formulation of peer-to-peer groups.
- Continuous networking with stakeholders.



Main Achievements:

The exchange visit to Morocco 23-29 November 2017

Main Objectives:

- To exchange experiences and further expand SHS's knowledge and competence in different areas relevant to women and girls with disabilities rehabilitation, empowerment and advancement.
- To acquire knowledge about child protection and develop their ability to take preventive steps and promote their response to any behavior related to the protection of children from violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation

Main Outcomes:

- SHS team had the chance to network and build new connections with a number of girls and women centered organizations particularly in the field of disability.
- Visiting Ministry of Social Development, Solidarity and 7 DPOS.
- Visiting several DPOs and rehabilitation centers in Morocco that provide wide range of services to girls with disabilities such as special schooling, rehabilitation and vocational training.



Awards

Stars of Hope is one of just 20 organizations from around the world to receive a With and For Girls Award.

"These 20 outstanding organizations demonstrate the power of grassroots movements and girl leadership to effect change, both in communities and in the world at large. The Collective is proud to be supporting the With and For Girls Award winners with flexible funding, which is still a rare asset for most grassroots organizations. We want to encourage more funders to trust and invest in girls to address the challenges that they face in their everyday lives. By doing so they are changing the future for the millions of girls worldwide who face discrimination simply for identifying as a girl."
Muna Wehbe, CEO of Stars Foundation.

Stars of Hope offers support to women and girls with disabilities while pushing for policies that ensure their rights are respected and guaranteed. By offering skills' training to help increase their prospects in the job market, this includes regular training courses on a wide range of topics.

Receive the "With and for Girls Award" from Stars Foundation for the outstanding work of SHS

**WITH
AND
FOR
GIRLS
2016 AWARD WINNER**

The Internship for Women with Disabilities Project.

As part of Stars of Hope's endeavors to empower the women with disabilities (WwDs), different women with various types of disabilities were provided with short-term (three months) employment opportunities in civil society organizations, ministries and other governmental entities.

The group of (21 women) has been divided into two phases, 10 women between April June 2017, and 11 women between July Sep 2017.



Main objectives:

- To contribute to poverty alleviation and an improvement of quality of life of the women with disabilities in the West Bank and Jerusalem.
- To promote inclusion mainstreaming and prove that adaptation of offices and workstations to ensure accessibility to disabled staff are doable and a good practice.

Cooperation and networking

Throughout the project of internship for Women with Disabilities, partnership agreements have been signed between Stars of Hope Society “ the first party” and the civil society organization that is the second party, - the party responsible for employing the WWD for the period of three months. Such partnership agreement includes roles and responsibilities of each of the pre mentioned parties.

The cooperation between Stars of Hope and the organizations was very good, no major problems occurred; the managers of the organizations were very cooperative with us, and with the employed Women with Disabilities, although at the beginning they were hesitant to employ WWDs thinking that they cannot be productive at all.

As updated on “the National Palestinian Coalition for employment of PWDs”, now we are working with the other partners to submit notes and modifications on the new draft of labor law, where SHS is one of the committees’ member to ensure mainstreaming of disability issues with this new law.

In addition, SHS with the other coalition members in tile to implement employment days for PWDs in cooperation with MOL and GIZ. The plan was implemented between Aug. Oct 2017.

The coalition members have met many times on periodic basis for the purpose of identifying the internal regulations of the coalition and producing the relevant brochure.

The internal regulations determine the membership criteria; roles and responsibilities of members; missions and priorities of the collation. Moreover, the coalition is still in the piloting stage and will be for another two years before official registration.



Impact stories

1. Marwa's Experience

Marwa Shukri Mahmoud Istety is a girl with partial visual disability. We visited her on her work site at the association in Jenin camp on March 10 2018. She works at the association as an Assistant secretary. When we asked Marwa about her job and her work satisfaction, she answered that she is very happy and very optimistic at her job, and she always hopes to give even more. Marwa added that after working with the association she loved her field of study further.



Marwa added that two members of her family suffer from different types of disabilities, and that makes their life even harder. However, by working at this position she managed to help her family financially, even if it was a small amount.

Moreover, we spoke to Marwa's adviser at the association Mrs. Farha Abu-Alhyja, who praised Marwa's good manners and smooth interaction with her colleagues, she exalted her will power and ability to create an atmosphere full of joy and happiness, and finally she wished her more work opportunities to come.

Policies

Special Girls Protection Policy was developed and disseminated:

SHS and Defense for Children International – Palestine (DCIP) tailored a special protection policy for the girls with disabilities.

Main objectives

- Respect and protect Girls with disabilities against different forms of violation.
- Protect girls with disabilities from all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation. Moreover, to ensure their safety by establishing clear and specific procedures and ensuring that, all crewmembers are aware of their responsibilities.
- Training for protecting and improving the wellbeing of the girls and young women with disabilities.



Main Outcomes

- Visited several DPOs and rehabilitation centers in Morocco that provide wide range of services to girls with disabilities such as special schooling, rehabilitation and vocational training.
- The awareness and advocacy activities and trainings are now systematically targeting the schools and clubs to sensitize community members and girls themselves about the disability issues and the needed steps to attain their denied rights.
- SHS is committed to dealing with and addressing any peer-related practices that, for some children, may constitute a stress element like other forms of adult violence, abuse and neglect

Projects

Advocacy Training for the SOLIDAR Project Partners

The training enabled the exchange between the participants on work at national and regional levels.

- Starting the Cooperation between Labor Unions and the Palestinian National Alliance for Employment to Provide Decent Work and Union Activity for People with Disabilities (PWDs).
 - A workshop on decent work and union activity for people with disabilities (PWDs) was held with the participation of 33 people representing active organizations in disability field and civil society activists. The workshop discussed the prospects of cooperation between PWDs and Palestinian trade unions.
- Defining decent work for youth: Understanding global context and formulating what works for youth in the region.

The session focused on ILO and Agenda 2030 framework to set the global context. In light of this global context, needs for national policies promoting youth employment were elaborated mainly focusing on the need for revising social and economic policies implemented.

- Trade and investment policies and the impact on decent work.

SOLIDAR project partners presented their evaluations on EU-Country level relations with regard to youth, given that the revised ENP considers youth as a stability factor in the region.

- Empowering youth: Youth mobilization, participation.

A look at the level of youth engagement in national policy making spaces including on employment, education, social protection policy as an enabling factor to raise their concerns and ensure that their needs are met. Key constraints on youth civic participation, as well as restrictions on freedom of association. To identify policy recommendations enhancing youth inclusiveness, including young women, youth refugee and minority groups in labor market.



Conferences

SHS has participated in the “Third Regional Conference of the Arab Forum for Women with Disabilities:

Cooperation for a Secure and Barrier-free World”.
The Arab Organization of people with disability organized the conference at Cairo-Egypt / April 28-29.

Main objectives:

- A great networking opportunity for SHS to connect with key actors at the regional level. (Organizations from 16 Arab and foreign countries participated in the conference).

Main outcomes:

- The meeting included the election of the Regional Committee on Women with Disabilities in the Arab Organization for Persons with Disabilities, 13 women with disabilities were candidates for the elections, 6 of whom were elected. Among the winners was Ms. Safia Al Ali, Chairwomen of Stars of Hope Society, representing Palestine as the Research Coordinator of the Committee.
- The Arab Declaration on the Rights of Women with Disabilities was announced.
- This included special demands on girls, women with disabilities and mothers of children with disabilities, to ensure their equal participation in society and their enjoyment of their human rights as stated in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.



Strategies

1. The new SHS's strategy 2017-2020 was launched

Main Objectives:

- Advocate on issues of concern to women and girls with disability in Palestine:
 - Communication and networking with community organizations.
 - Advocacy and mobilization.
 - Capacity building of staff.
- Support access to education and Economic empowerment opportunities:
 - Job creation and economic empowerment
 - Enhancing professional skills of women with disabilities to access to labor market
 - Ensure the inclusion of disability in educational institutions
- Access to justice and protection from violence:
 - WWD to have adequate access to justice, rights and tools.
 - Raising awareness for stakeholders and Women with Disability.
 - Legal Aid Services.
- Build the capacity and voices of girls and Young women with disability:
 - Assessing the needs of women with disabilities.
 - Integrating inclusion in the programs of civil society organizations.
 - Women Empowerment in decision-making process.
- Develop SHS's profile and organizational capacities to achieve its goals and deliver on the strategy
 - Operation Development.
 - Human resources development.
 - Fundraising and sustainability.



Collaboration

SHS and Shorouq Organization have collaborated in implementing different activities in Bethlehem area.

Main Objective

- Training workshops delivered to a number of CBOs about mainstreaming women with disabilities in the organizational scope of work and strategies.

Main outcomes:

- Introducing different aspects about disability rights, concerns, were sensitized about the proper disability mainstreaming practices, and protocols that needed to be adopted towards creating an inclusive and receptive work environment..
- A training workshop were delivered to 18 women with hearing disability who came from different areas.
- Introducing the obstructive ideas and the impact of these ideas on the human being's feelings, behavior, body, soul and social identity.



Training, Coaching, Advising and Capacity Building Workshops and Programs

1. Conducting of a comprehensive training program.

August- September 2017

Expert trainers delivered the training courses.

Main Objectives:

- The program is designated for the SHS staff, focal points and members of BODs covering several interlinked topics.

Topics Included:

- The effective legal services adopted to prevent and respond to violence against women with specific attention to women and girls with disabilities.
- Mechanisms and tools of advocacy and networking to lead active advocacy campaigns towards PWDs' rights.
- International human rights monitoring mechanisms and systemic advocacy with specific attention to the CRPD.
- Communication and English language.
- Advanced financial measures & procedures.



2. The Capacity Building and training /August- September 2017:

The envisaged multilayered capacity-building program was built upon two important pillars that were embedded in the trainings and consultancy endeavors, Institutional development and institutional resilience.

Main Objectives:

Institutional development:

- The trainings focused on building and improving the capabilities and strengthening the performance and proficiency of SHS's employees and SHS as a whole.
- The trainings have aimed at familiarizing and equipping the trainees with different professional concepts and methodologies that will sustain beyond the lifetime of the capacity-building program.
- The trainings and consultancy activities work in parallel to enhance and improve SHS's capacities in which to manage different initiatives fulfil the donors' requirements and handle the very various relevant procedural measures.

Institutional resilience:

- To enhance the institutional resilience of SHS against different types of shocks and to maintain its sustainability.
- To equip and involve all participants in the planning, decision making, and development process.
- To embraced the concept of dissemination of knowledge among all members in which to overcome any future shocks and sustain the SHS memory and functionality.
- To implement the decentralization style of management and tend to inject new blood in the system for the sake of fulfilling its mission, vision and strategic directives.
- To transform the planning and development process from being a one sided process into a collective mutual process where all members of SHS share the responsibility to bring about sustainability and professionalism to SHS.
- The trainings have been to designed to combine more than one participant in which more than one person can gain the knowledge and bridge any arising gap in the future and repair any defect in the system.

-Fundraising and Management Skills:

Train board on communication, fundraising and English language skills.

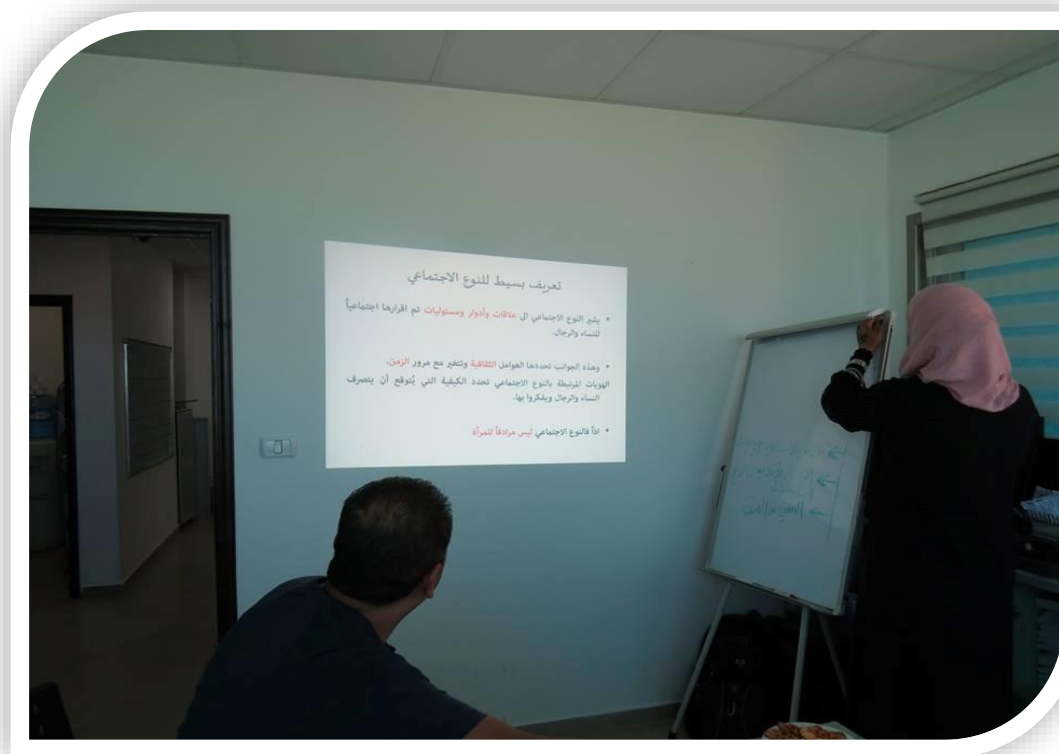
-Financial oversight, accountability, compliance (board members):

Development of an easy read version of existing financial procedures and tools in Arabic and train the board on it.

Main Outcomes:

The impact of these courses was very vivid, as the trainees currently can comprehend English correspondences and conversations. This assisted participating in the fundraising process in terms of reading the calls of proposals, emails and other relevant documents in addition to meetings with donors.

Enhancing the sense of involvement and participation of the board of directors and strengthening their abilities to present SHS in all forums and promote the needs of WWDS.





3. Capitalize and upgrade the skills and capacities of SHS's core staff

Included board members and focal points in several relevant domains.

Main Objectives:

- Training focused on building and improving the staff capabilities, and strengthening the performance and proficiency of SHS's employees and SHS as a whole.
- The trainings have aimed at familiarizing and equipping the trainees with different professional concepts and methodologies that will sustain beyond the lifetime of the capacity building.
- The trainings and consultancy activities work in parallel to enhance and improve SHS's capacities in which will effectively manage different initiatives and fulfil the donors' requirements and handle the very various relevant procedural measures.

Main Outcomes:

- Institutional resilience: The essence of the capacity-building program has emerged from the need to enhance the institutional resilience of SHS against different types of shocks and maintain its sustainability.
 - The training and consultancy activities have adopted a participatory approach in which to equip and involve all participants in the planning, decision-making, and development process.
 - The capacity-building program has embraced the concept of dissemination of knowledge among all members in which to overcome any future shocks and sustain the SHS memory and functionality.
 - The Advisory Committee: After cooperating with Mr. Ayed from the DCIP, SHS decided to invite him to be a member of the committee to provide any needed professional support, consultancy and connection relevant to Girls with disabilities issues and concerns.
 - Joint projects for girls with disabilities: After the award and cooperating with DCIP, both bodies decided to jointly apply for any arising calls for proposals concerning defense and empowerment of girls with disabilities as was reflected in the new strategy of SHS
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4. Conducting a 4 days training on IHL/ and human rights:

to empower the communities including schools in advocating and understanding their human rights under the international law.

- This activity was carried out in Tubas and Hebron for 4 days.

Main objectives:

- Awareness sessions:
 - ✓ To deliver an awareness session to students and teachers about the rights of people with disabilities in general.
 - ✓ To explain the right to education of the girls with disabilities, stressing on the authenticity of this right and magnitude impact of education of the life quality of the WwDs either as girls or as adults.
 - ✓ To clarify the hardship of life and the obstacles that people with disability face during the daily routine either on mobility, communication or accessibility aspects.
 - ✓ To explain that the isolation, neglect and exclusion of the disability in all facets of life is extremely against the laws and international conventions.
- Theatric and Artistic Performance:
 - ✓ Displaying an interactive theatric and musical play. To reflect the genuine sense of life rooted in the hearts of people with disability and share this essence with the rest of students.

Main outcomes:

- The session also included a life experience presentation (life path) delivered by students with disabilities from the same schools.
- The students demonstrated the emotional and psychological damage caused by the ill-treatment of others either in the public or in private domains.
- The performance has employed the art to convey the meaning and concept of all rights of PwDs to the students and schoolteachers.
- The outdoor activity also included speeches delivered by the girls with disabilities to express their feelings when they are neglected or maltreated by their colleagues or teachers.
- Students with disabilities clarified the struggle they experience during studying, mobility and communication especially if the school buildings and curricula lack the needed adaptations or teachers lack the required trainings.



5. Training for Thematic areas of importance for Stars of Hope (both staff and board)

- Train staff and board and potential news focal points on thematic areas of concern to the Organization and agreement on future strategic directions of the organization:
- Training on the effective legal services on the prevention of and the response to violence against women with specific attention to women with disabilities.
- Training on the mechanisms of advocacy to lead active advocacy campaigns towards PWDs' rights.
- Training on International human rights monitoring mechanisms and systemic advocacy with specific attention to the CRPD sense of ownership and belonging of the staff.
- Training for protecting and improving the wellbeing of the girls and young women with disabilities.
- "Gender based violence" training, which was part of the activities sponsored by the award, so that the girls are introduced to the definition and types of violence, the right to protection, the litigation, reporting, access to justice and identifying of the available support and protection services.

Main Outcomes

- These training concentrated on educating the participants about the managerial framework and strategic thematic areas of SHS and the relevant international treaties and other pertinent legal procedures.
 - In addition, these trainings succeeded to familiarize the trainees with other concepts and practices in terms of violence against women and leading active advocacy campaigns
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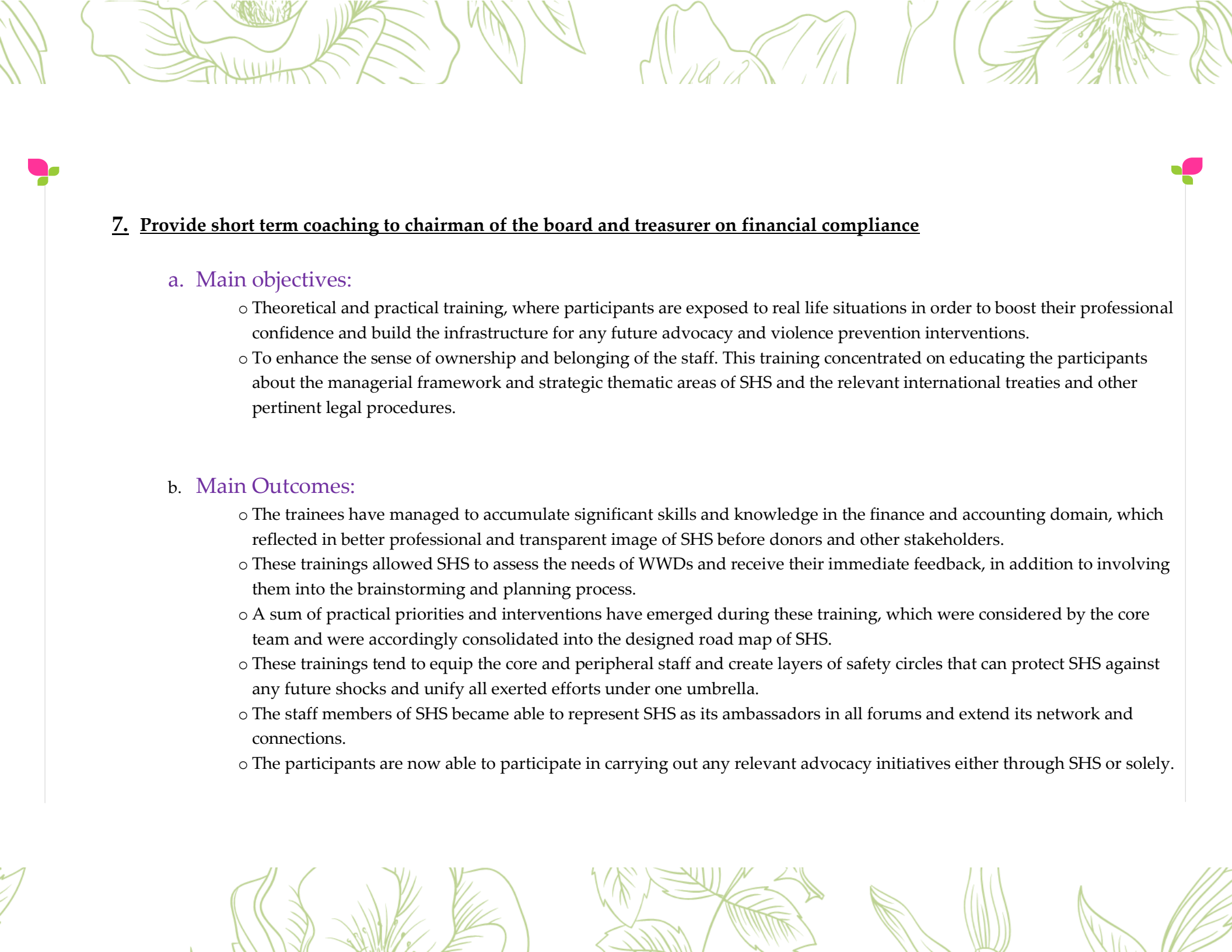
6. Hiring a technical advisor to support the organization rebuild its technical capacity.

Main objectives:

- Retaining the memory and embrace openness:
 - ✓ Training the board of directors and other employees to run the organization effectively by introducing them to the operational methodologies and protocols that are flowed by SHS management level.
 - ✓ Coaching and equipping the core staff with the methodologies and ways of attracting new funding opportunities.
- Open new doors before SHS and allow her to become resilient and independently standing without the fear of being taken over.

Main outcomes:

- Allowed SHS to pass safely through the transitional phase and avoid losing information, knowledge, memory and its identity as well.
 - The advisor worked closely and mutually with the board members to analyze priorities, asses proposed interventions, search for potential donors, communicate with previous donors, network with stakeholders, review donor's priorities, present SHS profile and priorities.
 - The advisor adopted "on hand training" approach where the staff gained and accumulated theoretical knowledge in line with a mentored practical experience in the fields of fundraising and networking.
 - A voluntary Advisory Committee was established to provide guidance and support SHS in its fundraising and networking efforts. The advisory committee consists of 8-10 members who are intended to bring unique knowledge and skills which augment the knowledge and skills of SHS's staff in order to more effectively guide the organization.
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7. Provide short term coaching to chairman of the board and treasurer on financial compliance

a. Main objectives:

- Theoretical and practical training, where participants are exposed to real life situations in order to boost their professional confidence and build the infrastructure for any future advocacy and violence prevention interventions.
- To enhance the sense of ownership and belonging of the staff. This training concentrated on educating the participants about the managerial framework and strategic thematic areas of SHS and the relevant international treaties and other pertinent legal procedures.

b. Main Outcomes:

- The trainees have managed to accumulate significant skills and knowledge in the finance and accounting domain, which reflected in better professional and transparent image of SHS before donors and other stakeholders.
- These trainings allowed SHS to assess the needs of WWDs and receive their immediate feedback, in addition to involving them into the brainstorming and planning process.
- A sum of practical priorities and interventions have emerged during these training, which were considered by the core team and were accordingly consolidated into the designed road map of SHS.
- These trainings tend to equip the core and peripheral staff and create layers of safety circles that can protect SHS against any future shocks and unify all exerted efforts under one umbrella.
- The staff members of SHS became able to represent SHS as its ambassadors in all forums and extend its network and connections.
- The participants are now able to participate in carrying out any relevant advocacy initiatives either through SHS or solely.



8. Contracting consultants for proposals' writing

Main objectives:

- SHS has contracted different consultants for proposals' writing.

Main outcomes:

- This activity was very helpful for the organization during the last phase; this allowed us to look for new funding opportunities. This built confidence in our fundraising program as contracting professional staff can execute the strategy that everyone has already agreed upon.

