



ASSOCIATION BAYTI AND ASSOCIATION MEILLEUR AVENIR POUR NOS ENFANTS (AMANE) IN MOROCCO

How to build trust with boys in vulnerable situations and how to address gender and sexuality issues with boys to prevent violence and sexual exploitation.



SEXUAL
EXPLOITATION OF
BOYS



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BACKGROUND ON DOCUMENTING PRACTICES

As programmes to identify and address the specific needs of boys are limited, ECPAT International launched the [Global Boys Initiative](#) (GBI) to better understand the sexual exploitation of boys and the protection services available. The Global Boys Initiative has conducted a series of research projects in countries around the world to better understand the extent of sexual exploitation of boys, the vulnerability and risk factors, the barriers to reporting and accessing services, and what is needed to improve prevention and response strategies. With the completion of the Initiative's first phase of research, we can now confidently raise a number of pressing issues related to the sexual exploitation of boys, consolidating this knowledge to influence and frame global strategies for programming, advocacy and new research. We know that sexual exploitation of boys is a global problem and we have gathered information on the main factors motivating abuse, high-risk situations, gender norms, barriers to accessing services, among other things. We are now focusing on how to address these challenges and support boys and service providers in the fight against sexual exploitation.

In July 2022, we began engaging ECPAT members, partners and practitioners working with boys in different regions of the world to inform them about the Global Boys' Initiative, to explore the possibilities of implementing the Initiative at national and regional levels, and to capitalise on members' and partners' experiences of working with boys.

In November 2022, ECPAT International and AMANE published the [sexual exploitation of boys in Morocco report](#).¹ The ECPAT network in Morocco is at the forefront in preventing and responding to the sexual exploitation of children in Morocco. In partnership with the ECPAT International secretariat, the study was based on field research (with frontline social workers supporting sexually exploited children in Morocco) and a literature review (a desk study of the Moroccan legal framework protecting children from sexual exploitation, and a review of the literature with a focus on boys). The results of this study inform recommendations for improving services to make them gender sensitive. The dissemination of this study is already helping to break down the stigma and social norms surrounding boys' experiences of sexual exploitation and abuse. Clear recommendations for evidence-based improvements are also provided.

In discussions with ECPAT members in Morocco (Association Bayti and AMANE), several learning points were identified as relevant to the success of the Global Boys' Initiative at the national and global level. These include the documentation of approaches to boys living in street situations developed by the Bayti Association, as well as gender and sexual violence awareness activities conducted by AMANE.

To this end, the objective was to document awareness-raising and outreach practices with boy survivors of sexual abuse and exploitation in Morocco in order to capitalise on these experiences, to encourage learning from other organisations around the world, and to contribute to the practical knowledge of the IMG - thus contributing to answering the main question: *"how to work with boys at risk or survivors of sexual exploitation and abuse through a gender-sensitive approach?"*.²

1 The field surveys of the study also included the collaboration and participation of the Bayti Association.

2 This case study is a joint activity between ECPAT International, AMANE and Bayti and aims to highlight the lessons learned from the ECPAT network in Morocco on the sexual abuse and exploitation of boys.

INTRODUCTION

Bayti and AMANE are both members of the ECPAT network in Morocco. Both organisations are involved in child protection activities, including combating the sexual abuse and exploitation of boys in the country.

Association Bayti is a non-governmental, non-profit organisation that works in Morocco for the protection and psychosocial reintegration of children in difficult situations, and for the defence of their rights. Bayti's mission is to protect (prevent and care for) children in difficult situations from all forms of abuse, violence, exploitation, neglect and exclusion. Bayti's approach is right-based, and children are treated as full citizens whose rights must be respected and guaranteed, not as beneficiaries whose needs must be met.

AMANE is a Moroccan association which, since 2009, has been promoting the rule of law, an open and inclusive society where children exposed to various forms of violence - and in particular sexual violence - have their voices heard, their rights respected and are protected and cared for by family, community, associative and institutional structures that are aware of their rights/obligations and take full responsibility. AMANE accompanies associative and state child protection stakeholders and more generally stakeholders in contact with families and children, in order to reinforce the prevention of sexual violence against them, to encourage disclosure, and to ensure standardised care for victims.

METHODOLOGY FOR DOCUMENTING PRACTICES

Documenting this case study was done using an assessment and learning tool developed by the ECPAT International and Global Boys Initiative research teams. The evaluation and learning questionnaire was used to guide the interview with the teams from both organisations in Morocco. The questions included in the questionnaire were designed to collect information on what the organisation believes are effective practices in providing care and awareness services to boys. The methodology was implemented during a visit to the headquarters of Association Bayti and AMANE, during which direct observations could be made of the space and resources used.

The GBI research tells us that boys do face unique challenges in accessing support and protection services. In particular, research in Morocco highlights how children in poverty - such as children in street situations - are particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation, and that taboos around sex and sexuality mean that boys may not know how to protect themselves from these issues. These lesson learned are also relevant to other countries where the Global Boys' Initiative has been able to conduct research. This case study therefore focuses on the approaches used in Morocco to build trust with boys living in poverty and on the streets, as well as on the strategies used to address gender, sex and sexuality issues in a preventive manner with boys and their families.

Key Challenges in Working With Boys in Morocco

“In the family’s socialisation process, the boy is raised to be strong. He will be able to do everything and he will be the boss. But when a boy is raped or sexually exploited, we don’t talk about it. Vulnerability is not accepted. The boy can go out at any time, and may be exposed to risks all the time, but we look the other way.”

In Morocco, as in many other countries in the world, boys are often not considered to be at risk of sexual abuse and exploitation. This perception is linked to the idea that this issue only concerns girls, but also to the taboos - still very present within communities and families - on subjects related to the sex and sexuality of boys. Association Bayti has been working since its creation on these issues affecting girls and boys in the country. The organisation reports having encountered more challenges in the process of assisting boys because of barriers related to a sense of ‘shame’ within their families. AMANE also indicated the importance of working on sexual violence against boys, which is often better hidden by families for the same reasons.

These barriers are also partly due to the cultural context, which requires the adoption of awareness-raising tools that are based on objective elements, on a ‘rights’ approach and that focus on the best interests of children. Raising the awareness of boys and their families involves deconstructing the representations anchored in society; it is a long and complex process to which all components (educational body, religious, etc.) must contribute if transformative changes are to take place.

The trust-building and support work of Association Bayti

Association Bayti works through identification and assistance activities for children in street situations, as well as through the management of care centres for children in difficult situations³. The identification of children in street situations is done through mobile teams that operate day and night. When Bayti started working with children in street situations 26 years ago, it quickly noticed that many boys were also involved in sexual exploitation dynamics in order to survive and “protect” themselves. The Bayti teams also noted that the boys were exposed to problems of sexual abuse in their daily life and during their street activities.

“It is difficult to identify these boys, they [the boys] don’t talk about it directly.”

Bayti therefore felt it was necessary from the outset to build the teams’ capacities to reach out and build trust with the boys in order to better understand their particular situations and to be able to set up a support process. In the beginning, Bayti took the initiative to get in direct contact with these children and to get closer to them by eating with them, playing with them, talking to them... and then offering them their services. Then, Bayti drew on the expertise of a child clinical psychologist hired as part of the teams, who could coach the teams on how to approach the children and how to use innovative techniques to better understand their protection and safety issues and concerns. This was because the lack of trust of children in street situations towards adults made it difficult to talk to children. However, these fears were particularly prevalent among boys, who find it more difficult to share information about their sexuality. They were afraid of undermining the image of masculinity that they felt they had to adhere to.

The support provided by the psychologist at the beginning of the intervention has been crucial in the process and has enabled the Bayti teams to develop specific techniques for approaching boys in street situations, which are based on a psychological approach that seeks to understand the boy’s overall situation, not just his current problems. Considering that boys will not easily share information about their involvement in sexual exploitation dynamics, Bayti staff operate with an approach that aims to generate a kind of “break” from the street in order to start a process of leaving the street situation - and then address the issues related to sexual abuse and exploitation. This approach is based and structured on:

³ According to Article 513 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, “minors who have not reached the age of 16 may be considered to be in a difficult situation when their physical, mental, psychological or moral safety or their education is in danger because of their association with delinquent persons or persons known for their bad reputation or with a criminal record ; when they rebel against the authority of their parents, the person having their custody, their guardian, their legal guardian, the person who takes care of them, the person or establishment to which they have been entrusted; when they become accustomed to running away from the establishment where they are studying or training; when they leave their home or when they do not have a suitable place to live”.

- A general understanding of the socio-demographic characteristics and dynamics that cause these children to be in street situations in the first place;
- An understanding of the motivations that drive boys to live on the streets. A large number of boys find themselves in street situations because of problems in their families and are out of touch with their basic social fabric (including their families);
- To avoid a dependency approach to the support system offered by civil society organisations. It was observed that boys perpetuate their street life by depending on this support system and using it as a solution to some of their problems on the street - thus not being able to create that moment of “break” and detachment from the street situation.

Engaging with boys in street situations is complicated because of the group and protection dynamics that are often in place on the street. It is unusual to find boys alone on the street, and they tend to gather in groups run by “leaders”. These leaders may be teenagers or young men who have spent a lot of time on the streets and have often been involved in delinquent activities. The sexual exploitation of boys is therefore part of this context and the involvement of boys in this dynamic occurs in exchange for a form of protection and access to certain basic services on the street⁴. It is also important to consider the time boys have spent on the streets, and the impact this has had on their lives and their physical and mental health.

“The whole learning process for these boys has taken place in an environment where there is violence, crime, drugs, etc. The boy’s experience counts for a lot in the work to be done [afterwards].”

Negative community perceptions of children in street situations - and particularly of boys - are an additional challenge faced by the Bayti team. Indeed, boys living and working on the street are often perceived as criminals or as dangerous individuals. It was therefore important to set up a parallel process of awareness-raising in the communities to change their perceptions and inform them about the work Bayti does with these boys, emphasising the positive effects this can have on community life in general. Bayti’s experience shows how crucial it has been to raise community awareness of the reasons and motivations why these boys were on the streets in the first place. In this regard, Bayti emphasised the importance of media engagement, which has played an important role in raising community awareness, and that the production of articles and videos on the conditions of children in street situations can help to initiate collective discussions in behaviour change activities.

Building on these lessons learned, Bayti’s teams build trust with the boy through three main steps, which can be summarised as follows:

⁴ Leaders have a strong power relationship with boys. To break the chain of exploitation, Bayti teams also engage with leaders through group sessions.

1. Offering care as the first form of contact with the boy. Educators⁵ are provided with a first aid kit to provide care for boys with minor injuries or visible skin problems. This approach seems to work because it shows the child that the practitioner cares and that he is worthy. This contributes to the development of the adult-child relationship and changes the perception of children in street situations as adults;
2. Offering help, showing that an adult wants to take care of the boy without getting anything in return, contributes enormously to the trust-building process;
3. After the treatments, or at subsequent meetings, the educators accompany the boys to the hammam⁶ to improve their personal hygiene and change their clothes, and at the same time change the way they see their bodies, by teaching them how to take care of them. Treatments include body washing and scrubbing. This support is provided in full compliance with Bayti's child safeguarding policy and always with full respect for the child's privacy. Bayti's learning in the trust-building process is that this activity both reinforces the idea of simply wanting to help - again changing the perception of the power relationship - and allows the boy to enter into a different relationship with his own body. According to the Bayti teams, this process is particularly important for boys who have experienced forms of sexual abuse, as it allows them to gently reconstruct their relationship with their bodies;
4. During successive meetings, Bayti offers the boy the opportunity to visit the day care centre run by the organisation and thus to begin the process of breaking away from the street situation⁷. When the boy accepts the invitation to the centre, he is accompanied by the educator who has been following his case and is introduced to the other colleagues who offer him clean clothes and a meal. This is also the ideal time for the educator to conduct individual interviews with the boy and actively listen to his situation. This step is not only important for the boy himself but also for other boys. When boys are well received and treated at the centre, this information is shared with other boys living in street situations. This allows Bayti to be identified as a facility where children can access help and be listened to.

“Afterwards, it’s word of mouth, the children talk about it among themselves”.

Throughout this process, the actions and behaviour of the educator accompanying the boy are essential. An important piece of information that has been gleaned from the field experience of the Bayti teams is **the need to avoid at all times a handout approach with the boys**. This is true for all children, but is particularly relevant in the specific case of boys. Because of preconceived ideas about masculinity and stereotypes about the expected role of boys, boys do not want to be seen as victims. It is therefore very important that the approach used in the confidence-building process is empathetic and does not give the impression of rescuing the young person. Thus, the educator's approaches must include:

5 Always equipped with identification signs and clothing associated with Bayti.

6 These are public or private bath facilities that are present in several Muslim countries.

7 This process also involves working on the basic motivations that cause the boy to be in a street situation in the first place. To this end, Bayti also carries out activities to support the families of these boys (where possible) in order to rebuild this family link and rework the motivations behind the boy's situation;

- The capacity for empathy and active listening, which allows the educator to really listen to the boy and make him understand that he is being listened to and accepted as he is. *“I understand what you are telling me, I see you”* are expressions often used by staff to make boys feel that they are listened to and respected;
- Personal skills such as acceptance of others and respect, as well as being able to demonstrate commitment to this type of work. Having conviction in the work and believing in the human value of the other person are considered essential skills for Bayti;
- Know how to respond to boys' behaviour and how to make them feel comfortable. It also involves understanding the boy's fears and the fact that sharing information on his part could potentially put him at risk.

The boys identified and trusted in this process can then benefit from Bayti's services in the day centre (with educational, recreational activities, etc.) or be referred to Bayti's 24-hour care facility. The children in this facility face various protection issues - not only sexual abuse and exploitation - and are placed in the shelter by decision of the juvenile judge as “children in difficult situations” according to the Criminal Procedure Code. The children accommodated in this facility are accompanied by social workers who are responsible for the overall management of their individual cases. The transition from the street to the centre is a continuous process, starting with a presentation of the child's file by the street team to the social workers of the Bayti centre team and including a tour of the centre's premises and activities by the referring educator. This person initially stays in contact with the boy in the centre to support and complete this transition gently by showing support for the boy.

“Often boys are afraid. These are children who have suffered. They know the streets well, but not the centres”.

At Bayti, the educators and social workers receive technical support from a clinical psychologist, who also provides psychological support and follow-up for the boys. In particular, the psychologist organises and runs group workshops once a month with all the intervention teams and the families of the children in care:

- These workshops last four to five hours and address the challenges and obstacles that the teams encounter in their work. These meetings provide an opportunity for educators to report on their observations in the field, their difficulties and to receive tools and techniques to improve;
- Specifically for boys, issues of masculinity in adolescence, sexuality and masturbation are often addressed in the workshops. In particular, the psychologist provides the teams with knowledge and tools on how to deal with these issues and how to understand the affirmation of sexuality and masculinity in their development;
- The workshops also provide an opportunity to discuss possible signs and symptoms of sexual abuse and exploitation in boys. The psychologist provides the staff with knowledge about the signs that should alert them, without necessarily assuming that the boy has been sexually exploited. In this regard, all concerns are reported directly to the psychologist, who is responsible for determining the specific situation of the child. She is in charge of linking the different information received about the boy with her observations made during therapeutic sessions.

Thanks to her advice, the educators pay attention to boys who have nightmares, who have problems with doors or closed places, who isolate themselves and who draw or play with high degree of force and aggression. These are boys who are more likely to have experienced sexual abuse or exploitation.

The work of building trust and the intervention process with boys who are survivors of sexual exploitation therefore requires more in-depth support from the teams, where the role of the referent is key. In this sense, it is also essential to strengthen the bond of trust that has been established by ensuring that information about available services is clearly shared, by maintaining the promises made to the boys, and by being consistent and patient when meeting with them. These approaches are particularly important for surviving boys, as the bond of connection and trust with adults has often been broken.

As seen above, the boys supported in their break from the street access weekly support and follow-up sessions with the psychologist employed by Bayti. The frequency of these sessions is determined on the basis of factors specific to each individual case. During the process of working with boys receiving intake and case management services through Bayti, it was noted that the presence of female staff is an important asset. Based on the association's experience, many of the boys demonstrated that they needed the support of a female figure at some point in the process. Indeed, it would seem that a woman's perceived availability to listen and care is an advantage in the support strategy. This can be explained by the entrenchment of gender norms and roles that tend to associate the female figure with a caring and protective figure. For boys who have suffered sexual abuse or exploitation by men or by other boys, men may represent danger figures. It is interesting to note how the man-danger association is also made - by many boys - in reference to the police, who can sometimes chase boys in the street.

AMANE's gender and sexual violence awareness work

Since 2009, AMANE has been conducting awareness-raising, capacity-building and advocacy activities with children, families, communities and stakeholders in the national child protection system in Morocco. Over the years, strengthening the gender aspects of its advocacy and prevention activities has emerged as crucial for AMANE. In specific awareness-raising activities on gender-based violence, AMANE now considers the importance of strengthening work around gender norms and masculinities. AMANE believes that it is essential that boys are also involved in carrying out these activities. For each project implemented by the association, mapping and evaluations are carried out in order to define the methodology to be chosen according to the specific context and the cultural and religious dynamics. In this sense, AMANE is building collaborative relationships with theological experts to align its messages of child protection from sexual violence with religious principles. AMANE's field and community assessments confirm that stereotypes of boys as strong, resilient and stoic in the face of pain and hardship are well rooted in Morocco.

“These stereotypes condition the child’s personality, which will also lead to the justification of violent behaviour by the boy. The use of force and violence [as a form of expression and conflict resolution] is completely normalised. This aggressivity is almost an accepted form of communication.”

These gender norms have an impact on how boys will share - and retain - information about their experiences of sexual abuse or exploitation. AMANE has developed specific tools to integrate the gender dimension in its awareness-raising work, and in particular in the activities carried out with children and families (within and outside schools). In particular, the association has created several toolkits to conduct awareness-raising actions on emotional education, sexual violence, gender-based violence, harmful and protective social norms.

The toolkits provide staff using them with an implementation manual for conducting sessions with children and adults. The local associations implementing the awareness-raising activities are trained by AMANE before the activities start. The process implies that local associations are trained beforehand, which means that they attend 7 to 9 days of training (depending on the topics covered). The awareness-raising sessions are spread over three sessions⁸, the first of which targets parents. When dealing with issues of sexuality and violence, it is important, according to AMANE, to start by talking to parents to obtain their permission and to inform them about the type of work that will be done with their children, and to avoid fuelling intra-family conflicts following the awareness-raising of children on certain topics regarded as sensitive.

Boys and girls are involved from the second and third sessions onwards, when awareness-raising focuses more on how to protect oneself from sexual violence and how to report concerns about it. All the materials used are child-friendly⁹, and the toolkit contains items such as cards and drawings to support the facilitation of sessions. These tools allow facilitators to lead the discussion with the children and ask them questions about the images presented.¹⁰ During these sessions, there are differences that can be observed between the behaviour of boys and girls, such as:

1. When using drawings of the human body, boys find it more difficult than girls to draw the genitals, or they can draw the upper body but have more difficulty drawing the lower body.
2. Boys can be either more shy or a distractor during group sessions, with moments of mockery or laughter. This requires a lot of patience on the part of the facilitation teams and an adaptation of the facilitation techniques and approach used when asking questions to the boys. An important learning in this sense was responding to the answers of a boy who may have the courage to talk about these topics and thus encourage the rest of the group to do the same. AMANE observed that boys tend to share more easily in groups, once one of them brings up the topic.¹¹

“The boys’ difficulty in drawing and talking about it is quite indicative of the taboo surrounding their sexuality. Boys do not always receive information on these topics.”

Bearing in mind that these processes require patience and time, **these sessions provide an initial discussion and key information for boys on forms of sexual violence**, ways to respect body boundaries and protect their bodies, and ways to end the taboo surrounding these issues. In the Moroccan context, it is important to specify in each case what is meant by the term “sexual violence” with regard to its manifestations.

8 Spaced at intervals of approximately one week.

9 From 7 to 12 years old.

10 Organisations are also trained on how to react to a potential report from children.

11 This is clearly also related to the personality of each child.

The second toolkit has a similar structure and implementation methodology to the first, but seeks to engage children and their families on gender norms and roles. Here too, facilitation teams can use tools such as maps and pictures to initiate discussion with children. These tools use images and quizzes to challenge traditional gender norms and thus encourage reflection on preconceived notions of masculinity. Based on the pictures and statements, children are asked if:

***“A boy can be afraid,
a boy can cry”***

Or if

“A boy can be fashionable or affectionate?”

Other tools explore more the gender roles and expressions that are expected. The tools allow for questions to be asked of children about how they dress and/or how they are interested in sports or play activities. Here too, it is important to bear in mind that the main idea of these activities is to start the discussion and therefore to know how to deal with the frustration that might be generated by sessions that may not always change the boys' thinking (at least in a visible and immediate way).

Considering the realities on the ground in some communities, the maps and images used mostly address basic issues of gender norms. These sessions are a way of starting a discussion and a process of involving children and their parents in these issues, taking into account the long time needed overall to achieve a change in behaviour and attitudes. When considering the implementation of awareness-raising activities on these topics - which are often considered sensitive and taboo - it is fundamental to also understand that these sessions can create real questions in individuals that could lead to uncomfortable discussions within the family and affect relationships. This again demonstrates the importance of ensuring parental involvement and awareness first and the need to approach the process gently, starting with basic and more generally accepted concepts.

“You” have to be careful, the impact is noticeable. This information grows in the boys’ heads and can lead to serious questioning.”

Finally, the observation made by the Bayti teams on the relationship of boys with female staff was also confirmed by AMANE. Indeed, AMANE finds that boys tend to associate the female figure with the role of protector and trust. In addition, it was noted that parents also feel safer knowing that their children are participating in activities that are implemented by women.

The technical and human capacities needed for implementation

Implementing Bayti's identification and trust-building activities with street boys requires a combination of technical, human and material resources that include:

- The availability of teams that can carry out identification and outreach activities on the street, social workers and a child clinical psychologist;
- Training for all teams on child protection policies, the national and international child rights framework, communication and psychological first aid, and understanding the reactions of girls and boys according to their life experiences and level of development.

As seen above, the support workshops led by the psychologist with the teams represent an innovative point in Bayti's work, since these workshops allow for constant supervision and guidance on the problems and challenges encountered. This exercise enables the link between the theoretical knowledge provided during the training courses and practice in the field. In addition, Bayti noted the importance of ensuring a good staff recruitment process and rigorous implementation of the code of conduct and safeguarding policy:

- The recruitment process focuses on the candidates' interpersonal and communication skills, as well as their motivation to do this type of work. Bayti analyses the emotional and personal side of individuals, their attitudes and potential biases (especially in terms of gender);
- Each person has to go through a three-month probationary period, which includes technical support, training and observation of the person's work in the field. Educators and social workers are supported in their initial work with boys. This supervision provides Bayti with an assessment of the person's attitudes and potential biases in dealing with boys;
- Knowing that building trust with boys is extremely difficult, in addition to the desire to ensure the safeguarding and safety of all children receiving its services, Bayti ensures the rigorous implementation of its safeguarding policy. Where the organisation has had conduct issues involving its staff, the individuals concerned have been reported and brought to justice. Acting on and confirming the sanctions to the boys' educators reinforce the child's psychological healing process and strengthens the child's trust in Bayti, confirming that his concerns have been listened to and taken into account.¹²

¹² Bayti provides children with several channels for reporting their protection and safeguarding concerns, as well as for collecting suggestions for improving the centres' activities. For example, a message box is available for all children and a children's representative group is set up and consulted regularly.

The implementation of AMANE's outreach activities with children and families requires the development of a rigorous human resource training process. In particular, the above-mentioned toolkits have been developed on the basis of commissioned social and psychological research, and are based on educational approaches to addressing these issues with children and parents. To be able to use these toolkits and methodology, implementing associations have to go through a training process (which can take up to four weeks) on how to use them. It is important to note that the implementing organisations are assisted by AMANE teams during the awareness-raising activities. The training modules include:

- Gender issues and gender-based violence (also against boys) in order to unify knowledge and ensure the dissemination of appropriate messages on these topics;
- Children safeguarding and the safe identification and referral of potential protection cases identified during the awareness-raising sessions;
- Listening techniques and psychological first aid. These modules have been developed with the external support of child psychologists;
- Association staff also receive tools that include worksheets to support and facilitate fieldwork.

AMANE ensures the appropriation of these tools and knowledge by the implementing associations and can support them in the piloting process with other organisations at a later stage. This training is combined with simulation exercises run by AMANE that allow the associations to better understand the facilitation of awareness-raising sessions and to be able to deal with delicate situations and the typical behaviour of boys in such group sessions. In addition, AMANE can mobilise psychological support to assist frontline organisations.

The AMANE team received in-house coaching on techniques for managing their own emotions, particularly the frustration that can arise during the implementation of activities in the field. It also carries out in-house debriefing sessions, allowing them to share emotions and difficulties among colleagues and to have parallel moments of relaxation.

Conclusion and possibilities for building on the work with boys

The accumulated experience of the Bayti and AMANE teams in their work with boys in Morocco has provided them with knowledge and innovative approaches on how to address the unique challenges of boy survivors and the responses they can demonstrate in the process of intervention and prevention activities on gender issues. The adaptation and internal learning that both organisations have developed over the years focuses on issues of trust, language and a deep understanding of the cultural, religious and community dynamics related to gender and protection in the country.

Bayti's experience in trust-building activities with boys in street situations and the development of internal learning mechanisms continues to provide important capitalisation opportunities and food for thought for the expansion of current programmes, such as:

- The development of specific tools for peer-to-peer (boys) psychosocial support and awareness raising on sexual abuse and exploitation between peers;
- Building knowledge and capacity to provide support to boys and children with a different sexual orientation and/or gender identity;
- Strengthening the internal monitoring and evaluation system that can capitalise on working with boys practices, and enable its use to inform capacity-building activities of other organisations at national and regional level.

AMANE's work on sexual violence is part of a long-term vision that seeks to support a process of deconstructing gender stereotypes and norms in children, families and communities, which requires time and a continuous presence on the ground - as well as the development and constant revision of the approaches used. The gender and sexuality awareness-raising tools and techniques developed and implemented by AMANE have provided important lessons in working with boys and preventing their sexual abuse and exploitation. The use of the toolkits requires a very important initial training phase, and its tools should therefore always be used after this step. AMANE's experience also provides insights into the capitalisation and expansion of programmes:

- The tools developed take into account cultural and religious dynamics to address sensitive issues such as gender and sexuality, and are available in French and Arabic. The training process on how to use these tools could be useful for other organisations starting to work with boys in the Middle East and North Africa region, but also in West Africa;
- Strengthening the evaluation of the impact of awareness-raising among children and their families could provide important elements of capitalisation, which could in parallel help the capacity-building activities of child protection services in the country;

- AMANE's attention to the cultural arguments used to construct its awareness-raising messages, as well as its collaboration with religious structures in this process, opens up interesting leads for the development of even more detailed tools on protecting boys from sexual abuse and exploitation. These tools could have a regional scope by engaging other associations and organisations in Muslim countries, but also for countries with a strong Muslim presence in migrant and refugee communities.

To delve deeper into this

- To find out more about Bayti's work in Morocco and to find out more about their approach and services, please visit: <http://www.association-bayti.ma/>
- For more information on AMANE's work in Morocco and more details on their approach and services, please visit: <https://amanemena.org/>
- For education and training on sexual exploitation and abuse: <https://ej.amaneprentissage.org/> (for young people) and <https://amaneprentissage.org/> (for adults)
- To better understand the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse of boys and ECPAT International's work in this area worldwide, please visit: <https://ecpat.org/global-boys-initiative/>
- For more information on ECPAT International's work: <https://ecpat.org>



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