

**MUZAFFARABAD:** Aiming to empower women at the grass roots level, a two day WHO training session on Health Sector Response to Gender based Violence concluded on Sunday in Muzaffarabad.

The training was conducted by World Health Organisation (WHO) Pakistan under its Gender and Health Programme, which is part of the One UN Initiative for Gender Equality. The activity was one out of the ongoing series of trainings all over Pakistan under the said programme to enhance the capacities of Primary Health Care Providers for sensitive response towards survivors of Gender based Violence.

More than 500 Lady Health Workers and Lady Health Visitors representing remote areas of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) were trained, enabling them to play a pivotal role for the prevention and treatment of this serious public health issue at the community level. “We work closely with our communities to provide health care and many times felt violence took place particularly with women and girls. Now we know our role to treat this issue as a public health problem because it is affecting the physical and mental health of the victims,” said a Lady Health Visitor from Rural Health Centre (RHC) Dhanni.

WHO Gender Specialist, Masooma Butt was the lead resource person in this training. She added that we want the empowerment of women in the society and at the same time was focusing on their health and maternity health. The participants at the training gave useful recommendations to incorporate issues like Violence against Women and Gender based Violence in the public health policy and Health Information Systems to institutionalize the response at all levels.

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