



Syria

accelerator  
lab

**MAGENTA**  
choose *better*



©UNDP - Syria - Zuhir Al-Fourati

# *Women Inheritance Rights in Syria*

## Design Recommendations Report

Submitted To: UNDP Syria  
Date: 16 March 2023

# Table of Contents

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>3</b>
BACKGROUND	3
SUMMARY OF THE APPROACH	3
<b>OVERARCHING KEY PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE INTERVENTIONS</b>	<b>6</b>
AVOIDING PSYCHOLOGICAL REACTANCE	6
MANAGING LOSS	7
STAKEHOLDER SELECTION	9
<b>INTERVENTION 1: SURFACING AND SHIFTING INHERITANCE NORMS</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>THE COMPONENTS OF THE INTERVENTION</b>	<b>10</b>
PART 1: CHANGING MENTAL MODEL THROUGH CASE STUDIES	10
PART 2: CHALLENGING INJUNCTIVE SOCIAL NORMS	11
<b>TAKING A DO-NO-HARM APPROACH TO CHALLENGING COMMUNITY NORMS</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>MONITORING AND EVALUATION</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>INTERVENTION 2: MEDIATION, HYPOCRISY AND RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>THE COMPONENTS OF THE INTERVENTIONS</b>	<b>17</b>
PART 1 : MOTIVATING BROTHERS TO TAKE PART	17
PART 2 : FINDING THE RIGHT MEDIATOR	19
<b>TAKING A DO-NO-HARM APPROACH TO MEDIATION</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>MONITORING AND EVALUATION</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>COHERENCE OF INTERVENTIONS</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	<b>24</b>

# Introduction

## Background

This Design recommendation Report expands on the selected interventions that MAGENTA put forward in the Mapping report, that presented the behavioural analysis carried out by the team in order to designing behavioural insights interventions to support women's access to their Housing, Land and Property (HLP) Rights as part of the project with the UNDP Syria Accelerator Lab.

Following the submission of the report, the UNDP team selected two priority interventions adapted from the recommendations and MAGENTA facilitated a remote design workshop to support UNDP staff in designing further the interventions for piloting after the end of this consultancy. This report provide build on the inputs of the UNDP team during the remote design workshop and provide guidance for the UNDP team to design fully those interventions.

## Summary of the Approach

Taking a behavioural science lens to the problem of inheritance in Syria follows an established behavioural science process:

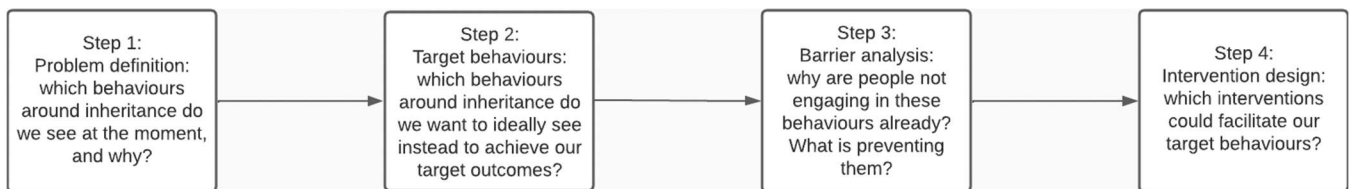


Figure 1: Traditional behavioural science process applied to the problem of inheritance in Syria.

### Step 1: problem definition

The first step involved an analysis of which concrete behaviours currently constitute the problem – who is currently behaving how, and why? This analysis included an assessment of likely behaviours of the actors involved (the father, the mother, the sister, the brother, the son-in-law, the community) across the 4 stages of pre-inheritance (before the father's passing), a circumstance change (father passing), to Takaroj and registration. A key to defining the problem here was that rather than merely analysing individual behaviours there was a need to also capture interactions between individuals. Therefore, when analysing current behaviours we focused on highlighting interactions across the main actors, based on a review of the existing literature as well as focus groups ran (Please see **Error! Reference source not found.**). As part of this analysis it became clear, that the sister faces a lot of social pressure by different actors to give up her part of the inheritance.

## Step 2: target behaviours

Next, we analysed what appropriate target behaviours could be across the key actors. These behaviours involve:

1. **Fathers** to follow Sharia law and making a clear division according to Sharia law ahead of passing, and capturing these in their will alongside ensuring the brothers will act on it
2. **Brothers** to follow Sharia law and contribute to a division of assets according to Sharia law and act on the will of their father (if available)
3. **Mothers** to follow Sharia law and take active steps to either influence the father to write his will, or support the sister in her claiming of the rights
4. **Sisters** to follow Sharia law and claiming their rights where it is not adhered to, potentially via legal means

However, analysing more clearly what it means for the sister to “claim her rights” (e.g. bringing up the topic of inheritance with her father, refusing the Murada etc) it became clear that the sister is facing countless *social barriers* in the form of pressure and push-back from her family that would mean that attempting to change the sister’s behaviour in the absence of changing the behaviour of those around her would unlikely lead to success, and more likely lead to additional harm to her.

## Step 3: barrier analysis

In order to analyse drivers of current behaviours (and potential barriers to target behaviours), the Behavioural Drivers Model<sup>1</sup> was applied. This model analyses barriers on 3 levels: psychological, sociological, and environmental level. As there is at present no single behaviour that constitutes the problem, we chose a behavioural model that would allow us to capture *general* drivers to multiple (and hard to define) behaviours rather than those behavioural models (e.g. COM-B) that have a stronger focus on identifying barriers to single behaviours.

This analysis concluded that every actor faces multiple barriers across all 3 levels, with many barriers shared. Hence, interventions should focus on removing *multiple barriers* for *multiple actors*. In addition, it became evident that there is no single intervention that could remove all barriers for all actors – therefore, we recommend sets of interventions that address these barriers rather than relying on single interventions.

## Step 4: intervention design

We proposed 5 different sets of interventions, aimed at the father, the son-in-law, the brothers, the community and the sister. Each of these sets of interventions aimed to address multiple barriers on different levels for each actor, and we suggested implementing ideally several of these interventions.

In summary, these interventions were:

---

<sup>1</sup> Petit, V. (2019). The Behavioural Drivers Model. UNICEF. URL: [https://www.unicef.org/mena/media/5586/file/The\\_Behavioural\\_Drivers\\_Model\\_0.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/mena/media/5586/file/The_Behavioural_Drivers_Model_0.pdf), 20.



- 1. The father: Legacy, responsibility and hypocrisy**  
This intervention was mentioned by all focus-groups as one that people felt could have a big impact: motivating fathers to clearly divide their assets before passing away through adhering to his legacy, addressing any potential hypocrisy for not adhering to Sharia law, and highlighting the father's responsibility as the decision-maker of the family. Two possible options for this intervention include handing over assets before passing or setting out divisions of assets intentions. The success of the intervention relies on motivating the father to divide assets according to Sharia law and ensuring that the siblings adhere to the father's wishes after his passing.
- 2. The son-in-law: Reducing influence**  
This intervention aims to address concerns around the son-in-law taking control over inheritance assets meant for the sister. Several options were proposed, including establishing pre-marital expectations regarding a daughter's right to retain her inheritance under her own name and ensuring that the prospective son-in-law pledges to comply with Sharia inheritance law. Positive case studies of supportive sons-in-law could also be used to address social norms around husbands' roles in their wives' inheritance. Finally, the intervention suggests reframing the brothers' responsibility to take care of their sister by helping her maintain control over her inheritance and justifying her share, leading to a potential change in social norms.
- 3. The brother: mediation, hypocrisy, and reframing responsibilities**  
this intervention aims to address the influence of brothers in the inheritance process and their potential resistance to adhering to Sharia law. Mediation services could be offered to support negotiations and ensure fairness, combined with support in navigating the administrative process. Hypocrisy could be surfaced to address tensions surrounding not adhering to Sharia law and to highlight the brothers' responsibilities towards their sister, particularly in financially supporting her and her children in the case of her husband's death. Reframing the brothers' role to focus on ensuring their sister receives her fair share could also be effective in changing their behavior and aligning with their beliefs as Muslims and caretakers of the family.
- 4. The community: Surfacing and shifting inheritance norms**  
This intervention aims to directly challenge social norms surrounding inheritance, particularly the norms around the behaviors of men. The infrequency and private nature of inheritance make it difficult for people to understand the process and behavior of others, leading to assumptions and misunderstandings. The intervention suggests providing mental models through case studies that realistically depict the inheritance process and surface both injunctive and descriptive social norms around what constitutes good inheritance behavior. Bringing inheritance into public discourse more broadly through cross-over opportunities with other thematic content could also increase awareness and understanding of the inheritance process.
- 5. The sister: Supporting some women to claim their rights**  
The proposed intervention aims to support women to claim their inheritance rights,

which is a difficult and unlikely path for them to take due to various barriers. To address this, the intervention suggests providing front-end support to women who are estranged from their brothers during the crisis and have nothing to lose socially. This support includes explaining their rights, the process, and providing lawyers to support them throughout the entire procedure. The intervention also includes supporting women through waiting times, navigating court dates and paperwork, and challenging any unjust rulings. The long-term commitment is essential to ensure that no woman is left alone during the process, and the successful cases could serve as a precedent for future claims and build a social movement.

## *Overarching key principles to guide interventions*

The below overarching principles are recommended to guide any interventions implemented by the UNDP team in relation to addressing barriers to support women's access to their Housing, Land and Property (HLP) Rights due to the entrenched nature of some of the barriers.

### **Avoiding psychological reactance**

Psychological reactance is a phenomenon whereby people react negatively to attempts to persuade them to change their attitudes or behaviors, particularly if they feel their freedom or autonomy is being threatened. This could be a **potential barrier to the success of interventions aimed at the community and the brothers, as they may feel that their cultural and religious traditions are being challenged.**

To minimize the potential for psychological reactance, interventions should be designed to respect and acknowledge cultural and religious beliefs and should be framed as aligning with Islamic principles of fairness and justice. It may also be helpful to involve trusted community leaders and religious figures in the design and implementation of the interventions to increase their legitimacy and acceptance.

Additional principles to reduce psychological reactance are to:

- **Emphasize choice:** Emphasize that the process is not about taking away choices but rather about providing information and options to make informed decisions.
- **Foster collaboration:** Encourage collaboration and teamwork among all family members, emphasizing that the inheritance process is not just about individual gains but about the well-being of the entire family.

- **Encourage open communication:** Encourage open and honest communication among family members and provide a safe space for everyone to express their thoughts and feelings.
- **Avoid blame and shame:** Avoid blaming or shaming any individual family member, and instead focus on finding solutions that are in the best interests of all involved.

## Managing loss

As a behaviour change strategy, it could be tempting to attempt to reframe the situation for the brothers so it is positive for them. Example positive outcomes for the brothers could be a more equal society, providing for their sister, providing for their sister's children amongst other arguments. If such a strategy is attempted, it is important that these gains should be framed in a way that aligns with their values and beliefs and broader cultural norms around inheritance.

However, what is likely (this could be tested) is that **these gains are perceived as marginal compared to giving up assets and losing out on potential social status**. If this is the case, any attempts to positively frame the loss could lead to psychological reactance. Even if well intended, messaging on gains could be perceived as manipulative or deceptive, further leading to negative reactions.

**Therefore, it may be more effective to actively address and acknowledge the loss and sacrifice.** This could come with a framing of this loss as a sacrifice for the greater good of the family, with their role as a caregiver, and with an emphasis on the importance of adhering to Sharia law and fulfilling religious duties.

Additionally, interventions that help the brothers find alternative ways to maintain their social status and reputation could also help mitigate the perceived loss of inheritance.

In order to support the brothers in addressing the loss, the following theories and principles provide relevant guidance.

A relevant theory is **self-determination theory**<sup>2</sup>, which posits that people are motivated by three basic needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. To manage the loss of inheritance, it might be helpful to focus on how giving up their inheritance could help them meet these needs in other ways, such as:

- An increase in autonomy if they feel that they are acting according to their personal values or beliefs
- An increase in competence if they feel that they are supporting their sisters' well-being or empowerment

---

<sup>2</sup> Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2012). Self-determination theory.

- An increase in relatedness if they feel that they are strengthening their family bonds or harmony

Another key principle for managing loss is the concept of **psychological flexibility**, which is the ability to adapt to changing circumstances and situations. This principle is rooted in Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)<sup>3</sup>, which posits that individuals should accept and embrace the present moment and work towards values-based actions that are in line with their goals and desires. The below table provide example statements that demonstrate the principles.

*It may be relevant for the relevant stakeholders who would implement the program to develop their own statements beyond the examples.*

Principle	Definition	Example statement
<b>Acceptance</b>	Acknowledging and embracing one's feelings and thoughts without trying to avoid or change them	<i>"I understand that giving your sister her share of inheritance is not easy and it might bring up a lot of emotions for you. How do you feel about that? Can you allow yourself to feel whatever comes up without judging or resisting it?"</i>
<b>Defusion</b>	Distancing oneself from one's thoughts and seeing them as transient events rather than facts or truths	<i>"You said that giving up your share means that you are failing. Is that really true? Or is that just a thought that you have? Can you notice that thought and let it go without getting hooked by it?"</i>
<b>Self-as-context</b>	Identifying with a broader sense of self that transcends one's roles or possessions	<i>"Who are you beyond your share of inheritance? What are some other aspects of yourself that define who you are? Can you connect with a deeper sense of self that is not attached to any roles or possessions?"</i>
<b>Present moment awareness</b>	Focusing one's attention and awareness on the here and now, rather than dwelling on the past or worrying about the future	<i>"What are you experiencing right now in this moment? What do you see, hear, feel, smell, taste? Can you focus on your breath and your body sensations? Can you be fully present and engaged in this conversation?"</i>
<b>Values</b>	Clarifying and articulating what matters most to one in life, and how one's actions align with one's values or goals	<i>"What is important to you in life? What do you stand for? What gives your life meaning and direction? How does giving your sister her fair share reflect your values or beliefs?"</i>

<sup>3</sup> Hayes, S. C., & Pierson, H. (2005). Acceptance and commitment therapy. *Encyclopedia of cognitive behavior therapy*, 1-4.



<b>Committed action</b>	Taking concrete steps toward achieving one's valued goals, and coping with any barriers or challenges along the way	<i>"What are some goals that you have in life that are aligned with your values? What are some steps that you can take to move toward those goals? How can I support you in taking those actions?"</i>
-------------------------	---	--

The principles to foster psychological flexibility should be embedded across both types of interventions.

Specifically, for any case study and social media activities it should be possible to **utilize the principle of acceptance, build on values**, and provide a reference to the **self-as-context**.

Mediation can touch on all aspects of psychological flexibility, and mediators could be provided with these principles to adhere to them. It will however be important that mediators are chosen to understand trauma responses, and to avoid bringing up the past particularly for traumatized individuals.

## Stakeholder selection

It is important to be sensitive to how the crisis in Syria has changed power dynamics when it comes to selecting stakeholders and those mediating in the inheritance process.

The crisis has likely had a significant impact on the social and economic structures of the community, potentially altering traditional power dynamics and relationships. It is essential to take this into consideration when selecting stakeholders and those mediating in the inheritance process to ensure that the most appropriate and effective individuals are involved.

This may involve engaging with new community leaders or working with respected individuals who have emerged as leaders in response to the crisis. It is also important to be aware of the specific needs and experiences of women who may have been disproportionately affected by the crisis and ensure that their voices are heard and their rights protected by selected stakeholders.

# *Intervention 1: Surfacing and shifting inheritance norms*

In the Mapping report, this recommendation included 4 sub activities. During the remote design workshop, participants rated the 4 sub activities on a matrix for impact and feasibility. Two stood out: changing mental models through case study and shifting injunctive norms. They are the focus on this section.

## The components of the intervention

### Part 1: Changing mental model through Case studies

Providing case studies can be a powerful tool for challenging social norms and promoting inheritance for Syrian women according to Sharia law. The goal is to **provide a realistic and nuanced portrayal of the inheritance process**, including the challenges and difficulties faced, and to show a variety of perspectives and experiences from women, men, and community leaders. The current mental model is often shaped by assumptions and stereotypes about the inheritance process, including who has power and agency, as well as emotional experiences. By highlighting both positive and negative emotions in the case studies one can challenge assumptions about the process and hopefully provide the language to allow for a public discourse on the topic.

Below are principles for designing and sharing the case studies in order to achieve these aims:

1. **Provide a realistic and nuanced portrayal of the inheritance process:** Ensure that the case study presents the entire process, from beginning to end, including the challenges and difficulties faced by the family. It should also be grounded in the specific cultural context of the community.
2. **Emphasize the role of communication and collaboration:** Include examples of how open communication and collaboration among family members can lead to more fairer inheritance distribution and better family dynamics. This can encourage families to have more open discussions about inheritance matters.
3. **Show a variety of perspectives and experiences:** It's important to show a range of perspectives and experiences within the case study, including those of women, men, and community leaders. This will help challenge assumptions and stereotypes about who has power and agency in the inheritance process.
4. **Highlight both positive and negative emotions:** Case studies should not just focus on the positive outcomes but should also show the difficulties faced by the family.

This will help provide a realistic portrayal of the process and challenge assumptions about how easy or difficult the inheritance process is.

5. **Show resilience and problem-solving:** Include examples of how families overcame challenges and conflicts during the inheritance process.
6. **Address common misconceptions:** Identify and address common misconceptions about inheritance according to Sharia law. This can help dispel misunderstandings and provide clarity.
7. **Use relatable and accessible language:** It's important to use language that is accessible and relatable to the community and avoid jargon or technical terms that may be unfamiliar or confusing.
8. **Include visuals and multimedia:** To make the case study more engaging and accessible, include visuals and multimedia such as photos, videos, or infographics. Diversify the formats to reach readers with different preferences, if possible.
9. **Showcase successful examples of inheritance under Sharia law:** Highlighting successful examples of families who have followed Sharia law during the inheritance process can help to challenge social norms and demonstrate that it is possible to follow this law while also maintaining family harmony.
10. **Ensure privacy and confidentiality:** It's important to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of the family involved in the case study and obtain their informed consent before sharing their story.
11. **Involve the community in the design process:** Involving the community in the design process can help to ensure that the case study is culturally appropriate and relevant to their specific context.
12. **Test with target group:** gather feedback about the case studies, including which assumptions about inheritance were challenged, which emotions were experienced by those reading the case studies, to adapt accordingly.

## Part 2: Challenging injunctive social norms

Injunctive social norms describe behaviours people think they should follow based on what they think other people expect of them.

In our situation, we want people to change their behaviours around inheritance, in particular to ensure a fair division of inheritance according to Sharia law. In order to change these behaviours, one supporting step can be to ensure that people believe *others* expect them to divide inheritance fairly according to Sharia law. And in order to surface these expectations, messages around what one *ought* to do can be disseminated via a multi-media campaign, in the hope that this then changes what people *actually* do.

There are different messages that can be conveyed, and the below serve as a starting point. These messages should be adapted by people close to the community, and tested with community members before being disseminated.

## Potential messages for adaptation and testing

- "The true test of our faith is not in performing rituals, but in how we treat our family members, including inheritance."
- "Inheritance is not a favor, it is a right according to Sharia law."
- "Inheritance is not just about property, it's about showing our religious values."
- "Distribution of inheritance is a basic Islamic right that we all should respect and follow."
- "Protect your family's honor by following Sharia law in inheritance."
- "Family traditions are not an excuse to abandon your faith, act on Sharia law when it comes to inheritance"
- "Our family customs may have served us well in the past, but it's time to embrace the timeless wisdom of Sharia law when it comes to inheritance."
- "Following Sharia law in inheritance is a way to honor your family and ensure peace and harmony."

## Target audiences

It is extremely important that the target audiences of this campaign go beyond those that are already on social media platforms, which may be skewed towards younger populations. Social norms are built and maintained by most members of society, and if younger people are changing the social norm in the absence of older generations being part of the dialogue they will most likely fail, in particular when it comes to inheritance. Therefore, ensure that you are reaching:

1. Brothers
2. Sisters
3. Mothers
4. Fathers
5. Community leaders

## Messengers

These messages can, as part of a campaign, come from different messengers. Here it is important that the messengers reflect the different target audiences, with younger influencers reaching younger generations and other community leads and respected figures reaching older generations.

## Call to action

It is also important to include a call to action at the end of messages. This call to action could include:

- **Reading the case-studies** to understand how different families have approached the topic of inheritance
- **Speaking to a community leader** to understand how they can be supported in ensuring a fair division

- Safely approaching the topic of inheritance with their own family, **starting discussions** if they feel like they are in a position to do so
- **Talking to family and friends** about the campaign
- If sequenced well: **taking up mediation services**

## Taking a do-no-harm approach to challenging community norms

The IN CASE framework<sup>4</sup> for unintended behavioural consequences suggests things to look out for, as well as potential mitigation strategies:

	Things to look out for	Mitigation strategies
<b>I – Intended behaviours</b>	Women starting conversations in their family but are met with acts of aggression or social sanctions.	Provide thoughts on how to start conversations with family members safely, provide support lines for women who are met with aggression, closely monitor the campaign impact (e.g. by monitoring social media commentary and local discourse)
<b>N – non-target audiences</b>	N/A (as every member of society should be part of the target audience group here).	N/A
<b>C – compensatory behaviours</b>	Brothers might start exerting more control over the inheritance process as they worry about losing the inheritance they anticipated.	Ensure the case study presents an understanding with the brother's position in any stories, rather than judgment. Acknowledge negative emotions relating to loss and ensure that actions are attached to deeper values such as providing for the family and religion.

<sup>4</sup> Emery, A., L. de Molière, P. Lang, M. Nicolson and E. Prince (2021), IN CASE: A behavioural approach to anticipating unintended consequences. Government Communication Service. Retrieved August 5, 2021, from <https://gcs.civilservice.gov.uk/publications/in-case-a-behavioural-approach-to-anticipating-unintended-consequences/>.



<b>A –additional behaviours</b>	<p>There could be negative commentary on social media or elsewhere, turning the discourse into a negative one that judges the position the campaign takes.</p> <p>Women who receive their fair share of inheritance could face social sanctions from those who believe that women should not have equal rights to inheritance.</p>	<p>Monitor social media and other platforms for negative commentary, and respond with factual information and respectful dialogue. Engage community leaders to support the campaign and provide accurate information to their communities.</p> <p>Provide support and resources for women who are facing discrimination or social sanctions as a result of claiming their inheritance rights. Ensure mediation is seen to be driven by both the brother and the sister.</p>
<b>S - signalling</b>	<p>The campaign could be perceived as signaling about women's rights rather than Sharia law, which could be met with criticism by some.</p>	<p>Emphasize the importance of Sharia law as the guiding principle for inheritance, and highlight the benefits of equitable inheritance for the family as a whole. Engage with religious leaders to ensure their support and understanding of the campaign's goals.</p>
<b>E – emotional impact</b>	<p>Women who have not received their fair share according to Sharia law could start feeling resentful, brothers who are due to go through the inheritance process could start feeling angry and protective over what they perceive to be their share.</p>	<p>For women, ensure that there is an understanding of legal routes where women do want to engage in the process, but also provide ways of channeling these feelings by providing the next generation with a better way.</p> <p>For brothers, acknowledge negative emotions relating to loss and ensure that actions are attached to deeper values such as providing for the family and religion.</p>

# Monitoring and evaluation

**Objective:** To increase the degree of inheritance division in accordance with Sharia law by changing community social norms to be in line with Sharia law.

Key behavioural outcome:

- % of women who received their actual shares according to Sharia
- % Degree of inheritance division according to Sharia law (proxy indicator to show evolution over time, how to measure this will need consideration from M&E experts)

## **Key Intermediary outcome (behavioural drivers) Indicators:**

- % of audiences who agree that Sharia law should be the primary guidance in dividing inheritance assets
- % of audiences who agree that they should divide inheritance assets in line with Sharia law
- % of audiences who agree that others expect them to divide inheritance assets in line with Sharia law
- % of audiences who report they understand what decisions the inheritance process entails
- Perceived self-efficacy during the inheritance process by family members

## **Key outputs:**

- Number of people viewing the case studies
- Number of people sharing the case studies

## **Process:**

1. Surveys: Pre and post-intervention surveys can be administered to assess changes in awareness, attitudes, and behaviors.
2. Focus groups: Focus groups can be conducted to gather qualitative data on the impact of the interventions and to gather more in-depth insights into attitudes and beliefs.
3. Interviews: Interviews with key stakeholders, including family members, community leaders, and UNDP staff, can be conducted to gather feedback on the impact and effectiveness of the interventions.

## **Sample pre-and post-survey items**

Survey items (can be used pre-and post campaign)

1. How familiar are you with the provisions of Sharia law regarding inheritance? (1=Not at all familiar, 5= very familiar) (question to be cross-referenced with factual questions on division of assets as per Sharia)
2. Do you believe that Sharia law should be the primary guidance in dividing inheritance assets? (1=Strongly disagree, 5=Strongly agree)

3. Do you believe that you should divide inheritance assets in line with Sharia law? (1=Strongly disagree, 5=Strongly agree)
4. Do you believe that others expect you to divide inheritance assets in line with Sharia law? (1=Strongly disagree, 5=Strongly agree)
5. To what degree do you believe that inheritance assets are divided according to Sharia law in your community? (1=Not at all, 5=Completely)
6. How well do you feel that you understand what decisions the inheritance process entails? (1=Not at all well, 3=Very well)
7. Have you personally experienced any changes in the way inheritance is divided in your community since [enter month of the campaign starting]? (1=No changes, 5=Significant changes)

### **Sample qualitative questions to assess harm**

1. Have you experienced any negative consequences as a result of the campaign aimed at increasing Syrian women's share of housing inheritance according to Sharia law?
2. Have you faced any challenges or difficulties in your community or family because of the campaign's efforts to promote inheritance rights for women?
3. Have you observed any changes in the way people in your community or family talk about or approach inheritance and Sharia law?
4. Are there any specific topics related to inheritance or Sharia law that you feel are difficult or sensitive to discuss as a result of the campaign?
5. Are there any concerns or fears that you have about the campaign and its potential impacts on your community or family?
6. Have you observed any changes in the way women's roles or rights are perceived or respected in relation to inheritance and Sharia law as a result of the campaign?
7. Are there any ways in which you feel the campaign could be improved to better support and protect the rights of women and other marginalized groups?

# *Intervention 2: Mediation, hypocrisy and responsibility*

When it comes to designing the intervention aimed at the brother, there are 2 core aspects. The first is to motivate brothers to take part in the mediation. The second is to enable a positive mediation process by finding the right mediator.

## The components of the interventions

### Part 1: Motivating brothers to take part

A key to motivating brothers is to both leverage hypocrisy and rephrase responsibility, both during the mediation process but also in advance to provide arguments for why taking part in mediation is important. Below we provide guidance and sample messages on how to leverage hypocrisy and rephrase responsibility.

#### Leveraging hypocrisy

- **Highlight the gap between stated beliefs and actual behaviors:** By pointing out the discrepancy between their professed beliefs and actual actions, brothers can be motivated to change their behavior to be more in line with their stated values. However, make sure that this is done “indirectly”, by stating for instance that “as a religious person, we adhere to Sharia law...” rather than saying “you state you are religious but yet you don’t adhere..”, as this could backfire (see *section on Avoiding psychological reactance*).
- **Appeal to their sense of identity:** One can also frame the issue in a way that appeals to their identity as Muslims and protectors of the family.
- **Provide clear alternative behaviors:** Instead of simply pointing out the hypocrisy, offer concrete behaviors that are more in line with Sharia law. This could include taking care of their sister by helping her maintain control over her inheritance, or supporting their sister in other ways to ensure that she is not left vulnerable.
- **Use positive examples:** Highlighting positive examples of brothers who have acted in accordance with Sharia law when it comes to inheritance can support the shift in social norms.

#### Potential messages for adaptation and testing

- "As a religious person I adhere to Sharia law, which includes ensuring equal treatment and respect for all members of the family. By supporting our sisters' inheritance rights, we are staying true to these values."

"We can't expect our sisters to thrive if they are denied the inheritance that is rightfully theirs. By supporting and caring for our sisters, we are also building the future of our family and community."

- "As brothers, we have the power to change norms and create a better future for our families. By supporting our sisters' inheritance rights in line with Sharia law, we are setting a positive example for future generations."

### **Rephrasing responsibility**

1. **Avoid placing blame or accusations:** It is important to avoid assigning blame or accusing the brothers of neglecting their responsibilities. Instead, focus on highlighting the positive aspects of their role as caretakers of their sisters.
2. **Emphasize the importance of Sharia law:** Reinforce the importance of adhering to Sharia law in matters of inheritance, and the obligation of brothers to ensure that their sisters receive their fair share.
3. **Use positive examples:** Acknowledge and highlight instances where brothers have fulfilled their responsibilities in taking care of their sisters.
4. **Empathize with the brothers:** Recognize the challenges and pressures that brothers may face, and provide support and guidance on how to navigate these challenges.
5. **Encourage open communication:** Support brothers to communicate openly and honestly with their sisters about inheritance matters, and facilitate a safe and non-judgmental space for these conversations to take place.

### **Potential messages for adaptation and testing**

- "As brothers, we have a responsibility to protect and support our sisters, and that includes ensuring they receive their rightful share of the inheritance according to Sharia law."
- "Taking care of your sister means looking out for her best interests in all aspects of life, including inheritance. By working to ensure that she receives her rightful share, you are embodying the true meaning of brotherhood."
- "As a brother, it is our duty to make sure that our sisters are not deprived of their rights. By advocating for their rightful share of the inheritance, we are fulfilling our responsibility to protect them."
- "Taking care of my sister means ensuring that she is not financially vulnerable after our father's passing. This includes making sure that she receives her rightful share of the inheritance according to Sharia law."
- "Taking care of our sisters means supporting them not just emotionally, but also financially. Inheritance is a crucial part of that support, and by following Sharia law, we can ensure that our sisters receive their fair share."



## Part 2: Finding the right mediator

A large challenge in designing this intervention which aims to bring brothers and sisters together in a mediation process is to find the right mediator. Below are some of the important aspects of such a mediator:

### Attributes of the mediator:

1. **Knowledge of Sharia law:** The mediator should have a good understanding of Sharia law and how it relates to inheritance, and should be knowledgeable about how exactly to divide assets.
2. **Neutrality:** The mediator should be neutral and unbiased towards everyone involved. They should not have any personal interests or relationships that could affect their objectivity.
3. **'Gender Responsive':** The mediator should understand key concepts related to gender and power to account for them in the mediation.
4. **Good communication and active listening skills:** The mediator should have strong communication skills, including active listening and the ability to communicate effectively with both the brother and the sister. They should be able to facilitate open and honest communication between the siblings and help them understand each other's perspectives.
5. **Conflict resolution skills:** The mediator should be skilled in resolving conflicts and negotiating agreements. They should be able to guide the parties towards a mutually agreeable solution that is in line with Sharia law.
6. **Empathy:** The mediator should be empathetic towards the parties involved, particularly the sister, who may be in a vulnerable position, but also towards the brother who may experience loss. They should be able to understand and acknowledge the emotional impact of the situation and provide support where needed.
7. **Patience and persistence:** The mediator should have patience and persistence, as the process of negotiation and mediation can be challenging. They should be able to stay focused on the objective of achieving a fair and just resolution and not attempt to take short cuts.
8. **Confidentiality:** The mediator should respect the privacy and confidentiality of the parties involved. They should ensure that any information shared during the mediation process remains confidential.
9. **Knowledge of administrative and legal procedures:** The mediator should have a good understanding of the administrative and legal procedures involved in inheritance in Syria. They should be able to assist the parties in navigating the process and help them understand their legal rights and responsibilities.
10. **Trauma informed:** the mediator should have a basic understanding on how to support those that have gone through trauma, as aspects of inheritance could be met with a trauma response, particularly broaching topics such as death and loss.

# Taking a do-no-harm approach to mediation

The IN CASE framework<sup>5</sup> for unintended behavioural consequences suggests things to look out for and potential mitigation strategies:

	Things to look out for	Mitigation strategies
<b>I – Intended behaviours</b>	More people than possible might start seeking mediation and if they can't be served it might provide an excuse to stop any discussions within the family	Consider referring them to other mediation (CDR) services offered by INGOs or CBOs meeting the same gender responsiveness standards.
<b>N – non-target audiences</b>	<p>Non-participants may perceive mediation as interference or a challenge to their beliefs and values</p> <p>The mother might attempt to interfere in the process if she believes it sheds a bad light onto the family</p>	<p>Involve respected community leaders and stakeholders in the planning and implementation process; provide clear information on the benefits of mediation and the importance of a fair division of inheritance to the broader community</p> <p>Provide messaging for mothers, offer to include the mother as part of the process</p>
<b>C – compensatory behaviours</b>	Brothers may engage in compensatory behaviors to exert control over the inheritance, such as pressuring their sister outside of the mediation process	Provide ongoing support to sisters and their families to ensure their rights are protected; involve respected community leaders and stakeholders in ongoing education and awareness-raising campaigns
<b>A – additional behaviours</b>	Brothers may attempt to influence the mediation process by exerting pressure on the mediator.	Ensure mediators are aware of this risk and have an appropriate response that ensures the brother feels understood but where

<sup>5</sup> Emery, A., L. de Molière, P. Lang, M. Nicolson and E. Prince (2021), IN CASE: A behavioural approach to anticipating unintended consequences. Government Communication Service. Retrieved August 5, 2021, from <https://gcs.civilservice.gov.uk/publications/in-case-a-behavioural-approach-to-anticipating-unintended-consequences/>.

		it is clear that they are and remain impartial.
<b>S - signaling</b>	<p>The intervention may unintentionally reinforce gender roles and stereotypes, such as the idea that women need men to advocate for them in inheritance disputes.</p> <p>Mediation may signal weakness or lack of control over family affairs</p>	<p>Emphasize the importance of fair division of inheritance in accordance with Sharia law and the benefits of mediation as a means to achieve this; involve respected community leaders and stakeholders in ongoing education and awareness-raising campaigns</p>
<b>E – emotional impact</b>	<p>Mediation process may create emotional stress for sisters and their families</p>	<p>Provide access to mental health and counseling services for all parties involved in the mediation process; ensure that mediators are trained in trauma-informed approaches</p>

## Monitoring and evaluation

**Objective:** To increase the degree of inheritance division in accordance with Sharia law by providing mediation services to brothers and sisters.

### Key behavioural outcome:

- % of women who received their actual shares according to Sharia
- % Degree of inheritance division according to Sharia law (*proxy indicator to show evolution over time, how to measure this exactly would need consideration from M&E experts*)

### Key intermediate behavioural outcomes:

- Indicators related to level satisfaction of brothers and sisters with the mediation process (to disaggregate data between brothers and sisters), such as
  - % of participants to the mediation process who report that the mediation process has made the inheritance division easier for them,
  - % of participants to the mediation process who report that the mediation led to a fairer outcome,
  - % of participants to the mediation process who report feeling that their perspectives were heard and taken into account.
- Indicators related to barriers removed during the mediation, such as
  - % increase of brothers reporting the importance of their sisters receiving their fair share according to Sharia law,
  - % increase of sisters reporting self efficacy in the inheritance process.

**Key outputs:**

- Number of brothers and sisters who participate in mediation
- Number of inheritance conflicts resolved through mediation

*Note that these outputs could be also be conceived as behavioural outcomes, but in this case participation alone will not be sufficient to achieve aims, hence the categorisation as outputs.*

**Process:**

- Mediation records: keep track of the number of brothers and sisters who participate in mediation, the number of inheritance conflicts resolved through mediation, and any relevant notes about the process
- Pre and post-mediation surveys: conduct surveys before and after mediation to assess participants' satisfaction with the process and their level of understanding of inheritance laws and division in accordance with Sharia law
- Conduct interviews / capture qualitative data to ensure there is no harm caused to the sisters, offer one-to-one sessions with the sisters to understand if there is any external pressure on her during the mediation service

**Sample Pre-Intervention Survey:**

1. Have you discussed inheritance with your family before? (1=never/5=frequently)
2. Have you experienced any conflicts related to inheritance within your family? (1=not at all/5=very much)
3. How comfortable are you discussing inheritance with your family? (1 = not at all comfortable, 5 = very comfortable)
4. To what extent do you agree with Sharia law regarding inheritance? (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)
5. How often do you communicate with your siblings about inheritance-related matters? (1 = never, 5 = very frequently)
6. How important is it to you that your sister receives a fair share of the inheritance? (1 = not at all important, 5 = very important)
7. How important is it to you that your brother-in-law is involved in inheritance-related decisions? (1 = not at all important, 5 = very important)
8. Have you ever received mediation or other forms of conflict resolution services before? (Yes/No)
9. How likely are you to consider mediation services to resolve conflicts related to inheritance within your family? (1 = very unlikely, 5 = very likely)

**Post-Intervention Survey:**

1. How satisfied were you with the mediation services you received? (1 = not at all satisfied, 5 = very satisfied)
2. Did the mediation session(s) help you better understand the inheritance process and your rights under Sharia law? (1=not at all/5=very much)
3. Have you experienced any conflicts related to inheritance within your family since the intervention began? (1=not at all /5=very frequently)
4. If yes, were you able to resolve the conflict(s) with the help of the mediation services? (Yes/No)

5. To what extent do you adhere with Sharia law regarding inheritance now? (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)
6. How often do you communicate with your siblings about inheritance-related matters now? (1 = never, 5 = very frequently)
7. How important is it to you that your sister receives a fair share of the inheritance now? (1 = not at all important, 5 = very important)
8. How fair was the mediator in the negotiation process? (1 = Not at all fair, 5 = Completely fair)
9. To what extent were both parties able to express their views during the mediation? (1 = Not at all, 5 = Completely)
10. How much did the mediator help to find a mutually beneficial solution? (1 = Not at all, 5 = Completely)
11. How satisfied are you with the mediation process overall? (1 = Very dissatisfied, 5 = Very satisfied)
12. How likely are you to recommend mediation services to resolve conflicts related to inheritance within your family to others? (1 = very unlikely, 5 = very likely)

**Sample qualitative questions to monitor potential harm toward the sister:**

1. Do you feel comfortable and safe during the mediation process?
2. Do you feel that your opinions and desires are heard and respected during the mediation process?
3. Do you feel that the mediator is fair and impartial throughout the process?
4. Do you feel that the mediation process will be successful in reaching a resolution that you are satisfied with?
5. Are there any aspects of the mediation process that make you uncomfortable or that you do not feel are fair?
6. Do you feel pressure to agree to certain terms during the mediation process? If so, from whom?
7. How has the mediation process impacted your relationship with your brothers and other family members?
8. Have you experienced any negative consequences as a result of participating in the mediation process?
9. Is there anything else that you would like to share about your experience with the mediation process?

## ***Coherence of interventions***

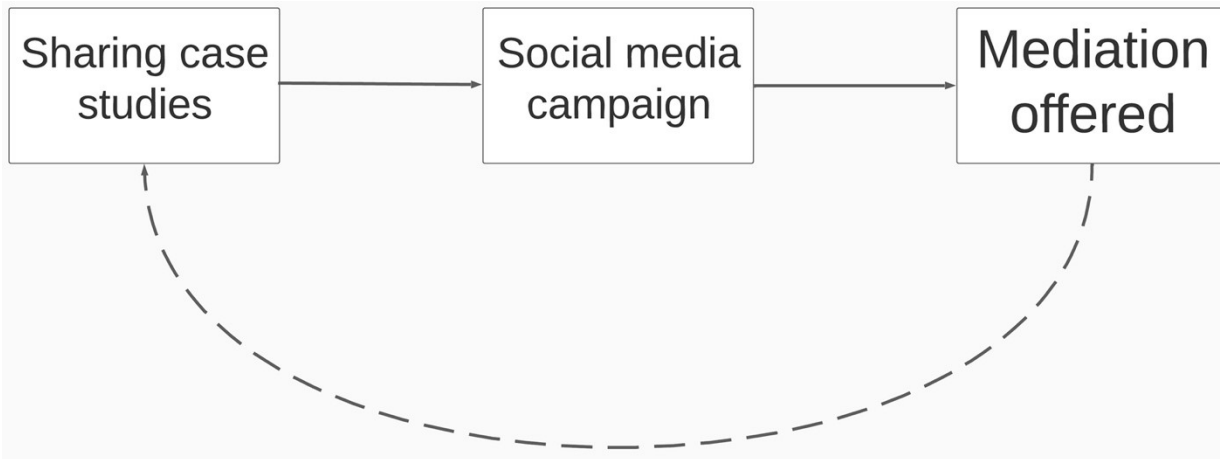
The interventions presented above could be implemented in a sequence. Indeed, the sequence in which the interventions are implemented can have a significant impact on their effectiveness. A well-sequenced approach can help to build momentum and ensure that each intervention builds on the successes of the previous one.

1. Based on the importance of first challenging the mental model of inheritance, it is suggested that the case studies are designed and implemented first. This can help



to provide a realistic and nuanced portrayal of the inheritance process, including the challenges and difficulties faced, and provide a new, more accurate mental model for the community.

2. A multi-media approach can then be used to amplify the impact of the case studies, challenge injunctive social norms, and reach a wider audience. Social media can also be used to promote discussions, and provide information and resources related to inheritance and gender equality.
3. Finally, offering mediation services can then help to address specific challenges and provide support for families who are navigating the inheritance process. Mediation can provide a space for families to have open and honest discussions, resolve conflicts, and make decisions in line with Sharia law and the principles of equal distribution. Given the importance of finding the right mediators, sequencing the intervention last might also allow for more time to develop the process and get it right, whilst still allowing for a challenging on community norms earlier.
4. Closing the loop, early successful mediation stories can then be re-designed as case studies, to broaden the impact of the interventions.



## Conclusion

This design recommendation report provides guidance to the UNDP team to support their full design of the interventions, with key behavioural insights and considerations to lower resistance and maximize impact. As a next step, it is highly recommended to pilot the intervention on a small scale with close oversight and M&E. The lessons learned from the pilot will inform any adaptation prior to scale up.