



GENDER ANALYSIS

USAID/WEST BANK AND GAZA

FINAL REPORT

Governance Integration for Stabilization and Resilience in the Middle East and North Africa (GISR MENA)

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ACRONYMS

CEDAW	Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
EJHN	East Jerusalem Hospital Network
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GBV	Gender-based Violence
GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation
KII	Key Informant Interview
MoE	Ministry of Education
MOHESR	Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
MoWA	Ministry of Women’s Affairs
MSME	Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
PCBS	Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics
PFCCIA	Palestinian Federation of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, and Agriculture
PA	Palestinian Authority
UN	United Nations
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WBG	West Bank-Gaza
WRO	Women’s Rights Organization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PURPOSE

The purpose of the gender analysis is to help the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)/West Bank and Gaza (WBG) identify and understand key gender inequalities, issues, and related constraints in WBG. The recommendations that stem from the analysis aim to enable USAID to achieve greater gender equality and social inclusion within priority program sectors, as aligned with the Mission's development objectives, intermediate results, sub-intermediate results, and activity planning.

GENDER ANALYSIS PRIORITY SECTORS AND SUBSECTORS

The gender analysis examines the barriers and opportunities relevant to the rights and inclusion of women and members of other marginalized groups within these sectors and subsectors of priority for USAID/WBG's programming:

1. Gender-based violence (GBV), with a focus on shelters, perpetrators' rehabilitation, children as GBV witnesses, and the East Jerusalem Hospital Network (EJHN), which serves those with heightened vulnerabilities and limited access to services.
2. Women's leadership and empowerment within economic and political spheres, with a focus on economic empowerment, higher and early education, and female-headed households; political participation and peace building; and participation in local government.
3. Gender issues in the environmental sphere, including domestic water in the West Bank; climate change and renewable energy; and agriculture, wastewater management, and reuse.

CONTEXT

The Palestinian context is influenced by prolonged Israeli occupation and sociopolitical relations among Palestinian governing authorities. The social, political, and economic situation has deteriorated in recent years because of the coronavirus pandemic, the decline in peace prospects, and the severe security and economic conditions in the Gaza Strip. The territorial division of Palestinians along sociopolitical and geographic lines has undermined social cohesion between WBG, and within the West Bank, which is divided into Areas A, B, and C, according to the treaty signed by the Palestinian Liberation Organization and Israel in 1993. Palestinians living in Area C are among the most vulnerable because of their frequent exposure to violence and the continuous presence of military forces.

Refugees registered by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) accounted for approximately 41 percent of the total resident population in 2018. Approximately 64 percent of Palestinians in Gaza and 26 percent of Palestinians in the West Bank are refugees. Among the refugee population, 7 percent have at least one disability, and in 2017, 39 percent were living in poverty. The percentage of children with disabilities is 13.4 percent in the West Bank and 10.8 percent in the Gaza Strip (Palestinian Bureau of Statistics 2020).

U.S. Government laws and restrictions, including the Taylor Force Act, limit USAID's ability to work directly with the Palestinian Authority and prohibit assistance that benefits designated organizations. Given the legal boundaries within which USAID must operate in WBG, the research team's recommendations

for direct programming interventions and support are those that USAID can implement in collaboration with civil society, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), private sector actors, and international partners. The research team also makes recommendations for diplomatic efforts USAID might undertake to influence positive changes in laws and policies, and their implementation, towards greater gender equality, inclusion, and equitable access to services in WBG.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The gender analysis incorporates a literature review, semi-structured key informant interviews (KIs), small group meetings, focus group discussions (FGDs), and secondary data analysis of information and statistics. The research team reviewed relevant USAID policies, guidelines, and program reports; academic and action-oriented research; national survey reports and data sets; gender analyses and reports from government, nongovernment, and international agencies; and published research and analysis related to gender equality in USAID/WBG priority sectors. The analysis also draws on quantitative data from secondary sources, primarily from the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), the United Nations (UN) Women data portal, and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs' online digital services and platforms for current data and indicators.

Individuals from a range of perspectives participated in KIs or group discussions: the Palestinian Authority, civil society organizations, community-based organizations, USAID/WBG staff, USAID partners, private sector, international donor organizations, international NGOs, universities and research organizations, refugees, youth, and people with disabilities. Small group meetings enabled the research team to contextualize issues of gender equality, female empowerment, and social inclusion in the Palestinian Territories. FGDs provided varying experiences and perceptions, and the opportunity to verify and cross-check the research. The research team used an iterative, multiphase approach to analyze the data. The team analyzed the primary source data using the content and thematic analysis framework, which involves organizing data according to themes related to the research questions. The report cites quotes verbatim to support the thematic analysis.

LIMITATIONS AND RISKS

Mobility restrictions among the three geographic areas of Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem, along with periodic political instability, affected researchers' freedom of movement and the availability of study participants at several points. The research team relied on in-person interactions for primary data collection but used virtual technology to perform KIs and FGDs when security or logistical conditions made in-person data collection unsafe or impractical.

KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

FINDINGS

1. *Gaps in laws and policies, and in their implementation*, leave women at risk. Many laws, regulations, and policies are without a gender perspective or sensitivity to women's perspectives. Lapses in enacting and enforcing existing legal and policy protections—such as waivers for under-age marriage and workplace discrimination that goes unaddressed—allow their circumvention.
2. *Social norms* considerably influence how women are regarded, respected, treated, and served in the home, the labor market, and the workplace and in laws and policies, service delivery, and political

discourse. Predominant norms include valuing women only for their reproductive capacity and their role as care providers, with disregard for women's economic and political leadership and potential. Gender-discriminatory behaviors are reinforced by social and political institutions, including religious bodies, the education system, and political parties. Resistance to inclusion, antifeminist discourse, religious narratives, and growing fundamentalism are among the social trends undermining gender equality.

3. *Deficiencies in resources and services* prevent women from realizing their potential, and service providers from offering a full range of services that women, persons with disabilities, and others need to exercise their rights and potential. There is too little funding available from government and nongovernmental sources for opportunities and investments that would enable women to enhance their capabilities and increase their access to better services, such as in vocational and professional development, loans for entrepreneurship, and infrastructure for critical facilities, such as the EJHN and kindergartens.
4. *Low awareness and sensitivity* to women's rights and the ways attitudes and behaviors lead to discrimination, harm, and exclusion. This includes little awareness and understanding of GBV among service providers, including medical personnel; employers and workplace colleagues; the general public, and many women, who are unaware of their rights and how to exercise them.
5. *Gaps in data, information, and research* create barriers to better understanding the disparities in women's access and opportunities, and the ways and frequency in which gender equality is undermined. This includes a lack of gender disaggregated data, such as in enrollment in professional development programs, as well as inaccessibility of public records on GBV cases, marriage contracts, and other indicators of women's rights violations.
6. *Political will* appears lacking within the Palestinian Authority (PA), which, as result, has not enacted or enforced the increased protections and opportunities to which women and other vulnerable groups have a right. The PA has not demonstrated the will to promote or enforce change—whether in laws, norms, or services—to reduce GBV and other rights violations, such as early marriage, or to address discrimination and exclusion.
7. *The broader context* particularly affects women. WBG's general environment, characterized by violence, occupation, and limited mobility and opportunities, affect women's safety, livelihood, and wellbeing. Violence related to the Israeli occupation and Palestinian status is highly gendered and rooted in power inequalities. Limitations on movement and access create barriers to health care and economic advancement that affect both men and women, but impact women more acutely. The internal political divide between the West Bank and Gaza exacerbates a lack of accountability and enables corruption, further impeding efforts to protect the rights and wellbeing of Palestinian women, men and youth.

RECOMMENDATIONS—PROGRAMMING

1. *Support for gender advocates.* Provide support for civil society; women's rights organizations; and their allies, both men and women, to advocate that the Palestinian Authority prioritize women's safety, rights, and equality.
2. *Influencing norms.* Enlist political, economic, religious, and social leaders to influence norms and attitudes about women's leadership and potential, and their right to equal social, political, and

economic participation. Involve men, particularly youth, to advocate for women's rights as change agents for gender equality and engage religious leaders who can clarify misinterpretations of religious texts that result in misunderstanding about women and their roles.

3. *Capacity strengthening.* Provide capacity strengthening resources to benefit women directly, for example, in skills and professional development; to enable service providers to expand and improve services for women and vulnerable populations; and to enhance gender-sensitive practices among individuals and within institutions.
4. *Education, advocacy, and awareness raising.* Support activities targeting women and girls, men and boys, government institutions, the private sector, and the general public, to increase understanding of equality and inclusion, including using intersectional and intra-sectoral programming (in design and implementation) to enhance women's empowerment across programming sectors.
5. *Gender-sensitive data and information.* Assist government agencies, academic institutions, private employers, and other bodies to improve data collection and analysis to inform disparities in women's access to economic opportunities, services that meet their needs, and political participation. Conduct studies and research to fill knowledge gaps that can improve understanding of disparities and violations of women's rights.

RECOMMENDATIONS—DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS

6. *Advocacy with the Palestinian Authority.* Exert influence on the Palestinian Authority to enforce women's rights and protections, and to enact reforms, legal amendments, and ratifications to close gaps in laws and the judicial system that continue to allow for violations of those rights and protections.
7. *Advocacy with Israeli authorities.* Exert influence on the Israeli authorities to reduce barriers to access to essential services with particular emphasis on easing the permit regimen to East Jerusalem hospitals and mitigate violence in WBG, which severely affects women and vulnerable groups.

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

The purpose of the gender analysis is to inform USAID/WBG's strategic planning, program design, and implementation. The analysis identifies key gender inequalities, issues, and related constraints in WBG. It explores new opportunities to further gender equality and female empowerment and offers recommendations for how USAID/WBG can achieve greater gender equality and social inclusion through its programs. The analysis aims to help the Mission identify, understand, and explain the gender gaps between men and women. The recommendations aim to enable USAID to mitigate gender inequality within priority program sectors and across rural and urban areas, as aligned with the Mission's development objectives, intermediate results, sub-intermediate results, and activity planning. This responds to USAID gender requirements and complies with Automated Directive Systems 201.3.2.9 and 205, which require that strategic plans and programs have a design informed by a robust gender analysis.

U.S. Government laws and restrictions, including the Taylor Force Act, limit USAID's ability to work directly with the Palestinian Authority and prohibit assistance that benefits designated organizations. Given the legal boundaries within which USAID must operate in WBG, the research team's recommendations for direct programming interventions and support are those that USAID can implement in collaboration with civil society, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), private sector actors, and international partners. The research team also makes recommendations for diplomatic efforts USAID might undertake to influence positive changes in laws and policies, and their implementation, towards greater gender equality, inclusion, and equitable access to services in WBG.

GENDER ANALYSIS PRIORITY SECTORS AND SUBSECTORS

The gender analysis examines gender equality barriers and opportunities particularly relevant to the rights and inclusion of women and members of other marginalized groups in WBG, within the sectors and subsectors of USAID/WBG priority, for consideration in the Mission's programming:

1. GBV, with a focus on shelters, perpetrators' rehabilitation, children as GBV witnesses, and the EJHN, which serves those with heightened vulnerabilities and limited access to services.
2. Women's leadership and empowerment within economic and political spheres, with a focus on gender roles and equality related to economic empowerment, higher and early education, and female-headed households; political participation and peace building; and participation in local government.
3. Gender issues in the environmental sphere, including domestic water in the West Bank; climate change and renewable energy; and agriculture, wastewater management, and reuse.

This analysis focuses on the circumstances and needs of women and men who are particularly disadvantaged (for example, women from marginalized areas in Gaza, East Jerusalem, and Area C in the West Bank; women with disabilities; and other groups). Where the research team was unable to collect sufficient empirical data within the scope of the study, the report identifies knowledge gaps for the Mission's consideration as areas to pursue collecting relevant data in the future.

CONTEXT

The Palestinian context is greatly influenced by prolonged occupation and the sociopolitical relations among Palestinian governing authorities. The social, political, and economic situation has deteriorated in recent years because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the decline in peace prospects, and the severe security and economic conditions in the Gaza Strip. The territorial division of Palestinians along sociopolitical and geographic lines has undermined social cohesion between WBG, and within the West Bank, which is divided into Areas A, B, and C, according to the treaty signed by the Palestinian Liberation Organization and Israel in 1993. Palestinians living in Area C are among the most vulnerable, because of their frequent exposure to violence and the continuous presence of military forces.

The PA has made progress in building state institutions, but financial constraints and donor dependence hamper its viability. In 2018, refugees registered by the UNRWA accounted for approximately 41 percent of the total resident population. Approximately 64 percent of Palestinians in Gaza and 26 percent of Palestinians in the West Bank are refugees. Among the refugee population, 7 percent suffer from at least one disability, and in 2017, 39 percent were living in poverty. The percentage of children with disabilities is 13.4 percent in the West Bank and 10.8 percent in the Gaza Strip (Palestinian Bureau of Statistics 2020). Despite these challenges, the government has developed national policy tools for positive reform. The Putting Citizens First Palestinian National Policy Agenda 2017–2022 states that the PA's top priorities are social justice, rule of law, and strengthening social protection. The National Policy Agenda emphasizes vulnerable and marginalized groups, such as persons with disabilities, youth, and women.

Data, however, indicate challenges remain. PCBS (2021) reports show that women's participation in the PA labor force was 18 percent and 16 percent in 2019 and 2020, sequentially. This is compared with a 25.1 percent participation of women in the informal sector in 2020, and a considerable gap between that of women in the West Bank (27.4 percent) and women in Gaza (16.8 percent). Not only are women underrepresented in the labor force, but there is also a wage disparity, with women earning 107.7 NIS daily compared to 137.1 NIS for men. Furthermore, the gap in unemployment rates among women and men is increasing. The unemployment rate reached 40.1 percent for women and 22.5 percent for men in 2020. In 2017, the poverty rate among females in the Gaza Strip was about four times more than for females in the West Bank (53.8 percent to 14.4 percent).

In the civil public sector, the proportion of women in management or senior positions (grade A4 and above) was only 13.7 percent in 2022 compared to 12.3 percent in 2011. Furthermore, women made up 10.8 percent of Palestinian ambassadors in 2020, up from 5.8 percent in 2017. The rate of women joining the Palestinian police in the West Bank has increased from 4.4 percent in 2017 to 5.6 percent in 2020. Likewise, in 2017, women made up 18.3 percent of Palestinian judges and that figure rose to 19.2 percent by 2020. In addition, women made up 20.4 percent of public prosecution staff (21.1 percent in the West Bank and 17.6 percent in Gaza). Members of local councils were 20 percent women: 20.4 percent in the West Bank and 12.6 percent in the Gaza Strip. Nevertheless, women constituted only 1.8 percent of heads of local councils in 2020, with insignificant differences between the two regions (PCBS 2021).

Despite the PA signing the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 2014, the legal system still fails to protect women's rights in family and criminal law. Mobilization and social resistance to realize women rights in accordance with CEDAW are constantly rising. Consequently, for example, data showed that the percentage of women aged 20-24 years who were married before the age of 18 was 13.4 percent in 2019: 11.4 percent in the West Bank compared with 16.5 percent in Gaza (PCBS 2021).

KEY SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INDICATORS

Economy

Average Daily Wage for Wage Employees Aged 15 Years and Above, 2020

PALESTINE	WEST BANK	GAZA
103.4 NIS TOTAL	121.9 NIS	61.6 NIS
106.8 NIS WOMEN		
103.3 NIS MEN		

Labour Force Participation Rate of Individuals Aged 15 Years and Above, 2020



Population below the National Poverty line, 2017



Social and Health Indicators

Human Development Index Rank, 2019

115

Health Care Expenditures as Percent of GDP, 2019



Literacy Rate (15 years and over) - Total, 2020



Unemployment rate (overall), 2020



41.2% MEN

21.3% WOMEN

14.6% WEST BANK

45.1% GAZA

Total Fertility Rate, 2021

3.4 births per woman

Adolescent birth rate

43 per 1,000 women in that age group

Maternal Mortality Ratio, 2020

28.5 per 100,000 live births

Under-five Mortality Rate

8.2 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2020

31.4 per 100,000 live births in West Bank

24.3 per 100,000 live births in Gaza Strip

FIGURE I

METHODOLOGY

The gender analysis incorporates a literature review, semi structured KIs, small group meetings, FGDs, and secondary data analysis of information and statistics. The research team first conducted a review of literature and data sets, which informed the research approach and identified data gaps addressed in the fieldwork. The research team reviewed relevant USAID policies, guidelines, and program reports; academic and action-oriented research, national survey reports and data sets, gender analyses and reports from government, nongovernment, and international agencies; and published research and analysis related to gender equality in USAID/WBG priority sectors.

KIIs provided fresh data to deepen understanding of gender equality and social inclusion-related issues, with a focus on the sectors and issues identified in the research questions. Individuals from a range of perspectives participated in KIIs or group discussions: the PA, civil society organizations, community-based organizations, USAID/WBG staff, USAID partners, the private sector, international donor organizations, international NGOs, universities and research organizations, refugees, youth, and persons with disabilities. Researchers used the interviews to collect information on gender relations, differences in access and quality of services for women and men, and Palestinian society and institutions. The team conducted small group meetings to contextualize information on gender equality, female empowerment, and social inclusion in the Palestinian Territories, and with civil society actors to get a sense of gender constraints and opportunities and to contextualize gender relations nationally. FGDs provided varying experiences and perceptions, confirmation or questioning of research, and the opportunity to verify and cross-check.

Priority sectors	Data collection methods/ number of participants		
	Key informants Interviews	Focus Group discussions	Small group meetings
USAID Program Development Specialists/Gender Program Office (PO)	-	-	3 participants
Gender-based Violence (GBV)	10	-	2 participants
East Jerusalem Hospitals Network (EJHN)	6	1 FGD with 6 participants	
Economic Leadership and Empowerment	6	2 FGDs with 15 participants	-
Higher education	6	2 FGDs with 20 participants	-
Early Education	3	2 FGDs with 20 participants	-
Female Headed Households (FHH)	2	1 FGD with 6 participants	-
local governance	2	-	2 participants
Political participation	3	-	-
Domestic Water and Wastewater	4	-	-
Climate Change and Renewable Energy	4	-	3 participants
Total number of participants	46	67	10

FIGURE 2

The research team used an iterative, multiphase approach to analyze the data. The team analyzed the primary source data using the content and thematic analysis framework, which involves organizing data according to themes related to the research questions. The report cites quotes verbatim to support the thematic analysis, which also draws on quantitative data from secondary sources, primarily from the PCBS, the UN Women data portal, and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs' online digital services and platforms to ensure current data and indicators.

LIMITATIONS AND RISKS

Mobility restrictions among the three geographic areas of Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem, along with periodic political instability, affected researchers' freedom of movement and the availability of study participants at several points. The research team relied on in-person interactions for primary data collection but used virtual technology to perform KIIs and FGDs when security or logistical conditions made in-person data collection unsafe or impractical.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

GBV is an outcome of the compounded sociocultural and political realities of WBG. The latest national survey on GBV showed that around two-thirds (59.3 percent) of Palestinian women experienced some form of violence in 2019 compared to 37 percent in 2011 (PCBS 2020). The analysis below examines the interconnectedness of patriarchal violence with occupation and GBV as a response. For example, many women choose to stay at home within their perceived safety zone, because the Israeli occupational practices and frequent violence make them unsafe in public spaces. These effects are compounded by the social norms that prevail within a patriarchy-rooted culture tolerant of GBV and an outdated legal system. This limits women's movement, and traps GBV survivors in a cycle of violence in which they are unable to report GBV incidents or access required services (AlRifai et al. 2022). . Despite this high prevalence, and ongoing efforts by civil society actors to prevent and criminalize domestic violence, in the absence of effective government action to control it, domestic violence continues to increase.

FINDINGS

Gaps in laws and policies, and in their implementation

- There are gaps in the legal framework needed to protect the rights and safety of women and girls in WBG. Where legal protections exist, exemptions and practices often allow protections to be circumvented.
- The PA's formal commitment to addressing GBV is not backed by actions reinforcing legal protections and enforcing those that exist. There is no effective means or mechanism for holding the PA accountable for fulfilling its commitments under international and national laws.
- Service providers fail to provide care for GBV survivors for fear of reprisal in a context in which they lack legal protection.

Social norms

- Service providers, including in health care providers, often lack the gender sensitivity and supportive attitudes to care for GBV survivors.
- Social norms are a major driver of GBV, perpetuated by experience with violence, misinterpretation of religious texts, a low level of understanding of GBV, and the lack of engagement by men and boys in programs and interventions designed to combat GBV.

Deficiencies in resources and services

- There is inconsistency and poor coordination in addressing GBV. The national referral system (NRS) is used inconsistently, impacting the response to GBV survivors.
- While the GBV sub-cluster serves as a coordination and cooperation platform for better GBV services in Gaza, the humanitarian nature of projects and providers' attitudinal and technical incompetence continue to be challenges.
- Women who access shelters face stigma, varying conditions, and often insufficient support and services for reintegration within their families and communities.

Gaps in data, information, and research

- There is a dearth of information about and attention to perpetrators of GBV, from both the policy and service provision perspectives.

- There is little information on services for children witnessing domestic violence and its perpetrators beyond the work of a few NGOs.

Political will

- There is a pervasive lack of political will to promote or enforce change, whether in laws, norms, or services in support of GBV improvement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

PROGRAMMING

Support for gender advocates

- Assist women activists and those working in women’s rights organizations to raise awareness of the intimidation and threats they face, because justice sector authorities are not responsive to activists’ concerns for their safety and security (short to medium term).

Capacity strengthening

- Include economic empowerment services in the reintegration of women leaving shelters, perpetrator rehabilitation, and mental health and psychosocial services for child witnesses of domestic violence (short to medium term).
- Through third parties, support relevant authorities to establish a mechanism to respond to the needs of GBV survivors in Gaza, which may include shelters, training forensic medicine cadres, and other essential services (short to medium term).

Education, advocacy, and awareness raising

- Induce a paradigm shift, focusing on prevention of GBV, by supporting a communications and media strategy to influence cultural norms and values within the broader public and among service providers (short to medium term).
- Engage male allies who work together with women to change the GBV from being a woman’s issue to one that is relevant to the whole society (short to medium term).
- Develop a strategy to engage religious leaders from both sexes (short to medium term).

Gender-sensitive data and information

- Support gender-sensitive studies and research to generate data and information needed to drive planning for service provision and inform advocacy for influencing norms (medium to long term).

DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS

Advocacy with the Palestinian Authority

- Exert high-level pressure on the PA so that it is held accountable for amending laws related to the protection of women from violence. Priority should be given to the ratification of the Family Protection Law and amendments in other laws needed for its effective implementation (medium to long term).
- Work with justice sector institutions and officials to push for the establishment of a gender-sensitive Family Protection Court with qualified judges from both sexes able to apply a gender lens to their work (medium to long term).

LAWS, POLICIES, REGULATIONS, AND INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICES

Several Arab states, including the Palestinian Territories, have begun to take responsibility for violence against women by ratifying international human rights conventions, treaties, and optional protocols, including the CEDAW. The PA ratified CEDAW by Presidential Decree No. 19 of 2009. After the UN recognized Palestine as a state in 2014, the PA acceded to CEDAW without any reservations (UNDP 2019). However, the action taken to accede has not been published in the national gazette, so it is not binding.

The National Strategy to Combat Violence against Women for 2011–2019 included an explicit objective in the National Policy Agenda (2017–2022) to promote gender equality and justice and to combat violence. A cross-sectoral strategy was formulated for this purpose, and national protocols were developed for the mechanisms for dealing with female survivors of violence in the health, social, and police sectors in light of the NRS for female survivors of violence (No. 18 in 2013; CEDAW 2017).

In November 2019, with funding support from the Italian government, the Ministry of Women’s Affairs (MoWA) initiated the creation of a national observatory system to maintain a unified national registry on GBV incidents. Research informants, who were among the members of the national committee formed to work on creating the observatory, recall that long discussions took place about how to ensure confidentiality, what forms to use in documentation, what coding system to use, who should be able to access what information, and related questions. Progress came to a halt before completion. Information about the status of the work is not obtainable. The MoWA never completed the initiative, in spite of the resources invested. At least three of the study’s key informants noted that during the annual 16 Days of Activism on GBV international campaign in December 2022, MoWA did not use PCBS statistics from the national violence survey in its final statement on the campaign. The ministry did not acknowledge its responsibility to address GBV and limited its attention to political violence. A West Bank key informant concluded:

“This means that the Ministry evaded its responsibilities toward GBV and did not concede that adequate response is a priority for its agenda.”

However, with support from the United Nations Population Fund and others, MoWA has invested heavily in harnessing multisectoral cooperation and coordination in the development of the Palestinian GBV NRS, the key governance instrument on GBV. In 2018, the work on the NRS was strengthened by an updated health protocol for service providers dealing with GBV cases. It considers a GBV essential services package and develops GBV standard operating procedures. The work to update the NRS continues. The cabinet accepted a final revised version last November, and when the final version is published in the national gazette, it will be binding to all.

In 2019, the PA issued Decree-Law No. (21) to amend the legislation determining the age of marriage. Article 2 stipulates that the eligibility for marriage is 18 years. However, the decree-law authorizes exceptions. In the southern governorates in Gaza, competent courts apply the Family Rights Law of 1954, which requires that the man be at least 18 and the woman at least 17. However, the law allows a judge to marry individuals under those ages. The head of the Personal Status Prosecution of the Sharia’a Courts reported having received requests in one month, from Hebron alone, that 43 marriage cases be registered retroactively. The process is not monitored or controlled. There are additional complications when a divorce occurs before the registration of such a marriage. In 2020, 21 percent of divorce cases in the West Bank involved girls between ages 15 and 19 (AL Sharif 2022).

Key informants widely agreed that justice sector institutions and officials often do not respect GBV survivors' rights. "Protection of the civil order and peace" is typically used as justification for not taking a GBV survivor's litigation case to full completion and for not holding fair trials, especially concerning "honor crimes," in which a woman who may have been a victim of sexual violence or suspected of an extramarital affair is killed to protect the family's honor. Study informants pointed to the Family Protection Prosecution's retention of information on such GBV issues and honor crimes. The chief justice's office has not published annual reports on marriage contracts issued after 2018, and the research team was unable to obtain this information. Informants reported that the chief prosecutor took no action related to an official complaint made by a prominent woman activist and head of a women's rights organization regarding life threats she had been receiving for her role in fighting early marriage and educating the public on sexual violence against children. Officials' resistance to act on GBV allegations has extended to failing to protect feminists and GBV activists, which instills more fear within the broader movement for women's rights.

By contrast, two informants working within the social protections sector commended the performance of family protection prosecutors, who have consistently recommended severe punishment for perpetrators proved to have committed GBV crimes. However, the same informants indicated that many judges are gender-insensitive and do not believe in GBV survivors' rights to access justice. These informants expressed an urgent need to strengthen judges' capacity and gender sensitivity to improve justice sector performance. One informant elaborated:

"Judges handling GBV court cases are the same ones who hear all other types of cases. They are traditional, patriarchal, and GBV and/or gender-insensitive men in their majority. So instead of accepting the recommendations of the family protection prosecutor of severe punishment for the perpetrator they go for the complete opposite and rule for the minimum punishment."

The legal definition of rape found in the WBG Penal Code No. 16 of 1960, which is applied in the Palestinian Territories, limits the crime and punishment of rape to females only, but in contradiction, global and Palestinian definitions include both sexes in a rape case. The WBG Penal Code considers any sexual assault on males as defilement, a lesser crime than rape that carries a lesser punishment. The code deals with incest as a crime of consensual adultery, a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment from two to three years and contingent upon a complaint filed by relatives or in-laws up to the fourth degree. The Egyptian law, No. 74 of 1936, in effect in the Gaza Strip, considers incest a crime. It is mentioned in Chapter 17 of crimes that pertain to "public morals" and is punishable by up to five years in prison (MIFTAH 2018).

No policy framework for clinical management of rape exists. Although the majority of the health facilities examined reported the availability of a written medical protocol on clinical management of rape, experts interviewed for the study pointed to a lack of a uniform approach or standard procedures for cases related to sexual violence. Informants asserted that clinicians handle rape cases on a very limited scale. Key informants repeatedly confirmed that virginity examination is still the most commonly sought rape-related service because of its association with honor in Palestinian culture (AIRifai 2018).

The Istanbul Convention recognizes domestic violence as psychological abuse that can have dramatic consequences on children's psychophysical health. In April 2014, the Council of Ministers adopted a measure to temporarily place children in foster families if the children were found to be in danger of violence or exploitation. In February 2016, a legislative decree established procedures for their rehabilitation and rapid reintegration into society.

Strong opposition to the Law of Family Protection from Violence began in 2019, after a law to raise the age of marriage was issued. The law was interpreted to be linked to CEDAW and thus to promote homosexuality, immorality, social disintegration, and the rebellion of women. Informants believe that the Family Protection Law and other related laws and policies are an expression of opposition to the PA. Because women are less politically powerful, many politicians do not support women's rights or the reform of regressive laws. The PA has made only a formal commitment on the subject of GBV, not a substantial or actionable one. To improve the legal status of Palestinian women requires the will of political actors to pass and enforce the Family Protection Law and amend other laws, including the Personal Status Law and Penal Code.

CULTURAL NORMS AND BELIEFS

Patriarchy-rooted cultural tolerance of GBV (compounded by misinterpreted religious texts) and the Israeli occupation are both systems of oppression in WBG. Early marriage, forced marriage, honor killings, and tolerant attitudes toward rape are among the manifestations of GBV. Attacks and hostilities against feminist activists and women's rights organizations, together with a lack of government protection, are a security concern among these organizations. Knowledge and attitudes about GBV among both male and female Palestinian youth are low (AIRifai et al. 2022).

Service providers have a high acceptance of rape myths. This affects their ability to respond to the needs of rape survivors who seek health care services. Many male physicians are unable to empathize with a raped girl or woman. They either lack the clinical skills, or they fear the perpetrator's revenge because protections for health providers are lacking (AIRifai 2018). The protracted humanitarian crisis in WBG and its impact, especially in the Gaza Strip, has exacerbated GBV in all its forms, including sexual violence, domestic violence, and child marriage. Although underreported, United Nations Population Fund research finds that about 15 percent of currently or formerly married women have been exposed to sexual violence in Gaza (UNFPA 2018).

The WBG's geographical fragmentation, along with strict control of movement and weak political and legal systems, have resulted in increased vulnerability to violence. UN Women concludes that "women and girls should not be left alone in such a complex, fragmented, and dysfunctional system. The present conditions of political uncertainty, added to the preexisting condition of dispossession from the Occupying Power, makes the likelihood of effecting the types of sweeping changes needed to ensure true access to justice very slim" (UN Women 2014, 6).

Some studies found a strong relationship between domestic violence and males' exposure to political violence, mainly in the West Bank's Area C (Hammami 2016). Women and girls in areas classified as C and in camps have higher rates of violence and less access to health, social, and legal services because of restrictions of movement and development (Oxfam 2019), and the Palestinian police, who often play a role in denying women's access to protection services.

Both policymakers and service providers neglect the issue or needs of GBV perpetrators. The research team found no information on rehabilitation services offered to GBV perpetrators. There is inconsistent use of the NRS for GBV survivors, and reluctance among government and NGO actors to use the system's referral and/or follow-up forms. There is also inconsistent effort among providers to create a favorable and supportive environment to GBV survivors seeking services.

Women who have sought temporary refuge in shelters have expressed being stigmatized as “shelter women.” Experts have noted a psychological effect when women return to their homes, where information about their experience is widely spread, creating an uncomfortable and sometimes unsafe space for them (UN Women 2018).

Study informants unequivocally emphasized cultural norms and beliefs among service providers as factors that perpetuate inconsistencies in the service system’s treatment of GBV as a priority area for intervention. Many informants confirmed there is still a need to sensitize service providers, especially men (but also women), before assigning them to serve GBV survivors. One woman NGO leader summed it up this way:

“It’s all about the mindset and how men and women are geared to see and believe things. Women’s issues, by formal and informal social training, are faced with rejection, disbelief, mystification, and exclusion. There are numerous conscious and subconscious gender biases against women that need to be disassembled and reassembled with a rights-based and justice perspective before and throughout addressing GBV in society. This must be an ongoing process. Otherwise, all efforts are in vain.”

Gender-discriminatory behaviors and social norms that foster gender inequality are reinforced by social institutions (such as religious institutions), the education system, and discriminatory laws and policies, which are all representations of structural violence. Gazan women and girls living in overcrowded, unsafe “temporary” shelters and in an environment with little privacy, limited access to hygiene facilities, and other threats are highly exposed to GBV. One key informant explained:

“Combating early marriage, which is a form of GBV against girls, we find ourselves in a completely contradictory situation. On the one hand, a new long-awaited law was issued for raising the legal age of marriage. On the other hand, multiple social, economic, and political forces act against its enforcement and families and some religious figures use various means to circumvent it.”

GENDER ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND TIME USE

Patriarchy and its formal and informal structures, intersecting with the Israeli occupation and its effects on both men and women, are at the core of Palestinians’ experience. Informants agree that gender equality has not been achieved in WBG, despite decades of work to promote gender rights. This realization should spur the women’s movement and those working on gender equality to conduct an honest examination regarding the reasons for the lack of progress, as one informant stated.

Inequitable gender norms are a key driver of GBV. One regional study found that about 80 percent of men and 60 percent of women think that a woman’s most important function is to care for the household and family. Men with more income and education, and fathers who have participated in domestic chores expressed more progressive attitudes. No differences in attitudes about gender were noted between younger and older males (El Feki et al. 2017).

Twenty-five percent of male respondents and 22 percent of female respondents reported that during their childhood, they witnessed their father or a male relative abuse their mother. More men than women had encountered physical abuse from someone in their home. Men experienced more bullying and other types of violence at school than women: 57 percent of men reported being physically reprimanded by a teacher (compared with 30 percent of women), and 24 percent of men reported being tormented at school

(compared with 14 percent of women). Almost one-fifth (17 percent) of men stated that they had committed physical violence against a female companion. Twenty-one percent of women reported having been victims of such violence. Men who as children observed violence against their mothers and suffered physical abuse in their childhood homes are substantially more likely to report engaging in intimate partner violence in their adult relationships (El Feki et al. 2017).

ACCESS TO AND CONTROL OVER ASSETS AND RESOURCES

Women and girls in West Bank Area C and in Gaza’s internally displaced persons camps have higher rates of GBV and less access to health, social, and legal services, because of Israeli restrictions on movement and of Palestinian police. As a result, GBV survivors are denied access to protection services, which has led to heightened insecurity and direct threats to women’s safety and bodily integrity.

Shelters for GBV survivors are limited, but they have been a primary source of support for women and children for decades. The shelters target women while limiting access to services for members of other gender groups who might be in need. As beneficiaries, women have no control over what services they are provided, and services vary from facility to facility. There are now five shelters: three in the West Bank (the Mehwar Center, the Nablus Safe Home, and the Jericho shelter) and two in Gaza (the Hayat Center and the Aman Center). The shelters provide services for women survivors of violence and their children as needed, including housing facilities, confidentiality, support in different forms, and security (UN Women 2018).

However, the research found a gap in information about family and social reintegration of GBV survivors after they are released from the shelters. Informants widely shared the view that neither shelter staff nor the Ministry of Social Development have the necessary capacity to provide for appropriate and adequate reintegration, such as follow-up, or for GBV survivors to secure a source of income and a dignified life. A senior UN key informant said:

“Some survivors were killed after they returned home from the shelter. Others returned to the shelters with more severe GBV experiences and with serious issues they did not have before, such as drug addiction and prostitution. This clearly means that we are not doing our job right or complete. And this is in a social environment that is increasingly hostile to women activism and WROs [women’s rights organizations]. If this is not addressed in a timely and comprehensive manner, it could bring to regress all the work done so far in this respect.”

This analysis found little evidence of access to services among children witnessing domestic violence, including a lack of mental health and psychosocial services.

PATTERNS OF POWER AND DECISION-MAKING

A recent study (AlRifai et al. 2022) has shown that power, control, coercion, isolation, ostracizing, silencing, and intimidation were all used in committing GBV. Social resistance, antifeminist discourse, rigid religious narratives, and a growing fundamentalism are characteristics of societal-level challenges that weaken awareness-raising and sensitization efforts. Representatives of participating women’s rights organizations consistently agreed that patriarchal forms of expression in dominant social norms supporting rigid gender roles and stereotyping and downplaying sexual violence and GBV negatively affects their work. Persistent attempts to silence women’s rights organizations, along with public attacks and hostilities against

the groups and individual feminist activists and a lack of government protection, were strongly shared security and social concerns (AIRifai et al. 2022).

The protracted humanitarian crisis in WBG and its impact on the Gaza Strip especially (because of the blockade) has exacerbated GBV in all its forms. According to 2017 data from the GBV sub-cluster, more than 40 percent of GBV survivors were exposed to psychological abuse, 25 percent to physical abuse, and 18 percent to resource denial. About 40 percent of these cases identified a current or former husband as the alleged perpetrator, while 31 percent identified other family members. Although sexual assault and rape continue to be underreported, about 15 percent of never-married women have been exposed to sexual violence in Gaza (UNFPA 2018). Despite this prevalence, none of those involved made strategic use of media in its various forms and outlets. One informant elaborated on the power of media to change people's mindset, social norms, and GBV services use.

EAST JERUSALEM HOSPITAL NETWORK

EJHN is made up of six Palestinian hospitals in East Jerusalem, which have been the backbone of the Palestinian health care system. The specialized, comprehensive, and sophisticated level of services offered across EJHN, along with the complementary teaching facilities and programs in medicine and nursing at Maqassed Hospital (the largest hospital in the network), have made the network hospitals centers of excellence. However, EJHN has yet to be institutionalized as a collective body, and has no governance instruments, bylaws, rules, or regulations in place.

Those seeking specialized health care services at any hospital in EJHN face structural violence embedded in cultural practices and norms, and violence related to Israeli occupation because of their status as Palestinian Jerusalemites or as patients from the WBG referred for treatment. This violence is highly gendered and rooted in power inequalities. EJHN presents an opportunity for offering an improved response to the needs of GBV survivors and the right to health care. With support, EJHN has high potential and promise to improve this group's access to care.

FINDINGS

Social norms

- Cultural norms support women's work in health care more than most other sectors. Men and women working together is accepted, including on night shifts and in close contact. Variable progress in gender equality across the network hospitals was observed.
- Women in power and decision-making positions in EJHN institutions vary by institutional practice, guiding ideology, and beliefs regarding gender. EJHN is less patriarchal and more progressive than its counterparts in WBG.

Deficiencies in resources and services

- The main challenge EJHN faces is repeated financial crises, affecting the provision of medical services, which creates a bigger gap in gender and health, because priority goes to men.
- Breast cancer survivors endure psychosocial consequences. No prosthetic care or post treatment mental health and psychosocial services are offered to them.
- Insufficient physical space is a serious challenge, particularly for Maqassed and Augusta Victoria. Gaza patients' escorts, the majority of whom are women, are hosted either in humble rented hotels or

crowded trailers placed on top of the roof of the hospital building, where their right to privacy and dignity in daily life circumstances are unachievable.

- The fact that the EJHN is not yet institutionalized presents members with a great opportunity for gender integration, should the resources be secured.

Broader Context

- Denial of permit applications submitted to the Israeli authorities for mothers to escort their referred newborns and children causes tremendous hardship on patients and families.

RECOMMENDATIONS

PROGRAMMING

Capacity strengthening

- Institutionalize gender-sensitivity within EJHN, including recruiting at least one full-time coordinator to be based at Faisal Huseini Foundation, to ensure impartiality, with a designated gender-sensitive focal person in each hospital (short to medium term).
- Support EJHN as a whole to develop a strategy and an action plan to serve as a road map to integrate gender considerations as the network formalizes (short to medium term).
- Work with Augusta Victoria Hospital to address lacking breast cancer services, namely the after-treatment mental health psychosocial services, reintegration, and breast prosthesis care (short to medium term).

Gender-sensitive data and information

- Conduct a gender analysis for a gender mainstreaming strategy to integrate a gender equality perspective at all stages and levels of programs and projects for selected EJHN member organizations, starting with Maqassed hospital (immediate).

DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS

Advocacy with the donor community

- Support EJHN members to establish financial sustainability and debt relief proportionate to each one's size by leveraging various funding sources. An endowment to the collective benefit of EJHN may be a way to equip the network to handle emergencies (medium to long term).

Advocacy with the Israeli authorities

- Support construction or purchase of a building urgently needed as accommodations for referred patients' escorts in the two major hospitals. This will require coordinating with the Israeli municipal authorities to support construction license issuance in accordance with laws in effect (medium to long term).
- Exert influence on the relevant Israeli authorities to reduce barriers to access and improve the permit measures, especially when children and women are involved (short to midterm).

LAWS, POLICIES, REGULATIONS, AND INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICES

The Association for Civil Rights in Israel's 2019 report indicates that the situation of Palestinians in East Jerusalem, who are 38 percent of the city's total population, was already deteriorating before the COVID-19 outbreak because of long-standing discrimination.

Patients in the West Bank or Gaza require permission from the Israeli government to receive treatment in a facility outside their area of residence. Tens of thousands are referred to East Jerusalem hospitals every year when medical care required is unavailable in the West Bank or Gaza, where the Palestinian Ministry of Health reimburses the cost (MAP 2016). Study informants confirmed that the rules and procedures for entering East Jerusalem for Palestinian patients from the West Bank or Gaza are complicated by restrictions on free movement. With few exceptions, the Israeli government does not allow Palestinians to enter East Jerusalem freely in a Palestinian-registered (PRCS) ambulance from the West Bank, including emergency cases or those needing urgent treatment. Instead, Israeli authorities require these patients to proceed through a checkpoint procedure known as a back-to-back transfer, in which patients are transferred to an Israeli-registered ambulance. A senior key informant from within EJHN described risks to bodily integrity and safety faced by Palestinian patients during the back-to-back transfer and expressed his concern:

“This unnecessary process causes delays, as transfers through a checkpoint take up to five times as long, causing severe distress and medical risks for the patients while they are walked or carried between ambulances, sometimes in critical conditions, that may be life-threatening in many cases.”

CULTURAL NORMS AND BELIEFS

Informants agreed that rigid notions of masculinity do not prevail in the healthcare arena as much as in other sectors and professional spaces. Depending on the hospital leadership's orthodoxy or gender awareness, this has resulted in variable progress in gender equality across the network hospitals. One male hospital director described his gender-aware approach:

“We believe women excel much more than men in organization, meeting deadlines, communication, follow up, and attendance to details. Even though we are aware of the prevalent view of men as being better performers than women, we hired three women in our senior management and we do not regret it.”

Another senior male informant with more than 35 years of management experience in a different hospital said:

“In our hospital you find a couple of women in senior positions and this is a recent change. Currently, there are two women in the new hospital Board of Directors compared to one woman in the previous one, albeit none of them hold a lead post, they are members with voting rights. The senior management of all departments is almost exclusively men. Furthermore, the university college of nursing, whose main beneficiaries are women—80 percent of the nursing students—is consistently weakened by withdrawing its humble resources to other departments. This is when it brings the hospital substantial income from the students' fees every semester.”

Five women survivors of breast cancer from Gaza who had received treatment at the Augusta Victoria Hospital in East Jerusalem participated in an FGD and talked about social stigma, self-image, and

vulnerabilities. Those who could not have a companion during hospital treatment elaborated on the fear, worry, and overall heightened vulnerability without their social support system.

In an interview, the mother of an autistic child who was treated at the Princess Basma Centre for Disabled Children in Jerusalem described the social pressure, blame, and responsibility that her husband, in-laws, and the community placed on her for bearing an “incomplete” or “damaged” child. She added:

“My own husband always conveyed messages of being overburdened by our autistic child, showing his rejection of his own child and again blaming me for bearing him. He never played with him or took him to the shops for he is ashamed of having him.”

GENDER ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND TIME USE

Women’s role in health care is viewed as an extension of women’s caretaking and nurturing role. This places men in leadership and management positions, while women serve frontline nurturing and caretaking functions. Study informants indicated that this varies across EJHN, ranging from high compliance with these gender roles to a more progressive order—in one institution, the majority of the management and leadership staff are women.

Interviews provided convincing evidence of women’s caretaking and nurturing gender role, especially in cases of referred patients. Medical escorts for the elderly, men, children, or sick women are usually the women of the family. Limited space is a serious challenge, particularly for the two main hospitals of Maqassed and Augusta Victoria. The latter provides four hotels for patient escorts coming from Gaza, while the former places trailers on the hospital’s roof as accommodations for Gaza patient escorts, four people per trailer, which were described as “being inappropriate and uncomfortable to patients’ escorts, who are women in their majority.” Health services prioritize care in ways consistent with traditional norms. A senior research informant explained this notion:

“When a woman from Gaza is issued a permit for premature labor, she is given the permit only for one week, after which she must leave back to Gaza, leaving her newborn behind in the incubator until fully grown. This could last between one to two months depending on the case progress. During that period, she only sees her baby via zoom as we connect her.”

Elderly women serve as escorts in some cases, while another able woman is denied the same role, as one key informant explained:

“When a child from Gaza is transferred for an open-heart surgery, the parents are not granted entry permit because they are too young. Instead, the grandma who is usually old, sick and weak to accompany the child postoperatively, is issued the permit. And even she gets only two weeks permit at best, while the child stays in hospital for at least two to three months after such a critical operation.”

ACCESS TO AND CONTROL OVER ASSETS AND RESOURCES

Although EJHN member institutions are staffed with qualified professionals, the lack of financial resources has reduced their capabilities, creating gaps in health care, including gender gaps. Between 2012 and 2016, permits approved for patients needing health care outside Gaza declined from 92 percent to 64 percent. As permits are harder to obtain for men, patients are almost always escorted by women. Women with

West Bank identity documents married to Jerusalemites and residing in Jerusalem are ineligible for treatment in Jerusalem (UN 2021). Study informants raised concern about control over resources among EJHN staff. Nurses and doctors often transfer to the Israeli health system for higher pay and better working conditions. An informant noted the need for qualified nurses in EJHN and stressed the role of Maqassed University and Al-Quds University, for example, in compensating for the lost nurses by maintaining a pipeline of qualified nursing graduates. The research team sees this as an opportunity for women's empowerment and gender equality because most nursing students are women.

PATTERNS OF POWER AND DECISION-MAKING

Women in power and decision-making positions in EJHN institutions vary by institutional practices, guiding ideology, and beliefs regarding gender. As part of the Palestinian Health System, EJHN might be expected to hold the gender norms and principles, known to be highly restrictive, but EJHN is less patriarchal and more progressive than its counterparts in WBG, possibly because of the more culturally diverse EJHN workforce, especially at the leadership level, many of whom have been exposed to other cultural influences. Gender related evidence from Maqassed Hospital indicates the importance of making a substantial investment in gender integration and mainstreaming, bearing in mind that the hospital workforce is culturally homogeneous and that gender sensitization efforts are still in their early stages under new hospital leadership.

The fact that the EJHN is still not institutionalized presents the members with an opportunity for gender integration. It holds potential for disrupting dominant power structures, opening space for gender equality policies with greater representation of female physicians, which is associated with better health outcomes. However, gender parity is insufficient to achieve gender equality. Research finds that institutional support and respect of nurses improves the quality of care, and that women's empowerment can increase health care access and provider responsiveness (Hay et al. 2019).

WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP AND FEMALE EMPOWERMENT

The gender analysis examined women's leadership and empowerment within WBG's economic and political spheres. Within the economic sphere, the analysis explored women's economic empowerment broadly, in more detail within higher and early education, and as experienced by female heads of households. The analysis focused on economic empowerment related to the highest and earliest stages of education because of the significance these subsectors hold for women's economic activity and professional development as educators, and for the importance of early and higher education in shaping social norms and economic opportunity. These levels of education have not been sufficiently studied from a gender perspective. The gender analysis included a focus on women as heads of households because of this group's particular vulnerability. The economic leadership and empowerment of women heads of household has not been studied sufficiently through a gender lens.

FINDINGS

ECONOMIC LEADERSHIP AND EMPOWERMENT

Gaps in laws and policies, and their implementation

- The PA's failure to sign the Convention (No. 190) on Eliminating Violence and Harassment in the World of Work weakens the protections available for women and men in the workplace.

- There is no consistent policy or standards for institutional practices within micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). Women and men working in MSMEs thus lack legal protection of their rights, including the right to earn the minimum wage.

Social norms

- Social restrictions, particularly those affecting divorced and separated women, affect women's decisions and limit their possibilities for employment and skills development. Newly widowed women and GBV survivors are among the most vulnerable and least protected.
- Women limited decision-making authority within the home and society affects their status in the economic sphere. Women's lack of authority over financial decisions and control of household resources often denies them the resources to advance in business or employment.

Deficiencies in resources and services

- Lack of financial support and insufficient opportunities for paid employment limits women's ability to find paying work.
- Women and young adults seeking to establish an MSME lack knowledge of the legal and administrative requirements involved and the financial means for setting up a business. Fears about tax requirements and other regulations also discourage them from attempting to establish their own MSMEs.

Low awareness and sensitivity to women's rights

- There is a lack of knowledge among private sector employers of the policy of protection from sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment. Women working in the private sector similarly lack knowledge about the policy and its protections.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Gaps in laws and policies, and in their implementation

- Inadequate policies and practices within academic and research institutions and biased attitudes among male colleagues undermine women's right to equal treatment and opportunities.
- Academic institutions' strategic plans and programs do not adopt a gender perspective and are not gender-sensitive, nor do these institutions have a system for reporting incidents of gender-based discrimination.

Social norms

- A significant obstacle to female academics' advancement is the resistance among male colleagues, which often forces female academics to refuse a leadership position when offered.
- A culture that prioritizes women's role as mothers impedes women's career advancement.

Gaps in data, information, and research

- There is an absence of quantitative and qualitative indicators from a gender perspective through which achievements can be measured.

EARLY EDUCATION

Gaps in laws and policies, and in their implementation

- Working in the private kindergartens does not ensure economic empowerment. The majority of those working there receive less than the minimum wage, work without written work contracts, and do not receive a specified number of paid or maternity leave days.

Social norms

- Kindergarten workers are unable to participate in decision-making on issues related to their rights, and they have no freedom to discuss these issues with the kindergartens' owners.

Deficiencies in resources and services

- Most female teachers work in kindergartens for lack of other opportunities. They find kindergartens to be a safe environment versus the private sector, where they may be subject to harassment.
- Preschools' physical infrastructure is poorly adapted to the needs of children with disabilities.

FEMALE-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS

Gaps in laws and policies, and in their implementation

- There is no law that regulates or guarantees the integrity of the collection and distribution of humanitarian assistance, leaving female heads of household and other vulnerable populations at risk of being denied assistance.

Social norms

- Female heads of households find that being a breadwinner is associated with both negative and positive outcomes, including a positive self-perception, especially after receiving training in life skills and how to deal with psychosocial crises.

Deficiencies in resources and services

- There is insufficient participation of stakeholders such as citizens, experts, and civil society institutions in planning and preparing programs related to the management and distribution of humanitarian aid and cash grants.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Gaps in laws and policies, and in their implementation

- The Local Elections Law contains several gaps that renders it ineffective in promoting the participation of youth, women, and persons with disabilities.
- Discrimination and violation of women's rights in the local councils is still pervasive.

Social norms

- Ministry of Local Government trainings do not consider the restrictions that prevent female employees from benefiting from training programs held outside their governorates.
- Despite improvement regarding the participation of women in local councils, they are still subject to harassment and discrimination.
- Women's employment opportunities and higher positions in local councils are limited because of the perceptions of councils as masculine spaces.

Low awareness and sensitivity to women's rights

- Challenges women face while working in local councils are compounded by the lack of awareness of the importance of their role.

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Gaps in laws and policies, and in their implementation

- Palestinian laws providing for women's equal opportunities and nondiscrimination are often not enforced.
- Women are excluded from participating in decision-making, national reconciliation, and peacebuilding efforts.

Social norms

- Customs and traditions are important obstacles facing women's political participation. Lack of community awareness of the importance of women's political participation and in decision-making reinforces women's low participation.
- Women's participation at the leadership and decision-making level is still limited, and women leaders still have little influence within political parties.

Deficiencies in resources and services

- Limited access to financial resources is a major obstacle to women's political participation. The absence of economic empowerment heightens women's dependency and adversely affects their involvement in the political sphere.

RECOMMENDATIONS

PROGRAMMING

Support for gender advocates

- Support local partners to undertake advocacy to promote the ratification of Convention 190 as the international legal basis for developing and amending labor legislation and harmonizing it with international standards (short to long term).
- Support local partners to undertake advocacy for a legal amendment that promotes equality and nondiscrimination in the Local Council Election Law and protects the presence of women at a minimum of 30 percent (medium to long term).
- Assist advocates to analyze and promote reform of the legal framework guiding the employment of women in local councils and women's nomination to higher positions (long term).
- Support advocacy campaigns to increase the quota of women in legislative and institutional elections by 30 percent, and to take measures to ensure the application in the parliament, political parties, and civil society institutions (medium to long term).

Influencing norms

- Collaborate with the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MOHESR) to build a consortium to allocate 30 percent of leadership positions in Palestinian universities to female academics and guarantee that the recruitment process is transparent (long term).
- Incentivize higher education institutions to provide a supportive organizational environment for women to assume leadership positions (long term).
- Support academic institutions to promote female academics to represent their universities in international forums and to provide scholarships for female and male academics to represent their universities in the public sphere (long term.)

Capacity strengthening

- Support local partners to conduct capacity building trainings for Palestinian Federation of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, and Agriculture (PFCCIA) and PGFTU related to protection from sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment in the workplace (short-term).
- Assist private sector leaders to develop and institute mechanisms to monitor and document violations related to violence, harassment, and discrimination in the workplace (short to medium term).
- Support the creation of a coordinating committee of official and nonofficial institutions to oversee a unified social assistance portal in the Gaza Strip to ensure the transparency and disclosure of relief programs and exchange lists of beneficiaries (medium to long term).
- Support local partners, including the PGFTU, to provide legal and judicial protection programs in cases related to sexual abuse and discrimination in wages, employment, and inheritance (short to medium term).
- Contribute to skills development of women entrepreneurs (short to medium term).
- Support training for female local government employees in management and technical skills, and for both established and aspiring women leaders in leadership, political participation, conflict management and peacebuilding (short to medium term).

Education, advocacy, and awareness raising

- Promote entrepreneurship and business development through women's business incubators, in cooperation with the MoWA, women's organizations, and the private sector (short to medium term).
- Conduct awareness programs to define women's political rights and guide them toward participating and integrating into political parties (short to medium term).
- Support media campaigns to raise awareness regarding social barriers to women's economic participation (short to medium term).
- Raise community awareness and motivate women, youth, and persons with disabilities to run for local council elections (short to medium term).
- Support political parties to formulate and execute strategies to enable women to assume leadership positions in local councils (short to medium term).

Gender-sensitive data and information

- Support academic institutions to develop a national gender audit index (short to medium term).
- Support the Municipal Development and Lending Fund to set and measure quantitative standards for local councils' engagement of female employees and women employees in higher positions (short to medium term).
- Support the Ministry of Local Government to monitor female employees' legal and administrative rights during orientation and supervision tours to local councils (short to medium term).

DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS

Advocacy with the Palestinian Authority

- Conduct advocacy campaigns to pressure the PA to ensure that the minimum wage decision is fully applied to the early education sector (short to long term).
- Conduct advocacy campaigns to put pressure on the PA to fulfill its international obligations toward the implementation of Resolution 1325 (medium to long term).
- Support the PA to adopt a long-term strategy toward raising the percentage of women in all government institutions and positions of decision-making in the state (long term).

LAWS POLICIES, REGULATIONS, AND INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICES

ECONOMIC LEADERSHIP AND EMPOWERMENT

Palestinian labor law gives the right to work for every capable person on the basis of equal opportunities without discrimination (PWWSD 2021, 19). Despite this, legislative gaps are among the obstacles to women's economic advancement and empowerment. These include the absence of comprehensive provisions for nondiscrimination; equal pay for work of equal value; prohibition of GBV, including sexual harassment in the workplace; and legal coverage for domestic workers. The PA has not signed the Convention (No. 190) on Eliminating Violence and Harassment in the World of Work. Palestinian Labor Law No. 7 of 2000 and Civil Service Law No. 4 of 1998 make no reference to combating sexual harassment in the workplace (Barghouti 2022). The Code of Conduct for the Public Service does not refer to sexual harassment as a breach of professional behavior or public service rules (Dwikat 2021).

Study informants working in women's organizations explained that the private sector lacks knowledge of the policy of protection from sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment. Women's and workers' rights organizations do not target private sector owners and workers to educate them about the policy. Women's silence about cases of harassment and their lack of awareness of the policy and complaint mechanisms increases the risk of workplace rights violations. GBV survivors in an FGD pointed out that they do not report cases of harassment for fear of scandal and shame in the context of family and society, and for fear of losing their source of income. Lengthy judicial procedures (often not in favor of the victims because of the difficulty in providing evidence and witnesses) are also a deterrent.

Informants indicated that different sets of laws complicate the legal environment (Egyptian laws apply in Gaza, while Jordanian laws apply in the West Bank). Informants reported that many private sector entities and NGOs are not committed to the labor law provisions for equal opportunities for women, for minimum wages, and for other rights guaranteed by the law.

An informant from the Ministry of National Economy reported:

“The number of registered businesses reaches 142,000 where the government institutions cannot monitor this large number, which causes violations of the law and the rights of workers, especially women.”

HIGHER EDUCATION

Article 24 of the amended Basic Law affirms that each citizen has the right to free education in public institutions. The institutional and developmental aspects of higher education and scientific research are fragile because of the lack of continuous staff training, weak accountability and transparency, employees' limited participation in decision-making, and poor supervision by MOHESR (Abu Hashish 2020).

Study informants indicated that institutional practices are biased toward males, although indirectly and sometimes illegally. Such practices include favoring male over female academics to receive economic support to complete their Ph.D. degree. This practice stems from the cultural view that men are breadwinners. Even though women academics and administrators play the same role, this is not reflected in institutional practice. In this context, one of the female academics articulated:

“I finished my Ph.D. and then got married. ... My colleague who attended college before me and got married and bore children but finished her Ph.D. in 2020... In addition to the accumulation

of responsibilities, she also faced challenges... that didn't take into consideration that it's often difficult for women to complete their Ph.Ds. in the time specified. However, for males, it was quite different as they were sent to complete their Ph.D. but left the university as long as 8 years with no consequences...but it is a different story when it comes to females even if they bear the same responsibilities.”

EARLY EDUCATION

Multiple bodies manage early childhood care and education in the Palestinian Territories, including the private sector, government agencies, community-based organizations, religious organizations, and NGOs (MoEHE 2017, 19). An informant from the Ministry of Education (MoE) explained that there are about 600 unlicensed and unofficial kindergartens in WBG that the ministry does not recognize. Education in most kindergartens is not currently part of the formal education system. UNRWA schools do not provide preschool education. Early childhood development services within the refugee camps are operated through community-based organizations and the private sector and usually are poorly resourced and attended. There are acute shortages of space for preschools and kindergarten, leading to low enrollment (JHSD 2021, 7).

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education Strategy 2017–2022 aims to enact policies and legislation that ensure at least one year of free, compulsory, quality pre-basic education, with special attention to reaching children from the most disadvantaged and poor communities through early childhood education and care services (MoEHE 2017, 115). The Law of Education stipulates that one year of preschool education is compulsory, but the government has failed to provide it (MoEHE 2017, 25). A study informant from the MoE explained:

“We have not yet reached compulsory preschool education in enrollment in the preparatory class which requires the provision of financial resources to build more government kindergartens, hire a large number of teachers, and provide educational resources and means while the financial situation of the Palestinian government is weak due to the decline in the financial resources granted to the authority especially by the USAID.”

FEMALE-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS

The Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA) and partners provide periodic cash assistance to about 107,000 families, electronic cards for poor families, food aid for about 173,000 individuals, health insurance cards for about 67,000 families, and exemption from school fees for poor families, along with cash assistance to families exposed to urgent social, health, and economic shocks, in the West Bank and Gaza (NDP 2021–2023). UNRWA also provides financial services, such as loans to marginalized groups of refugees, including women. Women accounted for the largest percentage of its microcredit program (48 percent in 2021). However, UNRWA reports lack indicators that measure the percentage of female breadwinners, the extent to which they benefit from financial services, and the impact on their basic needs.

The legal system lacks laws to regulate collecting, and mechanisms for spending and documenting, cash and food aid and other donations (AMAN 2020). MOSA has databases for cash assistance that include data for about 200,000 families and economic empowerment data for partner institutions. According to civil society informants, the program is not working well because there is no system for a more equitable distribution of cash and in-kind aid to entitled groups, including female breadwinners.

Informants described lapses in the control process due to the multiple actors involved in humanitarian aid, which involves the public sector, international organizations, the private sector, and individual initiatives. An informant from the NGOs said, “We need a general umbrella or a coordinating committee to monitor the distribution of the cash and in-kind aids because some people receive aid more than once while others get nothing.” Results from the discussion group also revealed favoritism and partisanship. Some female breadwinners from the discussion group expressed a feeling of unjustness after being excluded from grants though they were nominated. One group participant said, “Any project coming to the institution is divided like a cake on parties, friends, and neighbors.” Another stated, “The aids are not given to the project target group who are entitled for them.” Another participant explained, “When we go to the institution, they treat us in an insulting way, which hurts our dignity and makes us feel like beggars, not right holders.”

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND EMPOWERMENT

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

A Palestinian law regulating the electoral process was issued in 2005 as Article 17, stipulates that the representation of women in any of the councils of local bodies must not be less than 20 percent, with a minimum of three women on each list running for elections (Vintina 2020). There are several loopholes in the law. Although the general elections law was positively amended in favor of women in 2021, the local elections law gives women only 20 percent representation, which contradicts the National and Central Council’s quota of 30 percent (Afana 2020). According to Central Elections Commission (CEC) data, the first phase of the 2021 local council elections results indicated that women who won through voting in lists was 20.5 percent and in all local councils (voting and acclamation) was 21.8. percent. This points to the importance of the quota, which maintained the presence of women in local councils, despite those councils, such as those in Bethlehem, for example, which refused to present a list on the premise of their rejection of women’s participation (MIFTAH 2022).

In 2019, the percentage of female employees in local councils was 16.7 percent (Ateeq 2021). Female employees still face legal, administrative, and social challenges (Jayyousi and Saadeh 2019). Female employees do not have the same rights as other women under the labor law. For instance, female employees of local councils do not enjoy the maternity leave stipulated in the labor law (AWRAD 2013). Local council employees work under the local councils’ employment law and the civil service law, which does not specify their rights. The law only requires that employment terms be included in job profiles and that the council’s budget be endorsed by the Ministry of Local Government (Ateeq 2021). Recruitment differs from one council to another (AWRAD 2013; Ateeq 2021). Some councils recruit staff through personal acquaintances without formal job announcements, and others advertise vacancies. These advertisements are typically gender-neutral, allowing the council to intervene in the selection.

Despite the establishment of the Gender Unit in the Ministry of Local Government based on the Council of Ministers’ Resolution No. (12) in 2006 to increase women’s participation (Sawafta 2017), study informants from the Ministry of Local Government’s Gender Unit and the legal advisor described the failure of ministry staff, including the Gender Unit employees, to recognize the potential of female employees. Views among informants at the ministry are reflected in the words of one staff member:

“We target female members more, we educate them about the laws of local government, develop their capabilities, and empower them through comprehensive training programs, however, this is

only recent after working on an external project for international institutions.”

Informants from the ministry implied that female employees suffer from a discrepancy between the law and its implementation. The ministry, represented by the Gender Unit, has not adopted strategies to support and develop female employees in the councils.

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

The Palestinian Modified Basic Law of 2005 emphasized that women should enjoy the right to equity, the right of political participation, the right of voting, and of participating in nominations to select representatives (CARE 2013, 13). The Palestinian Territories’ Central Council has also stressed the importance of equality and strengthening women’s participation in all organizations of the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Territories, with a minimum of 30 percent representation by women (Aghabekian 2019, 8). However, informants stated that controversy still exists on the legality and effectiveness of the quota system, and that discrimination still exists.

In 2011, the first conference of the National Coalition was held for applying UN Resolution 1325 on women, peace, and security in the Palestinian Territories (WATC 2015, 14). In 2012, the Council of Ministers established a national committee for the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325. In June 2015, the PA endorsed a national action plan for implementation of UNSCR 1325 (Aburaquob 2020).

Despite these and other steps toward improving women’s political representation (including quotas, local election law, and the work of MoWA, among others), the obstacles to women’s political participation are numerous (Aghabekian 2019, 10). The failure of the Palestinian state to adopt policies and programs to support women in formal and informal political spheres has weakened women’s roles (Samaroo 2018, 16). PA plans do not reflect a clear intention toward equality (Erekat 2020, 7). Study informants working in women’s organizations explained that laws and policies contain loopholes and do not go far enough to guarantee equal access for women to decision-making positions and political participation. The election law does not constitute a political lever for women’s participation.

CULTURAL NORMS AND BELIEFS

ECONOMIC LEADERSHIP AND EMPOWERMENT

The role of women in economic activity and the labor market is affected by customs and traditions, which limit women to specific professions and work sites (WAFA 2022). Other factors include limited access to relevant training, unpaid care work (childcare, household chores), and limited access to and control over resources such as land, property, and finance (UN Women Arab Stat).

Divorced and separated women encounter social restrictions that limit their freedom of movement, their decision-making power, and other burdens that prevent them from developing occupational skills (ESCWA 2018). Newly widowed women are the most vulnerable yet the least protected category, though female heads of households are among the most eligible to receive aid from international humanitarian organizations. Widows are expected to be under the protection and guardianship of the males in their families (UN Women 2021), thus are more vulnerable to losing their custody rights and control over inheritance if they remarry (GBV Sub-Cluster Palestine 2018).

The research finds that gender disparities in labor force participation are largely linked to economic, social, and cultural barriers, including lack of a supportive environment for women's entrepreneurship. Study informants emphasized that Palestinian culture is discriminatory against GBV survivors and divorced and widowed women. Women in these categories are discouraged from leaving their homes in search of employment and from seeking to establish a small enterprise. Violence women confront within their families further denies them choice and economic participation. Some informants also discussed GBV survivors' mental health status.

According to one respondent, *"Some GBV survivors are not psychologically ready to develop themselves and to be an economically empowered woman."* Respondents explained that GBV survivors can be frustrated and psychologically destroyed, and they do not have the ability to face society. GBV survivors need a comprehensive approach to services, including business development and life skills, psychosocial support services, legal services, and financial support.

HIGHER EDUCATION

A dominant maternal ideology, according to a recent study, impedes the career advancement of academic women (El-Far, Sabella, and Vershinina 2021). The study concluded that female academics, whether mothers or not, are affected by notions of "motherhood" and are at a disadvantage. In the conservative patriarchal Palestinian Territories, female academics are expected to take on the burden of care within their families and to extend their capacity for motherhood to their students and co-workers. Childless women are also subject to family-related obligations that restrict progress in their professional lives or in access to leadership positions in higher education.

In addition, informants pointed to the need to look out for their children's best interest, considering the inadequate daycare provided by the university. For example, one of the female informants said:

"I'm the first female head of a law department at Birzeit University. Before getting married and having children, I used to dedicate 150 percent of my time...having to take care of your children is a lot more tiring than the job, and frankly, I was offered a very high position at the university last year and I refused it outright. Although my husband is a feminist and a true partner, our jobs were impacted since we prioritized our child."

EARLY EDUCATION

Many studies show that the cultural norms in the Palestinian community affect the early education sector. An International Labor Organization study indicates that most of the women working the kindergartens chose to work in this sector only because their husbands refused to allow them to engage in any other work. Husbands believe that other areas require more effort that may hinder their wives' ability to raise their children (ILO 2019, 29). Many preschool teachers end up in the education sector because they do not believe there are alternative job opportunities. Low salaries and status lead to a high rate of teacher turnover (ANERA 2014, 7). Informants from the Education Sub-Working Cluster pointed out that *"the community believes that women are the most capable of educating the children in the kindergartens, this stems more from the reproductive role and is in line with the values and culture of the society."* The teachers in FGDs explained that women's work in kindergartens is more acceptable than in other places, such as private companies, where they may be subject to harassment.

FEMALE HEADS OF HOUSEHOLDS

Informants from NGOs have noted that projects supporting small enterprise development for female heads of households consider that new female heads of household need a course of psychological, social, economic, and legal interventions to reach stabilization before benefiting from economic empowerment projects. From an informant:

“If we want to economically empower recent female breadwinners, we can’t neglect the social and psychological realities these females live. The psychological trauma and social pressures, as well as their ability to cope with their new reality after becoming responsible for the reproductive and productive roles, not to mention their struggle with their families and their husband’s families call for specific interventions before their names can be nominated for specific economic projects.”

One of the informants drew attention to the need to enhance the self-perception of female breadwinners—whether they are divorced or widowed recently or in the past—before offering economic projects. One of the female informants said, *“The first step we must agree on is that we should work on the personalities of females themselves and this must be the approach of all institutions that offer economic projects in order for females to move forward in dealing with restrictions to ensure the support of their families.”* This is confirmed by a woman who went to the center to seek legal aid after her separation from her husband. She applied for a project grant but was denied because she was not psychologically and socially ready. The informant said, *“I filed a complaint against them because of their refusal, but now I know the reason. I was not ready to manage my project, but I was trained to improve my life skills. ... Now I own four shops, I manage one of them, and the rest are managed by my children.”*

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND EMPOWERMENT

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Women elected as members of local councils have faced resistance from their male counterparts. The case of Yusra Badwan is illustrative. She was elected in 2019 as the first woman to head the municipal council of Azoun village. Six months later, two-thirds of the council members withdrew confidence and chose a male head. She recalled that tribal norms and patriarchy were significant obstacles to women’s achievement and asserted that women themselves must confront the traditions that block their ascension to leadership positions in Palestinian society (Abu Jalal 2019).

Women also face challenges in getting elected. Female candidates’ photos were not displayed during election campaigns. Male candidates and list supporters instead highlighted male candidates (MIFTAH 2022). Siham al-Barghouti, a feminist activist, reported that many electoral lists included female candidates in order to comply with the law’s quota requirement without selecting women candidates based on their qualifications (Nofal 2021). Few women were placed in the first four seats on political party ordering of lists of candidates—most were in seats 5 and 9, reducing their chances of election (MIFTAH 2022). Female members of local councils have also been forced to withdraw from candidacy or resign from membership due to family and clan pressures, for reasons related to the inappropriate electoral environment, or decision-making in the councils (PWWSD 2022).

Female employees of local councils face negative cultural views because the councils are considered male-dominated institutions. Women’s work at local councils is regarded as an affront to the community’s

cultural heritage, and the nature of local councils' work is not considered fit for women (Ateeq 2021). The literature review (Wathaefi 2016) and informants among international institutions and NGOs revealed that women's work is governed by policies, strategies, laws, decisions deemed male-biased, and unwritten male-dominated culture, evident in discriminatory practices. A female informant from the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) said in this regard: *"As much as you work on us and as much as we work on ourselves, whoever refuses to acknowledge our capabilities, will never do."*

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Community-related factors that hinder and eliminate women's political participation including lack of awareness on women's issues and rights, and traditions that enhance male culture; negative perspectives toward women's role in the society; and the lack of a democratic climate (CARE 2013, 19). The lack of trust and gender bias, represented in the lack of voter support for women candidates (in which women prefer to vote for men on the premise that they are more appropriate for political action and holding responsibility), promotes this view among the Palestinian community (Samaroo 2018, 19).

Tribal culture imposes on political parties by influencing the selection of candidates and exploiting the quota to achieve clan gains at the expense of the women's representation. "There are many challenges facing Palestinian women. Palestinian women face not only life under occupation, which affects all aspects of public and private life, but also life in a male-dominated society; the two exacerbate each other," said the representative of Norway in the Palestinian Territories in the annual Open Day on Women, Peace, and Security (UN Women 2022).

Study informants pointed out that society does not consider participation in politics to be an important role for women, and it hinders women's access to leadership at the party and institutional levels. Family responsibilities and women's reproductive roles often make them prefer those roles over political roles in an unsupportive environment and society. The misinterpretation of religious texts, in many cases, also represents an obstacle to women's political participation (Al-Tahrawi 2021, 8). Discrimination is also reflected in the opinion of those who are against women chairing local councils (PWWSD 2016, 23). Political parties also use women's issues only to attract women voters (Samaroo 2018, 17).

GENDER ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND TIME USE

ECONOMIC LEADERSHIP AND EMPOWERMENT

Palestinian women have made slow strides toward greater participation in the labor market and entrepreneurship (Al-Akhras 2022). The gender disparities of labor force participation in WBG are largely linked to economic, social, and cultural barriers, including lack of a supportive environment for women's entrepreneurship. Much of the female labor force is concentrated in low-skilled, low-income economic activities, including part-time, seasonal, and casual work. Because of a lack of nontraditional vocational and technical training and few alternative sources of financing, many Palestinian women are discouraged from starting their own businesses (UN Women 2019). Women's participation rate in the labor force increased from 16 percent in 2020 to 17 percent in 2021. By contrast, men's participation in the labor force reached 69 percent in 2021, compared with 65 percent in 2020. The unemployment rate in 2021 among women participating in the labor force was 43 percent, compared with 22 percent among men (PCBS 2022a).

Women, youth, and GBV survivors participating in the study's FGDs pointed out that negative perceptions are a major challenge to women's participation in the labor market. These include negative attitudes about

women in the private sector, the view that a woman's role is as a housewife, and the lack of support by influential leaders (for example, Mukhtars). These leaders generally discourage women from participating in economic activities, further perpetuating stereotypes about women's domestic role.

HIGHER EDUCATION

A recent study (AbdAlhadi and Al-Tahrave 2022) discusses the absence of a unified and comprehensive concept of women's rights in academic institutions. Workers unions in Palestinian universities in Gaza give wide rein for discriminatory practices against female academics. The results show that 86.3 percent of female academics have experienced gender-based discrimination in universities. The study concluded that strategic plans and programs of academic institutions do not reflect a gender perspective or consider gender sensitivity. There is also a lack of a system for reporting incidents of gender-based discrimination (AbdAlhadi and Al-Tahrave 2022). Academic informants indicate that women are barely represented in the Workers Union at the University of Palestine, which was reflected in the absence of issues related to the rights of female academics and administrators. One of the female academics at Birzeit University pointed out that the Workers Union at Birzeit University, despite its strength, generally defends the rights of male and female employees, without giving preference to the defense of female academics and administrators. However, an initiative, "Marsad for Social Justice," is being established to achieve equality for female academics, administrators, and students.

EARLY EDUCATION

The PCBS statistics in 2020/2021 indicate that all kindergarten teachers are females 6,739 (4,674 in the West Bank and 2,065 in the Gaza Strip). Working in the kindergartens does not ensure economic empowerment. About 75 percent of kindergarten workers receive salaries less than the minimum wage, and the majority (85 percent) work without written work contracts. About 55 percent do not receive a specified number of paid sick leave days during the year, 63 percent do not receive maternity leave, and 87.5 percent do not receive paid nursing hours. Also, 60 percent of kindergarten workers do not know the rights guaranteed to them by the labor law (ILO 2019, 6). Only about 13 percent of preschool and kindergarten teachers are qualified in early childhood development or childcare (JHSD, 2021, 7). The preschools are usually staffed by young, inexperienced teachers with secondary education and little awareness of early childhood development teaching and learning practices (ANERA 2014).

FEMALE HEADS OF HOUSEHOLDS

Female heads of households play multiple, conflicting roles in the injury or death of a male head of household, and often have to work in part time, informal, or low-income jobs due to the loss of the male breadwinner (UN Women 2022). The burden is compounded when the family includes disabled or elderly members or children (ESCWA 2021). Female heads of households are highly vulnerable. Repeated incidents of escalated violence, including those in May 2021 and August 2022, killed 260 Palestinians and displaced 113,000 civilians, of whom more than half were women and girls (OCHA 2022). The dead and injured among men has led to an increased number of female-headed households. A UN Women study revealed that female-headed households have registered a higher rate of displacement (88 percent) than those headed by males (77 percent). It also revealed that the larger percentage of women usually prefer to stay in their damaged houses rather than going to shelters (UN Women 2022). A study in 2019 found that female-headed households resorted more frequently to reducing nonfood expenditures to prioritize food (ACAPS 2021).

Female heads of households in the focus group (divorced or widowed) confirmed that they play multiple roles, such as the role of both parents, in addition to the productive role. This leads to tensions and conflicts because it contradicts the traditional division of roles for males and females. Other informants pointed out that the female breadwinners without financial support, beyond food assistance from international and local institutions, struggle to meet their family's basic needs using various strategies such as reducing the number of meals. Others refer to their attempts to overcome this pressure by distributing roles among their family members after receiving life skills training.

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND EMPOWERMENT

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

A female informant of the local council explained that among many, women are expected to limit their role to child-rearing and other domestic tasks. However, according to the informant, there is another group that believes that women and men are equal in their productive, local and political roles, and this applies to their participation in the membership of local councils. Some supporters also believe that women are more able to understand the needs of all societal groups, as indicated by the success stories of a number of female members. The female informant points out the decision of whether or not to participate in the elections hers.

A study informant from GIZ indicated that fewer women on local council staff affects women's positions and status on the staff. Women councilors are often excluded or marginalized. Other informants explained that this is related to social norms, such as the conservative community, negative attitudes, and male and female roles. One informant said, *"The community considers these challenges as excuses for gender-based work division, especially as some departments at the Local councils are considered male-only, including field workers and the technical, water, electricity and health departments. This means more job opportunities for males."*

Informants indicate that the responsibilities assigned to female employees in local councils are subject to the instructions of the administration and the mayor. The number of working days in the local councils is six instead of the official five. Female employees in the local councils face the difficulty of providing care for their children while working on Saturdays. Some informants drew attention to the inability of female employees to overcome reproduction roles. They see changing this perception as necessary for women's achievement of leadership positions on the staff. An informant from the Municipal Development Fund in the Gaza Strip attributes this to a perception of gender as an analysis and planning tool used by governmental and nongovernmental institutions and that men are viewed as enemies, which reinforces a discriminatory stance against women.

A GIZ female informant holds that enhancing women's time management skills, setting priorities, and negotiating with men is the basis for change. The informant said, *"Female employees need someone who understands, guides and listens to them. They need someone to trust and someone who can improve their skills in balancing between our houses and jobs... This might be the only source of effectively changing the roles in a way that is reflected positively on everyone instead of interventions that give rise to more conflicts."*

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Palestinian women have managed to achieve higher levels of participation in many national councils and bodies such as the Palestinian Legislative Council, Palestinian National Council, and Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization. Many women hold senior positions in PA institutions, such as

ministers, governors, judges, and ambassadors (PWWSD 2016, 8). Informants pointed out women still face weaknesses in lobbying to be involved in decision-making, limited understanding of their rights and roles, lack of confidence and limited interest in political participation.

Palestinian men and women share the same aim and positions on ending occupation, peace negotiations with Israel, and internal reconciliation (Aghabekian 2019, 12). Women in the Palestinian Territories have been largely excluded from formal dialogue to end the Palestinian political division. Their voices and concerns have not been heard or included in the reconciliation talks and agreements since 2005. Few women are represented on the reconciliation committees (UN Women 2019, 1). Informants from women's organizations confirmed women's participation in the internal reconciliation dialogues has been weak. Recently, some leftist parties have begun to involve women under pressure from the feminist movement, but participation in general is limited.

ACCESS TO AND CONTROL OVER ASSETS AND RESOURCES

ECONOMIC LEADERSHIP AND EMPOWERMENT

Average daily wages for Palestinian workers in Israel and the settlements are four times higher than the average daily wages in Gaza and double those in the West Bank (ILO 2022, 33). A key factor behind the gender gap is that workers employed in Israel and in Israeli settlements (where wages are notably higher than in WBG) are predominantly men. Furthermore, in the Palestinian private sector, low pay has an unambiguous gender dimension, with 60 percent of women earning less than the minimum wage—more than double the corresponding share of men (ESCWA 2021, 33).

Study informants stated that women's access to economic opportunities is limited because of short supply. In some marginalized areas, women cannot find employment because organizations provide only temporary services within short-term projects that depend on the availability of international funds. Findings from FGDs with GBV survivors revealed that survivors are less likely to obtain financing for a microenterprise because of social obstacles, lack of knowledge of where to obtain economic empowerment services, and fear of exploitation by these organizations. Young women in an FGD explained that a shortage of financial resources is the main obstacle to establishing their own enterprise. Financial support from women's and youth organizations is inadequate, and women are reluctant to obtain loans from banks for religious reasons. Informants explained that promising sectors where a large number of young women work are information technology and e-marketing, including web design, programming, graphic design, content writing, managing social media pages, voiceover, translation, video production, artificial intelligence, and cloud computing.

HIGHER EDUCATION

The strategy for higher education and scientific research 2021–2023 guides higher education's policies, programs, and interventions (MOHESR 2020). There are clearly gaps in the implementation, which include not considering a gender perspective in developing a teaching and support staff able to teach with high efficiency and interaction with students. There is an absence of quantitative and qualitative indicators from a gender perspective through which achievement can be measured, such as the enrollment rate of men and women faculty in capacity-building programs, and the degree of students' satisfaction with the performance of male faculty compared with that of females (MOHESR 2020).

Study participants' discussion of Palestinian universities reveals that the caliber of academic staff still needs improvement. This is reflected in the low quality of education in general and legal education more specifically. A female academic whose family supported her in pursuing law said:

“As a female academic myself, I wouldn’t address rape crimes as an abstract law material, instead, I would address them as crimes which violated the female victims and the whole society. There’s also the drafting legislation course and other practical courses that are approached very traditionally and are inevitably discriminatory in their essence from gender’s perspective. ...It is important to reconsider specific laws from a social, legal and feminist perspective which requires improving the abilities of the academic staff for both genders to form a legal educational system sensitive to equity and equality values for all social groups including the marginalized ones.”

Male students' evaluations of female academics performance, compared with male academics is quite striking. The evaluations cannot be considered reliable indicators of teaching performance as long as the assessment is governed by bias. For example, as a Palestine University student who participated in a study FGD group stated:

“Women will never be equal to men in their performance because of their physical and physiological circumstances and I wouldn’t imagine her to excel all the time, for example, a pregnant professor can’t always control the lecture normally and her performance will be weak. However, a male academic can control his social life and physical nature, so it would be easy for him to handle everything in the right way. “

EARLY EDUCATION

Most kindergarten managers in an FGD pointed out that the preschool sector faces many limitations related to control over assets and resources. The majority of female workers in kindergartens (79.6 percent) reported that there is a large discrepancy between their skills and knowledge and their job responsibilities (ILO 2019, 38). Sixty-eight percent of kindergarten teachers in the West Bank believe that training and learning opportunities are either not available or are insufficient (ILO 2019, 38). Fifty percent of kindergarten teachers in the Gaza Strip received on-the-job training, while 48.5 percent received no training (WAC 2012).

Informants explained that the majority of the Palestinian preschools are inadequate environments for children's care and education and were not initially designed to be childcare and education centers. A study by American Near East Refugee Aid revealed that the preschools are overcrowded, dilapidated, and lack facilities. (ANERA 2014, 10). The kindergarten managers in a FGD pointed out that the physical infrastructure of kindergartens is poorly adapted to the needs of children with special needs, and teachers have few skills and competencies to deal with these children, in addition to the social stigma attached to disability. The International Labor Organization study revealed that the kindergartens have clear gaps in occupational health and safety conditions in their facilities (ILO 2019, 4).

FEMALE HEADS OF HOUSEHOLDS

A focus group with female heads of households pointed to the cultural constraints divorced females face compared with widows. Females who become breadwinners as a result of their separation from their husbands are stigmatized. They are looked upon as inferior, which limits their movement and their ability to support their families. Other informants indicated that divorced females have difficulty convincing their

families of their need to develop themselves and their skills, or benefit from economic grants to support their families. One explained, *“We need more time to free ourselves from the fear inside of us and work on ourselves or allow the institutions to work on developing our personalities and skills to deal with those surrounding us in order to provide for our children without obstacles or challenges.”*

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND EMPOWERMENT

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The initiative to create a Gender Forum in Local Government emerged following the 2005 elections. Its objective is to influence decision-making within local governance structures, including political parties, and ensure local institutions abide by their national commitments and according to international charters. Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development (PWWSD) has been elected to lead the Gender Forum in Local Governance for two three-year cycles (2019-2021 and 2022-2024). The forum works to promote a gender-responsive enabling environment for local governance, one that reflects diversity, inclusion and gender equality and seeks to integrate gender into the policies and strategic plans of the Ministry of Local Government and civil society organizations.

A recent study indicates that trainings and consultations by the Gender Forum in Local Government and other groups were effective in enabling women to win local council elections and to gain knowledge of the roles of local council members and the work of the council’s various committees (PWWSD 2022).

Local authorities do not train and develop employees of local councils without assistance from international institutions or from the local government. Male employees more often get nominated to attend training opportunities, which creates a negative environment between female and male employees and the officials (Ateeq 2021). Ninety percent of female employees do not participate in municipal activities such as; trainings on gender issues, life skills, workshops related to municipal issues, conferences. They are told that instructions issued by mayors of the local councils indicate that only men are allowed to participate (Ateeq 2021).

When female employees are targeted for capacity-building programs, one of the informants from the international institutions said women are often unable to participate because of child obligations, movement restrictions, or refusal by superiors. The informant said, *“What happens is that most women have roles within their families, thus, males are the ones to participate in any incoming training. When there is a capacity building program, the one who is able to go out on the roads is always the male since females have children to return to and is deemed the reason males are the ones who inspire opportunities.”*

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

CEDAW’s official report of the Palestinian Territories stressed that the financial inability of the majority of women to run their electoral campaigns and lack of funders to support them are major obstacles for women’s political participation (UNESCO 2019, 26). The main obstacles to women’s access to decision-making positions within political parties is the failure to allocate resources from the party’s budget for women members, and a lack of the preparation of advanced training programs to equip a female leadership cadre (Al-Masri 2021). CARE (2013) revealed that 72.8 percent agreed that lack of financial resources prevented women from political participation. Study informants explained women’s low participation in

public life lessens their political participation. Economic dependence leads to political dependence. Activities in political work, meetings, and electoral campaigns require resources.

PATTERNS OF POWER AND DECISION-MAKING

ECONOMIC LEADERSHIP AND EMPOWERMENT

Women in economic decision-making and leadership positions are still few. Data for 2022 show that women constitute about one percent of the members of the board of directors of the Palestinian Federation of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, and Agriculture (PFCCIA; Awad 2022). Approximately 11 percent of women are members of the general bodies of companies, and 28 percent of business leaders are women (Al-Akhras 2022). In 2021, 2,156 new companies were registered with 5,229 owners, of whom 17 percent are women (Ministry of National Economy 2022, 27).

Research informants explained that the complicated requirements for officially registering new enterprises pose a considerable obstacle for women and youth. Women are afraid to register for fear their income will be insufficient to pay the taxes. Women and youth lack awareness and fear the complexities and conditions set by the official authorities. Informants explained women entrepreneurs lack awareness of the importance of registering membership in the PFCCIA. Networking is weak among women entrepreneurs in business incubators and microfinance institutions.

Informants from women's organizations pointed out that some women participating in economic projects, psychosocial support sessions, and life skills training become empowered to face challenges from family members and take financial decision-making into their hands. However, some women do not succeed because the control remains with their husbands or fathers. The majority of FGD participants stated that traditions give male family members control over financial decisions. A family may not allow female members to have a financial liability. This can limit female members' freedom to leave the home to participate in the economic activities. A divorced woman participating in an FGD reported that she does not receive alimony from her former husband, so she established a pastry-making small enterprise. The woman said, *"I do not have the ability to make a decision due to lack of experience, and the father and brothers are a major obstacle to the development of my enterprise. I do not have the ability to dispose of the financial return without the consent of my father."*

HIGHER EDUCATION

Female undergraduate students' increased enrollment has created a false impression that gender equality has been achieved in higher education (ACE 2021). Although national statistics on female enrollment are optimistic, the data raise concerns about equality in decision-making positions held by well-educated women. According to UNESCO (2020) and MOHESR (2020), women can earn higher degrees that will allow them to occupy academic positions in universities, participate in relevant research, and take leadership roles. But national statistics show that this has not been the case. The failure of universities, for example, to recruit, retain, and promote female academics is inconsistent with the standards of governance and reformation of the higher education sector from a gender perspective.

A majority of study informants indicated that a significant obstacle to female academics' advancement into decision-making positions is resistance among men within the university's environment, which often forces female academics to refuse a leadership position when offered. As a female academic informant expressed:

“What led me to refuse the higher position is that the law faculty is not prepared for the position they offered me. Although it’s great for a young woman like me to be chosen for this position, my goal isn’t to be put in a position for three years where my decision will need great defense and where I would face resistance and refusal from my male colleagues who themselves are in the same position.”

Financial, social, and human resources for women in academia are key pillars for empowerment (Kabeer 2002). Yet among female academics with a Ph.D. degree from an international university, informants expressed that these resources failed to help them overcome deep-rooted resistance among many male academics. The majority of informants described restrictions they face when elected to leadership positions. Efforts to engender a collective awareness, fairness, and investment of resources within institutions of higher education among decision-makers, academics, and students has lacked impact, particularly in legal education.

EARLY EDUCATION

The bylaws of the Kindergarten Owners Syndicates and the Kindergarten Workers Syndicates in the Gaza Strip state that the board of directors and the general assembly represent kindergarten workers in the Gaza Strip and are authorized to make decisions related to administrative and financial management (Syndicate of the Kindergarten Owners in the Gaza Strip 2021). The kindergarten teachers in an FGD explained, however, that they participate in the discussion of issues related to children, curriculum, and study plans; however, there is no participation in decision-making in issues related to their rights of impartial salary, annual or sick leave, or health insurance, and there is no freedom to discuss these issues with the kindergartens’ owners.

FEMALE HEADS OF HOUSEHOLDS

Interviews with informants and focus group participants revealed power within the households headed by females is either entirely in the hands of the woman, entirely in the hands of the men of the family or shared among family members. A female informant from an NGO indicated that the different patterns of power and decision-making depend on the personality of the females themselves, whether the family is supportive, the extent of females’ knowledge of their rights, and their life skills.

Women in a discussion group pointed out that female breadwinners search for opportunities for economic projects that would enable them to improve the living conditions of their families as a result of the fluctuation and instability of cash assistance. One of the female informants said, *“They gave me cash assistance for 6 months, and it stopped, after my children returned to a certain pattern and met their needs. Now there is no income. How do I take it from there?”*

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND EMPOWERMENT

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

In the 2021 local elections women and youth participated more widely as candidates. Women won 21.8 percent of council seats according to the women’s quota system (Suliman 2021). In these elections, few women competed for the presidency of local councils, as women’s position within the local council is still subject to traditional views. However, women’s participation has been enhanced in terms of performance and decision-making. Female candidates have been in better negotiating positions in the formation of

electoral lists, in the placement of their names in the electoral lists, in drafting the electoral program, and as spokespeople in the media, moving towards enhanced women's leadership at local and national levels (Nazal 2021). Successful experiences of female candidates and elected councilors have demonstrated the eligibility and ability of women to assume decision-making positions as reliable members and heads of local councils. Women have also assumed the presidency of the municipality or the village council, or chaired council committees (PWWSD 2022).

Although there are no national statistics showing the percentage of women employed in senior administrative positions in local councils, there are fewer women in decision-making positions, and there is resistance to acknowledging women's ability to make decisions (Ateeq 2021). A female informant from an NGO affirms that female employees in councils are keen to develop their capabilities, but local councils do not realize the value of female employees. A number of female informants from international institutions and NGOs believe that the implementation of laws and strategies will depend on a change in the mindset of decision-makers in local councils to recognize the importance of professional advancement of female employees. According to one of the female informants from GIZ, it is crucial to understand the reasons causing the obstacles from the viewpoint of men and women themselves in nontraditional ways. The informant said:

“Part of the contribution to the institutions is working to provide an embracing and encouraging environment for female employees. The mindset of males is based on the world of interests, by attracting more males who have power and influence...grounded on the basis of “Do me a favor and I’ll do one for you ...As for females, their top priority is to return to their home and children, they don’t possess the time to plan at all. How can we overcome this? It needs a thorough and exceptional study as well as creative and serious initiatives.”

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Women's political participation is still limited, despite the efforts made to improve their social and political status. PCBS data for 2022 showed that women constitute about 25 percent of the members of the Central Council. The percentage of women elected in the 2021 local elections (first phase) was 22 percent, compared with 78 percent for elected men. Women candidates were 26 percent of the total candidates as required by quota, but only nine (1 percent) of the total election lists were headed by women. In 2020, data showed that 11 percent of the members of Palestinian National Council and 12.5 percent of members of the Council of Ministers are women. Women ambassadors make up 11 percent of the Diplomatic Service. There is one woman among the 16 governors, and 19 percent of judges and 20 percent of prosecutors are women (PCBS 2022a).

Informants from women's organizations explained that the political parties have not adhered to the memorandum of understanding on raising the percentage of women's representation by 30 percent. No women were nominated to the negotiating teams of leaders and senior officials involved in negotiations with Israel, although women had requested inclusion. However, some related committees included women in advisory teams to these negotiations. During the nearly 25 years of on and off Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, only a few Palestinian women have been involved (Aghabekian 2019, 11).

GENDER ISSUES IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL SPHERE

The PA presents a fragmented political landscape under the domestic and international legal framework, which has resulted in a disjointed and poorly coordinated ecosystem with limited resources, posing some difficult challenges to climate change adaptation and mitigation (Freij 2021). Climate risks in WBG influence current and future development challenges, and gender roles have been highly impacted by climate change, with implications for health (WHO 2014), food security, and water availability. Climate change effects heighten the difficulties both women and men face in carrying out their respective socially assigned roles as caregivers and economic providers (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands 2018). Men and women are variably affected by these environmental issues and risks with formidable impact on their wellbeing and livelihoods.

FINDINGS

CLIMATE CHANGE AND RENEWABLE ENERGY

Gaps in laws and policies, and in their implementation:

- Regulations and policies don't have a consideration for women's needs, nor do they articulate the effects of climate change on gender roles.
- Women as homemakers are especially affected by the architectural practices impacting climate change in WBG, where inadequate buildings continuously increase energy demands in longer summers and harsher winters, resulting in a direct effect on households.

Social norms

- Employment and development in climate change and renewable energy are disproportionately open to men, while women's opportunities remain limited in both sectors.
- Young women and female students are subjected to discouraging cultural and social clues and pressures about education and employment in climate change and renewable energy, perceived as male-dominated venues that are incongruent with female gender roles and responsibilities.
- The effects of climate change have resulted in GBV, especially in Gaza, due to pressures on households and differences in decision-making power between men and women within the households.

Deficiencies in resources and services

- Women's inability to access resources and channels of support have decelerated the development of both sectors while limiting the progress of startups and young female entrepreneurs aiming at enhancing the climate change and renewable energy situations.

Low awareness and sensitivity to women's rights

- Women's awareness of climate change effects and renewable energy possibilities in WBG is limited due to their perception of the sector as a male domain, with disregard for women's voices and needs.

DOMESTIC WATER, ESPECIALLY IN THE SOUTH/ HEBRON GOVERNORATE

Gaps in laws and policies, and in their implementation

- Policies, laws, and regulations issued and endorsed by the Palestinian Water Authority (PWA) are particularly neglectful of women's needs and priorities.
- Private water resources, such as water wells, in the south are not tested to confirm suitability for human consumption and dealing with the consequences adds to women's responsibilities.

Social norms

- Gender norms and expectations have limited the involvement of women in the water and wastewater sectors, especially through employment channels where a limited number of women are able to secure and perform at jobs in both sectors.
- The presence of wastewater tanks or cesspits in houses has aided in the mitigation of the wastewater matter but holds public health risks, and its management is women's responsibility.

Deficiencies in resources and services

- Efforts from the municipalities are limited to the development of documents for new projects for the water and wastewater sectors but lack the financial support and expertise to implement them. The fewer the resources, the fewer the opportunities for women.
- Water scarcity in the southern West Bank has impacted the agricultural and manufacturing sectors' employment opportunities, with a harsher impact on women, due to gender roles.
- Young female engineers in Doura have showcased their abilities to perform in both sectors and have acquired experience in desk and field work in both sectors, including handling and managing the Scada Water System.

Low awareness and sensitivity to women's rights

- The engagement of women in the water and wastewater sectors is limited because of their lack of education, awareness, presence, and influence in the sectors, which are considered male-dominated employment spheres, with the exception of the Doura municipality.

RECOMMENDATIONS

PROGRAMMING

Influencing norms

- Support the development of a communication and media strategy to change public perception of the sector as being male dominated, to encourage women's entry (medium to long term).

Capacity Strengthening

- Improve understanding of projected climate change effects, with emphasis on the impact on women, within the architectural sector to integrate women's needs in their work (short to medium term).
- Create funding mechanisms for youth entrepreneurs focusing on female involvement in mitigating climate change effects and developing renewable energy, including supporting start-ups (long term).
- Promote women's involvement in agriculture, including in innovative, smart agricultural methods and irrigation systems (medium to long term).

Education, advocacy, and awareness raising

- Support projects to develop women's capabilities in climate change and renewable energy through awareness campaigns, support in education, and the provision of opportunities for development in the workplace (short to medium term).
- Push for the development of a gender integration strategy for the water and wastewater sector in selected southern cities, to develop women's leadership roles and capacities in the water and wastewater sectors (medium to long term).

DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS

Advocacy with the Palestinian Authority

- Support advocacy for integration of women's priorities and needs in the relevant endorsed laws and regulations (medium to long term).

LAWS, POLICIES, REGULATIONS, AND INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICES

CLIMATE CHANGE AND RENEWABLE ENERGY

There have been some PA documented initiatives towards the response to climate change. One of them is creating its nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement in April 2016, in which it outlined its efforts to reduce national emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change (EQA 2016). In addition, the Environment Quality Authority (EQA) of PA released its National Adaptation Plan (NAP) to Climate Change in August 2016 (Smithers, et al. 2016).

Very few women are involved in the energy sector policy reform in the West Bank and Gaza. While electricity cost is among the largest concerns of Palestinian households, and although women are the primary end-users of energy in the household, by traditional gender roles, men primarily deal with technical matters, including household access to electricity (USAID 2017). Due to climate change, there is an increase in electricity demand as households cope with heatwaves and cold weather (EQA 2016). Women, especially in rural areas, have minimal knowledge of renewable energy and of the implications of electricity use. Most key informants indicated that the Palestinian Authority largely neglects gender-specific needs. Policies and laws issued by the Environmental Quality Authority (EQA) and the Palestinian Energy and Natural Resources Authority (PENRA) do not include specific considerations for women, youth and other vulnerable groups. A government representative among key informants argued that laws and policies related to climate change and renewable energy are informed by recommendations of several ministries, including the Ministry of Women Affairs, thus, attentive to the needs of women and men. However, careful examination of relevant laws and policies indicates that the needs of women, and youth are not addressed; nor are there any gender-specific laws and policies in this regard.

DOMESTIC WATER, ESPECIALLY IN THE SOUTH / HEBRON GOVERNORATE

Data show that 17 percent of the Population in the West Bank are served by two entities. The Jerusalem Water Undertaking (JWU) serves a part of East Jerusalem and the majority of Ramallah and Al-Bireh, and the Water Supply and Sanitation Authority (WSSA) serves communities in the Bethlehem area. The rest of the West Bank and Gaza households are served by MoLG (Water Global Practice 2018). Water being a crucial issue for the Palestinian community, municipalities and villages have formed the Joint Service Councils (JSCs) to provide water and wastewater management services.

The 2013 National Water and Wastewater Strategy, and according to the key informants the 2021 strategy as well, state the importance of stakeholders' involvement in water and wastewater projects to ensure sustainability of resources management, with a gender perspective. The strategy, however, does not address the different needs of women and men nor relevant actions to be taken (PWA, Part 2. Water Policy 2013). A report conducted by the Global Water Partnership in 2015 indicated that none of the policies and plans in the water sector and solid waste institutions are gender sensitive or gender responsive (Global Water Partnership 2015).

Key informants talked about being excluded from formulating strategies, laws, and policies, undertaken by the Palestinian Authority (PA). The water and wastewater conditions in Hebron, Halhul, and Doura are particularly dire, facing geographical topography that makes mitigating them increasingly difficult. Although women are the main gender group coping with water scarcity in the household, their needs are not considered by policies and laws. Key informants from Hebron and Doura indicated discrimination against female employees in the water and wastewater sectors. Unavailability of privacy for female engineers in their respective municipalities manifested during interviews where male counterparts were constantly disrupting the place the interviews were held. Female employees are not provided personal areas to work comfortably, creating an uncondusive work environment.

CULTURAL NORMS & VALUES

CLIMATE CHANGE AND RENEWABLE ENERGY

Women fear entering sectors related to climate effects and energy, whether in educational or vocational pursuit. Young women, ages 15-24, are expected to have jobs in socially oriented professions, resulting in a small percentage of women working in the energy sector (USAID 2017). Knowledge of renewable energy among youth is low. In a study with 59.8 percent male and 40.2 percent female participants, most youth have limited knowledge regarding renewable energy, and no familiarity with wind energy. Key informants indicated that, due to cultural norms and values, women pursue a bachelor's degree when residing in the family home, while a master's degree is undertaken during marriage and in agreement with the husband. As climate change and renewable energy are not offered at the undergraduate level, studying them requires specialization through a graduate degree program. According to one key informant:

“I would need, after getting married, to discuss the possibility of obtaining a master’s degree with my husband as it will mean the imposition of changes on our family life, which is considered a higher priority than obtaining a master’s at this point. He might want to pursue a master’s degree as well which we both need to agree on.”

This suggests that even when options of progress and development through educational and professional fields are available, they are not considered as primary goals for women, and that women are expected to fulfill their cultural and social roles first, fitting with the norms in their respective community, in line with the accepted gender roles and expectations.

Technological advances create a space for young women to abide by cultural norms while also pursuing professional ambitions. These advancements have created a venue at home where women have the freedom to learn and progress online, resulting in female-led climate change and renewable energy start-ups as well as new possibilities for female entrepreneurs. The percentage of female students in engineering fields is low (Khatib, Bazyan, Assi, & Malhis 2021), however, key informants indicated that at Birzeit University, the number of female students in engineering, especially architectural engineering where climate change and renewable energy are explored in an academic manner, has been rising exponentially.

DOMESTIC WATER, ESPECIALLY IN THE SOUTH / HEBRON GOVERNORATE

The National Water and Wastewater Strategy integrated gender in the form of accessibility assurance, where the marginalized, poor, and women were the groups spelled out in the document (PWA, Part 2. Water Policy, 2013). However, in the Decree No. (14) for the year 2014 issued by the PWA, accessibility to water did not specify certain gender groups, it rather stated that “Every person has the right to obtain

his needs of suitable quality drinking water for utilization at specific prices set in accordance with the Tariff Regulation issued by the Cabinet of Ministers” (PWA, 2014).

Neither women nor men in the three southern cities have reasonable control or access over water resources. The three areas face water scarcity and the lack of wastewater networks. This has led to individual mitigation where in Halhul and Doura, families own their own cesspit. By cultural norms, women in these areas have the role of mitigating and administering the evacuation of these cesspits. They are also expected to respond when wastewater erupts from the cesspits. In Hebron, wastewater is also a problem, especially where some of the wastewater networks are not functional, however, the situation is of less severity as registered cases of wastewater overflowing into residential areas and streets are minimal.

According to one key informant:

“In Hebron, many of the families depend on the usage of private water wells, which are usually found in agricultural properties, however, we haven’t conducted sufficient testing to determine water condition and potability”

This has led families in Hebron to buy their own water from different parties at an increased price. Informants frequently noted the need to increase women’s awareness of water and wastewater as their current role is limited to the mitigation of water consumption.

In Halhul and Doura, access to water is similarly limited but the effects on women have been more severe, also affecting their role in the agricultural sector. This is where the depletion of water and the infiltration of wastewater of agricultural areas has eliminated jobs, thus affecting women as homemakers and as working women. Issues of providing water to the family has created an increase in financial burden due to water purchasing. Women in agricultural jobs eventually had to abandon them or take up other jobs and depend on water from relative’s homes. Water in Halhul is allocated to different areas on different days, but supply is variable. According to one key informant:

“Some people obtain a higher quantity of water than they require, especially by filling their water tanks, and since the area in Halhul is mountainous, water usually doesn’t reach houses on the mountaintops. We have conducted several observations and noticed that the water doesn’t even reach the area as the networks there are dry.”

GENDER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

CLIMATE CHANGE AND RENEWABLE ENERGY

Key informants have indicated that gender roles affect the exposure, response, and adaptation to climate change risks. By reproductive gender role, women hold domestic responsibilities, including caring for family members’ health, food, cleaning, and education. In agricultural communities, women contribute to land work and are owners of small-scale agricultural projects (Deloitte 2018; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands 2018; EQA 2016). Nonetheless, according to the PCBS, about 7 percent of women working in economic activities in 2018 work in agriculture compared to 6% of males, which is a decline from what it was in 2004, when it reached 34 percent compared to 12 percent for males (PCBS 2019). Others argue that the percentage is higher and may reach 30 percent, given that agriculture is considered an extension of women’s domestic work (Hilmi 2019), and therefore falls within the reproductive versus the productive gender role. In addition, agricultural holdings are owned by the majority of males, with about 7 percent of women owning agricultural holdings (PCB 2010), suggesting their limited access and control over resources and benefits.

Gender role definitions, perceptions and discrimination create disparities in the labor market, where women face wage disadvantages, especially in fields that are male dominated such as climate and energy. Although the lack of employment opportunities affects both gender groups, women are further affected by the social dictates and consequences of being denied breadwinner status, even when they generate household income. According to key informants, women have few opportunities to elect climate change and renewable energy as sectors of education and professional development. Female students are discouraged by their families to study climate change and renewable energy, and further discouraged by the lack of employment opportunities. The few placements available go primarily to men who are given priority over women. Key informants have also pointed to discrimination in employment expectations, as women have been allocated research and desk jobs, while men are allocated field work and more dynamic and important positions. One of the key informants have indicated that

“Women work harder and invest more time and energy in their work in order to be taken seriously and to be respected, however, the social institution doesn’t value women in a professional sense, especially in male-dominated sectors.”

DOMESTIC WATER, ESPECIALLY IN THE SOUTH / HEBRON GOVERNORATE

Although the three investigated areas are located in the southern part of the West Bank and face similar circumstances related to water and wastewater management, gender roles are different in each of them, showcasing an institutional development in some. In Hebron and Halhul women aren’t provided with professional or educational opportunities that allow their involvement and participation in the water and wastewater sectors. This keeps women within socially acceptable employment spaces and expected positions as homemakers. It also broadens the existing gender gap between men and women and leaves women gender roles narrowly defined and minimally recognized in this sector.

As for Doura, the high level of education among women, including female engineers in the water and wastewater sectors, shows a small yet significant departure from social gender roles. The effect of female employment in these sectors in Doura on the social relations and structure hasn’t been explored since their engagement in the sector is fairly new and minimal.

ACCESS TO & CONTROL OVER ASSETS & RESOURCES

CLIMATE CHANGE AND RENEWABLE ENERGY

Climate change effects have implications for food security and food quality (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands 2018). According to key informants, the financial stress of mitigating the effects imposed on the food and agriculture sectors threatens men’s and women’s culturally defined gender roles, in terms of their ability to provide for their families, while imposing additional stress on family relations, with graver impacts on women as homemakers and care providers.

The constraints are also apparent in the occupational control over vital resources. Seizing of land and natural resources, which also affects food security, and the limitation on access to water resources has compounded the impact of climate change (Jarrar 2019). Key informants confirmed that when taking the unconventional path of creating a start-up or small business related to climate change and renewable energy, women are confronted with numerous constraints in accessing assets and resources, including machines, prototype-parts, equipment, land to build, test, and produce products, which are in short supply

in the West Bank and Gaza, and the lack of access to land due to the occupation. The situation is furtherly dilapidated with the limited mobility women have in the WBG compared to men.

DOMESTIC WATER, ESPECIALLY IN THE SOUTH / HEBRON GOVERNORATE

Control over assets, including domestic water, is usually held by men (Oxfam, 2020). Experts have noted that even though women are the primary users of domestic water within the household, men have access to water resources and networks, sidelining women. Primary research shows high female participation in the water and wastewater sectors in Doura where young women are studying and training in these fields. One key informant stated:

“Young female engineers have interned at the municipality and have gained experience in fieldwork missions, which are usually assigned to male counterparts, and gaining experience in the only technology used, the Scada Water System. Every year there are more of them looking to intern and work in the water and wastewater sectors”

The situation is different in Hebron and Halhoul. Key informants reported the presence and employment of only one female engineer in the water and wastewater sectors in Hebron, and none in Halhoul. A substantial gender gap is evident in Hebron where women are not hired into the sector due to gender discrimination. According to a woman key informant:

“I have obtained several academic degrees and have over 12 years of experience in the water and wastewater sectors, however, several opportunities for senior positions were withheld from me and awarded to male counterparts, even though they didn’t have the education and experience that I have.”

As for Halhoul, primary research indicates women are not involved in water and wastewater sectors at the municipality level. They are regarded as homemakers whose input is in water use and wastewater management at home. Some areas in Halhoul, such as Abu El-Qamra, have been eliminated from the agricultural sector’s production due to the high infiltration of wastewater in the area, causing men to seek employment in Israel. One key informant stated: *“The men work in Israel from Sunday to Friday and the women take their money and spend it in Hebron on Saturday.”*

This statement, reflecting male informants’ in Halhoul inability to value women’s participation in water and wastewater sectors demonstrates the dominance of the cultural norms and gender roles.

PATTERNS OF POWER AND DECISION-MAKING

CLIMATE CHANGE AND RENEWABLE ENERGY

There are no sex-disaggregated data related to energy use, decision-making, or employment. Key informants indicated that decision-making is culturally granted to men, and the climate change and renewable energy sectors are no exception. Women’s power resides in their role as home care providers where they have control over duties and chores, domestic requirements, and needs. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands 2018).

With men considered the breadwinners, the increase in energy demands, prices, and lack of resources imposes a financial burden, which can affect their role and social behavior, and heighten risks of mental and psychological issues (Deloitte 2018; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands 2018). Key

informants stated that women, especially in Gaza, have limited control over their own circumstances resulting from climate change. According to one key informant:

“I have worked on the creation of the environmental codes’ books, and at the time I was a student, so I wasn’t aware of how inaccurate our work was and how it doesn’t correlate to the current situation of buildings’ inability to contain generated heat.”

This affects women’s role as homemakers, because it falls upon them to deal with these consequences, including the usage of cooling and heating appliances. Since men are the decision-makers, use of these appliances requires men’s permission. Since using these appliances results in increases in electricity bills, unauthorized use can cause domestic disputes and lead to GBV.

Key informants noted that women leading in the climate change and renewable energy sectors are constrained by different covert and overt means. Although there are women occupying leadership positions in both sectors in the West Bank, there is a lack of women’s leadership in climate change and renewable energy, especially in Gaza where one key informant said:

“An international report by the UN has demonstrated much higher outcomes and goals achievements from organizations led by women, and this also applies to organizations here, but women are not given the opportunity to showcase that.”

DOMESTIC WATER, ESPECIALLY IN THE SOUTH / HEBRON GOVERNORATE

Decision-making in relation to water is controlled by men. Since the beginning of the 2000’s, cities such as Hebron have created water supply chains in contracts made between the public and private sectors, leading to the privatization of water management, which was promoted by the World Bank and the PA (AFD 2020). This has created a greater difficulty for gender integration into these areas. As a result of water privatization, the municipalities no longer have knowledge of the volume of water, nor the ability to identify the quantities of water available. This is due to the multiple sources and terms of references, which hinder municipalities’ ability to address women's priorities and needs. According to key informants, women are disregarded in decision-making in the three investigated areas, and men prevent women from occupying positions with decision power. Even when present, as in Doura municipality, in the water and wastewater sectors, women endure unsupportive and sidelining practices. In Hebron and Halhul the situation is of particular concern. The lack of women’s involvement in the sectors confines power and leadership to men and deprives women from access to resources and growth opportunities.

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GLOSSARY¹

Female Empowerment. When women and girls acquire the power to act freely, exercise their rights, and fulfill their potential as full and equal members of society, they are empowered. While empowerment often comes from within, and individuals empower themselves, cultures, societies, and institutions create conditions that facilitate or undermine opportunities for empowerment. USAID uses the term “female empowerment” instead of “women’s empowerment” to capture girls, adolescents, and adults.

Gender. A socially constructed set of rules, responsibilities, entitlements, and behaviors associated with being a man, a woman, or a gender-diverse individual, and the relationships between and among people according to these constructs. These social definitions and their consequences differ among and within cultures, change over time, and intersect with other factors (for example, age, class, disability, ethnicity, race, religion, citizenship, and sexual orientation.) Though these concepts are linked, the term “gender” is not interchangeable with the terms women, sex, gender identity, or gender expression.

Gender Analysis. An analytic social science tool used to identify, understand, and explain differences between male and female individuals in households, communities, and countries, and the relevance of gender norms and power relations in a specific context. Such analysis typically involves critically examining differences in the relative status of women and men and their accesses to assets, resources, opportunities, and services; the influence of gender roles and norms on the division of time between paid employment, unpaid work (including subsistence production and care for family members), and volunteer activities; the influence of gender roles and norms on leadership roles and decision-making; constraints, opportunities, and entry points for narrowing gender gaps and empowering women and girls; and potential differential impacts of development policies and programs, including unintended or negative consequences. USAID requires that the findings of a gender analysis be used to inform the design of country strategic plans, development objectives, and projects. A gender analysis can be conducted at the macro level, analyzing sociocultural, economic, health, or demographic trends and legal policies and practices at the national or regional level and/or at the micro level, examining gender relations, roles, and dynamics at the community or household level within the context provided by the macro analysis. Taking a macro or micro focus depends on the purpose for which the analysis is being undertaken.

Gender Equality. The equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men are or will become “the same” but that women’s and men’s rights, responsibilities, and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs, and priorities of women and men are considered, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not a women’s issue; instead, it should concern and fully engage men and women. Equality between women and men is a human rights issue and a precondition for and indicator of sustainable, people-centered development.

¹ These definitions are derived from the following sources: USAID, 2021, *Automated Directive Systems Glossary* (partial revision, September 2, 2021); USAID, *Women in Development. Key Terms in Gender Analysis*; USAID, *Delivering Gender Equality: A Best Practices Framework for Male-Dominated Industries* (<https://www.usaid.gov/energy/engendering-utilities/gender-equality-best-practices>); UN Women Training Centre, *Gender Equality Glossary*, January 2021 (<https://wrd.unwomen.org/index.php/practice/listing-toolbox/gender-equality-glossary>); USAID, 2022, *Engendering Industries: Integrating Gender into Workplace Policies* (<https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2022-USAID-Engendering-Industries-Guide-Workplace-Policies.pdf>); USAID, 2022, *Engendering Industries: Setting Strategic Gender Equality Targets* (<https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USAID-Engendering-Industries-Guide-Target-Setting.pdf>).

Gender Equity. The process of reaching equality. Gender equity denotes an element of interpretation of social justice, usually based on tradition, custom, religion, or culture, which is most often applied to the detriment of women. Such use of equity in relation to the advancement of women has been determined to be unacceptable. During the 1995 World Conference on Women (also known as the Beijing Conference), participants agreed that the applicable term would be “equality.” This was later confirmed by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women committee in its General Recommendation 28: “States parties are called upon to use exclusively the concepts of equality of women and men or gender equality and not to use the concept of gender equity in implementing their obligations under the Convention. The latter concept is used in some jurisdictions to refer to fair treatment of women and men, according to their respective needs. This may include equal treatment, or treatment that is different but considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities.”

Gender Gap. Any disparity between women’s and men’s condition or position in society. Gender gap often refers to a difference in average earnings between women and men, for example, “gender pay gap.” However, gender gaps exist in many areas, such as the four pillars that the World Economic Forum uses to calculate its Gender Gap Index: economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment.

ANNEX I: SCOPE OF WORK

BACKGROUND

USAID/ West Bank and Gaza (WBG) intends to conduct a gender analysis to provide a framework and baseline for effective integration of gender concerns and equities in its programs. This responds to USAID gender requirements and complies with ADS 201.3.2.9 and ADS 205, which require that Strategic Plans and programs have a design informed by a robust gender analysis.

MISSION GENDER ANALYSIS²

In alignment with ADS 205, the gender analysis will provide a country-wide (West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem) analysis of gender roles and constraints (including gender-based violence). The purpose of the gender analysis is to update the USAID/WBG 2012 Gender Analysis, inform USAID/WBG's strategic planning and program implementation, and explore new opportunities for USAID/WBG to further gender equality and female empowerment. It will identify the key gender inequalities, issues, and constraints and make recommendations on how USAID/WBG can achieve greater gender equality and social inclusion results in its programming in addition to ensuring that findings from the analysis are integrated into its strategic framework. The analysis will help the Mission identify, understand, and explain the gender gaps between men and women. It should look at differences related to geography, socioeconomic backgrounds, and age. In addition to sex disaggregation, the analysis should disaggregate population by age: children, youth (10-29), and adults, to the extent that there is information available, as they relate to the technical areas identified below. The analysis will include concrete recommendations on ways to mitigate gender inequality that can be integrated into USAID/WBG's various sectors, across rural and urban disadvantaged areas, as well as Mission's Development Objectives (DOs), Intermediate Results (IRs), and sub-IRs, Activity planning and implementation documents and tools, Activity performance monitoring and indicators, evaluation plans, and solicitations. Recommendations in the final report should clearly articulate the language/text from the analysis that should be included in the Mission's Gender and Youth Results Framework.³

Per ADS 205.3.3., the gender analysis must provide descriptive statistics on men and women (*Illustrative sectors to include education, health, community and civic participation, political participation, economic activity and earning, time use, violence, etc.*) and provide country and sector-level quantitative and qualitative data on the key gender gaps in each of the domains described in section 205.3.2:

- Laws, Policies, Regulations, and Institutional Practices
- Cultural Norms and Beliefs
- Gender Roles, Responsibilities, and Time Use
- Access to and Control over Assets and Resources
- Patterns of Power and Decision-making.

This data will focus on the country level and on specific sectors where Mission resources are likely to be concentrated. At this level, the analysis should, to the extent possible, also provide information about

² Gender Analysis: USAID uses gender analysis to identify, understand, and describe gender differences and the impact of gender inequalities on a sector or program at the country or project level. Gender analysis is a required element of strategic planning and project design and is the basic foundation on which gender integration is built (ADS 201.3.9.3 and ADS 201.3.11.6).

³ This document is currently undergoing refinement.

groups of women or men that are particularly disadvantaged or that have strong unmet needs for empowerment (e.g., women from marginalized areas, women with disabilities, and so forth). It would also be useful to include, to the extent possible, anecdotal data of needs that are currently lacking empirical data for Mission consideration to pursue collecting relevant data in the future. All data and statistics will be disaggregated by age group and demographics⁴ for the purposes of comparing gender issues within those groups and among non-group members.

Key lines of inquiry for the analysis include the following (all of which should cover the relevant domains listed in ADS section 205.3.2:

1. What are the current gaps between men and women that belong to the following groups (listed below) in terms of gender analysis key domains⁵, and provide recommendations on how the USAID/WBG strategic plans and programs can help close gender gaps found in the areas and sectors where USAID/WBG is active:
 - a. **Primary:** Palestinian women and men in general, women with low socioeconomic background, urban and rural inhabitants, in the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem.
 - b. **Secondary:** Youth, people with disabilities, survivors of gender-based violence⁶, and sexual minorities
2. What are the key issues, constraints (including norms and policies as well as others), and opportunities for integrating gender equality and female empowerment across the following sectors:
 - a. Economic development, workforce development and job readiness, micro, small and medium enterprise development, employment, and fiscal reforms
 - b. Democracy, political participation, citizen engagement, human rights, media and freedom of speech, governance, rule of law, and civil society
 - c. Agriculture, water resources and wastewater management, including environmental protection
 - d. Climate change and energy
 - e. Family health and population, including SRH, growth, maternal and child mortality, nutrition, access to and quality of health services, health financing and systems strengthening
 - f. Learning outcomes related to the education sector, learning environment, school violence, teaching profession
 - g. Infrastructure planning, operation and maintenance
3. What are the gender issues for which USAID/WBG possesses a comparative advantage, taking into consideration the strategies and interventions of other major donors in the country, and USAID's legal constraints⁷? For example, the U.S. cannot provide support for designated foreign terrorist organizations, like Hamas, and USAID cannot provide support that directly benefits the Palestinian Authority. USAID can provide additional guidance on this point verbally. We also

⁴ Geographic location, education level, employment income, etc.

⁵ Laws, Policies, Regulations, and Institutional Practices; Cultural Norms and Beliefs; Gender Roles, Responsibilities, and Time Use; Access to and Control over Assets and Resources; Patterns of Power and Decision-making.

⁶ Include information, to the extent possible, on repeated GBV

⁷ USAID will provide more information once the discussion with the partner takes place

recommend reading the recent Congressional Research Service report for more background.⁸

4. What are the prioritized programming and collaboration areas with other donors and relevant actors that are recommended for USAID where it can affect impact?
5. What are the recommendations for future programming? How can the different portfolios be strengthened, adjusted, or expanded to address identified gaps and to more effectively integrate gender equality and female empowerment into its programming in various sectors?

The analysis report should identify key trends and emerging issues that have the potential to shape future programming for USAID, including:

- a. Results (and associated indicators) that could be incorporated into program planning and activity design.
- b. Supportive strategies and national resources, including activities or initiatives by other donors, host country government institutions, and civil society groups, and any possible areas of collaboration or partnership.
- c. Resources required to strengthen the gender equality dimensions of the country program, including human resources, funds, etc.
- d. Anticipated areas of resistance or constraints, and how to cope with these.

The research team will work with the Mission Gender Advisor to explore options for how best to achieve gender equality goals; while taking into account the U.S. National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality. They will also work with the Mission's Gender Advisor and Gender and Youth Working Group (GWYWG) to propose gender indicators and an M&E framework, and as appropriate, to incorporate the Agency's eight gender key issue indicators into the existing framework.

ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

The gender analysis will comprise a combination of primary and secondary data collection. It will begin with an extensive desk research that will review and analyze secondary data, including, but not limited to: relevant national policies, laws, and regulations; sectoral analyses in the research and literature conducted by national government entities, USAID, other donors or international organizations, civil society, universities and think tanks; national and regional statistical databases; regional or global comparators that have made significant strides on gender equality, especially as related to women's economic and political participation; and, any literature relevant to the sectors and the region. The literature review will be focused at the macro and sectoral level to identify the gender and social inclusion inequalities or obstacles to female empowerment related to the mission's overall priority focus areas. Relevant statistical indicators will be selected and updated, focused on the sectors and regions prioritized by USAID.

Primary data collection will include semi-structured interviews and group interviews and/or focus group discussions (FGD) with government counterparts, the UN System, national NGOs, key civil society stakeholders, experts and resource groups, academics, implementing partner staff, and program beneficiaries as feasible.

⁸ <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/RL/RL34074>

For the gender analysis, the research team will consider the following:

1. Comprehensive review and analysis of pertinent literature and documents. Relevant materials might include, but not be limited to:
 - a. Integrated Country Strategies (ICS)
 - b. Recent literature that addresses gender issues in specific sectors and areas of strategic interest for the Mission
 - c. Other gender related documents that were produced by the PA, CSOs, UN Agencies and donors.
 - d. Media and grey literature.
2. USAID/Washington documents including, but not limited to:
 - a. [The Automated Directives System \(ADS\) 201 and 205, and the Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy \(under revision\)](#)
 - b. [The US National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality](#)
 - c. [U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence](#)
 - d. [U.S. Strategy to Empower Adolescent Girls](#)
 - e. [USAID's Youth in Development Policy](#)
 - f. [USAID Disability Policy Paper](#)
 - g. [Advancing Disability-Inclusive Development](#)
 - h. [USAID Policy on Diversity in the Workforce, Equal Employment Opportunity and Non-Discrimination](#)
 - i. [Private Sector Engagement Policy](#)
 - j. [USAID Climate Change Strategy Draft](#)
 - k. [Joint Regional Strategy: Middle East and North Africa](#)
 - l. [Women, Peace and Security Strategy](#)
3. USAID/WBG, such as, but not limited to:
 - a. WBG 2012 Gender Analysis
 - b. USAID/WBG Results Framework
 - c. TVET Gender Assessment
 - d. Banyan Global 2016 GBV analysis
 - e. Other documents related to activities currently under solicitation
4. Meetings and discussions with USAID/WBG staff involved in developing the Mission programs. These will include:
 - a. A PowerPoint presentation of preliminary findings and recommendations of the Gender Analysis to USAID (the Gender Advisor, Gender and Youth Working Group (GYWG) and Program Office).
 - b. A PowerPoint presentation of final report findings and recommendations to the USAID Front Office and technical teams.
5. Interviews with select key expert stakeholders, beneficiaries and other community members involved in current and proposed programs, including local gender expert resource groups; focus groups; and site visits to selected program activities, as time permits, to ask beneficiaries

about problems, successes, and possibilities for improving attention to gender in USAID activities. To the extent possible, a representative from each technical team of USAID/WBG will accompany the team during relevant interviews, focus groups, and site visits.

MAIN AUDIENCES

The main audience of the analysis is USAID staff and current and future USAID implementing partners. The analysis will particularly help the Program Office and Technical Teams to better incorporate and focus on gender integration throughout the program cycle, with particular attention to activity design. In addition, an approved version of the analysis will be accessible publicly to all interested parties.

PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE AND LEVEL OF EFFORT (LOE)

The period of performance for the gender analysis is estimated from July 2022 – December 2022. *Please note that USAID requires a vetting requirement and thus sufficient time is built in to vet any local personnel.*

Logistics support for the field research, translation/interpretation, editing and graphic design for the report will be added and proposed by the contractor.

DELIVERABLES

The schedule of deliverables reflects the level of effort and does not include the time that would take USAID to review and approve them.

The research team must submit the following deliverables, which are associated to the schedule of payments as shown at the end of this section:

Deliverable 1: Inception Report (IR) and Work Plan. The IR is key since its contents will provide a fully-fledged and detailed description of how the gender analysis will be carried out from beginning to end. It must include a detailed methodology for the Gender Analysis, detailed activities for the operationalization of the desk review and potential primary data collection, including localities and timeline for both fieldwork and the entire work, and necessary annexes to include any other relevant material. The research team is expected to conduct comprehensive desk research in preparation for the analysis, based on which it will identify remaining gaps that necessitate additional field work for primary data collection or validation of secondary data.

The IR is expected to have benefited from (a) a review of all statistical databases identifying availability of information; (b) a review of all the provided literature, including additional secondary information retrieved by the research team; (c) the initial/ kick-off meeting (or conference call); and (d) any other preparatory work before desk review and data processing. The IR must be clear and coherent and should not have any remaining issues and questions regarding any design or implementation issues. The Work Plan will include a detailed schedule of desk review activities and fieldwork, the timeline for data processing and analysis and drafting of the final report, and any other relevant information.

The inception report and workplan should be regarded as a living document; adjustments can be made in accordance with learning and in consultation with the

USAID mission.

Deliverable 2: Products include: a) a **PowerPoint presentation of preliminary findings** and recommendations of the Gender Analysis to USAID Gender Advisor, GYWG and Program Office; b) **exit briefings** with the Gender Advisor and Program Office.

Deliverable 3: **Draft of the Gender Analysis report.** It is important that the report follows the pre-established format in the IR. The draft of the final report will include tables and graphs, index and acronyms, and appendices (unless the latter are extensive). The report must not exceed 35 pages in length (without including appendices, lists of key informants, etc.) and will include any database in an Excel sheet in electronic format.

Deliverable 4: Products include: a) **final Gender Analysis report**; b) a **PowerPoint presentation of final report findings and recommendations to the USAID Front Office and technical teams**; and c) **external summary report of the main findings and recommendations (three pages) that can be shared with USAID implementing partners, Interagency Gender Working Group and other donors.**

The final report will be in English, with the Executive Summary provided in both English and Arabic. The structure of the final report is provided in Annex I of this SOW. The team must also submit all documents collected as part of this task in a Google Drive. This will include data records in Excel in electronic format and any other data collection instruments used. In case of semi-structured interviews, transcription files of key informants must be provided. *Note: Due to PII concerns and informed consent forms, recording interviews will be sparingly utilized. Submitting written notes from some interviews will be the preferred method; names of organization/government offices can be provided, along with job titles (and/or approximate). Removing any information from the written notes upon request will be adhered to.*

Deliverable timetable West Bank-Gaza Gender Analysis -revised December 2022

Stages	Deliverables	Dates and Timeframes (Subject to Change)
Preparation	Contractor recruits and on-boards a Team Leader for the Gender Analysis.	August-September 2022
	Contractor recruits and on-boards the other members of the research team	September-10 October 2022

	Contractor organizes and facilitates a kick-off conference call (date and time to be determined in coordination with USAID).	13 October 2022
	Contractor conducts an initial desk review of pertinent, accessible literature and datasets to inform the Inception Report and identify data gaps to be addressed by field work	13 October – 4 November 2022
	Contractor develops field research protocols for qualitative data collection informed by the initial desk review	4-15 November 2022
Inception Report and Workplan	Contractor prepares a draft Inception Report and Work Plan for the Gender Analysis, which includes a detailed methodology (datasets and documents for secondary analysis to be included in desk review, domain framework, instruments to be used, identified risks and mitigation actions). The Inception Report will reflect MSI’s approach to the study, which is to focus on sectors and subsectors of priority to USAID in the order of priority agreed.	4-21 November 2022
	Contractor submits the draft Inception Report and Workplan.	23 November 2022
	USAID reviews Inception Report and Work Plan and provides feedback.	25-30 November 2022
	Contractor incorporates USAID feedback.	1-6 December 2022
	Contractor submits final Inception Report and Workplan	7 December 2022
Field Research	Contractor conducts semi-structured interviews, group discussions	1 December 2022 – 5 January 2023

and Supplemental Desk Research	Contractor conducts supplemental desk research to complete the literature review of key documents and relevant datasets, with a focus on priority areas one and two	1 December 2022 – 5 January 2023
	Contractor conducts analysis and drafts summary of findings for priority areas one and elements of priority area two.	12 -20 December 2022
Draft Summary of Findings Priority Areas One and Two	Contractor submits a draft Gender Analysis summary of findings , including recommendations, for priority area one and elements of priority area two.	5 January 2023
	USAID reviews draft Gender Analysis summary of initial findings priorities one and two and provides consolidated feedback.	6-11 January 2023
	Contractor incorporates USAID feedback on summary of initial findings priorities one and two	11-13 January 2023
Final Report and Presentation	Contractor completes analysis and draft summary of findings for full study covering all three priority areas.	13-27 January 2023
	Contractor submits draft of complete Gender Analysis report	30 January 2023
	Contractor presents preliminary findings and recommendations and provides exit briefings to USAID	Week of 30 January date and time TBD
	USAID provides final comments.	31 January- 3 February 2023
	Contractor incorporates USAID final comments.	4-15 February 2023
	Contractor presents final report findings and recommendations to USAID	Week of 13 February 2023 Date and Time TBD

	Contractor submits final Gender Analysis report.	16 February 2023
	Contractor submits an external summary report of the main findings and recommendation.	17 February 2023

RESEARCH TEAM

Given the strong Palestinian expertise, the Mission requires limited engagement from headquarters (contractual management, oversight, copy editing, etc.) for this task. As such, the contractor must propose the number of consultants (Palestinian) to perform the gender analysis. The National Team Leader, who will also be in charge of the gender analysis and the other local consultant(s) will complement each other with expertise in the different sectors in which USAID/WBG works and in accessing the different locations of the Gender Analysis (West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem). The contractor is responsible for all logistical support.

The Mission’s Gender Advisor will join the analysis team in their field work to the extent possible.

The National Team Leader must have the following experience and skills:

- At least 10 years of experience in development areas relevant to USAID/WBG’s work, including proven experience in conducting high quality gender analyses in the targeted areas under this analysis.
- A master’s degree in sociology, anthropology, gender studies, international development, or a relevant social science field.
- Experience in the drafting and implementation of qualitative research instruments and possess working computer skills, particularly in Word and Excel.
- Leadership skills, and must be able to lead meetings, coordinate and gather different points of view of members of the team, draft initial documents with conclusions and recommendations, and prepare reports and presentations.
- Excellent verbal and written skills in English.

At least one of the other team members proposed must be a senior gender expert familiar with public policies addressing gender and social inclusion gaps, gender-based violence, youth, disability, and gender agendas and programs of the main development agencies in the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem, particularly USAID.

All consultants will sign a USAID non-disclosure agreement prior to beginning work.

STRUCTURE OF FINAL GENDER ANALYSIS REPORT

The final Gender Analysis report will be in English. It should include the following sections (not to exceed 35 pages):

Executive summary (4 pages): Synthesizes main findings, recommendations, and lessons learned. Does not include new information not available in the report. This must be a stand-alone document. *[An Arabic version of the Executive Summary is required and is not part of the page count]*.

Purpose (1 page): Clearly specifies the purpose of the analysis, the use of findings, the decisions for which evidence is being provided, and audiences of the report. The analysis topics of interest are articulated to the purpose; questions regarding lessons learned are included in this section.

Context and Background (4 pages): This section summarizes the sector/themes under analysis in regard to the main problem addressed, as well as a description of the target population, geographic area, economic, social, historic and cultural context.

Methodology and limitations (5 pages): This section includes a detailed description of the methodology and instruments used in the analysis. This allows the reader to estimate the degree of credibility and objectivity in the data gathered and in the analyses performed. In case of primary data collection, instruments and sampling criteria must be explained. Here, a summary table must be included which presents the following: instruments used, types of key informants, information gathered, and limitations or observations encountered during data collection. Similarly, limitations regarding secondary data analysis should be disclosed.

Findings, conclusions, and recommendations (up to 20 pages): This is the main section of the report. Findings will be clearly supported by multiple evidence sources referenced in the text, increasing its credibility. To the extent possible, evidence will be presented by using graphs and tables, and any other form that facilitates the readers' understanding of the text. Recommendations must be concise, specific, practical, and relevant supporting decision-making and the achievement of results on behalf of key stakeholders (including USAID), as appropriate.

Appendices: Will include at a minimum: a) SOW of the analysis, b) description of the design and methods used c) copies of the instruments used, d) Bibliography: sources used for statistical and desk review analysis (primary and secondary), e) other appendices required by USAID or provided by the analysis team.

The report must also include database files with acronyms.

ANNEX 2: INCEPTION REPORT

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

USAID/West Bank and Gaza (WBG) intends this gender analysis to provide a framework and baseline for effective integration of gender concerns and equities into its programs. This responds to USAID gender requirements and complies with ADS 201.3.2.9 and ADS 205, which require that the design of strategic plans and programs be informed by a robust gender analysis. Gender analysis is a mandatory element of strategic planning and project design and is the foundation on which gender integration is built (ADS 201.3.9.3 and ADS 201.3.11.6).

PURPOSE

USAID/WBG has requested Management Systems International (MSI) to contract a team of gender experts to conduct the gender analysis. The purpose of the gender analysis is to update the USAID/WBG 2012 Gender Analysis, inform USAID/WBG's strategic planning and program implementation, and explore new opportunities for USAID/WBG to further gender equality and female empowerment. It will identify the key gender inequalities, issues, and constraints and make recommendations on how USAID/WBG can achieve greater gender equality and social inclusion results in its programming, in addition to ensuring that findings from the analysis are integrated into its strategic framework. The analysis will help the Mission identify, understand, and explain the gender gaps between men and women. It will include concrete recommendations on ways to mitigate gender inequality that can be integrated into USAID/WBG's various sectors, across rural and urban vulnerable areas, and the Mission's development objectives, intermediate results (IRs), sub-IRs, and activity planning.

GENDER ANALYSIS RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This gender analysis will identify, examine, and explain gaps between men and women in households, communities, and nationally and will explore the relevance of gender norms and power relations in WBG.

The gender analysis will provide the WBG Mission with descriptive statistics on men and women in the priority sectors and subsectors in order identified by the Mission, as follows:

1. Gender-based violence (GBV), with a focus on shelters, perpetrators' rehabilitation, children as GBV survivors and witnesses, and the East Jerusalem Hospital Network -because of its service to people with heightened vulnerabilities and with limited access to services
2. Women's leadership and empowerment, with focus on economic empowerment, governance in higher education, governance in early education, female-headed households in Gaza, political participation and peace building, and local government
3. Gender issues in the environmental sphere, including domestic water in the West Bank (especially in Hebron governorate); climate change and renewable energy; agriculture, wastewater management, and reuse.

The analysis will provide country and sector-level quantitative and qualitative data on the key gender gaps and analysis of the constraints within each of the domains described in section 205.3.2 that prevent equal participation of women in social and economic development:

1. laws, policies, regulations, and institutional practices
2. cultural norms and beliefs
3. gender roles, responsibilities, and time use
4. access to and control over assets and resources
5. patterns of power and decision-making.

These data will focus on the country level and on the sectors and subsectors where USAID/WBG Mission resources are likely concentrated. At this level, the analysis will (to the extent possible) also provide information about groups of women or men who are particularly disadvantaged or have severe, unmet needs for empowerment (for example, women from marginalized areas in Gaza, East Jerusalem, and Area C in West Bank; women with disabilities; youth; and other groups). It will include (to the extent possible) anecdotal evidence of needs in areas that are currently lacking empirical data, for the Mission's consideration as areas to pursue collecting relevant data in the future.

The research questions USAID/WBG identified for the gender analysis cover three focus areas: (i) program targets and locations, (ii) gender issues, and (iii) opportunities for gender integration.

PROGRAM TARGETS

- a. What are the current gaps between men and women who belong to the following groups in relation to gender analysis key domains? Provide recommendations on how the USAID/WBG strategic plan and programs can help close gender gaps found in the areas and sectors where USAID/WBG is active.
 - i. **Primary:** Palestinian women and men in general, women with low socioeconomic background, and urban and rural inhabitants
 - ii. **Secondary:** Youth, people with disabilities, survivors of GBV, and sexual minorities
- b. How does the division of the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza affect men and women differentially in your sector? (Provide information disaggregated by geographical area and age.)

GENDER ISSUES

- a. What are the key issues and constraints (including norms, policies, and others) for integrating gender equality and female empowerment across the sectors?

OPPORTUNITIES FOR GENDER INTEGRATION

- a. What are the opportunities for gender integration across the priority sectors and subsectors?
- b. What are the gender issues for which USAID/WBG has a comparative advantage, considering the strategies and interventions of other major donors in the country, and USAID's legal constraints?
- c. What prioritized programming and collaboration areas with other donors and relevant actors are recommended for USAID where it can affect impact?
- d. What are the recommendations for future programming? How can the different portfolios be strengthened, adjusted, or expanded to address identified gaps and to integrate gender equality and female empowerment more effectively into programming in various sectors?

INCEPTION REPORT SECTIONS

This inception report is based on a review of relevant documents on topics related to the research questions. The desk review of available documents and reports focused on country and sector-level quantitative and qualitative data on the key gender gaps in each of the five domains described in section

ADS 205.3.2, which are: laws, policies, and institutional practices; cultural norms and beliefs; gender roles and responsibilities; access to and control over assets and resources; and patterns of power and decision-making. This is per the identified sectoral and sub sectoral priority areas. The inception and design report consists of the following sections.

Section I: Introduction. This section includes the purpose, scope, and research questions of the gender analysis. It concludes with a description of the inception report sections.

Section II: Review of the Country Context. This section provides an overview of the development context, addressing the key challenges and the situation with regards to gender equality and female empowerment.

Section III: Identified Gaps by Priority Sector. This section will present a brief summary of the major sectors and subsectors prioritized for the gender analysis to align with USAID program priorities and will highlight some of the main gaps in data and knowledge identified by the research team from its desk study.

Section IV: Gender-Sensitive Statistics and Indicators. This section will provide a review of existing gender-sensitive statistics and indicators for WBG. This will include types and sectors of indicators available that measure gender equality in WBG and the measured level and status of gender equality.

Section V: Approach and Analytical Framework. This section will present the methodology for the analysis, including a description of the analytical approach and analysis frameworks that will inform findings, conclusions, and recommendations for the report.

Section VI: Research Methodology. This section will review the data collection and analysis methods and the tools that will be applied.

Section VII: Work Plan, Deliverables, and Timeline. This section will include a description of the anticipated schedule of activities for completion of the analysis and assessment research and data collection, including the timelines and deadlines for submission of deliverables and reporting.

Annexes: Five annexes are provided at this design phase:

Annex 1: Inception Report Document Review Protocol

Annex 2: Draft Final Report Outline

Annex 3: Key Informant Interview Protocol

Annex 4: Focus Group Discussion Protocol

Annex 5: Small Group Meeting Protocol

Annex 6: Intersectional Gender Analysis Matrix

Annex 7: Data Collection Sources and Methods

Annex 8: Protocol for Voluntary Informed Consent and Data Protection

REVIEW OF THE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, SOCIAL CONTEXT

DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES AND NATIONAL STRATEGIES

The context of Palestinian social development is greatly influenced by the prolonged occupation and the sociopolitical relations among Palestinian governing authorities. In the past several years, the social, political, and economic situation has deteriorated rapidly, triggered by the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, the observed decline in peace prospects, and the deterioration of conditions in

the Gaza Strip, which has been under a military blockade for more than 15 years. The blockade continues to hinder sustainable development opportunities for Palestinians in Gaza and impedes reconstruction while increasing investment costs. The territorial division of Palestinians along sociopolitical and geographic lines has contributed to the fragmentation of the population. Hamas has ruled the Gaza Strip since June 2007. The Fatah-led Palestinian Authority continues to rule the West Bank. In this context, the Gaza Strip has developed a parallel legal framework. Parliamentary and presidential elections have not taken place for a long time, and the split between Fatah and Hamas continues (Al Jazeera September 24, 2020). Overall, an unstable security situation with numerous restrictions to access and movement characterizes the operational environment.

The population in WBG remains vulnerable and structurally disadvantaged because of the ongoing occupation and the political division between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. In 2020, the population in WBG was 5.2 million (PCBS 2021), with a growth rate of 2.8 percent; it is expected to increase to 6.9 million by 2030. Population growth rates will remain high, despite the expected decline in the total fertility rate, which reached 3.8 births per woman (3.8 births in the West Bank and 3.9 births in Gaza), according to the latest Palestinian Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey (MICS) in 2020. Demographic trends and future changes in the age structure indicate a decline in the number of children (ages 0–14 years), a slight increase in the number of elderly (over age 60), and a sharp increase in the working-age population. This requires targeted investment in youth and women’s empowerment to provide an opportunity for development, economic growth, and healthier lives.

DEVELOPMENTAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONTEXT

According to the 2020 Human Development Index, Palestine ranks 115th out of 189 countries in the middle category. Life expectancy at birth (72.9 years), average years of schooling (8.9 years), and expected years of schooling (13.0 years) are higher than the corresponding averages for Arab countries. The Palestinian population can be divided into two groups: refugees and nonrefugees. In 2018, refugees registered by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East accounted for about 41 percent of the total resident population. Approximately 64 percent of the Palestinian population in Gaza are refugees, and 26 percent of Palestinians in the West Bank are refugees. Of the total refugee population in the WBG, 7 percent suffer from at least one disability, and in 2017, 39 percent of Palestinian refugees were living in poverty. According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), the percentage of children with disabilities is 13.4 percent in the West Bank and 10.8 percent in the Gaza Strip (PCBS 2020).

The limited physical space allowed to Palestinians continues to hinder the provision of basic services to the population, especially to the most vulnerable. Ongoing sociopolitical internal unrest, protracted occupation, and limited and shrinking access to resources continue to weaken the institutional legal system and administrative capacity needed to develop Palestinian political, economic and social systems. Low capacity for policy development, coordination and monitoring, transparency and accountability, and limited oversight by the parliamentary system remain obstacles to reform.

Facing these challenges, the Palestinian government has developed national policy tools for positive reform. The Putting Citizens First Palestinian National Policy Agenda 2017–2022 (NPA) was published in December 2016 to create a viable, unified, and fully independent state. It is the fourth national plan since 2008. The 2017–2022 NPA aims to align public institutions with Palestinian citizens while using available resources to improve the quality of life, and to be a guide for developing strong and citizen-centered public institutions. Key national priorities are defined, including social justice and rule of law, and strengthening

social protection. The NPA sets the government's strategic direction within the framework of three pillars, which are broken down into their respective national priorities and national policies.

The 2017–2022 NPA's third pillar emphasizes the role of national social protection systems, transparency and integrity standards, and the need for good governance and reducing persistent multidimensional poverty. Previously, the Palestinian Reform and Development Plan 2008–2018 established a basis for allocating state resources, with the Palestinian Authority committing to implement an integrated policymaking, planning, and budgeting process. This included developing a Medium-Term Expenditure Framework to allocate resources over the medium term according to national policy priorities. Another goal was to improve government transparency, accountability, coordination, and communication. However, the progress of government reform continues to be hampered by internal political divisions, relations with Israel, and the international diplomatic-economic sphere.

The NPA aims to promote social inclusion by establishing job creation programs for marginalized groups, such as people with disabilities, youth, women, and former prisoners. The focus on youth is also evident in the NPA's goals: to empower and equip Palestinian youth to participate meaningfully in public life and state building, and to place a special emphasis on supporting disadvantaged youth. Other relevant national sectoral and cross-sectoral strategies include the national sectoral health strategy, the national social development strategy, the national youth strategy, and the cross-sectoral national gender strategy.

IDENTIFIED GAPS BY PRIORITY SECTORS

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Patriarchy-rooted cultural tolerance of GBV and the Israeli occupation are two systems of oppression in the WBG. In one recent study, participating women's rights organizations unanimously agreed that patriarchal forms of expression in the dominant social norms supporting rigid gender roles and stereotypes negatively affect their work. Early marriage, forced marriage, honor killing, and tolerant attitudes toward rape are among the manifestations of GBV. Attacks and hostilities against feminist activists and women's rights organizations, together with a lack of government protection, were a strongly shared security concern among these organizations. The same study showed that knowledge and attitudes about GBV among Palestinian youth (both men and women) are low (AIRifai 2022).

Another study on clinical management of rape in the Palestinian Territories shows that service providers' have a high acceptance of rape myths. This affects their response to the needs of rape survivors who seek health care services. Many male physicians are unable to empathize with a raped girl or woman. They either lack the clinical skills, or they fear the perpetrator's revenge, in the absence of protections for medical doctors or other health service providers (AIRifai 2018). GBV in the Gaza Strip is a key protection and health concern that leaves women and other vulnerable groups disempowered. The protracted humanitarian crisis in WBG and its impact, especially in the Gaza Strip, has exacerbated GBV in all its forms, including sexual violence, domestic violence, and child marriage. Although underreported, UNFPA research finds that about 15 percent of currently or formerly married women have been exposed to sexual violence in Gaza (UNFPA 2018).

The WBG's geographical fragmentation, along with strict control of movement and weak political and legal systems, has made many localities more vulnerable to violence. Thus, violence in the Palestinian context is multidimensional and deeply embedded in occupation and in the patriarchal social norms that are reproduced and reinforced in the context of occupation (Oxfam 2019). A study conducted by UN Women concludes that "women and girls should not be left alone in such a complex, fragmented, and dysfunctional system. The present conditions of political uncertainty, added to the preexisting condition of dispossession from the Occupying Power, makes the likelihood of effecting the types of sweeping changes needed to ensure true access to justice very slim" (UN Women 2014, p. 6).

Some studies found a strong relationship between domestic violence and males' exposure to political violence, mainly in the West Bank's Area C (Hammami 2016). Women and girls in areas classified as C and in camps have higher rates of violence and less access to health, social, and legal services because of restrictions of movement and development (Oxfam 2019), and the Palestinian police, who often play a role in denying women's access to protection services. This review has observed that the approach for addressing GBV is selective and inconsistent, with little coordination between the different actors. Only less sensitive and challenging GBV issues focusing on women are addressed with the almost full exclusion of other involved parties. For example, GBV perpetrators are completely out of sight of both policy makers and service providers. From the desk research, the research team found no information on rehabilitation services offered to GBV perpetrators. One of the main inconsistencies is related to the extent of different actors' adherence to and implementation of the Referral System for GBV Survivors, and to the reluctance of some government and NGO actors to use the system's referral and follow up forms. Another inconsistency is related to institutional practices such as the degree of effort made to create a favorable and supportive environment to GBV survivors who seek services. Survivors are often met with poor attitudes and behavior among service providers in various service sectors.

Identified Gaps: Gender-Based Violence

1. Information gaps exist concerning the impact of policies related to GBV and their effectiveness.
2. Selectiveness and adoption of traditional approaches in addressing GBV left out critical actors in the making of women's violence experiences, most significant of all are the perpetrators and other influential actors, such as opinion leaders and religious figures, who were found almost completely absent at all levels and spheres in the reviewed literature, including regarding rehabilitation, healing, guiding, and advocacy. These are all areas for the research to address.
3. Scarcity of information on on-line GBV against women and girls and boys confirm a need for generating more and fresh data on the subject beyond GBV prevalence, incidence, and typology.

SHELTERS

Shelters for GBV survivors in the WBG date back to 1999. Currently, there are five shelters: three in the West Bank - the Mehwar Center, the Nablus Safe Home, and the Jericho shelter; and two in Gaza - the Hayat Center, and the Aman Center. Of these, two are governmental; Mehwar in the West Bank and Aman in Gaza, and the three others are owned and run by women-led NGOs. The shelters provide services for hosted individuals (usually women facing violence) including accessibility, housing facilities, confidentiality, support in different forms, and security (UN Women 2018).

The number of shelters in WBG is limited, but they have been a primary source of support for women and children for decades, to varying degrees. However, the data on the shelters' structures, conditions, services, and processes show that these vary from one shelter to another, especially regarding the services provided. The shelters are also targeting one gender group while limiting the access to services for other gender groups that might be in dire need of shelter aid and support. Further investigation in the form of primary data is required because the secondary data provides limited information on the shelters' overall image and their conditions.

Identified Gaps: Shelters

1. Staff capacities, expertise, and experience in dealing with different challenges for GBV survivors is an issue worth exploring and developing, especially because different psychological and mental health requirements necessarily emerge. This includes the mental health needs and well-being of staff, which is a key determinant of service quality.
2. Lack of important services such as childcare for beneficiaries with children is a service gap that imposes further implications for and stress on the beneficiaries.
3. The extent of shelters' infrastructure responsiveness to the needs of women beneficiaries with disabilities and their access to the available services is a significant information gap.
4. SGBV survivors' reintegration modalities or mechanisms, including use of governance instruments such as protocols or standard operating procedures, is a critical information gap.
5. Beneficiaries' satisfaction with the services they receive, and the extent to which the shelters' offerings meet their needs was not examined in any previous research.

CHILDREN AS GBV WITNESSES

Children witnessing domestic violence can easily become an intergenerational issue if left unattended. Data on the subject are needed to inform planning and services. To develop useful guidelines for services dealing with witnessing domestic violence and give children awareness of supportive settings, institutions need to activate multilevel prevention processes and initiatives exploring the victim-perpetrator relationship, the “collateral victims” (witnesses), law enforcement and services, centers, and specialists involved who undertake networking as needed. However, legal and social policies aimed at protecting, assisting, and empowering women and bringing offenders to justice may not consider child witnesses of violence to be a direct target for services. At the same time, there are international studies exploring witnessing domestic violence and its consequences, but there is little research concerning welfare and health professionals involved in the care of children witnessing domestic violence (Carnevale et al. 2020). These are all information gaps that must be filled to inform programs.

Identified Gaps: Children Witnesses of Domestic Violence

1. Children witnessing domestic violence is a gap area in most levels and aspects in WBG—in services, programs, and research and evidence generation.
2. International studies exploring witnessing domestic violence and its consequences could inform similar work in WBG. These are all information gaps that must be filled to inform programs.
3. Useful guidelines for services dealing with witnessing domestic violence are needed, along with giving children awareness of supportive settings. To do so, institutions need to activate multilevel prevention processes and initiatives exploring the victim-perpetrator relationship, the “collateral victims” (witnesses), law enforcement and services, centers, and specialists involved who undertake networking as needed.

EAST JERUSALEM HOSPITAL NETWORK

The Palestinian medical administration is divided into West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem, and the health care system spans all three of these regions. Patients in the West Bank or Gaza need permission from the Israeli government to be treated in a different region, and when permission is granted are referred to hospitals in East Jerusalem. Tens of thousands of people per year are referred to East Jerusalem when necessary medical treatments are unavailable in the Palestinian health care system, where the Palestinian Ministry of Health covers the cost (MAP 2016).

It is evident that the health care system in East Jerusalem is the pinnacle of the medical services provided to the Palestinian public, where expertise, resources, and gender sensitivity and inclusivity are available. However, the lack of financial support has reduced the capabilities of these establishments, creating a gender gap in the health care and provision context.

Identified Gaps: East Jerusalem Hospitals Network

1. East Jerusalem hospitals’ capabilities are increasingly compromised because of the lack of financial support from the Palestinian Government.

2. Accessibility is a huge gap in the health care system for Palestinians. Patients accessing different regions can be put at risk because of the denial of health care services or delays receiving permissions for services.
3. The inclusion and support for different gender groups in the healthcare system has been evident in the East Jerusalem hospitals and their systems. However, the situation in the WBG is different and requires further integration of gender groups through vocational and occupational support.
4. The denial of parents' permissions for children creates a gap of emotional and psychological support for children, which is not usually filled because not all hospitals provide psychological support services.
5. The financial gap in the support for hospitals in East Jerusalem is increasingly affecting the provision of medical services, which subsequently creates a bigger gap in the Palestinian health care system regarding gender and health.

WOMEN LEADERSHIP AND FEMALE EMPOWERMENT

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Palestinian women have made strides toward greater participation in the labor market and entrepreneurship, though at a slow pace (Al-Akhras September 16, 2022). The gender disparities of labor force participation in WBG are largely linked to economic, social, and cultural barriers, including lack of a supportive environment for women's entrepreneurship. Much of the female labor force is concentrated in low-skilled, low-income economic activities, including part-time, seasonal, and casual work. Because of a lack of nontraditional vocational and technical training and few alternative sources of financing, many Palestinian women are discouraged from starting their own business (UN Women 2019). Women's participation rate in the labor force increased from 16 percent in 2020 to 17 percent in 2021. By contrast, men's participation in the labor force reached 69 percent in 2021, compared with 65 percent in 2020. The unemployment rate in 2021 among women participating in the labor force was 43 percent, compared with 22 percent among men (PCBS 2022a).

Average daily wages for Palestinian workers in Israel and the settlements are four times higher than the average daily wages in Gaza and double those in the West Bank (ILO 2022, 33). A key factor behind the gender gap is that workers employed in Israel and in Israeli settlements, where wages are notably higher than in the WBG, are predominantly men. Furthermore, in the Palestinian private sector, the incidence of low pay has an unambiguous gender dimension, with 60 percent of women earning less than the minimum wage—more than double the corresponding share of men (ESCWA 2021, 33).

Palestinian labor law gives the right to work for every capable person on the basis of equal opportunities without discrimination (PWWSD 2021, 19). Despite this, legislative gaps are among the obstacles to women's economic advancement and empowerment. These include the absence of comprehensive provisions in relation to nondiscrimination, equal pay for work of equal value, prohibition of GBV, including sexual harassment, in the workplace, and legal coverage for domestic workers.

The role of women in economic activity and their position in the labor market is affected by customs and traditions, which restrict women to specific professions and work sites (Wafa 2022). Other factors include limited access to relevant training, the unrecognized unpaid care work (childcare, household chores), and limited access to and control over resources (land, property, finance) (UN Women Arab Stat).

Identified Gaps: Women's Economic Empowerment

1. Economic empowerment for GBV survivors in terms of laws, policies and available resources is not adequately addressed in the literature.
2. The literature does not well explore access to and control over assets and resources by women, including GBV survivors.
3. There is a gap in the literature related to patterns of power, decision-making, and women's leadership and participation in the labor force.
4. More examination is needed to understand opportunities for women to find decent work in the labor force in terms of laws, policies, and institutional practices.
5. There is a gap in the literature related to sexual harassment in the workplace in terms of laws, policies, and institutional practices.

GOVERNANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

The increased enrollment of female undergraduate students has given the false impression that gender equality has been achieved in higher education (ACE 2021). Although national statistics on female enrollment in higher education are somewhat optimistic, the data raise concerns about the issue of gender equality in decision-making positions in higher education, especially because it relates to empowering well-educated women. According to UNESCO (2020) and MOHE (2020), after graduating, women can earn higher degrees that will allow them to occupy most academic positions in universities, participate in relevant research, and take leadership roles. But national statistics show that this has not been the case. The failure of universities, for example, to recruit, retain, and promote female academics has fueled interest, which is inconsistent with the standards of governance and reformation of the higher education sector from a gender perspective.

Identified Gaps: Governance in Higher Education

1. Studies that address governance in higher education from a gender perspective are lacking.
2. There are no studies that provide information on the extent to which women teaching staff in faculties of law have access to practical training opportunities and the necessary skills in and outside the country, compared with males; evaluating the performance of male and female faculty members and the quality of education in faculties of law; the extent to which faculty members of both sexes use innovative learning methods in faculties of law from the perspective of the students; and law students' satisfaction with the performance of faculty members of both sexes.
3. A significant gap exists with regard to the roles and responsibilities of women as academics and administrators in higher education, including the obstacles and the burdens of the multiple roles that females play in public and private life that impede their representation in decision-making entities and spaces.
4. The literature review shows an evidence gap at the level of patterns of power and decision-making in Palestinian universities.

GOVERNANCE IN EARLY EDUCATION

It is a stated priority of the Ministry of Higher Education and Research (MoHE) to develop the legal and legislative framework of the Palestinian educational system. The strategy aims to enact laws, policies and legislation that ensure at least one year of free, compulsory and good pre-basic education, with special attention to reaching children from the most disadvantaged and poor communities through early childhood education and care services (MoHE 2017, 115). The PCBS statistics in 2020/2021 indicated that all kindergarten teachers are females 6,739 (4,674 in the West Bank and 2,065 in Gaza Strip)(pcbs.gov.ps). Studies revealed that working in the kindergartens does not ensure appropriate economic empowerment. The majority (85 percent) work without written work contracts. About 55 percent do not receive a specified number of paid sick leave during the year, and 63 percent do not receive maternity leave (ILO 2019, 6).

Identified Gaps: Governance in Early Education

1. The mechanisms of governance in the preschool sector in terms of formation of syndicates, boards of directors, parents' councils, and internal regulations that regulate work within the kindergartens
2. There is a gap in studies that analyze the institutional practices in the relevant ministries and the kindergartens
3. There is gap in the literature that studies the impact of the cultural norms and values on the achievement of gender equality in the preschool sector
4. There is a shortage of recent studies of the preschools that study the economic empowerment, gender roles, and responsibilities in the preschools.
5. There is a shortage of literature that studies patterns of power and decision-making.

FEMALE-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS IN GAZA AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

The percentage of female-headed households (widowed, divorced, or separated women) is stable at an average of 11 percent of the total households in the Palestinian Territories. Female headed households are 12 percent in the West Bank and 10 percent in the Gaza Strip. Data indicate that families headed by women in Gaza are nearly four times poorer (poverty level at 53.8 percent) than families headed by women in the West Bank (poverty level at 14.4 percent; PCBS 2022b).

Poverty rates between female-headed and male-headed households were relatively close in 2017, at 30.6 percent and 29.2 percent, respectively (PCBS 2017b). The percentage of poverty (54 percent) among individuals in female-headed households was higher in the Gaza Strip when compared with the West Bank (18.6 percent). The poverty rate among individuals in female-headed households exceeds that of male-headed households (PCBS 2017a).

Female-headed households in the Gaza Strip are three times more likely to be food insecure, at an estimated rate of 62 percent versus 19.3 percent in the West Bank (UN Women 2022a, 2022b). The prevalence of food insecurity among female-headed households is 15 percent higher than that among households headed by men: 36 percent versus 21 percent WFP 2017). Other determinants of food insecurity and poverty related to gender include the household head's employment status; being a refugee, urban poor, or a small-scale farmer or herder; living in a refugee camp; having a high dependence ratio; and having a household member with a disability or chronic illness (PEPRI 2017).

Female-households are deemed to be the highest recipients of aid and donations in the Gaza Strip and West Bank and represent a higher percentage of households relying fully on public assistance compared

with men—40.2 percent and 29.8 percent, respectively (Said-Foqahaa et al. 2020). The limited source of income and the absence of assets has obligated household-heading females to resort to long-term damaging strategies such as taking loans. Some women (usually older women without children) have been empowered by exploring avenues toward greater income security in this regard (UN Women 2020).

Identified Gaps: Female-Headed Households in Gaza

1. There is a lack of indicators directed toward meeting the practical and strategic needs from a gender perspective for female breadwinners (particularly compared with their male counterparts) such as services, resources, and opportunities within the framework of their gender-based roles.
2. There is a lack of a number of indicators that measure the achievement of gender equality in the opportunities and the impact or benefits represented by procedures directed toward increasing the contribution of female breadwinners to decision-making and opening new opportunities for them in the field of nontraditional work.
3. Attendance to the patterns of power and decision-making of women heads of families was completely missing.

WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND PEACEBUILDING

Despite the efforts made to improve the status of Palestinian women within society and the richness of women's experience at the various social, economic, and political levels, women's political participation is still modest. The percentage of women elected in the 2021 local elections (first phase) was 22 percent, compared with 78 percent for elected men. Women candidates were 26 percent of the total candidates (as required by quota), but only nine (1 percent) of the total election lists were headed by women. In 2020, data showed that 11 percent of the members of Palestinian National Council and 12.5 percent of members of the Council of Ministers are women. Women ambassadors make up 11 percent of the Diplomatic Service. There is one woman among the 16 governors (PCBS 2022a). Despite some steps toward improving women's political representation (including agreed quotas, local election law, and the work of the Ministry of Women's Affairs, among others), the obstacles and challenges to Palestinian women's public political participation to date have been numerous (Aghabekian 2019, 10). The absence of a general tendency of the PA to adopt policies and programs that would support women in the formal and informal political spheres, has weakened the role and participation of women (Samaroo 2018, 16).

Identified Gaps: Political Participation and Peace Building

1. There is a gap in the literature related to access to and control over assets and resources.
2. The literature lacks studies addressing patterns of power and decision-making in the political arena.

WOMEN IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE

Despite the efforts exerted to ensure the participation of women in local governance and to reinforce their role as members of local councils as decision makers able to provide quality services to constituent groups in line with the strategic approaches of Ministry of Local Government (MoLG), the same efforts, whether national or international, did not pay attention to the challenges women employees face in local councils. Perhaps the most critical gap is the low presence of women in local councils, as indicated by

MoLG statistics. The percentage of female employees in local councils was as low as 16.7 percent compared to 83.3 percent of male employees (Ateeq 2021). Moreover, the presence of female employees in local councils is lower when compared to their presence in the public sector which reached 47 percent compared to 53 percent (PCBS 2022).

Although Palestinian women are on the gradual path toward more equitable gender standards in some areas (Kuttab et al. 2020), this does not apply to female employees in local public offices. The literature review revealed that there are many legal, administrative, and social gaps and challenges that women still face (Jayyousi and Saadeh 2019). In terms of legal challenges, women employees do not have the same rights under the labor law. For instance, female employees of local councils do not enjoy the maternity leave stipulated in the labor law (Arab World for Research and Development 2013). Women also face significant discrimination in employment and training opportunities. Research indicates that the decisions of local councils are influenced by bias in the recruitment process, which favors men. Other factors that contribute to bias against women's employment include the absence of women in senior positions and the resistance among many men to be represented by women. There is also a gender gap in the number of women working in local councils compared to the number of men (Ateeq 2021).

Identified Gaps: Local Government

1. A deep gap manifested in the absence of female employees at the local councils. This was evident in their absence from any strategy that could provide support and empowerment to build the capacity or enhance female employee's inclusion in the local councils.
2. The Ministry of Local Governance, represented by the gender unit, aimed mainly to empower female members of local councils only. This can be considered as exclusion and discrimination at women's level as being members and employees at local councils.
3. Women face challenges on two levels: the existence of a deep gap in the representation of women in decision-making positions that still dominates the scene, and masculine resistance that does not acknowledge the ability of women to make decisions in case they overcome the glass ceiling after a long and thorny path before they reach places that are dominated by men. Only scant evidence was found on this matter and therefore requires confirmation.

GENDER ISSUES IN ENVIRONMENTAL SPHERE

DOMESTIC WATER IN WEST BANK ESPECIALLY IN HEBRON GOVERNORATE

The Palestinian Territories face water scarcity. Palestinians face significant and growing shortfalls in domestic water supply and availability. Water quality is considered undrinkable, especially in Gaza, with seawater intrusion because of the abstraction rate of groundwater, which is three times the sustainable abstraction rate (World Bank 2018). Thus, 97 percent of the water in Gaza does not meet the standards of the World Health Organization (PCBS and PWA 2019). The situation in Gaza is worse, due to the lack of sufficient and reliable electricity supply for water provision (World Bank 2018).

Seventeen percent of the population in the West Bank is served by two entities: the Jerusalem Water Undertaking (which serves a part of East Jerusalem and the majority of Ramallah and Al-Bireh) and the Water Supply and Sanitation Authority (which serves communities in the Bethlehem area). The Ministry of Local Governance serves the rest of the West Bank and Gaza households through providers (World Bank 2018). Water being a crucial issue for the Palestinian community, municipalities and villages have

formed the Joint Service Councils, which provides water and wastewater management services. The Palestinian government is aware of the importance of inclusivity of all groups in its future plans, including the National Water and Wastewater Strategy, but data show that gender sensitivity and gender responsibility are not considered in government plans and activities. As cultural norms dictate, men are the primary decision-makers regarding domestic water. Women and other gender groups are not usually in contact with relevant authorities responsible for domestic resources, such as government ministries, even though women are the primary users of domestic water.

The water situation in Hebron is facing increasing demand because of the continuous growth in population. However, groundwater and aquifers are insufficient. Samples from water within the area have shown traces of radiation, meaning it is unfit for drinking (World Health Organization 2015). “Governing the Reuse of Treated Wastewater in Irrigation: Case Study of Jericho, Palestine,” a report published by Al-Najah University in 2015, makes two key points:

1. A committee representing the Ministry of Local Government Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Planning, Universities and the Civil Society was formed in order to carry out the Water Sector Reforms needed for good water governance in Palestine. The committee carried out an institutional water sector review. The review found that the water sector management was managed by a number of different bodies. This included National Water Council, Palestinian Water Authority, West Bank Water Department, Jerusalem Undertaking Utility, Bethlehem, Beit Jala, Beit Sahour Water and Sewerage Authority, municipalities, Gaza Coastal Utility, Ministry of Agriculture, water service providers, and private water wells (mainly for irrigation). Actors in the water sector are working under different laws due to the absence of central water resources law to clarify each one’s role.
2. The ownership of water resources in Palestine varies between private, municipal, and government actors. This is due to the fact that laws from different political eras still exist in Palestine. This makes it very hard to control water resources.

Identified Gaps: Domestic Water in West Bank

1. Consideration of gender roles and needs in the context of domestic water access, usage, and management appear to be absent from the local and governmental development planning and activity.
2. Women participation in the decision-making process and the management of the water sector appears limited.
3. Water distribution cycle appears to be driven by technical factors rather than consultation with household, particularly women
4. Privatization of water resources has created a new chain of water usage that leaves a gap in the Palestinian Authority’s and Palestinian Water Authority’s data
5. Cultural norms are creating a deficit in the involvement and development of projects by and of interest to different gender groups.
6. Data on water accessibility by all gender groups, which should be supplied by the PWA and service providers, are nonexistent and are crucial to generate.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND RENEWABLE ENERGY

Climate risks in the Palestinian Territories are significant and are influencing current and future development challenges and creating new ones. Climate change has highly affected gender roles in the

Palestinian Territories, and the climate risks require great attention because they endanger health (WHO 2014), food security, and water availability, undermining the ability of women and men to carry out their economic and professional activities (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2018).

Electricity cost is considered the largest issue in Palestinian households, and in subscribing to traditional gender roles, it is left primarily to men to make decisions around household electricity needs (USAID 2017). Climate change is causing an increase in electricity demands to cope with heatwaves and unusual cold spells (EQA 2016). The climate and renewable energy sectors both have implications for gender roles and women's involvement and participation, especially in the setting of laws and policies.

Identified Gaps: Climate Change and Renewable Energy

1. Efforts for supporting climate adaptation and resilience are insufficient in the West Bank and Gaza, where gender roles and sensitivity related to the requirements of different gender groups are not well considered.
2. Insufficient support from the government and international bodies to help communities cope with risks of climate change has implications for health, food security, and mental health for different gender groups.
3. Government actions and activities are unclear regarding the NAP published in 2016, especially in relation to gender groups.
4. Resources for the creation of renewable energy plants in their different forms are unavailable.
5. All gender groups lack involvement in public debate related to climate change and renewable energy, which limits inclusion and involvement in the formation of policies and laws while limiting the design of gender-specific programs and approaches to attend to their different needs.
6. Support for gender groups in the sectors is lacking from governmental, cultural, and social perspectives and contexts.

AGRICULTURE, WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT AND REUSE

Agriculture is important in the Palestinian narrative. It has cultural, economic, historic, and symbolic significance and is a vital economic sector on which other sectors rely, such as transport, manufacturing, fertilizers, chemicals, and wholesale and retail trade (UNCTAD 2015). Although farmers are diligent in their work and production of agricultural products, several factors, such as climate change, impose burdens on the sector and its processes (EQA 2016). With the depletion of natural resources, the sector's permanency could be at risk. Assessments conducted by local and international organizations and government agencies do not adequately focus on gender sensitivity and inclusion within the sector. Gender groups face discrepancies in rights, access, control, usage, and leadership related to water and wastewater. This results in the limitation of contributions to the sector of different gender groups.

One factor that affects agriculture and the general scope of Palestinian livelihood is access to water. Demand exceeds the available resources (Al-Khatib 2017, Samhan et al. 2011), and wastewater is considered a viable solution to water scarcity (Wawi 2017). Treated wastewater is not fully exploited. Water disparity is increasing as the population increases, which leads to higher demand from the agricultural and industrial sectors, creating negative impacts on the socioeconomic development of the sector and on food security (Wawi 2017). Gaza is among the most water stressed places in the world,

with weak water and sanitation operators with large infrastructure and service deficits (World Bank 2020). Climate change also affects agricultural production in the Palestinian Territories with growth and products' sensitivity to the continuously changing weather conditions (EQA 2016).

Identified Gaps: Agriculture, Wastewater Management, and Reuse

1. Women working in the agricultural sector particularly lack support from the government and its nongovernmental and international partners.
2. Small-scale, women-led businesses lack sufficient financial opportunities, services, and technical assistance.
3. Limited understanding of wastewater, its treatment and potential benefits is a major knowledge gap within the agricultural sector. All gender groups could benefit from this resource. All need to be involved in learning and participating more in how it might be better used to meet currently unmet needs.
4. Integration techniques for treated wastewater in the agricultural sector are insufficient and poorly understood.
5. Lack of understanding coupled with limited access to financial resources hinder women farmers' transitioning to smart irrigations
6. Conventional farming and cropping practices do not necessarily improve productivity or increase the crop per drop.

GENDER-SENSITIVE STATISTICS AND INDICATORS

This section describes the available databases and indices that contain gender-specific data for WBG. Each database or index uses a set of indicators to provide greater insight into the status of women in WBG. Most of the indicators in the available resources listed are primarily related to women's economic participation, health, GBV (mainly on prevalence and incidence, and services to female survivors), people in need, and school education in WBG. Some data measure the status of women's political progress in terms of politicians, government officials, diplomacy, and political representation, but they are less comprehensive and numerous. Databases and indices have little or no data on women in the various branches of the justice system, domestic and care work, academia and higher education, the environment, GBV (socioeconomic costs, services to perpetrators and children witnessing GBV), and a variety of other topics studied.

NATIONAL DATABASES AND INDICES

The establishment of the PCBS Gender Statistics Program in 1996, with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Program of Assistance to the Palestinian People, was a milestone in gender statistics in WBG. After this, the availability of local and national data sets with gender-disaggregated data increased significantly. There was a need to fill the existing statistical gap on the situation of women and men in the Palestinian Territories. Key indices the program created include a list of indicators prepared according to the international recommendations and the national needs and specificities. In addition, the program prepares and publishes a comprehensive annual report on trends and statistics on women and men in the Palestinian Territories that discusses several socioeconomic aspects from the gender perspective and provides a situation analysis on women and men in five areas of Palestinian life: population, education, health, labor force, and public life. In addition, PCBS-generated data are all disaggregated by governorate and by rural and urban locales throughout WBG. Furthermore, PCBS

conducted two national surveys on violence with a major component on GBV (2011 and 2019), creating a nationally reliable index on this area.

The first Palestinian Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) was completed in 2014 with support from the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), followed by the second survey in 2019–2020. The MICS joint effort is part of the global MICS program. MICS surveys measure key indicators that enable countries to generate data on women and children that can be used in policies, programs, and national development plans and to monitor progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals and other internationally agreed commitments.

The Humanitarian Country Team, supported by the PCBS, created one of the richest and most current national databases and indices on humanitarian work areas from multiple verified and validated data sources. At first, the team surveyed a sample of 7,500 families across Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, to better understand their living standards, coping mechanisms, and physical and mental well-being. Humanitarian and development organizations have used the findings to shape their interventions across the Palestinian Territories by looking at multiple sectors holistically, including food security, health, protection, shelter, and education. The team successfully conducted the first Multisectoral Needs Assessment at the household level. This assessment identified the following people as most vulnerable and integrated them into the Multisectoral Needs Assessment data collection and need analysis: people living below the poverty level, Palestinian refugees living in refugee camps, Palestinian refugees living in outside refugee camps, people with damage to their shelter caused by the last escalation, female-headed households, small-scale farmers, people with disabilities, and internally displaced people. Most of the figures used for the population in the Humanitarian Needs Overview are based on PCBS population projections for 2022, based on their 2017 census. These include figures for specific vulnerable groups and key geographical areas. PCBS’s data sets are available online. Data sources also include 57 assessments (53 of which are needs assessments, and four are multi-cluster assessments) conducted by 60 partners. The analysis presented throughout the Humanitarian Needs Overview also uses a range of interactive charts, maps, and databases (protection of civilians, demolition, Gaza crossing movement and access, and Gaza critical indicators) developed by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) to support the humanitarian community’s response in the Palestinian Territories, all of which are available online at OCHA’s digital services and platforms.

The latest national development in this regard earlier this year was that UN Women and PCBS signed a memorandum of understanding aimed at developing and enhancing gender statistics in the Palestinian Territories and supporting the generation of gender-disaggregated data to serve policymaking; implementation and reporting on international commitments (including the Sustainable Development Goals); and women’s human rights treaties, conventions, and resolutions. The agreement seeks to enhance the generation and dissemination of gender statistics and work toward gender mainstreaming of all statistical activities within the PCBS and the National Statistical System to better inform planning, policy, and decision-making on gender equality and the empowerment of women at the national level.

In addition to the PCBS, some ministries publish gender-disaggregated data regularly, including the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, and to a lesser extent, the Ministry of Labor. The Ministry of Education reports annually on the enrollment rates of schoolchildren across all private, public, and United Nations schools, and the number of teachers and staff working at those schools. The Ministry of Health reports annually on the health status of the population and progress on services and health human resources.

Almost all indices, especially those produced by the International Labor Organization or UN Women, report regularly on the labor force and economic participation of women in WBG. This mostly includes indicators on employment rates, unemployment rates, employment-seeking rates, occupation, and average household income, among other standard economic indicators. Some studies have been conducted to explore issues more specific to Palestinian women's economic participation, most notably including the difference in pay between Palestinian women and men (that is, the gender pay gap). The International Labor Organization maintains the most extensive databases with both actual and estimated figures specific to labor force participation, employment-to-population ratio, informal employment, and unemployment, among 17 other indicators.

Besides these indices and databases, a number of individual studies and reports broaden the amount of gender-sensitive data specific to WBG. Perhaps the largest body of gender-sensitive data related to the WBG is about health, focusing especially on reproductive and sexual health, and indices are mainly from the Ministry of Health, PCBS, UNFPA, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, and the World Health Organization.

Besides a series of select studies, the UN Women Global Database on violence against women is the largest source with information on the subject in the region. The database records institutional mechanisms, laws, and services in addition to regular figures on violence against women, and child marriage. UN Women hosts a second database, the Global Gender Equality Constitutional Database, which evaluates whether national constitutions reflect gender equality.⁹

USAID/WBG also contributed to the process of gender data generation in two key areas where little is known. One is on the Countering Gender Based Violence Initiative. Banyan Global and its partners implemented this initiative to produce regional and country-specific indices on the socioeconomic costs of gender-based violence (domestic violence, early and forced marriage, and public sexual harassment) in countries in which USAID is present, including Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia, and West Bank and Gaza (USAID 2016).

More recently, USAID/WBG engaged Management Systems International (MSI) to conduct a rapid intersectional gender assessment related to technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in the West Bank and Gaza. MSI will assess the extent of gender mainstreaming in TVET-related policies and organizational procedures and practices in WBG and identify current gaps and challenges in female enrollment in targeted TVET institutions, private sector female employment, and local cultural norms toward female engagement in TVET programs (USAID 2022).

INTERNATIONAL INDICES AND DATABASES

The national databases offer critical insights into the status of women, especially in the domains of health, education, economic participation, and to a lesser extent, financial status and politics. However, there are three principal indices that process and evaluate these data and other data sets to determine and quantify the status of women in WBG. These three indices are:

- **Gender Gap Index** from the World Economic Forum: The Gender Gap Index tracks a series of 11 indicators from four major categories: economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment (WEF 2018).

⁹ See the Global Gender Equality Constitutional Database at <http://constitutions.unwomen.org/en>.

- **Gender Inequality Index** from the UNDP measures gender inequalities in three major categories: reproductive health, empowerment (mainly the political advancement of women), and economic status. The Gender Inequality Index is considered to have addressed some of the shortcomings from the UNDP Gender Development Index from the Human Development Report.¹⁰
- **Social Institutions and Gender Index** from the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development uses the Gender Institutions and Development Database to determine gender equality based on inputs (laws and general attitudes). About 60 indicators are used in the database, most of which are nontraditional indicators (sometimes qualitative indicators) that evaluate social institutions.¹¹

From the existing data from both international and national sources, a wealth of information exists in WBG on women’s health, selected aspects of GBV, and women’s economic participation, followed by women’s education, women’s political participation, some data surrounding violence against women and women with disabilities, and women in media. Limited or no data exist on the levels of women in the various branches of the justice system and law, civic engagement, women in academia, freedom of speech, freedom of mobility, and all environmental aspects’ impacts on women in WBG.

APPROACH AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

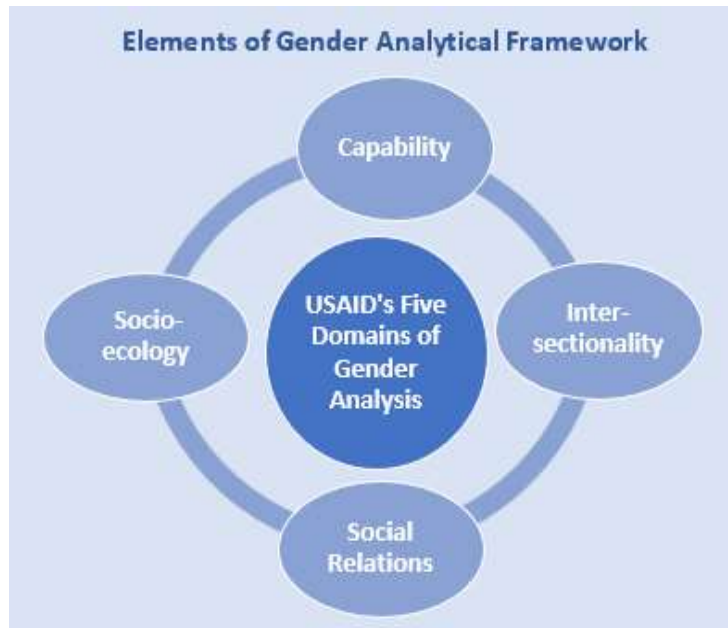
Lessons from changing gender norms show that changing unequal power relations requires cross-sectoral interventions and work for bringing about shifts in these relations (UNFPA 2020). For example, successful gender transformative approaches for combating child marriage, which is a form of sexual gender-based violence, start at the individual level of girls who are not empowered to advocate for their rights. These approaches move through to the level of communities where girls’ choices are limited, and through systems such as education where gender-unequal pedagogies flourish, and then to pertinent laws where early marriage is permissible legally. This requires understanding and tracking changes in social expectations of boys and girls; men’s and women’s roles; and gendered values, beliefs, and practices.

In conducting this gender analysis, the gender team will use the principle of triangulation, juxtaposing four complementary approaches and frameworks that scholars have been using globally, to comprehensively understand and analyze gender contexts and patterns of gender relations in the Palestinian Territories. As shown in Figure 1, the gender analysis for the USAID WBG will use (1) Naila Kabeer’s Social Relations Approach, drawing heavily on (2) Amartya Sen’s Capability Framework, and (3) Urie Bronfenbrenner Socioecological Model, integrating (4) Kimberlé Crenshaw intersectionality lens throughout the analysis process that will be done on USAID’s five domains of gender analysis.

This gender analysis understands that women’s empowerment is about the process by which those who have been denied the ability to make strategic life choices acquire such an ability. According to prominent scholar Naila Kabeer’s conceptualization, the ability to exercise choice incorporates three interrelated dimensions: resources (includes access and future claims to material, human, and social resources); agency (including processes of decision-making and less measurable manifestations of agency such as negotiation, deception, and manipulation); and achievements (well-being outcomes). Kabeer argues that these three dimensions of choice are indivisible in determining the meaning of an indicator and thus its validity as a measure of empowerment.

¹⁰ See the Gender Inequality Index at <http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/GII>.

¹¹ See the Gender, Institutions and Development Database at <https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=GIDDB2019>.

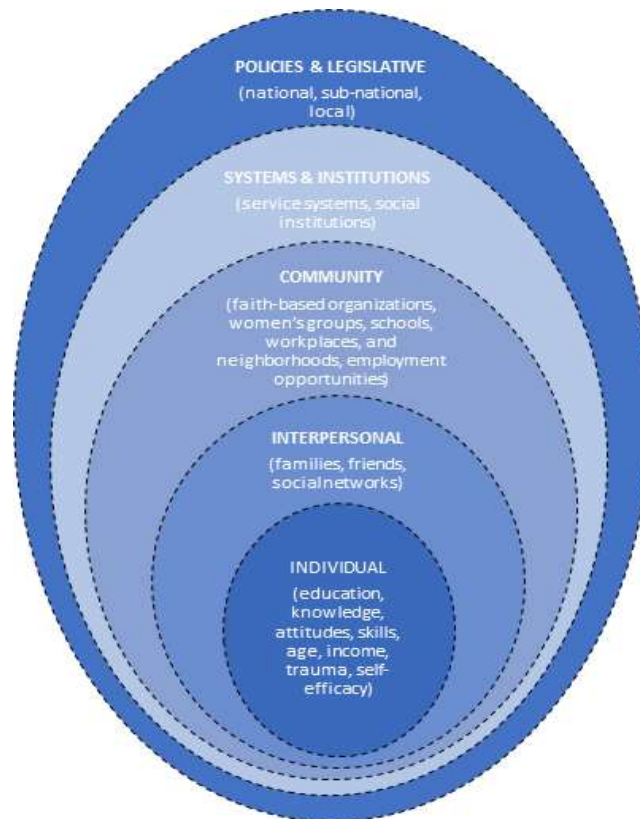


The notion of choice is qualified by referring to the conditions of choice, its content, and consequences. It incorporates the structural dimensions of individual choice: the criterion of alternatives, which is basically the structural conditions under which choices are made, while the criterion of consequences relates to the extent to which the choices made have the potential for transforming these structural conditions. Choice here necessarily implies the possibility of alternatives or opportunities that are seen and known and the ability to have chosen otherwise. According to Kabeer, some choices have greater significance than others in their consequences for people’s lives. Hence, a distinction between first- and second-order choices must be made—the former are those strategic life choices that are critical for people to live the lives they want, such as choice of livelihood, whether and who to marry, whether to have children, and other considerations. These strategic life choices help to frame other second-order, less consequential choices, which may be important for the quality of one’s life but do not constitute its defining parameters (Kabeer 2002).

Yount (2017) conceptualizes women’s empowerment based on Kabeer’s framework and advocates a framework that depicts empowerment as a living dynamic process, in which women acquire resources that enable them to develop voice (the capacity to articulate preferences) and agency (the capacity to make decisions) to fulfill their own aspirations. She argues that resources enable but do not necessarily guarantee empowerment because of the broader structural and normative environment (ecological system) in which girls grow up and in which women live. A woman’s ability to become empowered at the individual level depends on the environment in which she lives. Thus, if a woman earns an income (resource), it does not mean that she has decision-making power over that income (agency). Similarly, because a woman can participate in the workforce does not mean that she can do so free from harassment in her workplace; she may have legal rights, but that does not necessarily mean that those rights will be enforced systematically. These are all important aspects of empowerment and progress toward gender equality that most theories have fallen short of addressing (Yount 2017).

A complement to Kabeer’s theory is found in Amartya Sen’s capability framework, in which he outlines how gender inequality can be conceptualized and assessed from a capability perspective. Sen maintains that the question of gender inequality can be understood much better by comparing those things that intrinsically matter, such as functioning and capabilities, rather than just the means to achieve them, such

as resources. All capabilities together correspond to the overall freedom to lead the life that a person has reason to value (Sen 2003).



Along the same lines of Kabeer's theory, two key concepts in Sen's capability framework are choice and agency. Agency is normally associated with one's ability to choose and possessing the freedom to do so within a universe of constraints. Capabilities for achieving gender equality involve social institutions and normative structures, including policies that enable agency and gender prescriptions and social hierarchies that constrain our choice and our claims. The capabilities framework poses a frontal challenge to theories of preference and choice that do not recognize that one's choices and freedoms are circumscribed by what we perceive as possible, not in terms of utility but of capabilities, not in terms of preferences but of genuine choice.

The Bronfenbrenner socioecological model was developed by psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner in the late 1970s as a way to recognize that individuals affect and are affected by a complex range of social influences and nested environmental interactions. This model recognizes that factors can cross multiple levels, implied by the dotted lines separating each layer on the model in Figure 2. They can also affect people differently, based on cumulative and intersectional experience. This falls in full accordance with the Crenshaw's intersectionality lens integral to the analytical framework of this gender analysis.

Sen's Capability Approach connotes a shift in focus from utilities to capabilities, with emphasis placed on achievement and freedom. For Sen, the core lies in assessing what people are able to be and do. Functioning can be basic, such as having shelter and health care, attaining an education, and more complex aspects of well-being, such as having self-respect. The analysis of functioning requires an examination of progress through the capabilities of individuals. Deciding which capabilities matter depends on what aspects of well-being are being evaluated and for whom. The capabilities paradigm is a normative

framework for life quality that can be adapted to different contexts. Nussbaum has offered modifications of the capabilities approach, maintaining that it is imperative to develop a normative model of basic capabilities of social justice that could be applied across societies. Sen argues that the capabilities framework should be context specific (Robeyns 2003).

Sen defines development as “the expansion of individual’s capabilities” and suggests that the freedom of choice is central to the process of development. Normally, this freedom of choice reveals itself in a set of individual capabilities that are marked by institutional and structural factors that could be located at any socioecological level (Sen 2003). As Kabeer suggests, gender relations must be understood through a multidimensional lens. Crenshaw correspondently calls this intersectionality, which serves the purpose of capturing intersections of systems of oppression, intersecting layers of inequality, the different inequalities that generate forces that configure privilege, and oppression in a particular context, serving to secure the patriarchal dividend that only perpetuates gender inequality.

In this gender analysis, the Capability Approach will be applied to USAID’s five domains of gender analysis by the identified priority sectors and subsectors, with the integration of the Social Relations Framework and the Socioecological Model using the intersectionality lens throughout the gender analysis process. Nine capabilities of highest relevance to the Palestinian context and the purpose of this analysis were identified and will be used in the analysis process: (1) physical and mental health status, services, and use; (2) employment opportunities and conditions; (3) bodily integrity and safety; (4) educational resources; (5) shelter and environment; (6) political participation and representation; (7) mobility; (8) family and social integration; and (9) economic resources and opportunities.

The research team will work with the Mission gender advisor to explore how to best achieve gender equality goals, while considering the U.S. *National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality*. The team will also work with the Mission’s gender advisor and the Gender and Youth Working Group to propose gender indicators and a monitoring and evaluation framework and as appropriate, to incorporate the Agency’s gender key issue indicators into the existing framework.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This gender analysis is a qualitative, cross-sectional, nonexperimental study that will use a mixed methods approach using rapid appraisal techniques such as a document review, including a situation (context) analysis, semi structured key informant interviews (KIs), small group meetings, focus group discussions, and secondary data analysis of project information and statistics framed by the combined contextual framework described in the preceding section to answer the gender analysis questions. Refer to Annex 7 for a detailed description. The team conducted an initial desk review of pertinent, accessible literature and data sets to inform this Inception Report and identify data gaps to be addressed in fieldwork.

DATA COLLECTION METHODS AND DATA SOURCES

DESK REVIEW: DOCUMENT REVIEW AND CONTEXT ANALYSIS

The gender team will review relevant USAID policies, guidelines, and reports; and published research and reports related to gender equality in key sectors of interest to USAID/WBG. The team will review collected documents to identify different roles, rights, responsibilities, access to and control of resources, and power and decision-making for males and females in WBG. A situational analysis of documents will include an assessment of socioeconomic and political factors, whether external or internal, that could have impacts on the issue of gender equality in WBG. The situational analysis will draw on the existing literature that addresses the nine capabilities. This will be through reviewing various sets of literature, which include academic research, action-oriented research, national survey report and data sets, nongovernmental organizations' reports, government reports, and the gender analyses and reports of international nongovernmental organizations such as UN Women, UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, and USAID's current gender analyses and reports related to GBV, the TVET gender assessment, Civil Society Rapid Assessment, and the Financial Digital Services Assessment.

DESK REVIEW: SECONDARY DATA ANALYSIS

The gender team will compile and analyze existing data as available and relevant to the research questions for this analysis. The team will also seek data as available on the nine competencies for relevant projects and more general existing survey data to triangulate the literature on the Capability Approach with Palestinian information and data. Indicators used to measure the nine capabilities will be highlighted and assessed for integration in the Mission's set of gender indicators and statistics.

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

KIIs will be used to obtain fresh information that will deepen the understanding of issues related to gender equality and social inclusion in WBG with a focus on the sectors and issues identified in the research questions for the gender analysis. It will provide information on gender relations in the region; differences in access to information and training; and the quality of women's and men's and girls' and boys' participation in USAID projects and the wider Palestinian society and institutions. Challenges to and opportunities for realization of gender equality and female empowerment will be solicited from informants, along with recommendations for the 2023–2028 programmatic cycle. The gender team developed the protocols of data collection tools. Using these protocols will establish the highest possible level of comparability between key informants' responses and ensure that questions are posed and responses are recorded with consistency.

KIIs will be conducted in person in the West Bank and Gaza, including East Jerusalem, in December 2022 and early January 2023. The team will use a snowball sampling methodology to grow the respondent list as and when needed. Snowball sampling is a nonprobability sampling technique by which existing key informants recommend and recruit future subjects from among their acquaintances. KII groups from which individual representatives will be selected include the following:

- Palestinian Authority Government
- Civil society organizations
- Community-based organizations
- USAID/WBG staff
- International donor organizations

- International nongovernmental organizations
- Universities, think tanks, and research organizations
- Private sector
- Implementing partner project participants
- Refugees
- Youth
- People with disabilities
- Other relevant stakeholders

A final list of informants will be developed based on key informants' availability and feasibility or when necessary to conduct remote interviews via telephone or Zoom platform.

The research team will integrate dimensions of gender, age, disability, socio-economic status, inclusion, and participation into all aspects of data collection and analysis. These dimensions will guide its exploration of the needs and vulnerabilities of different groups. The research team will take intentional measures ensure study participants include those who are often most difficult to reach, including people with disability (PwD), refugees and youth. The team will seek to include PwD among focus group participants. Young adults will be among the key informants invited to respond to relevant sectors, particularly those related to economic and political empowerment. To reach refugees, the team will seek to involve residents of UNRWA camps through the Women Activity Centers based in the camps and will conduct FGDs with the refugee women-headed households.

SMALL GROUP MEETINGS

Small group meetings will be conducted with key stakeholder groups to contextualize information on gender equality, female empowerment, and social inclusion in the Palestinian Territories. The gender team will conduct small group meetings with civil society actors that will be held in the two regions of West Bank, including East Jerusalem and Gaza, to get a sense of gender constraints and opportunities in relation to the USAID domains of gender analysis and to contextualize gender relations nationally. Additional small group meetings and KIIs will be held with Mission staff.

The selection of locations will be based on USAID interest and team consensus on the most strategic locations for promoting social change in support of gender equality. Meetings will be arranged with representatives from the stakeholder groups listed in the previous section. The meetings will be used to validate data and information collected from other sources and to identify key challenges and key areas for USAID assistance to focus on the future. Suggestions and recommendations for improving and transforming gender relations will be solicited. See Annex 5 for the group meetings protocol and questions.

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

Five focus group discussions will be conducted to collect data on opinions, beliefs, practices, and attitudes of respondents toward the raised gender issues, assessing the identified capabilities per the selected domains. Focus group discussions will enable the team's in-depth understanding of multiple viewpoints and capture differential experiences and perceptions, increase research coverage, and allow for internal verification of information through the participation of multiple respondents, and facilitate gauging the degree of agreement and disagreement on key themes. See Annex 4 for the focus group discussion protocol and questions.

DATA ANALYSIS METHOD

The matrix method will be used for cross-sectional and qualitative data analysis. It is a coherent analysis format and versatile method available and used frequently in applied research. Specifically, a gender analysis matrix will be used to assist in conducting a systematic gender analysis. Other steps in addition to using a gender analysis matrix will be implemented to carry out this gender analysis effectively, including disaggregating data by sex and other social stratifiers such as age, disability, locale, region. A gender analysis matrix (see Annex 6) is at its core a table that explores how gender power relations interact to affect a specific topic or sector. To develop a gender analysis matrix applicable to the analysis of the gendered effects in the identified sectors, the team started with recognized gender frameworks that are stated in the scope of work for the gender analysis to identify how power relations manifest as inequities through the five defined domains: access to resources; roles and practices; norms and beliefs; patterns of power and decision-making; and policies, institutions, and laws. For topic-specific domains, the team selected subdomains known to be relevant to each. Within the table, the rows are the topic-specific domains, and the columns are the gender analysis domains.

Guided by the extensive research on gender issues in the Palestinian Territories, the fieldwork plan was designed to examine and confirm gender gaps identified in the desk review, highlight interlinks and solicit context-specific recommendations that address identified gaps, and highlight effective practices related to gender integration, with a focus on the three domains of GBV, women's leadership and empowerment, and gender issues in the environment sphere.

Domain One: Gender-Based Violence

- Shelters key issues, including survivors' reintegration, shelter infrastructure, and workforce development
- Perpetrators rehabilitation
- Children as GBV survivors and witnesses
- East Jerusalem Hospitals Network (serving referred people from Gaza and West Bank with heightened vulnerabilities with limited access to services and severe illnesses)

Domain Two: Women Leadership and Empowerment

- Women's economic empowerment
- Governance in higher education
- Governance, and infrastructure development of the early education sector
- Female-headed households in Gaza and economic empowerment
- Political participation and peace building
- Local Government

Domain Three: Gender Issues in the Environmental Sphere

- Domestic water in West Bank, especially in Hebron governorate, Dura, and Halhoul Municipality
- Climate change and renewable energy
- Agriculture, and wastewater management and reuse

DATA VALIDATION AND ANALYSIS

Data for the gender analysis will primarily be qualitative in nature and organized around five gender analysis domains, three main sectors, and eleven sub sectoral domains (refer to Annex 6) where nine capabilities will be analytically employed. The gender team will use an iterative, multi-phased approach to analyze the data. In addition, review of the document draft versions will provide both contextual information and data that, in combination with primary data from the fieldwork, will allow the team to provide detailed and credible answers to all the reviewers questions and respond to their comments. Team members will conduct the analysis jointly and individually.

Qualitative data from primary sources will be analyzed using the content and thematic analysis framework, which involves organizing data according to themes related to the evaluation objectives, evaluation questions, and the criteria. Some quotes and human stories will be cited verbatim in the findings to support the thematic analysis. *Quantitative data* from secondary sources will be analyzed using descriptive statistical methods involving tabulations and graphing of data. The raw data will be obtained primarily from the PCBS, UN Women dashboard, and OCHA online digital services and platforms, ensuring current data and indicators.

Data validation will be a continuous process. The gender team will check the validity of data and verify the robustness of findings at each phase throughout the gender analysis. All findings will be grounded firmly in evidence. The team will use a variety of mechanisms to ensure the validity of the collected data, including the following:

- Triangulation techniques that reinforce the credibility, trustworthiness, and validity of the findings, judgements, and conclusions obtained based on the primary data. Triangulation of data and information will enable the gender team to identify convergence and divergence in findings.
- Regular exchange among the team members and with the MSI assignment manager
- Internal regular team meetings to share and discuss preliminary findings and conclusions and their supporting evidence
- The debriefing meeting with the Mission’s reference group at the end of the field phase. Feedback from all will allow for further refinement of the analysis recommendations and conclusions.

LIMITATIONS AND RISKS

COVID-19 restrictions that have affected everyone’s research around the world since 2020 have eased, but it remains critical that the team be prepared for possible waves of infection, as is currently the case in various parts of the world and mildly in the Palestinian Territories at this point. In addition, the gender team accounts for the mobility restrictions imposed by Israel among the three geographic areas of Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem and the current political upheavals that could quickly lead to further mobility restrictions within the West Bank areas. The team recognizes that mixed methods studies require the use of qualitative methods that rely heavily on face-to-face interactions for data collection, which will be the chosen approach. However, the team will rely on Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Skype, and social media to perform KIs and focus group discussions as needed, especially given the tight timeframe for full completion of this task order. In addition, immediate peer debriefs and in-depth internal discussions will mitigate the barriers associated with online interviews.

WORK PLAN, DELIVERABLES AND TIMELINE

The following table describes a work plan detailing the proposed schedule of activities, submission of deliverables, and reporting timelines and deadlines. This supports the narrative description of anticipated

activities to be conducted during the research, data collection, and analysis phases of the gender analysis, as outlined above. If unexpected problems or additional opportunities arise throughout the analysis and evaluation process, timelines and deadlines may be adjusted in conjunction with the USAID/WBG Mission, if required and agreed.

WORK PLAN BY DELIVERABLES AND TIMELINE			
ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION	DELIVERABLES AND OUTPUTS	TIMELINE	DEADLINE
Literature Review and Inception Report Drafting			
Desk study and literature review of relevant research, survey data, U.S. Government and USAID policy papers and resource documents for situational analysis, secondary data analysis, and identification of gaps	Consolidated list of reference and resource documents from USAID, MSI, and team members Shared folder database	October 14–November 4	Ongoing
Consultation and agreement with USAID on the priority order of sectors and subsectors of focus for the gender analysis and inclusion in the initial summary of findings	List and groupings of priority sectors and subsectors in order of focus for attention by the study	October 14–27	
Set up the research filing system and online folders for the research team to maintain an organized file record of sources used for the gender analysis	Google Drive folders set up Files maintained by the research team	October 14–January 5	Ongoing
Design the study methodology, indicators, protocols, and tools and drafting the Inception Report	Draft Inception Report Outline and methodology Draft Inception Report Document review protocol Draft interview protocols (individual and group) Draft Interview/Meeting Notes Template	November 4–21	
Identification of potential key informants and participants for key informant interviews and focus group discussions	List	November 4–January 5	Ongoing
Draft Inception Report and work plan and annotated outline for final report submitted to USAID for approval	Draft Inception Report and work plan (with methodology, domain framework, draft instruments, document list		November 23

	from literature review, risks, and mitigation strategy) Draft annotated outline for final report		
USAID reviews and provides comments to draft Inception Report and work plan	USAID comments and questions	November 25–30	
Final Inception Report and work plan submitted to USAID for final approval	Final Inception Report and work plan		December 7
Primary Data Collection			
Data collection conducted through key informant interviews (KIIs) and group meetings to fill gaps identified by desk study	KII and group meeting and interview notes with summary findings and recommendations List of prioritized stakeholders, individuals, and organizational meetings	December 1–January 5	
File record of key informant interviews and focus group discussions conducted	Master list of key informant interviews and group meetings conducted	December 1–January 5	Ongoing
Analysis, Consultation, and Report Drafting			
Qualitative analysis of data related to the sectors and subsectors designated highest priority for the study	KII and group discussion notes with summary findings consolidated	December 12–31	Ongoing
Draft summary of findings for high-priority areas	Draft summary of initial findings, high priority areas		January 5
USAID review and input on initial findings and preliminary recommendations	USAID's comments and suggestions on summary of initial findings	January 6–11	
USAID feedback incorporated into summary of initial findings	Summary of findings reflecting USAID's input	January 11–13	
Qualitative data analysis and report drafting of remaining sectors and subsectors identified as priority for the gender analysis	Consolidated analysis, drafts, and redrafts	January 13–27	

Gender analysis draft final report submitted to USAID	Draft gender analysis final report with recommendations	January 30
USAID reviews and provides comments on the draft gender analysis final report	USAID comments and suggestions	January 31–February 3
Incorporation of USAID’s findings into the final draft of the complete gender analysis report	Draft reflecting USAID input	February 4–15
Presentation to USAID	Presentations of key findings and recommendations	Week of February 13
Final gender analysis report incorporating USAID’s final comments submitted	Gender analysis final report with final recommendations	February 16

INCEPTION REPORT ANNEX I: INCEPTION REPORT DOCUMENT REVIEW PROTOCOL

A document review is a rigorous, unbiased examination of existing research literature and supplemental papers, reports, and evaluations relevant to a topic being studied, analyzed, or assessed. Its objective is to acquaint readers with current thinking and research on a topic, and it may justify and inspire additional research into a previously ignored or understudied area. In this analysis, the document assessment will focus on the degree, quality, and effectiveness of gender equality and social inclusion in the development process, and USAID development assistance in West Bank and Gaza (WBG). This tool is meant to aid the WBG gender analysis and gender assessment team in examining documents based on a set of questions to achieve lens homogeneity. The questions address the extent to which the policies, practices, and approaches presented in the documents under review focus on and address issues of gender equality and social inclusion, the outcome or impact of the work covered in the document and identified gaps or areas for future focus and attention. The goal of the document review for the Inception Report is to provide USAID with a window into the status of gender equality in WBG and in USAID programming, and to provide information that can spark a discussion about how USAID can contribute to greater gender equality and social inclusion in WBG. The document review should include five sections: (1) a summary of the quantity and variety of material evaluated, (2) the themes and focus of the research or reports in the reviewed papers, (3) policy and implementation strategies used to achieve equity and inclusion, (4) primary evidence-based results and conclusions, and (5) gaps found by the reviewer. The following are some questions to consider while reviewing documents.

Document Topic and Focus

- What are the gender concerns discussed and highlighted in the document, in your opinion as a reviewer?
- Does the paper reference any specific gender subgroups (youth; refugees; people with disabilities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex)?
- Are subgroup goals and metrics (if relevant) stated?
- What terms or phrases were used to describe the aims of gender equality and social inclusion? What information (if any) was provided on the reasons for focusing on gender equality?

Policy and Implementation Strategies

- What information (if any) did the document provide on the rationale for an emphasis on gender equality?
- What policy and implementation methods were offered in the text to promote gender equality?
- Are these traditional policies or program tactics, or are they novel and creative?

Evidence-Based Findings and Conclusions

- What were the primary findings, effects, and impact of the examined document's policy or program strategy?
- How were the benefits of greater gender equality demonstrated?
- How were the results of gender equality measured?

Identified Gaps

- Did the document encourage readers to think critically about why gender inequality exists in the document's area of focus?
- Did the document include analysis, synthesis, or evaluation that took institutional or structural factors into account? Did it take social, cultural, religious, or traditional factors into account?
- What was the document lacking that would help to illuminate the issue of gender inequality in the West Bank?

INCEPTION REPORT ANNEX 2: DRAFT FINAL REPORT OUTLINE

- I. Table of Contents
- II. Acknowledgment
- III. Acronyms
- IV. Glossary
- V. Executive Summary (4 pages, in English and Arabic)
- VI. Introduction and Purpose
 - i. Contextual Overview for Gender and Current Strategic Priorities
 - Overview of Gender in West Bank and Gaza
 - Demographic Context
 - Political Context
 - Socioeconomic Context
 - Ecological Context
 - The Palestinian Authority's Institutional Approach to Gender: Achievements and Challenges
 - ii. Methodology
 - iii. Gender Analysis of the USAID Portfolio
- VII. Intersectional Gender Analysis
 - a. Five Domains and Capabilities
 - b. Program Targets
 - i. Findings
 - ii. Conclusions
 - iii. Recommendations
 - c. Gender Issues
 - i. Findings
 - ii. Conclusions
 - iii. Recommendations
 - d. Opportunities for Gender Integration
 - i. Findings
 - ii. Conclusions
 - iii. Recommendations
- XII. Appendixes

INCEPTION REPORT ANNEX 3: GENDER ANALYSIS KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS GUIDING QUESTIONS

The key informant interview questions for the gender analysis will focus on each of the following areas. The questions in each focus area are guiding questions that will not necessarily be covered in all the meetings, and some of the questions should be selected and reformulated or rephrased based on the groups' areas of interests, expertise, and level of knowledge. In addition, questions must be sector-customized when conducting the interview.

The research questions USAID/WBG have identified for the gender analysis cover three focus areas: (1) program targets and locations, (ii) gender issues, and (iii) opportunities for gender integration. The key domains are: (1) laws, policies, regulations, and institutional practices; (2) cultural norms and beliefs; (3) gender roles, responsibilities, and time use; (4) access to and control over assets and resources; and (5) patterns of power and decision-making. Questions are listed under each key domain and sector.

PROGRAM TARGETS

- What are the current gaps between men and women who belong to the following groups, in relation to the gender analysis key domains. Provide recommendations on how the USAID/WBG strategic plans and programs can help close gender gaps found in the areas and sectors where USAID/WBG is active.
 - **Primary:** Palestinian women and men in general, women with low socioeconomic background, and urban and rural inhabitants in the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem
 - **Secondary:** Youth, people with disabilities, survivors of gender-based violence, and sexual minorities
- How does the division of West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza affect men and women differentially in your sector? (Provide information disaggregated by geographical area and age.)

GENDER ISSUES

- What are the key issues and constraints (including norms, mobility restrictions, and policies and laws) for integrating gender equality and female empowerment across the following sectors and focus areas?
 - Gender-based violence in relation to shelters, perpetrators, and children who are gender-based violence survivors and/or witnesses
 - East Jerusalem Hospitals Network
 - Women leadership and empowerment in relation to preschool, higher education, political participation and peace building, and female-headed households
 - Environmental sphere, including domestic water, climate change and renewable energy, agriculture, and wastewater management and reuse
- What are the gender issues for which USAID/WBG has a comparative advantage, considering the strategies and interventions of other major donors in the country and USAID's legal constraints?

OPPORTUNITIES FOR GENDER INTEGRATION

- What are the opportunities for gender integration across the following priority sectors?

- Gender-based violence in relation to shelters, perpetrators, and children who are gender-based violence survivors and/or witnesses
- East Jerusalem Hospitals Network
- Women leadership and empowerment in relation to economic empowerment, local government, political participation and peace building, and female-headed households
- Environmental sphere, including domestic water, climate change and renewable energy, agriculture, and wastewater management and reuse
- What are the gender issues for which USAID/WBG has a comparative advantage, considering the strategies and interventions of other major donors in the country and USAID's legal constraints?
- What are the prioritized programming and collaboration areas with other donors and relevant actors that are recommended for USAID where it can affect impact?
- What are your recommendations for USAID future programming? How can the different portfolios with which you are familiar be strengthened, adjusted, or expanded to address identified gaps and to integrate gender equality and female empowerment more effectively into its programming in various sectors?

INCEPTION REPORT ANNEX 4: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS GUIDING QUESTIONS

The gender analysis will focus on three areas: institutional gender inequality and structures, gender-based violence, and opportunities for gender integration in areas of interest to USAID. The questions for the focus group discussions in each focus area are guiding questions that will not necessarily be covered in all the meetings, and some of the questions should be selected and reformulated or rephrased based on the groups' areas of interests, expertise, and level of knowledge. In addition, questions must be sector-customized when conducting the focus group discussion.

Institutional Gender Inequality and Structures

1. What opportunities are available for women to actively engage in politics, decision-making processes, the labor force, and access to resources? (This should include issues related to economic development; workforce development and job readiness; micro, small, and medium enterprise development; employment; and fiscal reform.)
2. Is there any difference between opportunities that are available to men and those available to women? How are they different and why? (The discussion should highlight legal and policy frameworks that support or hinder gender equality at both the central and local levels and at rural and urban locations.)
3. Are there any laws, policies, regulations, or institutional practices that protect or limit women's access to these opportunities?
4. What are the main institutional gaps and practices regarding gender equality in the Palestinian Territories? What recommendations do you have to fill the gaps?

Gender-Based Violence

5. What recommendations do you have to help USAID successfully integrate gender-based violence prevention and response in governance, economic development, and public service delivery projects?
6. What are the gaps and actions against gender-based violence that have not been considered adequately? What recommendations do you have to fill the gaps?

Opportunities for Gender Integration in Areas of Interest to USAID

7. What opportunities are there for gender integration in economic development; workforce development and job readiness; micro, small, and medium enterprise development; employment; and fiscal reform?
8. What opportunities are there for women's increased role in democracy, political participation, citizen engagement, human rights, freedom of speech, governance, rule of law?
9. What opportunities are there for women's increased role in water resources and wastewater management, including environmental protection?
10. What opportunities are there for gender integration in infrastructure planning, operation, and maintenance?

INCEPTION REPORT ANNEX 5: SMALL GROUP MEETING GUIDING QUESTIONS

Small group meetings will be conducted with homogeneous groups with common interest to conduct focused interviews.

- What are the opportunities available for women to actively engage in politics, decision-making processes, the labor force, and access to resources?
- What are the gender issues for which USAID/WBG has a comparative advantage, considering the strategies and interventions of other major donors in the country and USAID's legal constraints?
- What are the prioritized programming and collaboration areas with other donors and relevant actors that are recommended for USAID where it can affect impact?
- What are the main institutional gaps and practices regarding gender equality in the Palestinian Territories? What recommendations do you have to fill the gaps?
- What are the key issues and constraints (including norms, policies, and others) for integrating gender equality and female empowerment in your sector?
- What are your recommendations for future programming? How can the different portfolios be strengthened, adjusted, or expanded to address identified gaps and to integrate gender equality and female empowerment more effectively into USAID's programming in various sectors?

INCEPTION REPORT ANNEX 6: INTERSECTIONAL GENDER ANALYSIS MATRIX

INTERSECTIONAL GENDER ANALYSIS MATRIX						
SECTOR AND SUBSECTOR DOMAINS		GENDER ANALYSIS DOMAINS (GENDER-DISAGGREGATED DATA)				
SECTORS	SUBSECTORS	POLICIES, LAWS, AND INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICES	CULTURAL NORMS AND VALUES	GENDER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	ACCESS TO AND CONTROL OVER ASSETS AND RESOURCES	PATTERNS OF POWER AND DECISION- MAKING
Gender-based violence (GBV)	<p>Shelters: Key issues include survivors' reintegration, shelter infrastructure, workforce development</p> <p>Perpetrators rehabilitation</p> <p>Children as GBV survivors and witnesses</p> <p>East Jerusalem Hospitals Network</p>					
Women's leadership and empowerment	Women's Economic Empowerment					

Governance in higher education

Governance of the early education sector

Female-headed households in Gaza and economic empowerment

Political participation and peace building

Local Government

Gender issues in the environmental sphere

Domestic water in West Bank and Gaza, especially in Hebron governorate

Climate change and renewable energy

Agriculture, wastewater management and reuse

INCEPTION REPORT ANNEX 7: DATA COLLECTION SOURCES AND METHODS

DATA COLLECTION SOURCES AND METHODS				
DOMAINS AND SECTORS	SUBDOMAINS	SECONDARY DATA	PRIMARY DATA	
			DATA SOURCES	DATA COLLECTION METHOD
Gender-based violence (GBV)	Shelters: Key issues include survivors' reintegration, shelter infrastructure, workforce development	Yes	Official documents (strategies and policies) Surveys and studies	3 key informant interviews
	Perpetrators rehabilitation	Yes	Six civil society organizations: three in West Bank and three in Gaza	12 key informant interviews
	Children as GBV survivors and witnesses	Yes	Three international actors (United Nations Population Fund [UNFPA], UN Women, and United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF]) Three government actors (Ministry of Social Development, High Judicial Council, and Ministry of Education)	
	East Jerusalem Hospitals Network (EJHN)	Yes	EJHN head and secretary One group interview with the EJHN assessment team	Two key informant interviews One small group meeting
Women leadership and empowerment	Economic Empowerment	Yes	Ms. Salwa Al-Tibi, Gaza Program Manager at Care International in Palestine (West Bank/Gaza) Ms. Nahla Dwaik, Gaza Branch Manager in Small Enterprise Center (SEC) Association Mr. Iyad AlTahrawi, Gaza Sky Geeks Manager in Gaza Ms. Rami Mehdawi, Ministry of Labour – Employment Fund in the WB Ms. Reem Fraina, Director of Aisha Association for Women and Child Protection in Gaza	Five key informant interviews Two focus group discussions

		<p>FGD in Gaza with the MSME own by male and female youth</p> <p>FGD in the WB with the MSME own by male and female youth</p>	
Governance in higher education	Yes	<p>Law school students and faculty in one university in Gaza and one in West Bank</p> <p>One focus group discussion with 10–12 students in each university</p> <p>Two key informant interviews with law faculty (one man and one woman) in each university</p>	<p>Four key informant interviews</p> <p>Two focus group discussions</p>
Governance in the early education sector		<p>Early Childhood Program at UNICEF Jerusalem</p> <p>Head of the Gender Department in the Palestine Trade Union Federation</p> <p>Head of the kindergarten trade union in West Bank</p> <p>Coordinator of the subcluster working group of the preschools in Gaza</p> <p>Education Program Officer at Save the Children Gaza</p> <p>Head of Preschools at the Ministry of Education in West Bank</p> <p>One focus group discussion in Gaza with the kindergartens' managers and teachers</p> <p>One focus group discussion in West Bank with the kindergartens' managers and teachers</p>	<p>Six key informant interviews</p> <p>Three focus group discussions</p>
Female-headed households in Gaza and economic empowerment	Yes	<p>Three key informant interviews with civil society organizations in Gaza</p> <p>Three key informant interviews with international actors (United Nations Relief and Works Agency, UN Women, Islamic relief)</p> <p>One focus group discussion with women heads of households (as sole breadwinners)</p>	<p>Six key informant interviews</p> <p>One focus group discussion</p>

	Political participation and peace building	Yes	Key informant with six women leaders in political participation (Gaza and six in West Bank)	Six key informant interviews
	Local Government	Yes		Desk review
Gender issues in the environmental sphere	Domestic water in West Bank and Gaza, especially in Hebron governorate	Yes	Hebron municipality staff (two members)	Seven key informant interviews
	Climate change and renewable energy	Yes	Head of Environment Quality Authorities Environmental center, Beit Jala United Nations Development Program UN Habitat Al-Haq (human rights organization) Water Sector Regulatory Council	Six key informant interviews
	Agriculture, wastewater management and reuse	Yes	Official documents (strategies and policies) Surveys and studies	Desk review

Mission staff: (1) Two individual interviews will be conducted with the Mission’s gender advisor and other colleague(s) as directed (two key informant interviews. (2) Two small group meetings will be conducted with (a) the Gender and Youth Working Group, and (b) program office staff.

Totals: 45 key informant interviews, six focus group discussions, and three small group meetings

INCEPTION REPORT ANNEX 8: PROTOCOL FOR VOLUNTARY INFORMED CONSENT AND DATA PROTECTION

VOLUNTARY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN INTERVIEWS AND DISCUSSIONS

The research team will obtain verbal, informed consent before starting data collection sessions. Informed consent information will be provided via email when scheduling sessions and again before beginning the interview or group discussion. Before they start the interview, researchers will follow the script outlined in the Informed Consent Form to briefly explain the purpose of the interview or group discussion, give participants enough time to ask for clarification or other questions, and emphasize that the participant can decline to answer questions and stop the interview or discussion and is free to leave at any time.

In securing participants' prior consent before beginning an interview, researchers will also explain that everything participants share during the interview will be confidential. For focus group discussion participants, researchers will explain that they cannot ensure confidentiality because of the group setting but will take all possible measures to ensure confidentiality of participants' remarks and will instruct the group not to repeat to others what they hear during the focus group session. To keep data collected from key informant interviews and focus group discussions unassociated with the names or identities of participants, the research team will assign a code to each individual participant during data analysis and store the document linking the identification code to the participants' names in a secured, separate file.

DATA PROTECTION

The research team will keep all research notes, related correspondence, and names and contact information of participants in a secured file system on a cloud-based data repository system protected by passcodes. Only the research team can access the system. The research team will share the transcripts from the primary data collection with USAID through a Google Drive established for this purpose, with limited access to authorized users.

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