

# **Gender Profile: Palestinian Territories**

## **Final Report**

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**Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)**  
**Kokusai Kogyo Co., Ltd.**

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This study was conducted between August 2015 to January 2016 by Kokusai Kogyo Co., Ltd., based on a review of existing literature and a field survey in Palestine. This study was produced as a reference material for the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) for implementation of its development assistance in the country. The views, analysis and recommendations presented here do not necessarily reflect the official views and opinions of JICA.

## Summary

<b>Gender Situation and Government Policy on Gender</b>
<b>Current Gender Situation in Palestine</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) The political, economic, and social dimensions of Palestinian life are fragmented due to long (and seemingly endless) conflicts. In recent years, the socio-economy has deteriorated both in the West Bank and in Gaza. Gaza, which has experienced four ‘wars’ in a decade, is especially damaged with nearly 40% of the population in poverty.</li><li>(2) The Palestinian gender situation should be understood on the basis of the social/gender norms which have been developed from Arab traditional and cultural values and Islamic values. Women are mother, wife, and caretaker of the family who stay at home, and are not to be seen by non-relative men.</li><li>(3) Electoral quota systems have enabled women to occupy seats in the Palestinian Legislative Council (equivalent to a Parliament) and local bodies to a certain extent. However, the elected women are yet to achieve tangible power and/or capacity to make a difference.</li><li>(4) While economic necessity has started to change the gender division of roles, with which some women have begun to work to earn an income, this does not necessarily empower women.</li><li>(5) Women’s education level is very high. However, this has not led to their active participation in the economy; only less than 20% of the women are in the labour force. The women’s presence is specifically weak in the private sector, compared to the public sector. For one, social norms on ‘appropriate’ jobs, as well as education for women, limit the women’s job opportunities. For another, gender bias affects the potential employers negatively against hiring women.</li><li>(6) Other important gender issues of concern include women’s ‘asset poverty’, high fertility rate, gender-based and political/economic violence, early marriage and honour killings, and the influence of rising conservatism amongst others.</li></ol>
<b>Governmental Commitment on Gender</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) The Palestinian Authority’s “National Development Plan 2014-2016” has incorporated gender mainstreaming when developing the document, while it does not explicitly discuss gender mainstreaming/equality.</li><li>(2) The “Cross-Sectoral National Gender Strategy 2014-2016” is the main gender strategy of the government, which is the first of its kind in Palestine to promote gender mainstreaming in all sectors.</li><li>(3) The “National Strategy to Combat Violence Against Women 2011-2019” specifically tackles gender-based violence (GBV)/violence against women (VAW), while “Gender Charter for the Aid Coordination Structure in Palestine” argues for gender mainstreaming in aid coordination amongst the Palestinian Authority and the donor circle.</li><li>(4) The legal system of Palestine is a ‘patchwork’ of historical laws of different countries. Partly due to this, legal stipulations which would disadvantage women are still in practice. However, some recent laws, including Labour Law and Electoral Law, set regulations favourable for women.</li><li>(5) The de-facto internal split (the West Bank of Fatah and Gaza of Hamas) has made the rule</li></ol>

of law difficult to be applied.

- (6) The Palestinian Authority has joined the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 2014, and is currently in preparation of the National Action Plan for UN Security Council Resolution 1325.

#### **National Machinery**

- (1) The national machinery is the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA), established in 2003.
- (2) MOWA develops gender policies, promotes gender mainstreaming in various sectors, and coordinates with other actors including the civil society.
- (3) Although MOWA is committed, it has a short history and small ministry without implementing power; thus, it is not always possible for MOWA to ensure that governmental programmes/activities actually take gender considerations into account.
- (4) Gender Units are to be established in other governmental institutions. As of 2015, 11 out of 27 institutions have activated Gender Units, with an additional four institutions having gender departments in other names.

#### **Current Gender Situation in Selected Sectors**

##### **Peacebuilding / Palestinian Refugees Support**

- (1) Palestinian women have not had much influence on peace negotiations, partly due to the unfavourable environment against women's movements and opinions in recent years.
- (2) Palestinian Refugees account for more than 40% of the population. Refugees tend to be poorer than non-Refugees, while Refugee women tend to participate more in the labour force than non-Refugee women.
- (3) While there are 27 Refugee Camps in Palestine, the majority of the Refugees reside outside Camps, i.e., in various communities.
- (4) The living environment in the Camps is poor, with overpopulation, poor hygiene, and troubled infrastructure. The women's life in the Camps is extremely stressful.
- (5) The majority of Camps have Women's Centres, where women can gather and have their own activities. However, many Women's Centres suffer from lack of funds and support.

##### **Agriculture and Rural Development**

- (1) The "National Agriculture Sector Strategy 2014" does not give strategic importance to gender mainstreaming/women's empowerment.
- (2) While the importance of the agriculture sector in terms of its share of GDP has been shrinking, it is still significant in terms of women's employment; 20% of women in the labour force work in agriculture.
- (3) Working in agriculture, however, does not necessarily empower women. Women's contribution is often underestimated, not only by others but also by the women themselves. This could be attributed to the fact that many women work in family-run farms, in many cases as unpaid family members.
- (4) While agricultural cooperatives are popular in Palestine, the proportion of women members is small. In men-led cooperatives, women tend to have little power and decision making.

Thus, women are unlikely to be empowered. In women-only cooperatives, they tend to concentrate on 'feminine' work which is in line with traditional women's roles as mothers/caretakers.

### **Private Sector Development**

- (1) Major sectoral strategies in the sector, "National Economic Development Plan 2014-2016" and "National Employment Strategy" are yet to incorporate gender considerations strategically.
- (2) Women's participation in the private sector economy is limited. While the women's labour force participation is less than 20%, more women work in the public sector than in the private sector. The private sector employment is less preferred by women, because the types of jobs tend not to be 'appropriate' for women, but at the same time the employers do not have incentives to hire women as they tend to see women workers as incompetent (gender bias). In addition, women tend to be less qualified for the private sector jobs as their educational background is concentrated on 'female appropriate areas' including education, health, and humanities, whereas what is needed in the private sector jobs are more related to science. In micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), very few women are in the workplace.
- (3) Women tend to prefer to work in agriculture while men prefer to work in the informal sector, when they do not have job opportunities in the public/formal sector. When women work in the informal sector, it is likely because they have no other choice.
- (4) There are very few women entrepreneurs, and women's enterprises tend not to expand/develop. One factor is that women entrepreneurs do not have the proper 'business mind', but it is also true that the women do not have chances and/or access to develop the business mind.
- (5) Access to financial services, other than that of microfinance, is difficult for women. Whether microfinance has been beneficial for women is arguable; it is reported that in many cases women become 'loan windows', who simply bring the borrowed money to their husbands/fathers. Whether or not the women have control of the money is critical.

### **Challenges and Considerations for Gender Mainstreaming in Development Assistance**

#### **Significance of Understanding Diversified Gender Situations**

Gender situations in Palestine are extremely complicated and diversified. Depending on the group attributions, experience with migration, and community locations, to name but a few, the gender situations and issues of specific groups vary greatly. From the perspective of development assistance on gender, this leads to a high probability of ineffectiveness of applying 'generic' gender component(s) without case-by-case gender analysis.

Thus, in assisting Palestinian people on gender issues, it would be advisable for each project/programme 1) to implement gender research and analysis of each target community, as much as possible; 2) to have a gender expert on the team who has enough expertise and skills to be able to deal with this complexity and individuality. It would be desirable to make the design and activities of all projects/programmes 'tailor-made' as much as possible.

In addition, these researched data and analysis should then be consolidated and accumulated, in a cross-sectoral manner, so that they will form an invaluable resource of collected

information, an intellectual property, which will contribute to designing and implementing development assistance in Palestine as a whole.

### **Potential of Livelihood Support as GBV Countermeasure**

It is understood that access to a safe and stable livelihood works as an effective means for prevention and protection against GBV. Therefore, GBV protection/prevention and livelihood support could be, to a certain extent, incorporated into the same project/programme.

Gender issues in Palestine have evolved as consequences of the interaction of various political, socio-cultural, and economic factors. This being so, interventions to tackle them are also to be multi-dimensional. Women's livelihood support is, thus, not only for the beneficiaries' economic empowerment; rather, it should be considered in the context of multifaceted empowerment including political and social empowerment of women (e.g., strengthening the bargaining power of women in the household/community and re-examination of traditional gender norms); and combining GBV protection/prevention with livelihood support is one way to do so.

### **Gender Situation in relation to Monetary Control**

It is important to keep the issue of monetary control in mind, in development assistance in today's cash economy, for which Palestine is no exception. While it is generally a male role to control the money in the household, according to Palestinian social norms, the study finds that the individual who has control of the family 'wallet' varies greatly case-by-case. However, the lack of concrete and specific information on actual cases regarding this matter makes further analysis impossible. It would be desirable to collect more data and analyse the collected information on this issue.

As for microfinance, which has become a well-established development programme in Palestine, one problematic tendency is that women often become 'loan windows', whose names are simply used to obtain the loans used by household males. On the other hand, microfinance does have a potential to empower women borrowers, economically as well as socially, if women actually have the control of the money they borrow. As such, application of microfinance should be designed and implemented with great care, with consideration of these positive and negative impacts.

### **Potential for Support to Help Women Step Out of 'Female Appropriate' Areas**

One factor that hinders women's labour force participation and economic empowerment in Palestine is that a majority of women remain, willingly or unwillingly, in the socially 'female appropriate' areas of work and education.

It would be an appropriate support if the livelihood support, the private sector development, and the education sector development, promote and/or encourage women to step out these 'female appropriate' fields. However, it should be noted that working with and encouraging targeted women only would not be enough; raising awareness of this issue among the people around the targeted women would also be important. The social norm which has kept women in the supposedly 'female appropriate' fields regulates not only women themselves but also the people around them, who, in turn, intentionally or unintentionally, regulates these women's behaviour.

**Securing Commitment with Checklists**

In the context of Japan's development assistance, all projects and programmes would comply and commit to Japan's National Action Plan for UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (the Plan), formulated in 2015. In the context of assistance for Palestine, the Gender Charter for the Aid Coordination Structure in Palestine (the Charter) requires commitment and compliance.

In order to comply with the Plan and the Charter effectively and efficiently, it would be advisable that the required considerations, actions, to-dos and not-to-dos for compliance with these documents would be distilled and compiled into a kind of checklist.

## List of Abbreviations

BDS	Business Development Service
BWF	Business Women Forum –Palestine
CBO	Community Based Organization
CBT	Community-based Tourism
CEDAW	The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
DPT	Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus
DV	Domestic Violence
EVAP	Project on Improved Extension for Value-Added Agriculture
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FP	Family Planning
FPCCIA	Federation of Palestinian Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture
GBV	Gender-based Violence
GDI	Gender-related Development Index
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEM	Global Entrepreneurship Monitor
GEM	Gender Empowerment Measure
GNI	Gross National Income
GPI	Gender Parity Index
HDI	Human Development Index
HDR	Human Development Report
HIV/AIDS	Human-Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome
IDP	Internally Displaced Person(s)
ILO	International Labour Organization
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
LACS	Local Aid Coordination Secretariat
MSMEs	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
NIS	New Israel Shekel
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
MOA	Ministry of Agriculture
MOL	Ministry of Labour
MONE	Ministry of National Economy
MOTA	Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities
MOWA	Ministry of Women’s Affairs
PA	Palestinian Authority
PCBS	Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics
PFI	Palestinian Federation of Industries
PLC	Palestinian Legislative Council
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
PWWSD	Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development
RH	Reproductive Health
TFR	Total Fertility Rate
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
VAW	Violence against Woman / Women
WATC	Women’s Affairs Technical Committee-Palestine



# Map of the Palestinian Territories



Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics

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# 1 Basic Profiles

## 1.1 Socio-Economic Profile

International Development Indicators	Year	Human Development Index (HDI)		Gender Development Index (GDI)		Reference <sup>1</sup>		
		Value	Rank	Value	Rank			
	2013	0.686	107	0.974	41	<1>		
	2007	0.731	106	N/A	N/A	<2>		
	Year	Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM)		Gender Inequality Index (GII)		Reference		
				Value	Rank			
	2013	N/A		N/A	N/A	<1>		
	2007	N/A		N/A	N/A	<2>		
Demographic Indicators	Year	Population		Urban Population		Reference		
		Total	% of female	Urban Population	% of female			
	2014	6,607,000	48.7%	1,147,703	N/A	<3>		
	2008	5,786,000	48.3%	1,089,875	N/A	<3>		
	Year	Annual Population Growth Rate	Households by Head of Households' Gender		Reference			
			Male-headed Households	Female-headed Households				
	2012	3.0%	N/A	N/A	<3>			
	2007	2.6%	N/A	N/A	<3>			
Economic Indicators	Year	GNI per capita	GDP Growth Rate	Inflation Rate	Gini Index	ODA received (% of GNI)	Grant received (against GDP)	Reference
	2013	\$3,060	-4.3%	8.2%	34.5 (2009)	19.1%	N/A	<3>, <4>
	2007	\$1,660	-1.8%	5.2%	34.7 (2005)	28.3%	N/A	<3>, <4>
Public Expenditure by Sector	Year	Health	Education	Employment & Welfare	Agriculture	Defense	Reference	
	2013	N/A	N/A	N/A	5%	N/A	<3>	
	2007	N/A	N/A	N/A	7%	N/A	<3>	
Sectoral Share of GDP	Year	Agriculture	Industry	Services	Reference			
	2013	5%	23%	72%	<3>			
	2007	7%	24%	69%	<3>			
Labour Indicators	Year	Labour Force Participation Rate (Age 15-64) (%)		Unemployment Rate (%)		Minimum Wage per Month	Reference	
		Male	Female	Male	Female			
	2013	68.9	16.1	23.8	21.3	\$377 (2012)	<3><4>	
	2007	70.6	15.9	22.0	19.5	—	<3>	
Sectoral Employments	Year	Agriculture	Industry	Services	Reference			
	2013	10.5%	28.4%	61.6%	<3>			
	2008	13.4%	25.7%	60.9%	<3>			

1 See list of Data Sources for Basic Profiles on page 7.

Global Gender Gap Indices	Overall Rank in 2014 (Rank/out of total number of countries) <sup>2</sup>	— /142	
	Economic Participation and Opportunity	Rank in 2014	Reference
	<b>Total</b>	N/A	—
	<b>Ratio: female labour force participation over male value</b>	N/A	—
	<b>Wage equality between women and men for similar work</b>	N/A	—
	<b>Ratio: female estimated earned income over male value</b>	N/A	—
	<b>Ratio: female legislators, senior officials and managers over male value</b>	N/A	—
	<b>Ratio: female professional and technical workers over male value</b>	N/A	—

## 1.2 Education Profile

Education System

Palestinian educational system comprises of 10 years of primary education and 2 years of secondary education. Secondary educational schools consist of general education schools and vocational schools. Higher education is provided at four-year universities, technical colleges and two-year community colleges.

Adult Literacy Rate

Year	Total	Male	Female	Reference
2014	96.43%	98.40%	94.41%	<5>
2009	94.60%	97.43%	91.70%	<5>

Primary Education

Year	Gross Enrolment Rate			Net Enrolment Rate			Reference
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	
2013	95.26%	94.92%	95.62%	91.24%	90.51%	92.01%	<5>
2008	88.46%	88.59%	88.33%	83.66%	83.62%	83.71%	<5>
Year	Completion Rate			Reference			
	Total	Male	Female				
2013	93.99%	94.21%	93.76%	<5>			
2008	89.95%	90.71%	89.15%	<5>			

Secondary Education

Year	Gross Enrolment Rate			Net Enrolment Rate			Reference
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	
2013	82.29%	78.53%	86.21%	80.11%	76.55%	83.83%	<5>
2008	89.12%	86.13%	92.23%	86.70%	84.07%	89.44%	<5>
Year	Completion Rate (Lower Secondary) <sup>3</sup>			Reference			
	Total	Male	Female				
2013	73.11%	64.64%	81.93%	<5>			
2008	86.17%	80.19%	92.39%	<5>			

Vocational & Technical Education

Year	Number of Students /Female Ratio		Reference
	Number of Students	Female Ratio	
2013	2,711	13%	<6>
2008	6,582	33%	<6>

Tertiary Education

Year	Gross Enrolment Rate			Reference
	Total	Male	Female	
2013	45.6%	36.6%	55.0%	<3>
2008	50.7%	45.8%	55.7%	<3>

<sup>2</sup> Palestine is not included in the 2014 Global Gender Gap survey.

<sup>3</sup> "Lower secondary" is as is defined in the source.

Global Gender Gap Indices	Education Attainment	Rank in 2014	Reference
	<b>Total</b>	N/A	-
	<b>Ratio: female literacy rate over male value</b>	N/A	-
	<b>Ratio: female net primary enrolment rate over male value</b>	N/A	-
	<b>Ratio: female net secondary enrolment rate over male value</b>	N/A	-
	<b>Ratio: female gross tertiary enrolment ratio over male value</b>	N/A	-

### 1.3 Health Profile

Life Expectancy at Birth (age)	Year	Male	Female	Reference
	2012	73	73	<6>
	2007	72	72	<6>

Health Professionals	Year	Doctor to Population Ratio (per 1,000)	Nurse to Population Ratio (per 1,000)	Reference
	2013	N/A	N/A	-
	2003	N/A	N/A	-

Reproductive Health	Year	Maternal Mortality Ratio (per 100,000 live births)	Total Fertility Rate	Contraceptive Prevalence Rate (Age 15-49)	Pregnant Women Receiving Antenatal Care	Reference
	2013	48.0	4.0	52.5% (2010)	98.0%(2010)	<3>
	2006	61.0	4.6	50.2% (2006)	98.8%	<3>
	Year	Births Attended by Skilled Health Staff	Average Age at First Marriage	Adolescent Fertility Rate (births per 1,000 women aged 15-19)	Reference	
	2013	99% (2010)	N/A	60.2	<3>	
	2006	98.9%	N/A	67.1	<3>	

Infant and Under-five Mortality Rate	Year	Infant Mortality Rate (per 1,000 live births)			Reference
		Total	Male	Female	
		2015	18.0	19.4	
	2010	20.2	21.7	18.6	
	Year	Under-5 Mortality Rate (per 1,000 live births)			Reference
		Total	Male	Female	
2015		21.1	22.9	19.3	
2010	23.8	25.7	21.7	<3>	

Immunization Rate (1 year old)	Year	Measles	DPT	BCG	Polio
	2012	98%	97%	98%	98%
	2005	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Year	Hep B	HiB	Reference	
	2012	98%	97%	<7>	
	2005	N/A	N/A	-	

Nutrition

Year	Prevalence of Underweight (% of children under 5)	Prevalence of Stunting (% of children under 5 )	Iodine Deficiency	Diarrhea Treatment (% of children under 5 receiving ORS <sup>4</sup> packet)	Reference
2014	1.4%	7.4%	N/A	N/A	<3>
2010	3.7%	10.9%	N/A	31.4%	<3>

Access to Safe Water and Improved Sanitation Facilities (% of population)

Year	Access to Safe Water	Access to Improved Sanitation Facilities	Reference
2015	58%	92%	<8>
1995	88%	87%	<8>

HIV/AIDS

Year	HIV Prevalence among Pregnant Women Attending Antenatal Care(s)	Prevalence of HIV among Adults aged 15-49 (%)			Reference
		Total	Male	Female	
2013	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	-
2007	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	-

Global Gender Gap Indices

Health and Survival	Rank in 2014	Reference
Total	N/A	-
Sex Ratio at Birth	N/A	-
Ratio: Female Healthy Life Expectancy over Male Value	N/A	-

4 Oral rehydration salts.

## 1.4 Millennium Development Goals

<b>Goal 1: Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger &lt;9&gt;</b>		<b>2001</b>	<b>2007</b>
Target 1.A: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1.25 a day	● Proportion of population below \$1.25 (PPP) per day	27.9%	34.5%
	● Poverty gap ratio	7.6	9.8
	● Share of poorest 20% (lowest quintile) in overall consumption	6.8%	6.8%
Target 1.B: Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people	● Growth rate of GDP per person employed	11.3%	0.0%
	● Employment to population ratio	28.9%	32.9%
	● Proportion of employed people living below \$1.25 (PPP) per day	N/A	38.4%
	● Proportion of own-account and contributing family workers in total employment	33.2%	36.2%
Target 1.C: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger	● Prevalence of underweight children under 5	N/A	N/A
	● Proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption	N/A	N/A
<b>Goal 2: Achieve Universal Basic Education &lt;9&gt;</b>		<b>2001</b>	<b>2007</b>
Target 2.A: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling	● Net enrolment ratio in primary education	91.7%	83.9%
	● Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach last grade of primary education	98.3%	99.4%
	● Literacy rate of 15-24 years-olds, women and men	98.7%	99.1%
<b>Goal 3: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women &lt;9&gt;</b>		<b>2000</b>	<b>2008</b>
Target 3.A: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015	● Ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education	96.2%	109.5%
	● Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector	13.6	N/A
	● Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament	5.7%	12.9%
<b>Goal 4: Reduce Child Mortality &lt;9&gt;&lt;10&gt;</b>		<b>2005</b>	<b>2010</b>
Target 4.A: Reduce by two thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate	● Under-5 mortality rate per 1,000 live births	26/1,000	24/1,000
	● Infant mortality rate (0-1 year) per 1,000 live births	22/1,000	20/1,000
	● Proportion of 1-year old children immunized against measles	N/A	N/A
<b>Goal 5: Improve Maternal Health &lt;10&gt;</b>		<b>2005</b>	<b>2010</b>
Target 5.A: Reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio	● Maternal Mortality Rate (per 100,000 live births)	59/100,000	53/100,000
	● Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel (15-49 years olds)	97%	99%
Target 5.B: Achieve, by 2015, universal access to reproductive health	● Contraceptive prevalence rate	50%	53%
	● Adolescent birth rate	6.8%	6.3%
	● Antenatal care coverage (at least one visit)	N/A	16%
	● Unmet need for family planning	N/A	N/A
<b>Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other Major Diseases<sup>5</sup> &lt;9&gt;&lt;10&gt;</b>		<b>2005</b>	<b>2010</b>
Target 6.A: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS	● HIV prevalence among population aged 15-24 years old	N/A	N/A
	● Condom use at last high-risk sex	N/A	N/A
	● Proportion of population aged 15-24 years old with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS	N/A	N/A
	● Ratio of school attendance of HIV/AIDS orphans to school attendance of non-orphans aged 10-14 years old	N/A	N/A
<b>Goal 7: Ensuring Environmental Sustainability<sup>6</sup> &lt;8&gt;&lt;10&gt;</b>		<b>2005</b>	<b>2015</b>
Target 7.C: Halve, by 2015, the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation	● Proportion of population using an improved drinking water source	80%	58%
	● Proportion of the population using improved sanitation facilities	90%	92%

5 Selected relevant target and indicators.

6 *Ibid.*

## 1.5 National Commitment on Gender Issues (Political Participation, Conventions and Laws)

### Women in Decision Making

Year	Parliament	Government		Private Sector			Reference
	Member of Parliament	Minister	Vice Minister	Manager	Professional	Technical	
2006	12.9%	12.5%	N/A	16.25%	N/A	N/A	<11>
-	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	-

### Commitment to International Agreements

Signature	Ratification	Treaty/Convention/Declaration
	2014	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

### Laws and Regulations for Gender Equality and Protection for Women

Year	Law/Regulation
2003	The Basic Law
2005	Electoral Law

### National Policy on Gender

Year	Policy
2011	National Strategy to Combat Violence Against Women 2011-2019
2014	Cross-Sectoral National Gender Strategy 2014-2016
2014	Gender Charter for the Aid Coordination Structure in Palestine

### National Machinery

Year of Est.	Name of National Machinery
2003	Ministry of Women's Affairs

### Global Gender Gap Indices

	Political Empowerment	Rank in 2014	Reference
<b>Total</b>		N/A	-
<b>Ratio: females with seats in parliament over male value</b>		N/A	-
<b>Ratio: females at ministerial level over male value</b>		N/A	-
<b>Ratio: number of years of a female head of state (last 50 years) over male value</b>		N/A	-



## **Data Sources for Basic Profiles**

- <1> Human Development Report 2014:  
<http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-report-2014>  
(accessed: 1/Nov/2015)
- <2> Human Development Report 2007/2008:  
[http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/268/hdr\\_20072008\\_en\\_complete.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/268/hdr_20072008_en_complete.pdf)  
(accessed: 1/Nov/2015)
- <3> World Development Indicators / World Bank Data:  
<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/>,  
<http://data.worldbank.org/country/west-bank-gaza> (accessed: 1/Nov/2015)
- <4> Development Finance Statistics, OECD (DAC): <http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/>  
(accessed: 1/11/2015)
- <5> UNESCO Institute for Statistics:  
<http://data.uis.unesco.org/index.aspx?queryname=166> (Accessed: 26/Oct/2015)
- <6> Briefing note for countries on the 2014 Human Development Report: Palestine:  
[http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr\\_theme/country-notes/PSE.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/PSE.pdf) (accessed:  
29/10/2015)
- <7> UNICEF Palestine: Statistics: [http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/oPt\\_statistics.html](http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/oPt_statistics.html)  
(Accessed 7/Jan/2016)
- <8> WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) for Water Supply and Sanitation.  
<http://www.wssinfo.org/> (accessed: 29/Oct/2015)
- <9> Millennium Development Goals (MDGs (Statistical Report):  
[http://www.arabstates.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/MDG/english/MDG%20Country%20Reports/Programme%20of%20Assistance%20to%20the%20Palestinian%20People/oPT\\_MDGReport\\_2009.pdf](http://www.arabstates.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/MDG/english/MDG%20Country%20Reports/Programme%20of%20Assistance%20to%20the%20Palestinian%20People/oPT_MDGReport_2009.pdf) (accessed: 1/Nov/2015)
- <10> MDG Table, World Development Indicators:  
<http://databank.worldbank.org/data/Views/Reports/ReportWidgetCustom.aspx?ReportName=MDG-Table&Id=c658ae98&inf=n> (accessed: 1/Nov/2015)
- <11> Facts and Figures: Leadership and Political Participation, UN Women Palestine:  
<http://palestine.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation/facts-and-figures> (accessed: 1/Nov/2015)

## 2 Gender Situation and Government Policy on Gender

### 2.1 Current Gender Situation in Palestine

#### Summary

- (1) The political, economic, and social dimensions of Palestinian life are fragmented due to long (and seemingly endless) conflicts. In recent years, the socio-economy has deteriorated both in the West Bank and in Gaza. Gaza, which has experienced four ‘wars’ in a decade, is especially damaged with nearly 40% of the population in poverty.
- (2) The Palestinian gender situation should be understood on the basis of the social/gender norms which have been developed from Arab traditional and cultural values and Islamic values. Women are mother, wife, and caretaker of the family who stay at home, and are not to be seen by non-relative men.
- (3) Electoral quota systems have enabled women to occupy seats in the Palestinian Legislative Council (equivalent to a Parliament) and local bodies to a certain extent. However, the elected women are yet to achieve tangible power and/or capacity to make a difference.
- (4) While economic necessity has started to change the gender division of roles, with which some women have begun to work to earn an income, this does not necessarily empower women.
- (5) Women’s education level is very high. However, this has not led to their active participation in the economy; only less than 20% of the women are in the labour force. The women’s presence is specifically weak in the private sector, compared to the public sector. For one, social norms on ‘appropriate’ jobs, as well as education for women, limit the women’s job opportunities. For another, gender bias affects the potential employers negatively against hiring women.
- (6) Other important gender issues of concern include women’s ‘asset poverty’, high fertility rate, gender-based and political/economic violence, early marriage and honour killings, and the influence of rising conservatism amongst others.

#### <Socio-economic Situation in Palestine>

The Palestinian Territories (hereafter referred to as Palestine) consists of the West Bank (5,655 km<sup>2</sup>) and the Gaza Strip (hereafter referred to as Gaza) (365 km<sup>2</sup>). The population is 278 million in the West Bank and 187 million in Gaza<sup>7</sup>. The Palestinian Refugee<sup>8</sup> population is 78 million in the West Bank and 128 million in Gaza<sup>9</sup>. Many Palestinians reside overseas, including neighbouring Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and other Arab countries, some as immigrants and others as Palestinian Refugees; it is said that the Palestinian population worldwide exceeds 1,000 million.

In Palestine, 92% are Muslims, 7% are Christians and 1% belong to other religious groups<sup>10</sup>.

Ethnically, the majority are Arab people<sup>11</sup>. The nomadic people called Bedouins (who are ethnically

7 <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/we.html>,  
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/gz.html> (accessed 28/Nov/2015)

8 See 3.1 below for more detailed discussion on Palestinian Refugees issue.

9 UNRWA (2015a)

10 <http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofai/area/plo/data.html#section2> (accessed 26/Nov/2015)

11 <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/we.html>,  
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/gz.html> (accessed 28/Nov/2015).

Arabs) reside in and around Palestine<sup>12</sup>.

After the Arab-Israeli War in 1967, both the West Bank and Gaza were occupied by Israel. The situation finally changed in 1993, when the Oslo Accord was agreed by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel, which led to the creation of the Palestinian Authority in 1994<sup>13</sup>.

According to the Oslo Accord, both parties were to negotiate on the final status of Palestine including final borders, security, Jerusalem, how to settle the Palestinian Refugee problem, and Jewish settlements within 5 years of the interim period<sup>14</sup>. However, as the Israeli Prime Minister Rabin was assassinated in 1995, followed by the formation of a right-wing government led by Benjamin Netanyahu of the Likud Party, the Oslo process stalled<sup>15</sup>. The second Intifada started in 2000 saw the Palestine-Israel confrontation intensified. The second Intifada died down in a few years, but then in 2006, Hamas (Islamic Resistance Movement), won the general election for the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) over Fatah (the leading/largest faction in the PLO) which held up hopes for the resumption of peace negotiations. Hamas took control of Gaza and removed Fatah officials in 2007, to which Israel reacted by blockading the Strip. Ever since then, Gaza has been under siege. The Fatah-Hamas conflict has divided Palestine into de-facto separate entities, of the West Bank governed by Fatah and Gaza by Hamas. After as long as seven years, in April 2014, Fatah and Hamas reached an agreement on a unity government formation followed by an election, as an attempt for reconciliation<sup>16</sup>. Two months later, a unity government was formed<sup>17</sup>.

Armed conflicts at various scales between Palestine and Israel have continued. In Gaza, within this century, four ‘wars’ were fought—in 2006, 2008-09, 2012, and 2014. In 2014, the fighting continued nearly two months in July and August with more than 2,000 casualties including at least 1,483 civilians<sup>18</sup>. In the West Bank as well, smaller but frequent conflicts have taken place; since October 2015 the tension has been rising to the extent that some even envisage the eruption of a third Intifada<sup>19</sup>.

After the Palestinian Authority came to power in 1994, until 1999, the economy grew on the average at 10%. With the eruption of second Intifada in 2000; however, the situation deteriorated. Then, as the Intifada calmed down; the economy revitalized with nominal GDP recovering to the pre-Intifada level

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12 The current Bedouin population is unclear. Bedouin people are originally nomads; however, recently a considerable proportion of the Bedouin population has chosen to be settled in one place. Definition of Bedouin varies; in this study, the word refers to person/people whose identity is Bedouin/ex-Bedouin.

13 <http://www.jica.go.jp/palestine/office/about/greeting.html> (accessed 27/Nov/2015)

14 <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/oslo/negotiations/>,  
<http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2013/9/13/oslo-accords-explained.html> (accessed 27/Nov/2015)

15 <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2013/9/13/oslo-accords-explained.html>  
<https://history.state.gov/milestones/1993-2000/oslo> (accessed 27/Nov/2015)

16 <http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/area/plo/data.html#section2> (accessed 27/Nov/2015)

17 Nakashima (2014)

18 Seita (2015), <http://www.ochaopt.org/content.aspx?id=1010361> (accessed 28/Dec/2015)

19 <http://wedge.ismedia.jp/articles/-/5522> (accessed 26/Nov/2015)

in 2004. Yet again, as Hamas formed the government in 2006, drop in aid from the international donors caused negative growth in 2006 and 2007<sup>20</sup>. Confrontation between Fatah and Hamas has resulted in disjointed economic performance; in 2008 and 2009, the economy of the West Bank, backed up by the international community, grew approximately 10% while Gaza dipped into negative growth. Afterwards, the West Bank economy slowed down but in Gaza the reconstruction demand pushed up the growth, of 15.2% in 2010 and 23% in 2011. As can be seen, the growth in economy has not come from within, but rather relied on external circumstances, and thus is not sustainable. As of 2015, with negative impacts of 2014 Gaza crisis lasting, and private investment being among the lowest in the world, the Palestinian economy as a whole is in recession. The poverty rate as of 2014 is 16% in the West Bank, and is as much as 39% in Gaza. The Gaza economy has been specifically damaged; the private sector is severely eroded and 80% of the population depends on aid for their survival<sup>21</sup>.

As to GDP composition, the service sector accounts for 20% as the largest contributor<sup>27</sup>. The following sectors are: wholesale and retail trade, mining, manufacturing, electricity and water, and public administration and defence. GDP composition within the West Bank only shows that the service sector, wholesale and retail trade sector, and mining, manufacturing, electricity and water sector all account for more than 15% respectively, followed by transportation, information and storage sector and public administration and defence sector. In the Gaza economy, 30% is by service sector and 20% is by public administration and defence sector, followed by wholesale and retail trade<sup>28</sup>.

#### **Physical Fragmentation of the West Bank**

According to the Oslo Accord, the West Bank is divided into three areas: A, B, and C<sup>22</sup>. In Area A, Palestinian Authority is responsible for both security and civil matters. In Area B, the Authority rules the civil matters while the security is in the joint responsibility of Israel and Palestinian Authority<sup>23</sup>. Area C is controlled by Israel both in security and in civil matters<sup>24</sup>. Also, Area C accounts for more than 60% of the West Bank area<sup>25</sup>.

In addition, since 2002, Israel has been constructing the so-called 'separation wall' inside the West Bank, which reinforces fragmentation and impedes movements<sup>26</sup>.

20 [http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/oda/shiryo/hyouka/kunibetu/gai/plo/pdfs/kn12\\_03\\_01.pdf](http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/oda/shiryo/hyouka/kunibetu/gai/plo/pdfs/kn12_03_01.pdf) (accessed 26/Nov/2015)

21 World Bank (2015)

22 <http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/area/plo/kankei.html> (accessed 27/Nov/2015)

23 Having said that, in practice, security in Area B is controlled by Israel who has the priority.

24 According to the Oslo Accord, Area C control is gradually to be handed over to the Palestinian side. Nevertheless, as of 2015, no official change of the situation has been observed.

25 OCHA (2014a)

26 Tobina (2009)

27 [http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/oda/shiryo/hyouka/kunibetu/gai/plo/pdfs/kn12\\_03\\_01.pdf](http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/oda/shiryo/hyouka/kunibetu/gai/plo/pdfs/kn12_03_01.pdf) (accessed 26/Nov/2015)

28 [http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/oda/shiryo/hyouka/kunibetu/gai/plo/pdfs/kn12\\_03\\_01.pdf](http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/oda/shiryo/hyouka/kunibetu/gai/plo/pdfs/kn12_03_01.pdf) (accessed 26/Nov/2015)

The largest trading partner for Palestine is Israel. In 2010, 69.4% of goods imported into Palestine were from Israel; 92.0% exported from Palestine were for Israel; the Palestinian economy is largely dependent on Israel. The most imported goods in 2010 were: diesel fuel oil (10.8% of the total imported goods), natural gas (5.5%), and gasoline (5.3%). The most exported goods were: stone (12.3% of the total exported goods), marble stone (4.9%), and re-melting scrap (4.1%)<sup>29</sup>.

### <General Situation of Women in Palestine>

The gender situation in Palestine is based on the traditional, and socially accepted, concept developed from both tribal cultural values of the Arab region and Islamic values: that is, women should be at home, taking care of the family and raising children, and women should not interact with—or should not be even seen by—men who are not their family/relatives. In reality, the traditional gender division of roles of men as breadwinners and women as caretakers has started to crumble due to the male and female necessity to cope with the prolonged crisis. But this does not necessarily lead to women's empowerment. A decent woman is one that has married and has become mother of children (especially son(s)), is a notion still widely accepted by both men and women; only then, is she a respectable person in the community who could participate in the society more freely<sup>30</sup>.

While increasing numbers of women have taken up the role of the breadwinner as a coping strategy required for the family survival, it neither changes their traditional role of caretaker at home, nor lessens the burden of that role; they are simply to assume the double burden<sup>31</sup>. It is reported that some women, especially those with less education, feel it disempowering that they have to work outside home out of necessity<sup>32</sup>.

Israeli policies on occupation, settlement and blockade, and movement restrictions, have had considerable negative impact on both Palestinian men and women, economically, socially, and mentally. For women in particular, the 'movement restrictions' are double-fold; directly, women are impeded in their movements and harassed (including sexual harassment) at checkpoints<sup>33</sup> and/or borders<sup>34</sup>. Then, Palestinian men, i.e., the women's husbands, fathers, brothers, and neighbours, restrict the women's movements and behaviour further in order to 'protect' them from the Israelis<sup>35</sup>. In the West Bank, this issue is notably apparent in Area C, where Palestinian Authority does not have

29 [http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/oda/shiryo/hyouka/kunibetu/gai/plo/pdfs/kn12\\_03\\_01.pdf](http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/oda/shiryo/hyouka/kunibetu/gai/plo/pdfs/kn12_03_01.pdf) (accessed 26/Nov/2015)

30 The Institute of Women's Studies at Birzeit University (2013), UN Women (2011), World Bank (2010)

31 The Institute of Women's Studies at Birzeit University (2013), UN Women (2011)

32 World Bank (2010)

33 Checkpoints are set up at borders between Israel territory (including the occupied territories) and strategically significant locations.

34 Frequent reports are that women are stopped at those checkpoints and/or borders, and kept waiting for several hours without explanation which prohibits them from going to schools and work places, including farms. Extreme cases are that pregnant women are not given the permission to pass, resulting in being forced to give birth at the those checkpoints and/or borders (World Bank (2010))

35 MOWA (2014a), The Institute of Women's Studies at Birzeit University (2013), UN Women (2011), World Bank (2010)

the control on security (and civil matters)<sup>36</sup>. These physical segmentation and movement restrictions have severely weakened the informal social safety net<sup>37</sup> which could, to some extent, complement the malfunctioning public services, further increasing the vulnerability of women<sup>38</sup>.

As women call the situation, it is '*falataan amni* (absolute lack of security)<sup>39</sup>. International and internal political conflict, depressed economy, and socio-cultural constraints are all coupled together, making the gender situation more difficult and complicated. Major gender issues are examined below.

### <Women in Decision Making>

Elections for the PLC, the parliament in the Palestinian Authority, and for municipal bodies, have legal quotas to secure seats for women<sup>40</sup>. In the PLC, 17 out of 132 seats (12.9%) are occupied by women according to the most recent 2006 election results; note that the PLC has not been able to function due to the internal political conflict since Hamas' victory in 2006. In municipal bodies, 1,205 out of 5,629 members (21.4%) are women according to 2012 election results, raising the female member rating from 18% in 2010. Note that the 2012 elections were only conducted in the West Bank; not in Gaza and not for Popular Committees, self-management organisations in Palestinian Refugee Camps<sup>41</sup>. It is reported that women members in the municipal bodies have suffered from harassment (for instance, meetings are set in the night-time when women hesitate to attend due to security reasons, and women are ignored when making remarks)<sup>42</sup>.

It has been pointed out that women having seats through quota system is not enough; many women members need more capacity so that they would be able to put more (or any) gender considerations in actual decision making. Moreover, research indicates that as long as these women are excluded from the economic and social resources, the formality of having women in seats would not affect women's political considerations to have a say in the social decision making<sup>43</sup>.

Currently major political parties have quotas for women members in their management organisations<sup>44</sup>. As of 2014<sup>45</sup>, in Fatah, 20% of the party members are women, with 1 woman out of 21 Central Committee members. In Hamas, where men and women belong to different organisations inside, 35% of the party members are women. It is reported that in Hamas, women have little

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36 MOWA (2014a), World Bank (2010)

37 Including mutual help within the relatives and friends.

38 <http://palestine.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/economic-empowerment/programmes> (accessed 10/Dec/2015)

39 World Bank (2010)

40 See 2.2 below for more detailed discussion on the quota system.

41 OECD (2014), Quota Project (2014), UN Women (nd). See 3.1 and 4.4 below for decision making situation regarding Popular Committees in Refugee Camps.

42 PWWDS (2013a), interview with a woman member of local council in Jericho, West Bank.

43 The Institute of Women's Studies at Birzeit University (2013), PWWSD (2013a), and interview with PWWSD.

44 World Bank (2013)

45 Hereafter, the data on women in political parties are based on WATC (2014) unless otherwise specified.

influence in the decision making of the party<sup>46</sup>. In opposition, the Secretary General of Palestinian Democratic Union (FEDA) is a woman. In other major parties, 10 to 30% of the party members are women.

At the time of writing this study, the current cabinet (reshuffled in July 2015) has four women out of 24 ministers. In the history of Palestinian Authority cabinets, the largest number of women ministers is seven<sup>47</sup>.

As of 2013, women comprise 5% of ambassadors, 16.9% (West Bank) and 8.8% (Gaza) of judges, and 16.4% of prosecutors in the West Bank (data from Gaza is unobtainable)<sup>48</sup>.

In the public sector, as of 2012, 40% of the public servants are women. However, at the Director level, women comprise 22% only, with even fewer, 11%, at the Director General level<sup>49</sup>.

The private sector shows much less participation of women. Although detailed information such as the proportion of women at managerial levels is unavailable, the proportion of 'employers' is 1.9% within the female labour force, while 7.4% of men are employers within the male labour force<sup>50</sup>. As discussed in the next section, female labour force participation is very low; indicating the actual number of women employers is very small.

### <High Education Level which Does Not Lead to Economic Empowerment>

In Palestine, the education level of women compares well with that of men; actually, it could be said that women are better educated than men. As in 1.2 above, the net enrolment ratio in primary education is 92.01% for girls while 90.51% for boys. In secondary education, it is 83.83% for girls and 76.55% for boys<sup>51</sup>. In higher education, the gender parity index (GPI) is 1.48, meaning more female students are in higher education than male students<sup>52</sup>. The reason for boys not to be enrolled in schools and/or to drop out is considered to be that they tend to start working, rather than studying, whenever there is a change, reacting to flagging economy and deepening poverty<sup>53</sup>.

The international trend is that the more women are educated, the more they participate in economic activities. However, in Palestine, women's labour force participation is very low, despite their high

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46 OECD (2014)

47 Interview and e-mail correspondence with PWWSD.

48 PCBS (2014a)

49 UN Women (nd)

50 PCBS (2015a). See also 3.3 for discussion on gender situation in the private sector.

51 <http://data.uis.unesco.org/index.aspx?queryname=166> (Accessed: 26/Oct/2015)

52 PCBS (2014a)

53 UNRWA (2013), interviews with Palestinians in various sectors, including NGOs and donor agencies, as well as beneficiaries of aid programmes. Another face of this tendency is that, job opportunities barely exist for young women who drop out of school.



level of education<sup>54</sup>. The table below shows men and women’s labour force participation rates in 2014.

Table 2.1.1: Labour Force Participation Rate in 2014 by Gender (%)

Gender Region	Male	Female
West Bank	73.4	19.1
Gaza	68.2	20.0
Total	71.5	19.4

Source: PCBS (2015a)

Both in the West Bank and in Gaza, a mere 20% of women are either working or trying to get a job. The unemployment rate, also in 2014, is shown below.

Table 2.1.3: Unemployment Rate in 2014 by Gender (%)

Gender Region	Male	Female
West Bank	15.2	27.4
Gaza	40.1	56.8
Total	28.9	38.4

Source: PCBS (2015a)

It is clear that in Gaza, where the economy (notably the private sector economy) is severely depressed, both men and women suffer from very high unemployment rate. It is also clear, however, that regardless of the region, women’s unemployment rate is disproportionately higher than that of men. To add a note, the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), the data source for Tables 2.1.2 and 2.1.3 above, defines the labour force as “[all] persons aged 15 years and above who are either employed or unemployed”<sup>55</sup>, thus including those who are in the informal sector and are unpaid. That is to say, even fewer women are actually gaining tangible income than in seen above.

Behind the low labour force participation and high unemployment of women, many factors work against women.

Unemployment rate for men is high, which indicates in the flagging economy, there are few job opportunities in the first place. The traditional gender norm that it is men, who feed the family, while women take care of the household and raise children, is still strong in the society, although the reality has started to change (see above). In this context, men naturally come before women when employed<sup>56</sup>. Men including husbands and fathers would not, in many cases; let women under their care (supposedly) work outside, due to the same gender norm. Women themselves would also feel

<sup>54</sup> This phenomenon is prevalent not only in Palestine but also in neighbouring Jordan and other Middle East countries(JICA (forthcoming))

<sup>55</sup> Pp. 31, PCBS (2015a)

<sup>56</sup> This phenomenon seems to be more clearly seen in the private sector than in the public sector. See 3.3 below for the discussion on women in the private sector.



hesitant to step outside the norm by taking up working. As a consequence, many women would become so-called discouraged workers<sup>57</sup>.

Another hindrance is the large number of children that Palestinian women have, as discussed in the section below. The family system has become more nuclear, which makes the women with children (especially small children) hold back, as it is difficult to find a person to take care of the children while working. Potential demand for childcare services is therefore high, but in reality the service is scarce<sup>58</sup>.

While, as discussed, women's labour participation has not increased<sup>59</sup>, their unemployment rate exceeds that of men's. The possible factors are examined below.

Employers' general preference of men over women, as mentioned above, is undoubtedly a major reason. Moreover, women generally lack competitiveness as job seekers, due to their educational backgrounds. Female students predominantly study 'feminine' and 'female-appropriate' areas, including health, education and humanities, i.e., areas closely related to traditional women's role<sup>60</sup>, as the parents—even the parents who are positive for their daughters' education<sup>61</sup>—often allow girls to proceed into higher education only if they choose these 'feminine' areas as their major. However, these educational backgrounds generally provide not much professional expertise, as required by the employers, except for several professions such as teachers and health service personnel (professions that traditionally tend to have women)<sup>62</sup>. Even though quite a few female students major in life and physical science, because it is an abstract type of study, the major job option for the graduates is said to be teaching<sup>63</sup>.

The notion for 'feminine' and 'female-appropriate' area is set not only for education but also profession. Typical 'appropriate' jobs include teachers, health professionals, office secretaries, sales clerks, and farmers (since in Palestinian agriculture, basically farmers work on family farms with family members)<sup>64</sup>. According to data collected in 2014, 20.9% of women workers are in agriculture, 57.0% are in service sector; the vast majority are clearly in the 'appropriate' women jobs<sup>65</sup>.

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57 Hiral *et al.* (2008)

58 MOWA (2014a), The Institute of Women's Studies at Birzeit University (2013)

59 Female labour participation rate has been continuously low; it is reported that the rate has been declining since 2000s(The Institute of Women's Studies at Birzeit University (2013)). This could well be correlated with the social trend of deepening conservatism (discussed below).

60 The role as a mother and the caretaker of the family and other people, including the tasks related to these.

61 It is reported that in reality, parents still put priority to their sons' education, making their daughters have no choice but seeking for scholarships(UN Women (2011)).

62 The Institute of Women's Studies at Birzeit University (2013), UN Women (2011)

63 The Institute of Women's Studies at Birzeit University (2013)

64 UN Women (2011), The Institute of Women's Studies at Birzeit University (2013). See 3.2 below for women in the agriculture sector.

65 PCBS (2015a)

Considerable proportion of ‘appropriate’ jobs of teachers, health professionals and office workers is in the public sector, and the women workers have actually penetrated in the public sector<sup>66</sup>. The downside of the public sector jobs is, however, that the number of employment in the sector would not increase (if not decrease) as the sector is close to saturated and wage bill for public servants accounts for 16% of the relative GDP<sup>67</sup>. It is likely that the women are already competing with each other to get jobs.

While education does not necessarily result in securing a job, the education level of women maintains its high level. This is so probably because it is a coping strategy for the people<sup>68</sup>. According to a study in 2010 by the World Bank, education for women is seen as, in the West Bank, investment for the future possibility to obtain livelihood means, and/or investment for better marriage opportunity which would secure more stable life; in the context of unsure political and economic future, and in Gaza, which is in even graver shape of economy, as investment to grab whatever opportunity possible for formal sector job (that is, stable income source)<sup>69</sup>. Education does not secure a job, whereas without education one is unlikely to have a chance for a ‘good’ job (that is, either in the public sector or in larger private enterprise). According to the interviews in the field research for this study, in Gaza as well as in the West Bank, educated women tend to have better chances for ‘good’ marriages<sup>70</sup>. As stated before, in Palestinian society, to become/be seen as a decent woman, one needs to get married and have children.

### <‘Asset Poverty’ of Women and its Impact on Gender Situations>

It is considered that a woman’s social status could be evaluated by looking at her access to and control of resources in the household and in the society. The resources here include both physical resources (income, assets including land, essential goods including food and other properties) and social resources (knowledge, power, and respect received from others)<sup>71</sup>. A study that examined the correlation between gender equality and ownership of assets by international comparison finds that not owning assets and/or not having access to resources directly leads to having less and less bargaining power and influence in the household and in the society<sup>72</sup>. From this point of view,

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66 As stated above, female proportion in the public servants is as high as 40%.

67 World Bank (2015) According to this report, Palestinian wage bill as 16% of GDP is at the highest level in the world.

68 UN Women (2011)

69 World Bank (2010)

70 Interviews with NGOs working in Gaza. According to these interviews, the husbands-to-be and their family prefer women with education as their future wives because the women would: (1) have higher potential for bringing income to the households, and (2) be able to educate the children better even if (1) is not possible, thus making it more likely for the children to have more stable life. Therefore, men would not mind if their wives-to-be are more educated than themselves.

71 The Institute of Women’s Studies at Birzeit University (2013)

72 Doss *et al.* (2008)

Palestinian women are extremely vulnerable<sup>73</sup>.

In terms of individual asset development, because women have little chance for jobs (see the section above) and thus income, it is very difficult for them to build up assets with their own efforts. Even when women have income, socio-culturally it is men's role to control the money in the household so that it would not be accumulated as the women's own asset<sup>74</sup>.

When looking at immovable property including land and house, due to the scarcity of individual assets, it would not be realistic to purchase it. Thus, whatever property a women owns is practically obtained through inheritance. Inheritance is, unfortunately, also problematic. Although women have legal rights for inheritance to a certain extent<sup>75</sup>, socio-culturally it should be men who own land and other immovable properties, which leads to considerably intense pressure on women from the male relatives (including family members) to waive the inheritance rights for the sake of males—to which a majority of women are forced to concede<sup>76</sup>. It is reported that recently an increased number of women who try to exercise their rights would bring the matter to Sharia (Islamic) Court<sup>77</sup>. However, even then, many of them would face negative reaction from the Court and/or legal personnel, only to be rejected or smothered up<sup>78</sup>, as this women's action implies that they would dare to 'rebel' against the norms and thus against the men. This sometimes results in the women being ousted from the family and the community<sup>79</sup>.

Another means for women to obtain assets is her dowry, which is typically jewellery. Because of the situations described above, in the majority of cases, the dowry is the only individual asset of women<sup>80</sup>.

Although comprehensive and recent research and data on this matter is unavailable, the table below illustrates the general tendency as described above.

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73 The Institute of Women's Studies at Birzeit University (2013), OECD (2014), MOWA (2014a). As access to various resources is discussed in the following chapters as appropriate, this section mainly focuses on assets.

74 World Bank (2010), The Institute of Women's Studies at Birzeit University (2013), MOWA (2014a).

75 Generally speaking, a woman has less inheritance than a man in the equivalent position (such as a daughter vs a son). See also 2.2 below.

76 OECD (2014), The Institute of Women's Studies at Birzeit University (2013), UN Women (2011)

77 UN Women (2011)

78 UN Women (2014a)

79 *Ibid.*

80 The Institute of Women's Studies at Birzeit University (2013)

Table 2.1.3: Proportion of Women who Own Assets

	1991	1999	2010
	West Bank and Gaza Strip	West Bank and Gaza Strip	West Bank (economically active women only)
Car	-	1%	15%
Land (or share in land)	8%	5%	29%
House (or share in a house)	9%	8%	11%
Bank account	8%	12%	NA
Private investment project (or share in a project)	-	0.2%	5%
Jewelry	48%	53%	52%
Other assets	9%	9%	NA

Source: The Institute of Women's Studies at Birzeit University (2013)

At the time of this study's writing, current concerns as to women and their assets include the following:

- Due to prolonged economic recession, especially in Gaza and Area C in the West Bank, many women are forced to sell off their only asset, their dowry, as a desperate coping strategy for their own and family's survival<sup>81</sup>.
- Recently in Gaza, population increase has pressured land prices and caused them to sky-rocket. This inevitably results in intensified conflicts over inheritance. Increasingly, women who try to defend their inheritance rights are victimized via physical and mental violence. It is reported that in some cases the violence accelerates into murder<sup>82</sup>.

### <Reproductive Health (RH)>

Total Fertility Rate (TFR) in Palestine in 2014 is 4.1 (3.7 for the West Bank and 4.5 for Gaza)<sup>83</sup>. TFR in 1991 was 6.1, and thus it has been decreasing for these several decades<sup>84</sup>, yet is still at a high level. Contradicting the international trend in which the higher the education level rises, the lower TFR becomes, Palestinian women, especially Gaza women, continue to have many children.

The factors behind the high TFR are likely to be multi-fold. An underlying factor is a traditional and persistent social value, that is, a woman is to be respected when married and is a mother (of, especially, son(s))<sup>85</sup>. Also, as discussed above, labour force participation of Palestinian women are low and many women are full-time housewives. While the causal association between the two—the

81 UN Women (2011), The Institute of Women's Studies at Birzeit University (2013)

82 UN Country Team in the occupied Palestinian territory (2012), interviews with NGOs and a cooperative in Gaza. See also the item of [Early Marriage and Honour Killings] in the next section.

83 PCBS (2015b)

84 The Institute of Women's Studies at Birzeit University (2013)

85 The Institute of Women's Studies at Birzeit University (2013), UN Women (2011), World Bank (2010)

women do not work because they have many children, or, they have many children because they do not work—is unclear, it is very much likely for these two correlate to each other<sup>86</sup>.

Furthermore, in Palestine, a widespread societal sentiment aiming toward larger Palestinian population exists. This is in the context of ‘versus Israel’; if and when Palestinian population grows larger in comparison with Israeli population, Israel would feel pressured. Thus, it is sometimes said that the population is a weapon for Palestinians<sup>87</sup>. It would be conceivable that Gazan women have even higher TFR than the West Bank because some social sub-consciousness may be at work, toward increased Gazan people as a weapon for resistance; after all, Gaza has seen large scale violent conflicts every few years, to the extent that it is not impossible to think of an extinguishment of the people and the land.

The trends in Family Planning (FP) in 2014 are as follows: 44% use modern contraceptive methods, 13% use traditional methods, and 43% do not use any<sup>88</sup>. Due to high social pressure to have children, desirably many of them, some report that women have difficulties to decide about FP independently<sup>89</sup>.

A current concern is RH in Gaza specifically. 2014 conflict has resulted in massive damage of medical and health facilities, and consequently in increased maternity mortality which could have been avoided and reduced rate of FP usage<sup>90</sup>.

### <Women and Violence>

Gender-based violence (GBV) in Palestine is largely affected not only by socio-cultural factors but also by political and economic factors.

#### [Domestic Violence and VAW]

Violence against Woman/Women (VAW) in Palestine is a social taboo, regarded as a domestic problem that is needed to be handled inside home<sup>91</sup>. This makes it difficult to have any accurate picture. According to available data, though, it is prevalent. An international comparison by UN (2015) reports 58.8% of Palestinian women experience intimate partner psychological violence at least once in their life<sup>92</sup>. The PCBS Territory-wide study in 2011, reports<sup>93</sup> that within the year before the data collection, 29.9% (in the West Bank) and 5.10% (in Gaza) of wives experienced at least one form of spousal violence<sup>94</sup>. Moreover, 65.3% of the victims did not tell anybody about the

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86 The Institute of Women's Studies at Birzeit University (2013)

87 *Ibid.*, Richter-Devroe (2011)

88 PCBS (2015b)

89 OECD (2014)

90 UNFPA (2015)

91 The Institute of Women's Studies at Birzeit University (2013)

92 UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2015)

93 PCBS (2012)

94 Physical, psychological, sexual, economic and social violence are included (PCBS (2012)).

violence<sup>95</sup>—the so-called ‘culture of silence’ kicks in.

What lies behind this ‘culture of silence’ includes patriarchal and masculinist values and socio-cultural norms that are built upon them. Decision, including judgement of good and bad, is for men to make. Therefore, if a husband beats his wife, it is because he has justifiable reason to do so<sup>96</sup>. According to a study in 2000, 49% of male and 43% of female respondents answer that a wife is beaten by her husband because she deserves it<sup>97</sup>. UN Women (2014a) summarizes the spousal violence situation utilizing PCBS data, as follows.

Table 2.1.4: Spousal Violence against Wives (%)

	Psychological Violence		Physical Violence		Sexual Violence	
	2005	2011	2005	2011	2005	2011
West Bank	68.0	48.8	23.7	17.4	11.5	10.2
Gaza	49.7	76.4	22.6	34.8	9.7	14.9

Source: UN Women (2014a)

Few data and researches are available as to violence against unmarried women, widows and divorcees, as well as to VAW outside household including VAW in public spaces. A piece of information compiled in UN Women (2014a) is shown below, as to domestic violence against unmarried women.

Table 2.1.5: Domestic Violence experienced by Unmarried Women (age 18+) (%)

	Psychological Violence		Physical Violence		Sexual Violence	
	2005	2011	2005	2011	2005	2011
West Bank	56.1	19.5	24.4	24.0	N/A	0.7
Gaza	47.3	35.3	25.1	39.7	N/A	1.0

Source: UN Women (2014a)

Comparison between 2005 and 2011 according to Tables 2.1.4 and 2.1.5 shows that regardless of marital status, domestic violence against women in the West Bank has, although slightly, reduced whereas that in Gaza has increased almost sharply. This phenomenon is discussed in the following item since the political and economic environment of Gaza is likely to be an affecting factor.

As a protection and support system, the Family Protection Unit established in 2008 in the Security Force has been working, although its effectiveness is limited<sup>98</sup>. One problem is that GBV and VAW are not clearly defined in the legal system<sup>99</sup> on which the Unit is supposed to be working; another is that the Unit is not sufficiently staffed both in terms of number and of their professionalism. It is reported that there has been serious secondary damage against the survivors (such as harassment, let

95 *Ibid.*

96 The Institute of Women's Studies at Birzeit University (2013)

97 *Ibid.*

98 MOWA (2011), UN Women (2014a)

99 See 2.2 below.

alone neglect)<sup>100</sup>. There are non-governmental services, by NGOs and international organisations, which tend to emphasize prevention and advocacy over care, the absolute number is still small, and coordination amongst them is yet to be improved<sup>101</sup>. As to referral systems, which refer survivors to professional care services including psychological counselling, legal service and/or higher medical services according to necessity, there is one active system by United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in the Palestinian Refugee Camps, although it has not had many users<sup>102</sup>. A governmental referral system is to be built, with Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA) being in the planning phase<sup>103</sup>.

Under these circumstances, a mere 0.7% of victims of spousal violence tried to seek outside support (including care/support services by NGOs and medical institutions) while, as stated above, 65% kept their silence, according to PCBS survey in 2011<sup>104</sup>.

### **[Political Violence, Economic Violence and GBV]**

In Palestine, violence is an everyday occurrence for both men and women, due to the cycle of violence by and against Israel as well as due to internal political turmoil. In the PCBS survey conducted in 2011 (referred to above), 47.8% of West Bank households and 49.1% of Gaza households have experienced at least some sort of violence by either Israeli force(s) or by settlers<sup>105</sup>. Political violence by Israeli forces and settlers takes various forms including detention of Palestinians, invasion, forced eviction, and destruction of buildings and farm lands, physical violence such as beating, verbal violence such as insults and threats, and harassment at checkpoints such as being kept for hours, rejection of passing, and sexual harassment. In addition, it would be fair to consider economic blockade in Gaza and water and building restrictions in the West Bank as political violence as they are highly politically motivated<sup>106</sup>. While women are also victimized by Israeli political violence (such as sexual harassment at checkpoints), men are more likely to be assaulted precisely because they are Palestinian men<sup>107</sup>.

A vicious circle of violence has been observed within Palestinians; males as victims of political violence further victimize women. A statistical study by Clark *et al.* reveals that men who have experienced political violence are more likely (statistically significantly) to commit violence against

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100 MOWA (2011), UN Women (2014a)

101 UNFPA (nd)

102 UNRWA (nd) and interview with UNRWA HQ (Amman, Jordan). See also 3.1 below.

103 Interview with MOWA

104 PCBS (2012)

105 *Ibid.*

106 World Bank (2010), MOWA (2014a)

107 In the field research for this study in a Refugee Camp in West Bank, a case of a mother of a current detainee is collected. The respondent's son, an apolitical teenager, was simply walking near the separation wall when he was suddenly detained. He has been in detention for more than half a year. The only reason for his detention seems to be 'being a Palestinian boy'.

women than men without such experience<sup>108</sup>. Moreover, grim economic conditions, and male joblessness aggravates VAW. A study conducted in 2011 shows that 30% of women with unemployed husbands have experienced domestic violence, while 21% of women with employed husbands have<sup>109</sup>.

When a male is victimized through political violence, he suffers not only physically but also psychologically—his self-esteem drops and he feels humiliated. In Palestine, this occurs naggingly and chronically. On the one hand, the traditional value requires him to feed and protect his family, which is simply difficult to fulfil. Consequently, his humiliation, lowered self-esteem, frustration and anxiety pile up. His mind and body needs a ventilation outlet; which tends to be materialized as violent behaviour against those weaker around him—his wife and other women in the household, and children. Here, the psychology of showing his ‘superiority’ (probably subconsciously, though) also works<sup>110</sup>.

The increase of VAW, as described in Tables 2.1.4 and 2.1.5 above, could be explained through this mechanism. As discussed, Gaza has experienced a long blockade (economic as well as physical) after Hamas’s rise in 2007 and as many as four violent conflicts which some call ‘wars’, within a decade only<sup>111</sup>. Gazan people are practically locked in within the Strip, with a devastated economy and grave political prospect. The social anxiety is naturally severe. This social, economic and political situation has mentally cornered Gazan men, if not physically or economically, pushing them over the threshold, so that they would resort to violence against women around them.

The situation in the West Bank is comparatively better, but it is not in any way good. It should be noted that in the West Bank, the political violence is not homogeneous. As explained above, the West Bank comprises Area A, B and C; especially in Area C, where Israel controls both security and civil matters, people suffer from political violence (in the sense discussed above) by Israeli forces and settlers day-to-day. Although detailed documentation of the situation in Area C is scarce due to the complicated political context<sup>112</sup>, it is reported that more than 70% of the communities are excluded from the water network, control of movements is more severe than it is in Area A and B, and in 2013 alone, at least 565 Palestinian buildings were forcibly dismantled with more than 800 people losing their houses and farm lands, and more are at risk of eviction<sup>113</sup>. In this environment, it would be fair to consider that the prevalence of political violence as well as VAW influenced by that in Area C is

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108 Clark *et al.* (2010)

109 UN Women (2013)

110 Clark *et al.* (2010), World Bank (2010), The Institute of Women’s Studies at Birzeit University (2013)

111 Smaller violent incidents simply go on and on. During the field research in Gaza for this study as well, a rocket attack by Hamas occurred, resulting in the next day’s retaliation attack by Israel.

112 OCHA (2014b)

113 OCHA (2014a)



considerably higher than that in Area A and B<sup>114</sup>.

### **[Early Marriage and Honour Killings]**

The current international consensus is that early marriage, that is a marriage of a minor under 18 years of age, is regarded as a form of forced marriage (because a person less than 18 years old would not be mature enough to make a legally eligible decision of life such as marriage), and thus included in GBV<sup>115</sup>. Early marriage in Palestine has reduced greatly in number; however, it is reported that it again started to increase in the last several years, notably in Gaza where the poverty is deepening. Parents who cannot afford to feed their children ‘marry off’ their daughters to lessen their economic burden<sup>116</sup>. While the actual number and/or rate of increase are unclear, development agencies working in women’s empowerment in Gaza are concerned with the perceived fact that specifically after the conflict in 2014, in several specific local communities, early marriage has increased considerably<sup>117</sup>. The reasons stated for this trend include poverty as described above, and that parents who have been displaced (Internally Displaced Person(s), IDP(s))<sup>118</sup> would not be able to provide security to their children and thus marry their daughters to males who are seen to be capable of having a more secure life than themselves<sup>119</sup>.

Another gender issue of concern is the increase of so-called honour killing(s), again with no clear data available<sup>120</sup>. Honour killing is typically a murder of a woman who supposedly committed ‘shameful’ behaviour(s)—that is, in many cases, behaviour with sexual implications such as out-of- or before-marriage sexual intercourse)—by family/relative males (father, brothers, cousins and so on) in order to protect the family honour. However, in certain cases, it is not clear what is ‘shameful’ about the victim’s behaviour<sup>121</sup>. The number of cases reported includes 13 cases in 2012 and 19 cases in 2008. Information on the difference between and/or characteristics in the West Bank and Gaza and other attributions is not available for this study<sup>122</sup>. Another issue around this matter is that there are cases in which ‘honour’ is used as an excuse for murder which is actually for inheritance issues, assets, and/or properties; for instance, a woman who inherited land is murdered so that male relative(s) would get the land back to his/their hands, and then the murder is socially settled because supposedly she was killed in order to keep the family honour for her ‘shameful’ behaviour. This is

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114 This study is unable to identify any data and/or researches which are on the prevalence of and/or differences in GBV/VAW in Area A, B, and C.

115 Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Sub-Working Group (2014)

116 OECD (2014)

117 Interviews with UNFPA and UN Women, as well as with NGOs working in Gaza.

118 In the 2014 ‘war’ in Gaza, the number of IDPs rose to 485,000 (28% of the population) at one point; even after one year, in July 2015, 100,000 people were still displaced (OCHA (2015)).

119 Interviews with UNFPA and UN Women, as well as with NGOs working in Gaza.

120 The Washington Post (2014), OECD (2014)

121 *Ibid*, The Institute of Women’s Studies at Birzeit University (2013)

122 The Institute of Women’s Studies at Birzeit University (2013)

particularly the argument in Gaza<sup>123</sup> where the land price has surged in recent years<sup>124</sup>.

### <Rising Conservatism and its Impact on Gender Situations>

The post-Oslo Accord era in Palestine has seen weakening of modern values including democracy, diversity, civil society movements and women's empowerment and gender equality<sup>125</sup>.

It is beyond the scope of this study to examine the proceedings and background factors of this phenomenon; one quick note is that the fact that the PLO (and subsequently Palestinian Authority) has decided on the 'two-state solution', i.e., coexistence with Israel, without the consensus of the population and has navigated—or had to do so—has been crucial<sup>126</sup>. A tough decision was made, and nevertheless, peace negotiation has stalled, with socio-economic and political situations in a mess. This has made the population disillusioned and mistrusting against the PLO as well as other establishments, including the Western World which (is seen to) have backed up the Oslo Accord. This subsequently has led to the negative feelings against the modern values based on the Western Modernism<sup>127</sup>. This sentiment is thought to be a base of recent rise of Islam fundamentalism in Palestine as well as in the Middle East as a whole<sup>128</sup>. These sentiments and situational factors intermingled together have fostered the return to the so-called traditional and religious values and the rise of conservatism in the society<sup>129</sup>.

Conservatism with re-strengthened traditional values has negatively impacted the Palestinian gender situation. The women's movement, majorly by the women's organisations, for the rights and freedom of women was active in pre-Oslo Accord era, but considerably deaccelerated since, especially, the early 2000s. Social presence of female opinion leaders has shrunk, and not only that, control of movement imposed on women by men and the community/society has tended to become more strict so that women would be 'protected' from the dangers in the society, especially Israeli violence<sup>130</sup>.

The governments (both Fatah government in the West Bank and Hamas government in Gaza) have recently become more authoritarian<sup>131</sup> and are reported to have taken offensive measures against women's organisations<sup>132</sup>. These circumstances coupled together, women's movements and actions, especially in organized manners, have become more difficult to be undertaken.

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123 Interviews with NGOs active in Gaza.

124 UN Country Team in the occupied Palestinian territory (2012), interviews with NGOs and a cooperative working in Gaza.

125 The Institute of Women's Studies at Birzeit University (2013), Richter-Devroe (2011)

126 International Crisis Group (2014)

127 The social mode has shifted, and it has become widely felt that democratization, women's freedom/empowerment and such are not what were derived from the society of Palestinians, but something parachuted from outside—that is, international community led by the Western countries(The Institute of Women's Studies at Birzeit University (2013)).

128 Iizuka (2002), Richter-Devroe (2011), interview with PWWSD.

129 The Institute of Women's Studies at Birzeit University (2013), Otero (2012), Richter-Devroe (2011), interview with UN Women.

130 The Institute of Women's Studies at Birzeit University (2013), World Bank (2010), interviews with UNFPA and PWWSD.

131 Shimizu (2011)

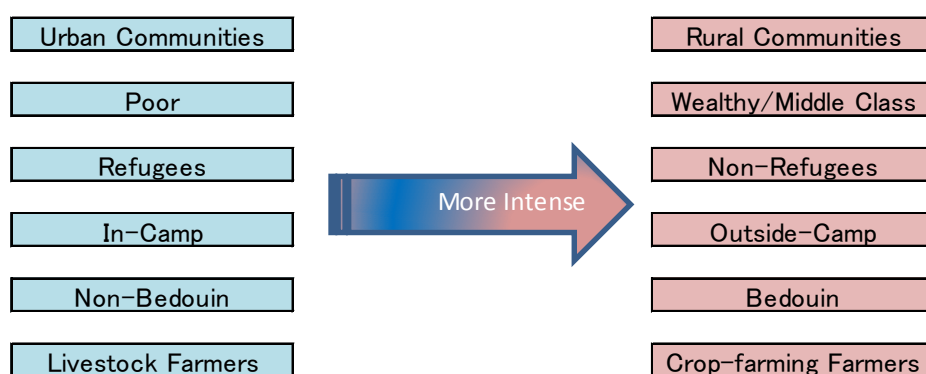
132 OECD (2014)

### <Intensity of Gender Norms by Community/Group Attributions>

The peculiar modern history of Palestine has forced many of its people to migrate—often more than once, typically seen in Palestinian Refugees and IDPs. Furthermore, conflicts themselves, Israeli policies on occupation and economy, and massive inflow of international aid, coupled with the repeating migration, have considerably affected the integrity and continuity of socio-economic situation and livelihood of the communities. As a consequence, community structures are observed to be fluctuating and fragmented.

This has led to a greatly complicated gender situations in the community and in the society as a whole<sup>133</sup>. To put it bluntly, Palestine is a society composed of a ‘patchwork’ of communities without united and integrated communal history. Because of this, variables that determine gender situations are diversified, and each community has its own particular sets of these variables.

This makes an ‘overview’ of gender situations in Palestine extremely difficult. As an attempt to better understand the complicated situations, a categorisation of intensity of gender norms by community/group attributions is provided below, as a generalized guide. This categorisation is developed through the analysis of the information accumulated for this study and detailed discussions of respective groups are given in this study as appropriate. Gender norms here refer to the notions commonly held by the people within the group they belong to, regarding what and how men and women should and should not do/act.



Source: Author’s compilation <sup>134</sup>

Figure 2.1.1: Gender Norms within Groups by Group Attributions

133 As UN Women stated, ‘ready-made’ gender assistance measures are no good in Palestine (interview with UN Women).

134 Sources for information used in the analysis are as follows: for urban-rural difference, JICA (2015a) and interviews with Palestinian informants; for difference among rich-middle class-poor, World Bank (2010), The Institute of Women’s Studies at Birzeit University (2013), and interviews Palestinian informants; for Refugee-Non-Refugee difference, see more detailed discussion in 3.1 below; for Bedouin-Non-Bedouin difference, see more detailed discussion in 4.1 and 4.2 below; and for difference within farmers community, JICA (2015b) as well as interviews with Palestinian informants. See also 4.1 below.

The factors behind the tendency depicted above vary from group to group. For instance, a major factor in Wealthy/Middle Class-Poor groups, Refugee-Non-Refugee groups, and In- and Outside-Camps groups is probably the economic and physical necessity, and related attitude of people to adopt coping strategies. In order for the individual/family/group to survive, the people of Poor, Refugees, and In-Camp groups cannot afford to stick to the traditional gender norms, that is, ‘women should not work outside home’ ‘women should not move around too freely’ and so on<sup>135</sup>. In the case of Bedouins, socio-cultural factors seem to play a critical norm. As Bedouin people have led a nomadic life as a group composed mainly of blood-relatives, their everyday life tends to be completed within the group, without much interaction with people outside. This would probably result in strongly maintained traditional norms<sup>136</sup>.

The categorisation has a limited scope. For one, the groups discussed above are only those whose tendency in terms of gender norms could be examined by more than one source. Attributions that are important when analysing gender situations, but without plural information sources on this matter, are excluded; they include the West Bank-Gaza difference, educational attainment, difference in the types of jobs and employment, and ownership of assets including land.

It should be noted that this categorisation is merely an attempted generalisation of propensity. Therefore, this guide may not prove correct in actual individual cases. It is also very much possible that another attribution of the group may have greater influence than these examined above. Moreover, gender norms of a group with overlapping attributions, for example, a group of Refugees, who are Bedouin, living in a rural area, cannot be assumed from this categorisation<sup>137</sup>

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135 UN Women (2011), World Bank (2010)

136 Interviews with Palestinian informants including a Bedouin Tribal Leader.

137 See 4.1 below for elaborated discussion.

## 2.2 Governmental Commitment on Gender

### Summary

- (1) The Palestinian Authority's "National Development Plan 2014-2016" has incorporated gender mainstreaming when developing the document, while it does not explicitly discuss gender mainstreaming/equality.
- (2) The "Cross-Sectoral National Gender Strategy 2014-2016" is the main gender strategy of the government, which is the first of its kind in Palestine to promote gender mainstreaming in all sectors.
- (3) The "National Strategy to Combat Violence Against Women 2011-2019" specifically tackles gender-based violence (GBV)/violence against women (VAW), while "Gender Charter for the Aid Coordination Structure in Palestine" argues for gender mainstreaming in aid coordination amongst the Palestinian Authority and the donor circle.
- (4) The legal system of Palestine is a 'patchwork' of historical laws of different countries. Partly due to this, legal stipulations which would disadvantage women are still in practice. However, some recent laws, including Labour Law and Electoral Law, set regulations favourable for women.
- (5) The de-facto internal split (the West Bank of Fatah and Gaza of Hamas) has made the rule of law difficult to be applied.
- (6) The Palestinian Authority has joined the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 2014, and is currently in preparation of the National Action Plan for UN Security Council Resolution 1325.

### <National Policy on Gender>

The "National Development Plan 2014-2016", the Palestinian Authority's basic strategy for development, has incorporated gender mainstreaming as one of the seven pillars of the approach to developing the Plan. The vision of the plan states "[Palestinian Authority] respects human rights and fundamental freedoms and guarantees equal rights and duties for all citizens", and the people "live in safety and security under the rule of law"<sup>138</sup>, although it does not explicitly mention gender mainstreaming and/or gender equality.

The current policy which directly relates to gender issues is named "Cross-Sectoral National Gender Strategy 2014-2016", which was formulated as the first of its kind in Palestine to promote gender mainstreaming in all sectors<sup>139</sup>. The five strategic objectives of the Strategy are: to increase women's participation in the labour force, to reduce all forms of violence against Palestinian women, to increase women's participation in decision making institutions, for Palestinian women to have access to all basic services, and to mainstream and universalize gender issues<sup>140</sup>. As to the second objective, reducing VAW, another Policy has already been formulated in 2001, namely, "National Strategy to

138 Pp. 42, Palestinian Authority (2014)

139 ILO (2013)

140 MOWA (2014a)

Combat Violence Against Women 2011-2019”<sup>141</sup>. The existence of the VAW Strategy indicates the recognition by Palestinian Authority of the problem and challenges that VAW poses.

In addition, in 2014, Palestinian Authority in cooperation with the international donor agencies<sup>142</sup> launched “Gender Charter for the Aid Coordination Structure in Palestine”. The Charter has been formulated reflecting on the insufficient attention so far on gender consideration in aid coordination, given Palestine’s dependency on international aid, which is derived from the territory’s particular political and socio-economic context<sup>143</sup>. The Charter aims to foster coordination and cooperation by the Authority and donor agencies in the following six areas: data for analysis, eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls in Palestine, mainstreaming gender within planning, budgeting and policy making, political, economic and social participation, closing gender gaps in service provision, and mutual accountability<sup>144</sup>.

## <Gender in the Legal System>

### [The Basic Law]

The Basic Law of 2002 (amended in 2003) stipulates that all citizens are equal before the law regardless of their race, sex, colour, religion, political views and disability, and basic human rights and freedom are protected and respected<sup>145</sup>. On the other hand, the Basic Law also refers to Sharia (Islamic) laws as the principal source of legislation, which, depending on interpretations, may undermine the rights of women<sup>146</sup>.

### [Legal System as a ‘Patchwork’ of History]

Several decades of colonisation, occupation, and political turmoil to date, have made the legal system in Palestine a ‘patchwork’ of historical laws of different countries. In some spheres, the Jordanian laws govern the West Bank while Egyptian laws regulate Gaza. Since the creation of Palestinian Authority, the PLC as the parliamentary system had tried to consolidate these fragmented laws into new Palestinian laws, but the process was halted due to the second Intifada erupted in 2000 and political confusion that followed. Then, since 2007, the PLC itself has been frozen due to the internal division and political rivalry<sup>147</sup>. Even the laws newly launched and/or amended by 2007, are problematic as they contradict within and/or each other. Moreover, inadequate implementation

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141 MOWA and National Committee to Combat Violence Against Women (2011)

142 Those who led the process in the international community are UN Women and Local Aid Coordination Secretariat (LACS). LACS was established in 2005 in order to increase the effectiveness of the donor coordination in Palestine, with Aid Coordination Officers working extensively to coordinate with and amongst the donors. (<http://www.lacs.ps/article.aspx?id=2> (accessed 6/Nov/2015))

143 United Nations (2014), <http://www.lacs.ps/article.aspx?id=52> (accessed 6/Nov/2015)

144 MOWA (2014b)

145 UNDP (2011), UN Women (2013)

146 UNDP (2011)

147 *Ibid*, OECD (2014), Quota Project (2014)

capacity of the government(s) (that is, Fatah's and Hamas') and Israeli occupation severely hinder their enforcement<sup>148</sup>.

The laws and their contents that affect major gender issues are outlined below.

### **[Laws that Govern Family and Personal Life]**

The laws that regulate the family and personal life are: in the West Bank, the Personal Status Law of 1976, of Jordan, and in Gaza, the Law of Family Rights of 1954, of Egypt. Major provisions, which are common to the two laws and have influences in gender situations, include the following<sup>149</sup>:

- Muslim men can have up to four wives<sup>150</sup> while women may have only one husband.
- When getting married, Muslim women are required to be approved by their male guardians (a male relative called 'wali'). Men do not need such approval.
- Minimum age eligible for marriage is set (see below). However, when and if Sharia Court decides that it would be the best interest for the person, those who are younger than the age can be married.
- Husband may divorce his wife one-sidedly. In order for the wife to be able to divorce her husband one-sidedly, there must be an article stating so in the marriage contract. Otherwise, she may only require 'legal separation' based on the mutual agreement.
- When re-married, a divorced woman automatically loses the custody of her children from the previous marriage.
- As to inheritance, the details are regulated by the Sharia Law; for example, a daughter may inherit from her parent half of what a son does.
- As there is no concept as common property of husband and wife, when a husband dies or the couple is divorced, a wife does not have a right for the property acquired during the marriage unless it is documented as such.
- In Sharia Court, a woman's testimony weighs less than a man's.
- If a woman leaves the house in opposition to the husband's will, she may be legally forced to go back home.

In addition, provisions particular to the Personal Status Law in the West Bank include:

- Minimum age for marriage is 16 for males and 15 for females.
- The custody of a child, when the parents are divorced and the mother is not remarried, is given to the mother until the child reaches puberty, and then to the father.

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148 UNDP (2011)

149 The description below is based on UNDP (2011) and OECD (2014).

150 As it is regulated in Islamic (Sharia) Laws. Note that the Laws stipulate that the husband must treat all the wives equally.

Provisions particular to the Law of Family Rights in Gaza include:

- Minimum age for marriage is 18 for males and 17 for females.
- The custody of a girl child, when the parents are divorced and the mother is not remarried, is given to the mother until the child reaches 11 years of age and then to the father. The custody of a boy child is given to the mother until he is seven years old, and when the boy reaches nine years old to the father. While the boy is between seven to nine years of age, either the father or the mother, who would provide betterment for the child, holds the custody.

### **[Penal Code]**

The laws that regulate crimes and punishable activities are: in the West Bank, the Penal Code of 1960, of Jordan, and in Gaza, the Mandate Penal Law of 1936 (law formulated during the British rule).

Major provisions which are common to the two laws and have influences in gender situations include the following<sup>151</sup>:

- Rape is criminalized except for spousal rape.
- The rape charge is dropped if the assailant marries the victim<sup>152</sup>.
- Domestic Violence (DV) is not regarded as crime.
- Artificial abortion is criminalized, even when it is performed for a pregnancy due to sexual assault. Not only the pregnant woman but also all who supported the abortion, including the medical personnel, are penalized.
- Penalties for so-called ‘honour crimes’ and ‘honour killings’<sup>153</sup> are light in general and in certain circumstances no penalty is given.

In addition, provisions particular to the Penal Code of the West Bank include:

- Penalties for rape are lighter if the victim is non-virgin compared to the case of virgin victims, from one-third to half.
- Incest is not regarded as sexual assault. Both the assailant and the victim are regarded as offenders.

In the West Bank, in 2011, a Presidential decree deleted the provision for the penalty reduction against the ‘honour killing’ in the Penal Code (of Jordan). Yet, it is still criticized as insufficient, as it is possible to lighten the penalty by interpretation of other provisions and application.

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151 The description below is based on OECD (2014), Jallad (2012) and UNDP (2011).

152 It is not clear that how much this stipulation is actually used. However, being raped—an unmarried woman losing her chastity—is socially regarded as ‘shame’, which leads to the people around the victim (family and relatives) pressuring her to accept the marriage arrangement. Many victims are thought to bow to their pressure so that family ‘honour’ is cleared (Jallad (2012))

153 See 2.1 above.



### **[Labour Law]**

In the public sector, the Civil Service Law of 1998, and in the private sector, the Labour Law of 2000 regulate the rights and duties of workers. The Labour Law prohibits discrimination due to gender and protects female workers with provisions including 10 weeks of maternity leave, employment after childbearing, and breast-feeding at workplaces. At the same time, the Law prohibits women from ‘dangerous work’ ‘heavy work’ and night-time work in certain conditions. Other problematic issues include non-protection of domestic workers and those employed by relatives (who, in many cases, are women)<sup>154</sup>. The non-existence of minimum wage had been criticized as one factor for gender gaps in wage. The 2013 amendment of Labour Law now sets the minimum wage at 1,450 NIS<sup>155</sup> per month<sup>156</sup>.

### **[Electoral Law]**

Electoral Law regulates the national election. The 2005 amendment introduced female quota for the PLC elections as follows<sup>157</sup>:

- In the PLC elections, political parties are required to include, in the candidates list, one woman in the first three, then another woman in the next four, and then at least one woman in each five that follows.
- If the condition above is not fulfilled, Central Election Commission does not accept the candidates list.

In local elections, regulations vary depending on the number of elected members. To generalize, approximately 20% of the seats are reserved for women in Local Bodies<sup>158</sup>. In Popular Committees in the Refugee Camps (see 3.1 below), the Bylaw for the Committees encourages the Committees to include at least one woman Committee member<sup>159</sup>.

### **[Difficulties in Rule of Law due to de-facto Internal Split]**

As discussed above, the PLC has been frozen which has resulted in the absence of recent formulation and amendment of laws. In the West Bank, the Fatah government has issued Presidential decrees and Cabinet Decisions to develop the laws and regulations to compensate the absence of the PLC. However, due to the political conflict, the Hamas government in Gaza often does not approve/implement these decrees and decisions; it is also reported that even the existing laws are not

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154 Center for Development Studies, Birzeit University (2015a), UNDP (2011)

155 NIS=New Israel Shekel. Palestine does not have its own currency and NIS is usually used. In West Bank, Jordanian currency, Dinar, is also in use.

156 Center for Development Studies, Birzeit University (2015b), interview with PWWSD.

157 Quota Project (2014)

158 Quota Project (2014), <http://palestine.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation/facts-and-figures> (accessed 6/Nov/2015), and interviews with international agencies and NGOs.

159 PLO Department of Refugee Affairs (2010)

properly implemented there<sup>160</sup>. Laws and regulations which relate to gender issues are especially (and probably intentionally) neglected, as the civil society criticizes<sup>161</sup>. It is reported that in 2007, the Hamas government issued a decree that polices women's access to public spheres. Although this decree was later retracted, it is still reported that women have been criticized as and/or punished for being 'un-Islamic', including not wearing veils, walking with a non-relative male, and riding bicycles<sup>162</sup>. In the West Bank as well, the systematic limitation of governance<sup>163</sup> and insufficient capacity of the government has caused inadequate implementation and enforcement of the existing laws and policies<sup>164</sup>.

### <Commitment on International Agreements>

#### [CEDAW]

In April 2014, the Palestinian Authority has submitted its application to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), along with seven other international treaties and conventions on human rights, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, officially joining them in the following May. The move is seen as a 'negotiation card' against Israel. The Palestinian Authority does not hold reservations in CEDAW articles<sup>165</sup>.

#### [National Action Plan for UN Security Council Resolution 1325]

The Palestinian Authority is in preparation of National Action Plan for UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (Women and Peace and Security). As of September 2015, it is formulating a National Framework for the Plan in collaboration with the civil society organisations<sup>166</sup>.

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160 UN Women (2014a), The Institute of Women's Studies at Birzeit University (2013), and interviews with international agencies and NGOs.

161 Interviews with Palestinians. In order to protect their political safety, the names of the informants are not given.

162 OECD (2014)

163 See 2.1 above. As clearly seen in the difference amongst Area A, B, and C of the Palestinian authority, and the actual practice of it.

164 OECD (2014)

164 OECD (2014), UN Women (2014a), The Institute of Women's Studies at Birzeit University (2013), UNDP (2011)

165 UNOHCHR (2014)

166 Interviews with MOWA and UNFPA.

## 2.3 National Machinery

### Summary

- (1) The national machinery is the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA), established in 2003.
- (2) MOWA develops gender policies, promotes gender mainstreaming in various sectors, and coordinates with other actors including the civil society.
- (3) Although MOWA is committed, it has a short history and small ministry without implementing power; thus, it is not always possible for MOWA to ensure that governmental programmes/activities actually take gender considerations into account.
- (4) Gender Units are to be established in other governmental institutions. As of 2015, 11 out of 27 institutions have activated Gender Units, with an additional four institutions having gender departments in other names.

### <Background and Tasks>

The national machinery in the Palestinian Authority is the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA) established in 2003. Its vision is to empower Palestinian women to participate in construction and development of humane and just Palestinian society. The major task of MOWA is to affirm the Authority's commitment to gender equality and women's political, economic, social and cultural empowerment<sup>167</sup>. Its activities include<sup>168</sup>:

- To develop and formulate policies on gender mainstreaming and empowerment of women,
- To encourage the policies of various sectors in (more) gender mainstreaming through lobbying and advising Ministries and other governmental institutions concerned,
- To review legal stipulations from gender perspective and accordingly encourage the government to amend the laws toward gender equality, through lobbying and advising Ministry and other governmental institutions concerned, and,
- To coordinate and build cooperative relationships with international agencies and civil society organisations active in gender issues and empowerment of women.

Additionally, MOWA plans and conducts training for capacity building in gender mainstreaming and gender equality for governmental personnel in Ministries and other governmental institutions, though rather small in scale<sup>169</sup>.

### <Achievements and Challenges>

The gender policies overviewed in 2.2 above are realized thanks to the inputs and efforts of MOWA to Palestinian Authority. MOWA has also succeeded to a certain extent in incorporating gender

167 MOWA (nd)

168 Interview with MOWA, MOWA (nd), Richter-Devroe (2011)

169 Interview with MOWA

consideration in several policies and legal system; for instance, MOWA has led, in cooperation with the civil society, the formulation of female quota in election systems<sup>170</sup>.

On the other hand, the environment is not necessarily favourable in the Authority, which, broadly saying, has lacked strong commitment on gender mainstreaming and/or empowerment of women<sup>171</sup>. MOWA is a policy making and advisory institution and not an implementing agency; thus it does not have the authority and/or power to enforce gender considerations written in policies and laws. Likewise, MOWA is not entitled to enforcing other Ministry/Institutions to actually commit to gender-related matters. More resource and investment, both in human capital and budget, are needed in order to mainstream gender more concretely in various sectors<sup>172</sup>.

MOWA is a young and small ministry with approximately 90 staff (60 in the West Bank and 30 in Gaza). The Minister of Women's Affairs worried, in the interview for this study, that it might not be possible to pay the staff salaries for the month<sup>173</sup>. The working environment is further complicated by the Israeli blockade of Gaza; staff meetings between those of the West Bank and of Gaza cannot be held<sup>174</sup>, with only the Minister being able to move between the West Bank and Gaza. Yet, the Minister is still required to obtain the Israeli permission beforehand. This hinders the prompt and potentially more effective work of the Ministry<sup>175</sup>.

### <Gender Departments in Governmental Institutions>

A Cabinet Decision in 2005 requested Ministries and other governmental institutions to establish 'Gender Units'<sup>176</sup>. After a decade, as of August 2015, out of 27 Ministries and other institutions, 11 have active Gender Units, 4 have gender departments with other names. A further 3 have Gender Units, which are ratified, but yet to be activated. The remaining 9 have not ratified Gender Units. The table on the next page shows institution-wise situation of Gender Units/departments.

Whether Gender Units/departments are to be established, ratified and/or activated has been subject to the intention, understanding and/or commitment of each Ministry/institution (more specifically, that of the top-level personnel including the Minister). Even in Ministries where Gender Units are activated, some have less power/authority within the institution than others, resulting in their incapability of producing tangible outcomes<sup>177</sup>.

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170 Richter-Devroe (2011), ILO (2013)

171 UNFPA (nd), Richter-Devroe (2011)

172 Interviews with MOWA and UNFPA

173 Interview with MOWA

174 Israel does not issue permission for the staff's passing checkpoints/borders (interview with MOWA).

175 Interview with MOWA

176 Cabinet Decision as of May 3, 2005 (Palestinian Authority (2005))

177 Interviews with MOWA, Ministry of National Economy and Ministry of Labour.

Table 2.3.1: Gender Units and Departments in Governmental Institutions

Name of Institution	Name of Department	Ratified	Activated
Ministry of Agriculture	Gender Department, General Directorate of Planning	○	
Ministry of Culture	Gender Unit	○	○
Ministry of Detainees	Gender Unit	○	○
Ministry of Education	Gender Unit	○	×
Ministry of Environment	Gender Unit	×	×
Ministry of Finance	Gender Unit	×	×
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Gender Unit	×	×
Ministry of Health	General Directorate of Women's Health	○	
Ministry of Housing	Gender Unit	○	○
Ministry of Information	Gender Unit	×	×
Ministry of Interior	Gender Unit	○	×
Ministry of Justice	Gender Unit	×	×
Ministry of Labour	Gender Unit	○	○
Ministry of Local Government	Gender Unit	○	○
Ministry of National Economy	Gender Unit	○	○
Ministry of Personal Affairs	Gender Unit	○	○
Ministry of Planning	Gender Unit	○	○
Ministry of Religious Affairs	Department of Women's Work	○	
Ministry of Social Affairs	Department of Women's Affairs	○	
Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities	Gender Unit	×	×
Ministry of Transportation	Gender Unit	○	○
Council of Ministers	Gender Unit	○	×
Border Authority	Gender Unit	×	×
Central Bureau of Statistics	Gender Unit	○	○
Committee of Youth and Sports	Gender Unit	×	×
Committee of Radio and TV	Gender Unit	×	×
Department of Refugee Affairs	Gender Unit	○	○

Source: Ministry of Women's Affairs, JICA (2015c)

### 3 Current Gender Situation in Selected Sectors

#### 3.1 Peacebuilding / Palestinian Refugees Support

##### Summary

- (1) Palestinian women have not had much influence on peace negotiations, partly due to the unfavourable environment against women's movements and opinions in recent years.
- (2) Palestinian Refugees account for more than 40% of the population. Refugees tend to be poorer than non-Refugees, while Refugee women tend to participate more in the labour force than non-Refugee women.
- (3) While there are 27 Refugee Camps in Palestine, the majority of the Refugees reside outside Camps, i.e., in various communities.
- (4) The living environment in the Camps is poor, with overpopulation, poor hygiene, and troubled infrastructure. The women's life in the Camps is extremely stressful.
- (5) The majority of Camps have Women's Centres, where women can gather and have their own activities. However, many Women's Centres suffer from lack of funds and support.

##### <Participation of Women in Peace Negotiations>

Participation of women in Palestine's international peace negotiations so far has been very limited and it would be fair to say that women's voices have hardly been heard<sup>178</sup>. A background factor is that recently, notably in the era after the Oslo Accord, Palestinian politics has become more conservative while tribalism has gained strength; in parallel, society as a whole has been going against the modern/international trend of democratisation and diversification of values<sup>179</sup>. As a consequence, in the Palestinian Authority, women have been "systematically marginalized" from top-level decision making<sup>180</sup>.

The similar (and correlated) trend has been observed, as discussed in 2.1 above, in the society as a whole. Organized women's movement has been discouraged in the conservative society, especially since the turn of the century. Thus, it has become more difficult for women's wills and opinions to penetrate into the decision making and political process including that of peacebuilding, through a bottom-up manner<sup>181</sup>.

178 PWWSD (2013b)

179 The Institute of Women's Studies at Birzeit University (2013), Shimizu (2011).

180 Pp.12, Richter-Devroe (2011)

181 The Institute of Women's Studies at Birzeit University (2013), Otero (2012), interview with PWWSD. International society is also concerned with the trend of rising conservatism and weakening of women's movements (interviews with UNFPA and UN Women).

## <Support for Palestinian Refugees>

### [‘Palestinian Refugees’ and UNRWA]

Ever since the outbreak of the Palestinian Refugee crisis, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) has been a central actor in the picture, without which it is very difficult to understand the socio-economic situation of Palestinian Refugees.

UNRWA was established in 1949, as the response of the international society to the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict and began its relief activities in 1950. Having started as an emergency relief agency, in the absence of a solution to Palestinian Refugee problem, UNRWA’s mandate has repeatedly been renewed by the UN until today. The agency supports Palestinian Refugees with registration, in 5 (five) operation fields including the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. UNRWA provides assistance mainly in basic services including education, health, social welfare, and food, as well as livelihood support including microfinance services<sup>182</sup>.

UNRWA defines Palestine Refugees as persons “whose normal place of residence was Palestine during the period from 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948, and who lost both home and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict”<sup>183</sup>. The Palestinian Refugee population, starting with 750,000, now exceeds 5 million<sup>184</sup> and is scattered across within 5 UNRWA fields<sup>185</sup>.

### [Refugee Communities and their Gender Norms]

Palestinian Refugees account for 43.1% of the total population in the Territory<sup>186</sup>, with 775,000 in the West Bank and 1,277,000 in Gaza<sup>187</sup>.

Table 3.1.1: Refugee and non-Refugee Population in Palestine (%)

	Palestinian Refugees	Non-Refugees	Total
West Bank	27.3	72.7	100.0
Gaza	68.0	32.0	100.0
Total	43.1	56.9	100.0

Source: PCBS (2014b)

According to the data of Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), the poor population is more in Refugees than in non-Refugees (35.4% in Refugees, 26.1% in urban population, and 19.4% in rural

182 [http://www.unic.or.jp/info/un/unsystem/other\\_bodies/unrwa/](http://www.unic.or.jp/info/un/unsystem/other_bodies/unrwa/),

[http://www.unic.or.jp/activities/humanitarian\\_aid/palestine\\_refugees/](http://www.unic.or.jp/activities/humanitarian_aid/palestine_refugees/) (accessed 10/Nov/2015)

183 <http://www.unrwa.org/palestine-refugees> (accessed 10/Nov/2015). Although this definition does not include people who were displaced by the other (later) conflicts such as the Third Middle Eastern War of 1967, considering the availability of the data and integrity of the argument, “Palestinian Refugee(s)” in this study will mean those in UNRWA definition, unless otherwise specified.

184 <http://www.unrwa.org/palestine-refugees> (accessed 10/Nov/2015)

185 <http://www.unrwa.org/palestine-refugees> (accessed 10/Nov/2015)

186 PCBS (2014b)

187 UNRWA (2015a)

population). Refugee women have slightly higher fertility rate than non-Refugees (Refugees' 4.4 vs. non-Refugees' 4.3) and higher labour participation rate (20.9% vs. 18.4% of non-Refugees)<sup>188</sup>. While it is not clear whether the difference in fertility is statistically significant, the higher labour participation rate of Refugee women could be explained as follows: because Refugees households are more in poverty, more acute economic necessity works to weaken the social notion/gender norm, that is, it is not good for women to work outside. Another factor, which may have contributed, is that in Refugee Camps, UNRWA has supported, through its Job Creation and Microfinance programmes, women's income generation<sup>189</sup>.

Although it is difficult to examine objectively, what has been repeatedly heard in the field research in this study is that: Palestinian Refugee communities hold considerably low in conservativeness and in traditional gender norms, compared to non-Refugee communities. As examples, it is claimed that Refugees send more girls for higher education and that they tend to control women's movements less than non-Refugees. When asked the reasons/factors behind this tendency, the vast majority of the informants told the researcher that the Refugee population has had more chances and opportunities to interact with people outside their original communities, due to their forced and often repeated movements, which made them more susceptible to new, non-traditional ideas and ways of thinking<sup>190</sup>. Another factor that is conceivable to contribute is that, due to their underprivileged condition including lack of land/assets<sup>191</sup> and higher rate of poverty, Refugees, male and female, would adopt coping strategies for gaining income and other necessities such as food. This would mean that they are more prone to 'deviate' from traditional gender norms including restrictions on women's work outside home, more freedom of movements, and education<sup>192</sup>.

### **[Palestinian Refugees in and outside Refugee Camps]**

There are 19 in the West Bank, and 8 in Gaza, Palestinian Refugee Camps. The Camp residents' population in the West Bank is 229,000 while that in Gaza is 560,000<sup>193</sup>.

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188 PCBS (2015c)

189 While both programmes target men and women, UNRWA as an agency mainstreams gender in all of its work (interview with UNRWA HQ, Amman) and the programmes are constructed in such a way that women are encouraged to participate. See, for respective programmes, the following: <http://www.unrwa.org/what-we-do/microfinance>, <http://www.unrwa.org/resources/about-unrwa/gaza-job-creation-programme>, <http://www.unrwa.org/resources/about-unrwa/west-bank-job-creation-programme> (accessed 17/Nov/2015)

190 Interview with NGOs, International Agencies and other concerned Palestinians. JICA (2015a) reports similar opinions.

191 Refugees are by definition people who have been forced to leave their lands and thus at least at the beginning they did not own land and hardly any assets. After several decades, some have most probably obtained land and other assets, but compared to non-Refugees, it would be fair to think that they have considerably less land/assets. (Note that reliable data for comparison is unavailable)

192 See also UN Women (2011) for the weakening of gender norms as coping strategies are employed.

193 UNRWA (2015a)



Table 3.1.2: Refugee Population In and Out of Camps

	West Bank	Gaza	Total
Palestinian Refugees	774,167	1,276,929	2,051,096
In-Camp Refugees (% in total Refugee Population)	228,560 (29.5%)	560,964 (43.9%)	789,524 (38.5%)
Out-Camp Refugees (% in total Refugee Population)	545,607 (70.5%)	715,965 (56.1%)	1,261,572 (61.5%)
Non-Refugees <sup>194</sup>	2,054,200	573,251	2,627,451

Source: UNRWA (2015a) (except for non-Refugee population)

The table above shows Refugee population residing in and out of Camps, compared to non-Refugee population. As seen, more than 60% of Refugee population live outside Camps. The majority of them are scattered across the Territory, living in local communities just next to non-Refugees. This makes it very difficult to understand the living situations of the Refugee population as a whole. On the other hand, Refugees who can afford to, tend to live outside Camps, due partly to the poor living environment in the Camps (see below)<sup>195</sup>. Considering these conditions, the discussion below largely refers to the issues observed in the Camps.

### [Gender Issues in Palestinian Refugee Camps]

Despite the implication of the phrase ‘refugee camps’, Palestinian Refugee Camps are not composed of tents or prefabrications. The Camps were first set up as emergency and temporary places to stay. However, after six decades of taking refuge, the Camps have become aggregations of small residential buildings. While no solution for the Palestinian Refugee Problem is found, these buildings and infrastructures in the Camps have been built, repaired, and rebuilt without clear planning. Consequently, in small limited space designated to the Camp, ever-increasing buildings are built which are required to accommodate (again) ever-increasing population. The result is severe overpopulation. The situation is harsh enough in the West Bank, but in Gaza, where Camps have “one of the highest population densities in the world”, it is nearly devastating<sup>196</sup>. Basic infrastructure including water supply, sewerage systems and electricity is inadequate with hygiene conditions being very poor<sup>197</sup>. It is of concern that Camps would become slums<sup>198</sup>.

Problems of living environment, poverty and unemployment, coupled together with the deep sense of stagnation and grim political prospects for the future, negatively impact both males and females. Yet women, who are generally more vulnerable, lead their everyday life overloaded with mental and physical burdens.

194 Figures for non-refugees are taken from PCBS (2014b) for the comparison. Note that figures for refugees are not identical in PCBS (2014b) and UNRWA (2015a), thus the comparison is just for the tendency.

195 JICA (2015a, 2015d)

196 <http://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work/gaza-strip> (accessed 10/Nov/2015)

197 JICA (2015a, 2015d)

198 JICA (2006)

The challenges each Camp faces vary greatly from each other; physical and environmental conditions lead to unique difficulties to each Camp and its residents. These conditions include: in the West Bank, which area (A, B or C) it is located in or near, whether Israeli settlement(s) and/or separation walls are close<sup>199</sup>; in Gaza, whether it is in the northern area (i.e., close to the Israeli border where more violence has been observed) and/or the border walls. Urban or rural settings also affect Camp conditions. As such, women in a particular Camp may have even more serious issues than those in another Camp. Yet, it would be useful to have a quick overview of common problems that many Camp women face<sup>200</sup>:

- Due to overpopulation, women hardly have a space to relax. Mentally strained virtually 24/7, always seen by somebody else.
- Children are also strained as there is little space to play safely. The stress may lead to children's mental problems and/or troubled behaviours, which puts more burdens on their mothers<sup>201</sup>.
- As generations have continued to live in the Camp, more family members live in the limited space in the house. Women, who are less free to go out than men, have to stay in the small house with other women of the family (mother- and sisters-in-law, for instance). Consequently, women often experience disputes and collisions within home.
- Men in the households, including the husbands, are often unemployed and/or jobless. It frequently results in conflicts and disputes within the couple, including domestic violence (see also discussion on violence below). Even if the woman tries to work herself, adequate job opportunity is scarce<sup>202</sup>. It is difficult to find a person to take care of the child/children ('men do not take care of children'). This all leads to economic hardship.
- These everyday stresses would repeat every day, forever. This realisation leads to even more stress and distress.

### **[Women's Participation in Decision Making in Refugee Camps]**

In Palestinian Refugee Camps, the Service Popular Committees (hereafter referred to as Popular Committees), elected from the residents, manage the decision making. According to Amended Bylaws for the Popular Committees of 2010, by the PLO Department of Refugee Affairs, each

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199 The Camp visited in the field research for this study is located near the Area C and separation wall; as such, a majority of women respondents have experienced detention of male family members including their husbands and sons. The mental distress and anxiety when family members are detained is obviously high, but even when not, the apprehension for the possibility is persistently profound.

200 Interview with members of a Women Centre in West Bank, JICA (2015a)

201 Depressions, hypertension and miscarriages, potentially induced by stress, are reported amongst women residents (JICA (2015a)).

202 According to a woman who lives in a Camp, "We don't find good job around here. Maybe cosmetic shops. The payment is really bad. 300NIS a month, that's about it. Barely pays the kid's lunch at school. If you don't like it, you just get unemployed. That's the choice". For information, legal minimum wage is 1,450NIS for a full-time job (see 2.2 above)

Committee shall have one (or more) woman as Committee member(s)<sup>203</sup>. The PLO encourages Camps to comply with the Bylaw in Popular Committee elections, while it is not yet for all the Committees to have women members<sup>204</sup>

As to organisations of Refugee Women, the majority of Camps (18 in the West Bank and 7 in Gaza) have Women Centres<sup>205</sup>. Women Centres were established through support of UNRWA and have later evolved into Community Based Organizations (CBOs) managed by women volunteers. Typical activities in the Centres include vocational training programmes (e.g., embroidery, tailoring, accessory-making), related income generation programmes (gaining income through part-time work utilizing skills gained by vocational training programmes), awareness raising and advocacy, and catering services called productive kitchens, as these activities would have support from UNRWA<sup>206</sup>. Some Centres cooperate with others through, for example, sending member women as trainers of the vocational training programmes<sup>207</sup>.

Some Centres are more active, and have better coordination with other Camp organisations (including the Popular Committees) than others<sup>208</sup>. Yet, the physical existence of the Centre seems to have significance for the women, as it means there is at least some physical and social space for women to meet and interact with other women<sup>209</sup>. Here it should be noted that there is much 'hidden' demand for Centres and their activities, as it is most probable that many more women in the Camps would like to be involved but cannot, due to the social norms which are negative against women's participation in outside home activities. Actually, many, if not the majority, of the women active in the Centre activities do so despite opposition from men around them including their husbands and other male relatives<sup>210</sup>.

Additional information on Women Centres include the following: UNRWA has recently shrunk its programmes targeting refugee women, including support for the Centres, due to the fund shortage<sup>211</sup>; and self-help organisation of refugee women, other than that in relation to Women Centres, is not identified.

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203 PLO Department of Refugee Affairs (2010)

204 Correspondence with Office for Peacebuilding and Reconstruction, Infrastructure and Peacebuilding Department, JICA

205 <http://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work> (accessed 07/Dec/2015); the total number of Camps are 19 in West Bank and 8 in Gaza. Women Centres usually do not have their own buildings; The Centre visited in the field research for this study is located in a floor in a multi-tenant building next to the Camp border.

206 Interview with members of a Women Centre in West Bank, JICA (2015a)

207 Interview with members of a Women Centre in the West Bank

208 Interview with members of a Women Centre in West Bank, JICA (2015a)

209 Women's Refugee Commission (2009, 2011)

210 In the interview conducted in the field research for this study, out of 16 respondents (refugee women), 15 answered that their family (from husbands to relatives) had opposed for their going to the Centre. One woman told the author that she has been lying to her husband for more than 10 years; every time she comes to the Centre, she tells her husbands that she goes to see a doctor.

211 Interview with members of a Women Centre in the West Bank, JICA (2015a), UNRWA (2015a)

### [Violence against Palestinian Refugee Women]

As discussed in 2.1 above, GBV is persistent and prevalent; Camp communities may be less conservative than others, but GBV still exists. Adversely, some report that GBV is more serious in Camps<sup>212</sup>. If that is so, it could be (at least partly) attributed to the GBV mechanism described in 2.1 above; men, when losing their identity and pride as the family protector and breadwinner (due to, for instance, unemployment), tend to turn to violence so that they could in some ways alleviate their anxiety and stress<sup>213</sup>. Thus, it is possible that in refugee communities where unemployment and poverty rate is higher, more GBV is happening.

UNRWA has set up and operates the support system for GBV survivors, which would refer the survivors to professional services such as psychological and legal counselling as per necessity<sup>214</sup>. However, as GBV is a social taboo, not many survivors have used the system. For instance, in 19 Camps in the West Bank in 2014, the system has treated a mere 485 cases<sup>215</sup>.

### [Non-communicable Diseases and Refugee Women]

In recent years, non-communicable diseases (NCDs) have become a major development problem worldwide, with Middle East and Palestine as no exception. In Palestine in particular, NCDs are more of a major cause of death than communicable diseases<sup>216</sup>.

While comprehensive data with which Refugee and non-Refugee populations can be compared as to NDCs is unavailable, available data enables us to catch a glimpse of a gravely problematic situation of Refugee women; El Kishawi *et al* (2014) is a research that probes into the prevalence of obesity, which has strong correlation with diabetes and cardiac diseases. According to their data, 66.8% of women with children (18-50 years of age) in Gaza Refugee Camps are obese<sup>217</sup>. Likewise, an unpublished research quoted in El Kishawi *et al* (2014) finds that 70.0% of women of 40-65 years of age in West Bank Refugee Camps are obese<sup>218</sup>. It is analysed in the study that a major reason for these high obesity rates is that Refugees, especially those in poverty, tend to depend on food aid (rice, sugar, edible oil and so on) for their survival. As their diet contains more quick-energy items, their dietary balance would be constantly impeded, impacting many women who are more prone to obesity than men.

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212 ILO (2013). This report however, does not include data/information to back up the statement.

213 Clark *et al* (2010), World Bank (2010), The Institute of Women's Studies at Birzeit University (2013). This mechanism is observed not only in Palestine but also in other countries (Women's Refugee Commission (2009, 2011))

214 Interview with UNRWA HQ (Amman, Jordan), UNRWA (nd)

215 UNRWA (2015b)

216 WHO (2009)

217 El Kishawi *et al* (2014)

218 Rizkallah, cited in El Kishawi *et al* (2014) (unpublished PhD Thesis).

Points of Attention in the Sector (when considering development assistance)	
Nearly 1/2 of population being 'Palestinian Refugees'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● More than 40% of total population is 'Palestinian Refugees': in Gaza, 2 out of 3 are Refugees.</li> <li>● Majority of Refugees reside outside Camps.</li> <li>● How to differentiate Refugees and non-Refugees?</li> </ul>
Life in Refugee Camps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Life in Camp is a fight against overpopulation.</li> <li>● Life in Camp is a fight against never-ending stress and pressures.</li> <li>● Physical and mental support is needed.</li> </ul>
Poverty & female labour participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Refugees are poorer than non-Refugees.</li> <li>● Refugee women are more employed than non-Refugee women.</li> </ul>
Refugees are less conservative?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Refugee communities are supposedly less conservative.</li> <li>● Would they be flexible to new/unfamiliar ideas and practices?</li> <li>● GBV in Refugee communities is severe? Possibly so, but reliable data and analysis is needed.</li> </ul>
Refugee women's self-organization and initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Women Centres are in operation in most Camps.</li> <li>● Women's mutual-help organization is seemingly not vibrant (except for Women Centres)</li> <li>● What would leverage their own initiatives and actions?</li> </ul>

## 3.2 Agriculture and Rural Development

### Summary

- (1) The “National Agriculture Sector Strategy 2014” does not give strategic importance to gender mainstreaming/women’s empowerment.
- (2) While the importance of the agriculture sector in terms of its share of GDP has been shrinking, it is still significant in terms of women’s employment; 20% of women in the labour force work in agriculture.
- (3) Working in agriculture, however, does not necessarily empower women. Women’s contribution is often underestimated, not only by others but also by the women themselves. This could be attributed to the fact that many women work in family-run farms, in many cases as unpaid family members.
- (4) While agricultural cooperatives are popular in Palestine, the proportion of women members is small. In men-led cooperatives, women tend to have little power and decision making. Thus, women are unlikely to be empowered. In women-only cooperatives, they tend to concentrate on ‘feminine’ work which is in line with traditional women’s roles as mothers/caretakers.

### [Policy Framework in Agriculture and Rural Development, and Gender]

“National Agriculture Sector Strategy 2014”, the main policy framework in Palestine in this sector, sets strategic objectives as follows: “[ensuring] farmers’ resilience and attachment to their land, while fulfilling the contribution of the agriculture sector in providing requirements for development”, “[e]fficient and sustainable management of natural resources”, “[e]nhanced agricultural production, productivity and competitiveness, as well as enhanced contribution of agriculture to food security”, and the “agriculture sector has effective and efficient capacities, institutional frameworks, legal environment, infrastructure and agricultural services”<sup>219</sup>. In terms of gender consideration, the Strategy refers repeatedly to ‘women farmers’ in sections such as policies to achieve the strategic objectives. However, the references are vague and abstract without clear and/or practical intent<sup>220</sup>.

Within the Ministry of Agriculture, Gender Department in General Directorate of Planning is in charge of gender issues (thus there is no Gender Unit)<sup>221</sup>.

### [Overview of the Agriculture Sector where Many Women Work]

For Palestine, the agriculture sector is important as it absorbs 10% of the working population, and also in terms of food security<sup>222</sup>. However, the situation surrounding the sector is problematic.

Currently the agriculture sector accounts for approximately 5% of Palestine’s GDP<sup>223</sup>, which has been declining.

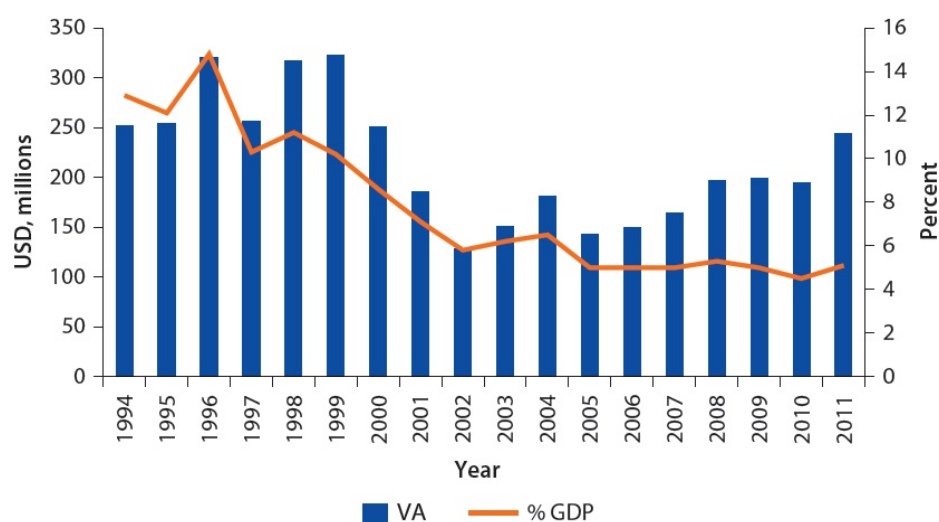
219 Pp 22-23, Ministry of Agriculture (2014)

220 Ministry of Agriculture (2014)

221 JICA (2015c)

222 Ministry of Agriculture (2014), FAO (2011a)

223 <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=2&country=PSE&series=&period=> (accessed 10/Dec/2015)



Source: Niksic *et al* (2014)

Figure 3.2.1: Trend of Agriculture Value-Added in West Bank

The decline of agriculture value-added in the West Bank is thought to be mainly caused by the limited access to and investment in the agricultural land and water resources, imposed by Israeli policies<sup>224</sup>.

In Area C, which accounts for more than 60% of West Bank, these restrictions are particularly severe. Moreover, agricultural land is often demolished and disrupted (as political demonstration) and farmers suffer frequent interference while going to their farms, making the agricultural productivity in Area C very low<sup>225</sup>.

In Gaza, where traditionally labour-intensive export-oriented farming has been a major agricultural practice, Israeli construction of walls and the blockade since 2007 have severely hindered exports. To make the things worse, conflict which occurs every several years (including, most recently, 2014) has greatly damaged agricultural lands and infrastructure<sup>226</sup>. As a consequence, livelihood depending on agriculture only has become almost impossible<sup>227</sup>.

Having said that, the agriculture sector is still significant, especially as a sector that absorbs much of female labour force; one out of five working women is in agriculture, as seen in Table 3.2.1 on the next page.

One reason that the agriculture sector has many working women would be that the majority of Palestinian farms are family-run. It would be easier for a woman to work on a family-run farm than in enterprises/operations outside, because in the former she would be primarily working with her family

224 Niksic *et al* (2014)

225 Niksic *et al* (2014), OCHA (2014a, 2014b), World Bank (2010)

226 The 2014 conflict resulted in \$450 million damage in agriculture in Gaza (MAS (2014a)).

227 MAS (2014a), UN Country Team in the occupied Palestinian territory (2012), UN Women (2011), interviews with an agricultural cooperative and farmers in Gaza

and would not be exposed to the eyes of the outsiders. Thus, it less likely to offend the gender norm that puts negative implication on women’s outside work (see 2.1 above)<sup>228</sup>. Another factor is that considerable numbers of women working in agriculture do not earn income as such; rather, they work for food items needed in their everyday survival<sup>229</sup>.

Table 3.2.1: Workers in Agriculture (% of total in Labour Force) by Gender

	Male	Female	Total
West Bank	9.1	20.0	11.1
Gaza	5.6	23.2	8.6
Total	8.2	20.9	10.4

Source: PCBS (2015a)

Division of roles by gender in agriculture is commonly said to be as follows: males are in charge of physically demanding work such as harrowing, as well as work that includes interaction with outsiders such as purchasing agricultural inputs and selling the products in the market, while women do organizing seeds and seedlings, planting and transplanting, and preparation of products before bringing them to markets (such as washing and packing). However, this description is so generalized that it may cause for one to miss the nuances of the reality. In practice, tasks of men and women vary very much case by case, depending on the composition of the family/household, seasonal factors, and scale/size of the farm, amongst others<sup>230</sup>. It should be noted, though, that strategically and/or symbolically important tasks including management of water and utilisation of newly introduced equipment are supposed to be done by males<sup>231</sup>.

### [Gender Issues in Agriculture]

Even though many women work in agriculture, when it comes to whether working empowers women, it is often doubtful. In many cases, contribution of women is underestimated, not only by the males but also by the women themselves<sup>232</sup>. FAO (2011b) reports a woman’s response in which she states she ‘does not work’ because she is a housewife, although in reality she works every day on the family farm next to the male family members.

One reason behind the fact that women’s contribution is not adequately recognized would be that in the majority of cases farms are family-run and in the informal sector, with many women involved as unpaid family workers<sup>233</sup>. On the contrary, men tend to be owner-operators<sup>234</sup>. While actual situation,

228 FAO (2011b), JICA (2015b). See also discussion in 3.3 below on the informal sector.

229 UN Women (2011)

230 FAO (2011b), interviews with farmers in Gaza.

231 JICA (2015b), interviews with farmers in Gaza.

232 FAO (2011a, 2011b), MOWA (2014a).

233 UN Women (2011). Unpaid family workers are defined as workers who work without pay in enterprises managed/run by relative(s) in the same households (PCBS (2015a)).

234 UN Women (2011)



including the number/proportion of female unpaid family workers in agriculture, is not clear, according to Center for Development Studies, Birzeit University (2015a), a mere 1.8% of women in the agriculture sector earn a wage. In addition to this, less than 5% of women own agricultural property<sup>235</sup>, which would mean that very few women are owner-operators.

In Gaza specifically, it is likely that more women have been recently joining the sector as unpaid family workers; as discussed above, export-oriented farming has fallen on extremely difficult times which is probably resulting in less wage labourers employed, substituted by unpaid family workers<sup>236</sup>.

Employment without pay, i.e., unpaid family work, tends not to be recognized as valuable contribution by the worker him/herself, the employer, and everybody around, specifically because the labour is not calculated into tangible value, i.e., income. Neither would it help to accumulate the worker's individual assets, nor would it strengthen the person's bargaining power in the household<sup>237</sup>, while the time and physical burdens increase. Therefore, working in such a manner could be, and probably often is, in fact disempowering<sup>238</sup>. It should be noted here, though, that agricultural communities in Palestine are greatly diversified especially in terms of their gender situations, depending on the conditions and attributions of the community and its people (for instance, whether owns land or not, whether Refugee or not, as well as physical factors such as the land being located in Area A/B/C in the West Bank or in Gaza)<sup>239</sup>; that being so, one should be very careful to examine and especially to judge how the gender situation and issues are in a particular community<sup>240</sup>.

Lastly, women's access to agricultural input is very much limited. This is because, as discussed in the section above, it is usually the 'men's job' to communicate with the outside world<sup>241</sup>. Women's access to extension services varies; as to the extension services provided by Ministry of Agriculture, extension workers have different approaches to male and female farmers<sup>242</sup>. Although women who belong to women-only agricultural cooperatives do have access both to agricultural inputs and extension services, the number of such women is not large, as discussed in the next section.

### **[Women and Agricultural Cooperatives]**

In Palestine, there are many agricultural cooperatives<sup>243</sup> which are organized in order to provide the members better livelihood means in agriculture. The International Labour Organization (ILO), 2014,

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235 MOWA (2014a)

236 Interview with an export-oriented agricultural cooperative in Gaza, UN Women (2011)

237 Doss *et al* (2008)

238 JICA (2015b) reports cases in which women in particular communities in the West Bank have been exploited as "free labour force" for decades, deprived of life choices including marriage opportunities. See 4.1 below for more discussion.

239 JICA (2015b, 2015e, 2015f)

240 This point is elaborated in 4.1 below.

241 FAO (2011b), interviews with male and female farmers in Gaza.

242 JICA (2015b), interviews with Ministry of Agriculture, extension workers, and male and female farmers in Gaza.

243 Cooperatives in general is discussed in 3.3 below.

reports there are at least 230 agricultural cooperatives active in the West Bank only<sup>244</sup>. Out of these 230 cooperatives, 32% work in animal husbandry, 29% in crop production, and 25% in agricultural services including marketing and processing.

The composition of members by gender could be: male only, female only and male-female mixed, although quite a few are male only probably due to the socio-cultural norms which dislike women's interaction with non-family males<sup>245</sup>. According to ILO (2014), 39% of all cooperatives are comprised of male members only, while a mere 5% are women only. Within the total members, women constitute only 7%.

A recent trend in mixed cooperatives is efforts to increase women members<sup>246</sup>; this could be because cooperatives try to conform to the donors' values including gender mainstreaming, so that they are more likely to be given the aid/fund from the donors<sup>247</sup>. It is reported that in mixed-cooperatives, women tend to have little power in management and in decision making, so that membership does not necessarily empower (both economically and socially) them<sup>248</sup>.

Women only cooperatives tend to be smaller than men only and mixed cooperatives. In cooperatives researched in ILO (2014), the average number of members in women only cooperatives is 28, while in total the number of members is 81. The areas where women only cooperatives are active are mainly in home gardening, small-scale animal husbandry (such as chicken- and goat-raising), and small-scale crops/food processing (such as production of jam and olive oils); in other words, they concentrate mainly in the traditional 'female' area of work, which is in relation to domestic work<sup>249</sup>. This is 'natural' because women only cooperatives seek comparative advantage over men only and mixed cooperatives, leading, in most cases, to do what they do best. It should be noted, however, that this tendency contains the risk of reinforcing traditional gender segregation of roles—not only for women themselves but also for others surrounding them. Thus, more diversification of activities by women cooperatives would be desirable<sup>250</sup>.

According to UN Women (2011), this reinforcement of traditional gender segregation of roles could be seen not only in agricultural cooperatives but also in women-targeted donor assistance in the sector as a whole, which should be of concern. While the proportion of women-targeted programmes is small in the donor assistance in the sector, the majority of this small proportion is dedicated to traditional 'female' tasks which are in the realm of household work, including poultry farming and home gardening. The problem of this kind of assistance is, even when successful, it would lead

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244 Information on overall situation of agricultural cooperatives in Gaza is not available in information gathered for this study.

245 See 2.1 above.

246 Gaza Agricultural Cooperative Society for Producing and Marketing Vegetable (nd), JICA (2015c).

247 JICA (2015c)

248 ILO (2010), UN Women (2011)

249 *Ibid.*

250 ILO (2010)

neither to the women's asset-building nor their improved access to strategic resources, and thus not to medium and long term empowerment for the women<sup>251</sup>.

Points of Attention in the Sector (when considering development assistance)	
Many women in the agriculture sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The sector's role in women's economic participation is significant.</li> <li>● But in reality, a considerable proportion of women work unpaid, without leading to empowerment. Severe exploitation is also reported to happen.</li> </ul>
Entering work by necessity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Seemingly many women entered the agriculture sector because there was no other choice (for work/for survival).</li> <li>● Agriculture as the single livelihood is becoming unviable. What is the choice for people/women? Sticking to agriculture? Looking for something else?</li> </ul>
Underestimation of women's work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Gender division of roles in agriculture is not uniform and is diversified.</li> <li>● Women's agricultural contribution tends to be underestimated and underrated, by women themselves and by others around them.</li> <li>● Firstly needed is the women's own fair recognition?</li> </ul>

251 The Institute of Women's Studies at Birzeit University (2013), UN Women (2011). See also Doss *et al* (2008).

### 3.3 Private Sector Development

#### Summary

- (1) Major sectoral strategies in the sector, “National Economic Development Plan 2014-2016” and “National Employment Strategy” are yet to incorporate gender considerations strategically.
- (2) Women’s participation in the private sector economy is limited. While the women’s labour force participation is less than 20%, more women work in the public sector than in the private sector. The Private sector employment is less preferred by women, because they tend not to be ‘appropriate’ for women, but at the same time the employers do not have incentives to hire women as they tend to see women workers as incompetent (gender bias), and also, women tend to be less qualified for the private sector jobs as their educational background is concentrated on ‘female appropriate areas’ including education, health and humanities, whereas what is needed in the private sector jobs are more of science. In micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), very few women are in the workplace.
- (3) Women tend to prefer to work in agriculture while men prefer to work in the informal sector, when they do not have job opportunities in the public/formal sector. When women work in the informal sector, it is likely because they have no other choice.
- (4) Women entrepreneurs are very few, and women’s enterprises tend not to expand/develop. One factor is that women entrepreneurs do not have the proper ‘business mind’, but it is also true that the women do not have chances and/or access to develop the business mind.
- (5) Access to financial services, other than that to microfinance, is difficult for women. Whether microfinance has been beneficial for women is arguable; it is reported that in many cases women become ‘loan windows’, who simply bring the borrowed money to their husbands/fathers. Whether the women have the control of the money is critical.

#### [Policy Framework in Private Sector Development, and Gender]

Gender mainstreaming in economic development, private sector development, and employment in private sector, is yet to be promoted actively. “National Economic Development Plan 2014-2016”, of Ministry of National Economy, does not refer to gender mainstreaming and economic participation of women<sup>252</sup>. “National Employment Strategy”, of Ministry of Labour, is concerned about the low labour participation rate of women (see 2.1 above and also discussion below), but yet to set up a practical strategy to tackle the issue<sup>253</sup>.

It is not that the Ministries ignore gender issues. Both Ministries have set up and activated Gender Units. The Gender Unit in the Ministry of National Economy works mainly in the Ministry in order to incorporate gender consideration into the policies and programmes, as well as into the budget planning, of the Ministry<sup>254</sup>. The Ministry of Labour has played the key role in establishment of National Committee for Women’s Empowerment in 2012, which aims to promote employment of women and increase the labour participation of women. The Gender Unit of the Ministry is the

252 Ministry of National Economy (2014)

253 Ministry of Labour (2010)

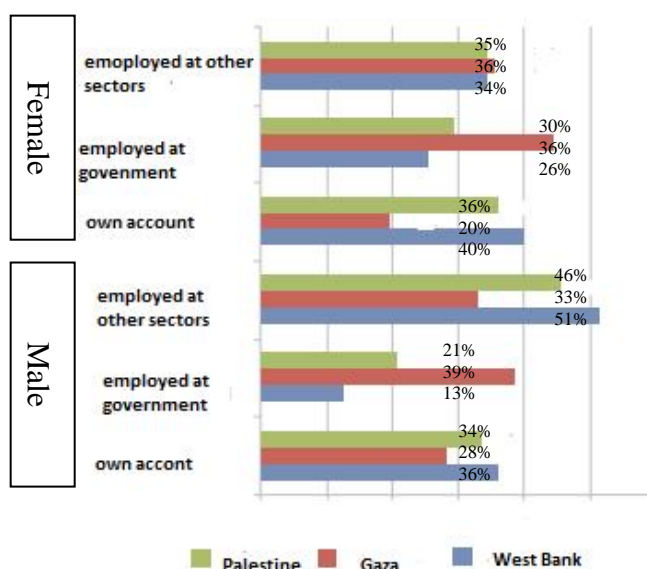
254 Interview with Ministry of National Economy

secretariat for the Committee<sup>255</sup>.

**[Stagnated Participation of Women in the Private Sector]**

As discussed in 2.1 above, women’s labour participation is low in general in Palestine—a mere 19.4% for women compared to 71.5% for men<sup>256</sup>. The rate is particularly low in the private sector.

The figure below shows the rates of the workers by sector (public or private)<sup>257</sup>, by region (the West Bank or Gaza), and by gender. Comparison between the West Bank and Gaza reveals that in Gaza, the public sector employment is very high for both males and females. This could be interpreted in relation to the stagnated private economy in Gaza, affected severely by the long-lasting blockade of the Strip by Israel. Comparing characteristics by gender, it is seen that in both the West Bank and in Gaza, large proportion of women is in the public sector, while males work more in the private sector<sup>258</sup>.



Source: ILO (2012)

Figure 3.3.1: Proportion of Employed Persons by Sector and by Gender

Reasons for which women’s employment is low have been discussed in 2.1 above. In addition to these, factors below also affect the disproportionate low proportion of women workers in the private sector, compared to the public sector, of which belong both the employers’ sides and the workers’

255 Interview with Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Labour (2012)

256 PCBS (2015a)

257 Note that the categorization in this figure is ‘employed at government’ and ‘employed at other sectors’. Therefore, ‘private sector’ here includes non-commercial entities such as international agencies and NGOs. Another category, ‘own account’, including self-employment, is discussed separately in an item below.

258 The figure below is based on 2010-2011 data. The current situation is likely to be changed, especially in Gaza where the economy is in trouble, especially after 2014 conflict. The figure is shown to understand the general tendency.

sides.

On the employers' side, one reason would be the persistent gender bias, that is, women are incompetent workers compared to men<sup>259</sup>. Another would relate to the depressed economy, and thus severe management conditions of private enterprises. As the financial situation is poor, employers do not have many job offers; when and if they employ somebody, they would 'naturally' select men as they have done so far; the labour market is a 'buyers' market' where even males struggle for jobs with high unemployment. From the viewpoint of employers, incentives to employ women (for instance tax reduction for certain percentage of women workers) do not exist, while the traditional social and gender norms tell them that it should be men who work outside home—then why employ women? Moreover, existing systems to protect women workers, including maternity leave and employment after child delivery, are likely to work as disincentives because the employers would see them as more—and unnecessary—trouble which would need to be dealt with if they hire women<sup>260</sup>.

Reasons on the workers side include those discussed in 2.1 above: opposition from the people around, mismatching between the education/qualification/skills and those needed at job, and problems to find caretakers for children while at work. Besides, in the private sector employment, social/gender norms become more of the obstacles than in the public sector; the socially 'female-appropriate' jobs, including teachers, office administrators, nurses and health-workers, basically presumed to be the public sector jobs<sup>261</sup>, coupled with the gender bias negative against women as businesspersons, which exists not only in the minds of employers but also in those of the workers – women themselves as well, discourage women from entering the private sector jobs<sup>262</sup>.

Gender gap in wage is likely to be another discouragement for women's employment in the private sector. Median wage per day for women is 84% of that for men; in the manufacturing sector, it is only 57%<sup>263</sup>.

Factors from both sides consolidated together; limit the sectors to which women have access. As seen in the table below (Table 3.3.1), few women work in the sectors other than agriculture and services. Considering the situation discussed above, it would be fair to consider many of the women working in those other sectors are likely to be working as office secretaries and the like.

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259 The gender bias is particularly strong in the private sector, which is likely to discourage women to enter the private sector enterprises (ETF (2014)).

260 ETF (2014), The Institute of Women's Studies at Birzeit University (2013)

261 UN Women (2011), The Institute of Women's Studies at Birzeit University (2013)

262 Interviews with Business Women Forum-Palestine(BWF), Federation of Palestinian Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture (FPCCIA) and Palestinian Federation of Industries (PFI)

263 ILO (nd)

Table 3.3.1: Proportion of Women Workers by Sector (%)

Industry \ Year	2000	2005	2010	2014
Agriculture, Hunting, Forestry & Fishing	34.7	32.9	21.4	20.9
Mining, Quarrying & Manufacturing	11.1	8.2	7.5	9.8
Construction	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.7
Commerce, Hotels & Restaurants	7.6	8.3	8.1	10.3
Transportation, Storage & Communication	0.6	0.6	0.9	1.3
Services & Other Branches	45.7	49.7	61.8	57.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: PCBS (2015a)

To summarize, the trend is that employment of women, including its sector-wise variety, is greatly restricted. Given the limited self-sustaining development capacity of the economy of Palestine and its private sector, alteration of this trend would not be easy. One sector which is argued to have potential to absorb women workers, though, is the information technology sector<sup>264</sup>. In education, science, mathematics, and computer science are areas where men and women students are more or less same in number. Moreover, IT-related jobs could be ones which do not necessarily require much communication with many/unspecified male outsiders, and thus are less likely to be rejected in terms of gender norms<sup>265</sup>.

### **[Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, the Informal Sector, and Women]**

Out of 110,000 private enterprises in Palestine, 97% are small and medium enterprises with less than 10 employees, and 90% are micro enterprises with less than five employees<sup>266</sup>. These micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), though, do not employ many women. Only 13% of employed women work in micro enterprises with five or less workers<sup>267</sup>. Therefore, in MSMEs, proportion of females in total employees is also small (see Table 3.3.2 and Figure 3.3.2 below). 90% of MSMEs are family- or individual-owned<sup>268</sup>.

Reflecting these situations, in MSMEs, working environment is poor for women workers. In addition to physical shortcomings such as lack of space for women to take breaks, it is reported that problems such as sexual harassment and prolonged work without rest imposed on women are widespread<sup>269</sup>.

264 The Institute of Women's Studies at Birzeit University (2013), Kawasmi and White (2010)

265 *Ibid.* However, it should be noted that the prospects of the Palestinian IT industry are limited. The Palestinian economy lacks innovation, as the peculiarity of the political economy and related (and continuous) international aid has fostered its dependency; the IT industry in particular is managed mainly based on subcontracted works from Israeli enterprises and is not very self-sustaining in its development(The Institute of Women's Studies at Birzeit University (2013)).

266 JICA (2015g), ETF (2014)

267 ILO (2012)

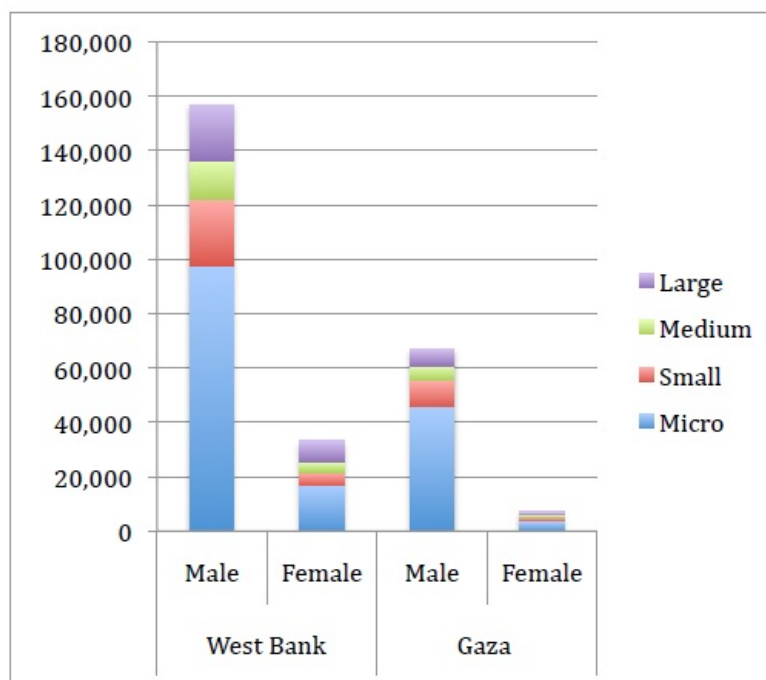
268 Kawasmi and White (2010)

269 Center for Development Studies, Birzeit University (2015b)

Table 3.3.2: Proportion of Male and Female Employees by Enterprise Size (%)

	Male	Female
<b>West Bank</b>		
MSMEs	84	16
Larger Enterprises	76	24
<b>Gaza</b>		
MSMEs	91	9
Larger Enterprises	85	15

Source: Kawasmi and White (2010)



Source: Kawasmi and White (2010)

Figure 3.3.2: Proportion of Private Sector Employees by Gender and by Enterprise Size

The majority of the MSMEs are also informal sector enterprises<sup>270</sup>. Although the actual scale of informal sector enterprises is difficult to grasp, precisely because they are informal, Kawasmi and White (2010) estimates 50-60 % of total enterprises are informal, while according to Al-Falah (2014), informal enterprises account for 49.7% of the total.

Employment in informal enterprises is problematic; informal enterprises are by definition not legally regulated and issues to be concerned include prolonged work, low wage including that less than minimum wage requirement<sup>271</sup>, absence of social benefits including paid leave and retirement plan,

270 While there is no clear and common definition for the informal sector, a vast majority of the reference materials adapted the PCBS definition of the informal sector in their argument. This study, which is based on them, thus also adapts the PCBS definition, unless otherwise specified, that is, the informal sector here is the sector of enterprises without registration in the tax registration. See PCBS (2011)

271 Issues on unpaid workers are discussed in an item below.



and dangerous working environment<sup>272</sup>. While they need to be remedied and improved, regardless of the gender of the worker, gender does seem to correlate with the person's choice of whether to work in the informal sector<sup>273</sup>.

- 1 Within the options of (a) employment in the formal sector, (b) employment in the informal sector, and (c) employment in the agriculture sector, both males and females choose (a) the formal sector if possible. However, when it is unavailable, males tend to choose (b) the informal sector, while females are more likely to choose (c) the agriculture sector.
- 2 Looking at the workers in the informal sector by age, the biggest population in males is the young group (15-29 years of age), while in females, it is the older group (45 or older).

As to 2 above (difference by age), Hiral *et al* (2008) argues that when males get older and accumulate more experience, they have a better chance to obtain formal sector jobs. On the contrary, women, even if they are once employed in the formal sector, they tend to quit when a child is born<sup>274</sup>. Then, in their 30s or later with their children are older, they may want to go back to work but it is too competitive to get the formal sector jobs because of a large number of younger females trying to work there. Consequently, they are forced to work in the informal sector albeit in worse conditions. Hiral *et al* (2008) does not analyse 1 (gender difference of sector choice); it could be attributable to the family-run and small-scale nature of the majority of Palestinian farms. Working in agriculture has fewer hurdles for women in terms of gender norms, because it does not include 'going outside' and 'seen by males outside family'. For the male choice of the informal sector over agriculture, the reasons are not clear, but one thinkable factor is that the agriculture has become more or less deficient as a livelihood means due to low productivity in the sector<sup>275</sup>, which makes men turn to jobs in the informal sector so that they could earn more.

Hiral *et al* (2008) also reports that only 6% of women with higher education work in the informal sector, while women with only primary or up-to-secondary education work more in the sector: both categories have more than 20% with informal jobs. It is analysed that since many women in the informal sector have taken their jobs as a 'last resort' for survival<sup>276</sup>, they (especially those with less education) see working outside home as 'shame', feeling disempowered, whereas educated women in the formal sector tend to consider their working outside home as self-empowerment<sup>277</sup>.

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272 ETF (2014), Al-Falah (2014)

273 The following two bullet points are based on the data in Hiral *et al* (2008). More recent data is not identified. It seems that the PCBS had not collected/accumulated data on informal sector/informal employment in its Labour Force Surveys in 2010.

273 Leaving job when/after delivery could be two patterns: one is due to the woman's will, and another is the unavailability of a person to take care of the child which makes it impossible for the woman to continue working.

274 Leaving job when/after delivery could be two patterns: one is due to the woman's will, and another is the unavailability of a person to take care of the child which makes it impossible for the woman to continue working.

275 MAS (2014b), Niksic *et al* (2014), UN Women (2011)

276 Kawasmi and White (2010), Hiral *et al* (2008)

277 World Bank (2010)

### [Women Entrepreneurs and their Enterprises]

According to Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM), which researches and analyses entrepreneurship in more than 100 countries (as of 2015), enterprises set up by women entrepreneurs in Palestine, in 2012, rank 58 out of 67 countries for the category of Start-ups (enterprises aged less than 42 months), and 66 out of 67 countries for the category of Established Enterprises (aged 42 months or more). These low ranks are mainly due to low proportion of female entrepreneurs in the population<sup>278</sup>. The fact that the rank for Established Enterprises is even lower than that of Start-ups implies that out of few women entrepreneurs, even fewer would be able to sustain for more than several years; women's business in Palestine must be in a truly severe environment.

GEM 2012 also reveals that 16% of males are involved in entrepreneurial activities, while only 3.4 % of females are. One major reason for females to start their business is 'necessity', while that for males is 'opportunity'<sup>279</sup>. A typical case is that the male breadwinner (say, the husband) loses his job, and the woman (say, the wife) is required to obtain income, so that she would set up a micro enterprise<sup>280</sup>. Thus, an opinion expressed by a women's business organisation makes sense: "many women entrepreneurs do not have the business mind, which hinders continuation and development of their business"<sup>281</sup>.

The business set up by women being out of necessity for them and their family to survive, tends to be in the area in their reach—that is, relating to the traditional female work of domestic work. They typically include embroidery, production of handicraft, small kiosks with their neighbours as their customers, and tiny beauty salons based at home. More than 50% of women's business is consumer-oriented<sup>282</sup>. The women, however, should not be blamed unilaterally for their narrow scope of business; the areas out of these 'traditional female work', because nobody expects women to enter, are nearly impossible for women to access unless they are exceptionally well equipped with knowledge/skills/funds or back up<sup>283</sup>.

After establishment, more emphasis is given to stability than to growth and development. Few female entrepreneurs try to grab the chance, if any, to expand and/or innovate. Another dimension of this is, it should be noted, that women's access to business information, knowledge and skills is so limited that they either do not notice the opportunity or feel it would be too much for them to handle<sup>284</sup>. A Palestinian women's business organisation that trains women entrepreneurs explains this as a problem of access to information, knowledge, skills, and finance which are intangible business assets. Women

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278 MAS (2013), Abdullah and Hattawy (2014)

279 MAS (2013), Abdullah and Hattawy (2014)

280 UN Women (2011), Abdullah and Hattawy (2014)

281 Interview with BWF

282 *Ibid*, Interviews with BWF and FPCCIA, Abdullah and Hattawy (2014)

283 Abdullah and Hattawy (2014)

284 Interview with BWF and FPCCIA, Abdullah and Hattawy (2014)

are not legally excluded from access to these, but in practice, control of movement imposed on women, and time and physical burdens of domestic work again imposed on women, coupled with people's (men's) negative attitude against women's business, to access business information/skills, or more precisely, to access the information on the existence of business information/skills, is difficult for women. Without these accesses, women cannot change their way of thinking and behaviour. Without change of thinking and behaviour, development of women's business is hardly imaginable<sup>285</sup>.

Table 3.3.3 below shows how few women are employers, i.e., those who manage the business<sup>286</sup>. In both the West Bank and Gaza, the overall trend in the employer category has not changed since 2010<sup>287</sup>.

Table 3.3.3: Proportion of Employers by Gender (%)

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
<b>West Bank</b>					
Male	8.4	8.7	8.9	8.2	8.5
Female	1.5	1.9	1.9	2.1	2.2
<b>Gaza</b>					
Male	4.6	4.3	4.1	4.6	4.5
Female	1.2	0.9	0.9	0.9	1.1

Source: PCBS (2011, 2013, 2014c, 2015a), ETF (2014)

Noted is the difference in the proportion of male employers, in the West Bank and in Gaza; Gaza has considerably less employers (in proportion) than the West Bank. This could be attributed to the greatly depressed economy of Gaza, due to Israeli blockade. It is conceivable that in Gaza, setting up and maintaining business with individual efforts is more difficult than it is in the West Bank.

### **[Women's Self-employment and Unpaid Work]**

Women's self-employment is not comprehensively researched and documented, and the actual situation is almost impossible to understand<sup>288</sup>. What can be seen from available data is that it is increasing considerably in Gaza, as in Table 3.3.4 below.

Increase of women's self-employment in Gaza could be interpreted as that more women have started economic/income-generating activities in the context of economic devastation of Gaza, with high male unemployment (that is, the traditional breadwinner losing their jobs). In the same manner as women entrepreneurs, it would likely to be a coping strategy, pressed by the necessity of everyday life<sup>289</sup>. It is not clear, though, how much of these micro/individual economic activities are

285 Interview with BWF

286 While the figures in the table are percentages within the gender, considering the low female labour force participation (see above), the absolute number of women employers is very slim.

287 See the next item for self-employment and unpaid work.

288 The Institute of Women's Studies at Birzeit University (2013), UN Women (2011)

289 Abdullah and Hattawy (2014)

viable—how much actual income these women could generate—in the economy which is in ‘abnormal’ state of being under blockage<sup>290</sup>.

Table 3.3.4: Women in Employment by Employment Type (%)

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
<b>West Bank</b>					
Employer	1.5	1.9	1.9	2.1	2.2
Self-employed	13.4	11.8	12.2	11.7	13.0
Wage employee	61.9	60.6	59.6	62.0	60.6
Unpaid family member	23.2	25.7	26.3	24.2	24.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
<b>Gaza</b>					
Employer	1.2	0.9	0.9	0.9	1.1
Self-employed	5.4	5.7	5.1	14.2	27.6
Wage employee	90.7	80.3	75.4	73.9	67.6
Unpaid family member	2.7	13.1	18.6	11.0	3.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: PCBS (2011, 2013, 2014c, 2015a), ETF (2014)

In the West Bank, the rate of women’s self-employment has been more or less constant (10-14%) since 2000, with small ups-and-downs linked to political and economic turmoil including the second Intifada<sup>291</sup>; it does not show the drastic change seen in Gaza, reflecting comparatively stable economy in the West Bank.

Another point that should be noted in Table 3.3.4 is unpaid family members<sup>292</sup>. While in Gaza it does not show consistent trend, in the West Bank, the rate of women unpaid family workers has been steady, with very high one-out-of-four. It could be thought that a majority of these unpaid family workers work in family-run MSMEs, as approximately 70% of family-run enterprises are located in the West Bank and a vast majority of these enterprises are MSMEs<sup>293</sup>.

Unpaid family work as a woman’s work is problematic from the point of view of empowerment. Firstly, in many cases, the woman herself, as well as the people around her, tends not to recognize her work as economic contribution<sup>294</sup>. Secondly, specifically because it is unpaid, regardless of her contribution, it leads neither to the woman’s asset accumulation nor to her obtainment of money that she can control. This also means her bargaining power in the household and access to resources do not increase, as discussed in 2.1 above. Even worse, it would be likely to be disempowering her; in most cases, the ‘employer’, the person who manages/runs the family operation is male. The

290 UN Women (2011)

291 World Bank (2010)

292 According to the PCBS, the source of the data, an unpaid family member is a person “who works without pay in an economic enterprise operated by a related person living in the same household” (pp. 32, PCBS (2015a)). See 3.2 for unpaid work in the agriculture sector.

293 Kawasmi and White (2010)

294 World Bank (2010)

mechanism is that the traditional gender norm of ‘male as decision maker, female as subordinate’ is reinforced through everyday interaction, while she is burdened by the workload with more limitation of time.

A further note is that this unpaid family work does not include taking care of sick and elderly at home<sup>295</sup> and/or domestic work which are supposed to be women’s job.

### **[Women and Cooperatives]**

Although they may not exactly be in the ‘private sector’, cooperatives should be discussed in the Palestinian context as they are many and active as livelihood basis of the people. There are also many women’s cooperatives. Cooperatives are said to have good potential particularly in conflict-affected areas such as Palestine, as they would allow sharing risks, pooling resources, and balancing work and family responsibilities more than private enterprises could<sup>296</sup>.

However, in reality, similar challenges to those of women entrepreneurs and self-employment are reported. Many of the women’s cooperatives concentrate on traditional ‘women’s job’ types of activities, that is, activities related to domestic work including small-scale food production/processing such as bakery and handicraft making. This choice of work is logical, so that women cooperatives would have comparative advantage to men’s and mixed-gender cooperatives. On the other hand, women always working in ‘women’s job’ types of activities would reinforce, in the eyes of both men and women, the traditional gender roles and related gender norms, making it more difficult for women (and men) to try non-conventional activities<sup>297</sup>. Furthermore, many women’s cooperatives are said to function as de-facto receivers of donor funds and they tend to go for charitable support, rather than making efforts of making profits and income<sup>298</sup>. If so, participation in cooperatives would enforce the women’s donor dependence. Even though it would benefit the participants economically, in terms of empowerment of women as active agents, the effects would be questionable.

### **[Access to Financial Services]**

It is difficult for women to access official financial services such as bank loans. It is not because there is any legal hindrance; it is rather because few women are able to provide requirements including collateral and guarantors; as to collateral, women hardly have, as discussed in 2.1 above, any assets including land. As to guarantors, in most cases a guarantor must be a socially and economically reliable person, and thus a man. Here, a woman would have a very limited list of such men to ask, as the social and gender norms are such that a woman should not interact and/or meet with men outside

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295 Hiral *et al.* (2008)

296 ILO (2010).

297 *Ibid*

298 Interview with BWF.

their family and relatives<sup>299</sup>. The lack of access to finance is thought to be a major obstacle for which women's enterprises and self-employment do not develop and expand<sup>300</sup>.

With this concern in mind, donors and NGOs have started to provide microfinance services since 1980s<sup>301</sup>. Currently, so many microfinance schemes are being given by NGOs as well as international agencies including UNDP and UNRWA, that some reckon the market is already saturated<sup>302</sup>. While unavailability of comprehensive data prohibits the study to understand the actual situation of the market, according to available data, at least 11 microfinance institutions are in operation and approximately 70,000 are active borrowers of the microcredits<sup>303</sup>.

The microfinance industry is inadequately regulated<sup>304</sup>. Interest rates, as well as gender and economic situation of the target population, vary depending on the scheme. There are programmes which do not require collateral although many do<sup>305</sup>. In many programmes, a potential borrower is required to have guarantor(s)<sup>306</sup> which tends to make the women's access difficult, just as in the cases of official loans.

Microfinance is considerably more accessible compared to official financial services. However, from the point of view of empowerment, microfinance in Palestine so far has shown mixed-results<sup>307</sup>. A major issue here is that women tend to become 'windows for loans'<sup>308</sup>.

According to research by the World Bank in the West Bank, many women borrow from microfinance not because they want to but because men (husbands and/or fathers) 'urge' them to do so, so that the men would use the money for their own (often micro/small) business<sup>309</sup>. In this case, when the men's business is in trouble, the borrower-women are obliged to repay (for nothing). It is of concern that due to the stagnated economy, this issue has become more prevalent now<sup>310</sup>--the West Bank economy has been depressed, although Gaza has been in even worse shape<sup>311</sup>. On the other hand, when and if the woman who borrowed the credit is able to control the money herself, then she is likely to experience

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299 The Institute of Women's Studies at Birzeit University (2013), interview with BWF.

300 World Bank (2010), The Institute of Women's Studies at Birzeit University (2013)

301 Dodeen (2013), The Institute of Women's Studies at Birzeit University (2013)

302 Interview with BWF. There are a considerable number of men and women who refrain from borrowing (even with access), the reason being it would be against Islam to have interests involved in lending and borrowing money.

303 Microfinance Information Exchange <http://www.mixmarket.org/mfi/country/Palestine> (accessed 02/Dec/2015).

Gender-segregated data are unavailable (The Institute of Women's Studies at Birzeit University (2013)).

304 Dodeen (2013). In 2003, a decree is issued to set Palestinian Monetary Authority as the regulator of microfinance institutions. However, concrete work is yet to be observed. ([http://microfinance-mena.org/?page=Pages\\_Activities&id=3](http://microfinance-mena.org/?page=Pages_Activities&id=3) (accessed 02/Dec/2015)) ([http://microfinance-mena.org/?page=Pages\\_Activities&id=3](http://microfinance-mena.org/?page=Pages_Activities&id=3) (accessed 02/Dec/2015))

305 For instance, UNRWA loans targeting Refugees include a 'Solidarity Group Loan' for women's groups (joint responsibility without collateral) and 'Microenterprise Credit' for men and women micro entrepreneurs amongst others.

(<http://www.unrwa.org/what-we-do/products-and-services?program=41> (accessed 02/Dec/2015))

306 Dodeen (2013)

307 Interviews with MOWA and BWF

308 Interviews with NGOs in West Bank and in Gaza.

309 World Bank (2010)

310 The worry is shared both in West Bank and in Gaza while no tangible/comprehensive data is available (interviews with NGOs in West Bank and in Gaza).

311 See 2.1 above.

multi-layered empowerment including not only economic empowerment but also increased bargaining power in the household and raised self-esteem<sup>312</sup>.

Points of Attention in the Sector (when considering development assistance)	
Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Diversification from—out of—'female appropriate' jobs and skills are likely to widen opportunity for women.</li> </ul>
Unpaid Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● West Bank has a very high proportion of unpaid family women workers, while unpaid work tends to lead to disempowerment.</li> <li>● If they keep on working with the family, what would be needed for their empowerment? How to gain income? How to improve the bargaining power? Possibly life skills including negotiation skills would help.</li> </ul>
Self-employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Gaza has seen a rapid increase in women's self-employment.</li> <li>● But the economy in Gaza may not enable their business to be viable. What would be the effective support in this context?</li> </ul>
Women entrepreneurs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Micro-businesses started by women, including those of self-employment, tend not to grow as a business. What is needed?</li> </ul>
Cooperatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Women cooperatives tend to concentrate on 'female appropriate' work.</li> <li>● While this provides comparative advantage over men-led cooperatives, it also poses a risk of enforcing conventional gender division of roles.</li> <li>● Diversification of women's work, tasks, knowledge, and skills would be desirable in cooperatives.</li> </ul>

312 UN Women (2011)

## 4 Gender Mainstreaming in Development Assistance of JICA and its Lessons Learned

Japan's development assistance plan for Palestine of 2012 focuses on Peacebuilding through promotion of social and economic independence as the basic policy. Priority areas include (1) stability and betterment of people's livelihood, (2) reinforcement of government's capacity, and (3) promotion of sustainable economic growth. In this study, 4 (four) JICA projects that deal with areas (1) and (3) are reviewed to examine the extent and effectiveness of their gender mainstreaming, and to draw lessons from their experiences.

### 4.1 The Project on Improved Extension for Value-Added Agriculture (EVAP Phase 2)<sup>313</sup>

(Project Time Frame: 5 years from 2016 (in planning))

#### [Project Overview and States if Gender Mainstreaming]

The agriculture sector is important for Palestine from the point of view of job creation, poverty reduction and food security. The Ministry of Agriculture promotes improvement of agricultural productivity and profitability through extension services by extension workers. However, the farmers are reported to be unsatisfied with the extension services as the provided technology does not necessarily match the needs of the farmers and the frequency of extension workers visit is not enough. Improvement of the extension services and more promotion of value-added agriculture would be desirable.

In this context, JICA has supported development of the Palestinian agriculture sector and its extension services through projects including “Strengthening Support System focusing on Sustainable Agriculture in Jericho and Jordan River Rift Valley (ASAP)” (2007-2010) and “the Project on Improved Extension for Value-Added Agriculture in the Jordan River Rift Valley” (EVAP 1) (2011-2015). EVAP 1 targeted small and medium sized farms/farmers in Jordan Rift Valley region in the West Bank. Through the activities, it formulated the EVAP extension package: an agricultural extension service package which provides skills/technologies and information required for farmers to make judgements based on profitability and to improve their productivity/profitability—in other words, to be more market-oriented. “The Project on Improved Extension for Value-added Agriculture in Palestine (EVAP Phase 2)”, hereafter referred to as EVAP 2<sup>314</sup> is in formulation to expand the extension service with market-oriented viewpoint to both the West Bank and Gaza.

EVAP 1 has worked throughout the project time frame to revise and improve the EVAP extension

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313 The title of the project is as of its adoption and may potentially be modified.

314 *Ibid.*



package. This was done through 5 cycles (seasons) of diffusion practices of farming technologies. Project Monitoring and Advisory Mission in July 2012 advised the project to incorporate gender consideration because it did not at first. Survey on the situation of women in the targeted communities was conducted in November to December in 2013, with which results the Project included the following two gender-related objectives: to empower women in farming management and household budget so that they would more actively participate in decision making in the family farming, and to lessen the workload of women in farming by bringing in simple and cheap equipment. New gender-related activities were introduced into the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> cycles: women's participation in training sessions encouraged, gender training included within the training for farmers, technologies which would lessen the workload introduced, and training on joint household budget management incorporated ('joint' means male and female in the household, primarily the husband and wife)<sup>315</sup>. At the time of final evaluation in April 2014, because the project activities were still in the transition to those with gender consideration, in-depth probing as to gender mainstreaming and other gender-related issues were suspended. Instead, in August 2015 research which focuses on gender-related outcomes and challenges in EVAP 1, so-called EVAP Gender Research was conducted<sup>316</sup>. EVAP Gender Research finds out that the effectiveness of gender training in EVAP was limited; that introduction of workload-lessening equipment was effective only when the husband already was comparatively aware of gender equality; and that lack of gender-segregated data made it difficult to conduct further analysis. The Research also finds out that there are good practices in which, for example, a husband and his wife inspired by the project inputs did their own local marketing research and successfully raised their income; this resulted in the husband's high appreciation of the contribution by his wife. Unfortunately, these good practices were rather sporadic<sup>317</sup>.

### **[Lessons Learned and Challenges for Strengthening Gender Mainstreaming]**

The experience of EVAP 1, that is, incorporation of gender consideration from a halfway point yielded only limited effectiveness, provides important lessons for EVAP 2 as well as for agricultural projects as a whole. For one, it is essential to include gender mainstreaming in the design of the project from the start. Furthermore, it is crucial to make the project personnel (Experts as well as other staff) understand why gender mainstreaming is important in the agricultural projects.

It would be fair to consider the EVAP 1 gender components were compromised so that they would not impede the other—from the point of view of the agricultural experts, potentially more important— components. For instance, gender training was 'crammed into' the existing training module, resulting in only half-hour sessions. As such, it would not let the farmers (trainees) give

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315 JICA (2015h)

316 JICA (2015e)

317 JICA (2015b, 2015e, 2015f)

proper and in-depth consideration on gender situation around themselves. Thus it did not make impact on them to the extent to change their thinking and behaviour. On the contrary, a male trainee-farmer answered that the gender training let him re-appreciate the traditional gender roles because the training gave him understanding of women's roles which are different than men's. In this case at least, the gender training, opposite to the intention of the component, has reinforced and entrenched the conventional gender division of roles<sup>318</sup>.

The training on joint household budget management aimed to foster man and woman's cooperation within the household on decision making with regard to farming management. Positive reactions included that the training let the trainee-farmers have clearer understanding of household income and expenditure, enabling them to manage domestic budget more efficiently<sup>319</sup>. On the other hand, a considerable proportion did not utilize what they learned in the training, or moreover, even though they started to keep track of the domestic budget, decision making was still in the men's hands<sup>320</sup>.

In relation to the above, it should be noted that information collected by EVAP Gender Research implies tremendous diversity exists in the patterns of household income and expenditure, and of its control, in Palestinian farmers: for instance, in an extended family, in addition to the husband-and-wife agriculture income, temporary income of the brothers of husband comes in time to time. The control of these incomes may differ; the husband may control the agriculture income while the brothers' income may be controlled by somebody else, still the family members may regard the total of these incomes as the household income<sup>321</sup>.

As in the case of household control of income, the household and community situations in Palestinian farmers, and in other Palestinian people, are greatly diversified; and so are their gender norms, gender situations, and the extent of women's empowerment (or disempowerment). Some attributions that would affect the situations include whether the community or households are refugee/IDP or not, own land or not and/or are Bedouin or not amongst others. It would be extremely difficult to find a one-size-fits-all understanding<sup>322</sup>. In order to examine this point further, this study attempts a case study of several farming communities, based on the information collected by EVAP Gender Research. It should be noted that the case study below is a very crude attempt to encourage more discussion on the point; the information from EVAP Gender Research naturally has different objectives than this study and thus does not provide comprehensive data that would be required for deeper analysis.

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318 JICA (2015b)

319 JICA (2015i)

320 JICA (2015b)

321 JICA (2015b, 2015e, 2015f)

322 JICA (2015f), Richter-Devroe (2011). See also 2.1 above

### A Case Study on Diversity and Gender Situations of Farming Communities

Hereafter, 4 (four) farmer communities with which EVAP Gender Research directly interviewed are examined in terms of their gender situations. Simplified attributions of each group are given below.

Although the communities are located in the West Bank, their specific locations in the West Bank are not given in this case study due to insufficient information regarding the communities' locality and its gender characteristics, and also not to give any unnecessary impression on the reader.

Table 4.1.1: Group Attributions of 4 Farmer Communities from EVAP Gender Research

Group A	Non-Refugee and non-Bedouin. Cropping mainly vegetables in the farming land that is either owned or leased. Group members organize a large agricultural cooperative of approximately 100 members (male members only). Livestock is also owned, taken care by wives of the members.
Group B	Refugees but non-Bedouin. Group organized by 15 female landless farmers. The husbands of the members work as agricultural labourers in Israeli settlements and also in sharecropping. Agricultural work in sharecropping is done by women during the day and in the evening by husbands (after they come back from the settlements); both women and men tend to be overloaded with work. The women's group cultivates herbs.
Group C	Non-Refugees. Ex-Bedouin who are now settled. Mostly landless. Group organized by 16 males, working mainly on livestock rearing. Some men work as agricultural labourers; some women (wives of members) cultivate vegetables in sharecropping.
Group D	Non-Refugees. Ex-Bedouin who are now settled. Group organized by 15 farmers (both males and females). Cultivate mainly vegetables with some livestock rearing. All members are blood relatives to each other.

Source: Author's compilation based on JICA (2015b, 2015e, 2015f)

Gender situations in the 4 groups, based on EVAP Gender Research, are given below. It should be noted that 'High/Middle/Low' in the table below are comparative within the 4 groups and not in any way absolute, as reasonable interpretation of the information available from the sources.

Table 4.1.2: Gender Situations in the Groups

	Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D
<b>Gender-related Attributions</b>				
Male Gender Awareness	Low	Low	Middle	High
Female Gender Awareness	Low	High	Middle	High
Male-female Joint Decision Making	Low	Low	Middle	High
Activities Initiated by Women	Low	High	High	High
Male Reactions toward Women's Activities	NA <sup>323</sup>	Negative	Positive	Positive
<b>Others</b>				
Land Ownership	Owned/Leased Land	Labour/Share-Cropping	Labour/Share-Cropping	Owned Land
Bedouin or not	Not	Not	Ex-Bedouin	Ex-Bedouin
Refugees or not	Not	Refugees	Not	Refugees
Other notes/concerns	Exploitation Of Women			

Source: Author's compilation based on JICA (2015b, 2015e, 2015f)

Importantly, group attributions such as Bedouin (or not) and Refugees (or not) do not explain their specific gender situations. According to the categorisation provided in 2.1 above, Bedouins are more conservative than non-Bedouins while Refugees have less intense gender norms than non-Refugees, as generalisation. However, Group C and D, who are ex-Bedouins, score better in overall gender situations, than Group A and B who are not Bedouins. Non-Refugee Group C, supposedly more conservative, scores better than Refugee Group B<sup>324</sup>. Thus, as stressed in 2.1 above, the categorisation is a mere attempted generalisation which would be unable to interpret specific cases where various factors interact.

Another important point is the relationship between gender awareness and male and female behaviours (that is, male and female jointly making decisions (or not), women taking initiatives without male consent (or not), and how males react to those women). Specifically, male gender awareness seems to play a notable role; for example, in Group D where both male and female gender awareness is high, female and male actions more easily leads to women's empowerment; on the contrary, in Group A where both male and female gender awareness is low, gender situation would stagnate.

323 The information available does not provide cases in which the women of this group have taken clear initiatives/actions on their own.

324 Individual cases are not described in this study as they are too detailed for the scope of this study. See JICA(2015b) for more information.

These may be apparent. However, when male and female gender awareness collide against each other, the outcome would be complicated.

In Group B, women have high awareness and they are engaged in group activities so that they would leverage their say to be heard. However, their husbands are negative. One factor behind this negative reaction is that the women's group activities are yet to yield tangible outcomes such as increased income, while they eat up the women's time<sup>325</sup>. As such, the male-female joint decision making stalls; men still have the deciding power in the households as well as the community. Change of behaviour toward more gender equality is yet to be observed<sup>326</sup>.

On the other hand, in Group C, a positive behavioural change case is found out in which a successful income-generating behaviour of wives (women-only share-cropping venture) promoted male-female joint decision making<sup>327</sup>.

These actual cases imply the significance of male gender awareness. While whether the higher male gender awareness is either the cause of the result of the communal change of behaviour is not clear from the information at hand, it would be safe to assume that male gender awareness, rather than that of females', correlates more strongly with gender consideration as a group of people and with gender situations in the group.

Then, it could be said that when observing gender situation, behavioural change, and/or potential of behavioural change, of a group of people, male gender awareness would work as a useful focal point for gender analysis of the group.

If allowed to repeat, though, it is clear those specific situations and the multi-fold attributions mingled together bear a perceived gender situation of a group—or any group. It would be advisable not to go for rapid and/or easy typology; when analysing gender situations in a group, it would be crucial to probe into the specific attributions, history, and various environments of the specific group. As UN Women states, no 'ready-made' gender assistance measures bring out results in Palestine<sup>328</sup>.

#### Supplemental Note on Table 4.1.2: Other notes/concerns

'Exploitation of Women' as noted in Other notes/concerns in Table 4.1.2 is explained below. In this community, many females are 'used' as free agricultural labourers by

325 JICA (2015b)

326 JICA (2015b, 2015e)

327 JICA (2015b)

328 Interview with UN Women.

community males. According to local informants, in approximately 40% of the households, women are not allowed to live their own life; some women are kept at their parental households up to the age of 40s without any chance of marriage (or any other option to leave); others are kept likewise up to their 30s only to be married off as a second wife, so that their fathers could take advantage of their free labour on the family farms<sup>329</sup>.

This community may be an extreme case. However, the field research for this study finds a case in Gaza, in which an unmarried woman in her early 60s (who has retired from her job as a school teacher), works in her brother's farm every day without any pay. In this case, she lives in the brother's household and does all the so-called 'female' work on the farm as there is no other female worker—the brother's wife is too occupied with 12 children of hers. These cases are enough to make those in development worry about the situations of women who are not wives—the unmarried women. It would be quite possible that considerable proportion of unmarried women are 'used' as free labourers without any other choice. In this study, an abundant collection of information and data on wives and their situations was collected.

Whereas, information and data on unmarried women, as well as those on widows and divorcees, were scarce. It would be fair to assume that this problem is not so only in the agriculture sector. In the agriculture sector, and in other sectors as well, more information/ data collection, researches and analysis on the situation of 'non-wife' women are greatly needed<sup>330</sup>.

As seen in the case study above, a quick typology of target farmers/communities from the viewpoint of gender is more or less impossible. It should be noted that the attempted analysis above is based on the information from West Bank farms only. As EVAP 2 plans to target Gaza farmers alongside with West Bank farmers, the situations of target farmers would be even more diversified. A natural conclusion would be that gender consideration in EVAP 2 would be required to be 'tailor-made', depending on the actual situations of and circumstances surrounding the specific farmer group(s) targeted.

It would be advisable that EVAP 2 should, as much as possible, research each target group on its gender situations before the actual activities so that the project could incorporate gender

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329 JICA (2015b)

330 While UN Women (2011) states concerns about the lack of data on widows and divorcees, concrete information and/or analysis on the gender situation of unmarried women, other than that from EVAP Gender Research described above, is unidentified by this study.

mainstreaming components appropriate to the respective groups; lessons learned from EVAP 1 are that generic type of gender component would be unlikely to be effective in the context of the project.

In order for the non-generic gender activities to be realized, then, it would be most desirable to have a knowledgeable and skilful personnel member as ‘gender-in-charge’. It would be required for him/her to be capable of understanding the diversified and complicated nature of gender situations in Palestine and of being flexible to plan, consider, conduct, and change the project activities depending on the socio-economic context. Also important is that the project team as a whole would need to be capable of understanding what the gender-in-charge does and says, so that the gender-related components are appropriately treated and utilized in the project. This would mean the capacity development on gender issues for the whole project team would be desirable. Furthermore, according to EVAP Gender Research, some C/P and extension workers in charge of gender understand gender only superficially; for instance, cases are reported in which extension workers regard ‘gender equality’ to be achieved simply when both males and females physically participate in project events<sup>331</sup>. It would be advisable that on the Palestinian side also, more fundamental and critical understanding of, and capacity development on, gender and gender mainstreaming would be necessary.

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331 JICA (2015b, 2015e, 2015f)

## 4.2 **Project for Sustainable Tourism Development through Public Private Partnership (Phase 2)**

(Project Time Frame: June 2013-June 2016 (planned))

### **[Project Overview and States if Gender Mainstreaming]**

Jericho in the West Bank is called the world's oldest city. A JICA project, "Project for Sustainable Tourism Development through Public Private Partnership" (Phase 1) (2009-2012), aimed for development of the potential on tourism in the region and for economic benefit of tourism to be more widely enjoyed by the local people. In terms of direct benefit to the people, Community-based Tourism (CBT), in which local people are actively involved in tourism-related activities, was focused on. The project achieved outcomes including tourism promotion such as establishment of tourist information centres and production of tourist maps, as well as CBT pilot projects. Since 2013, Phase 2 of the project (hereafter referred to as the Project) has started in order to make good use of the experience gained in Phase 1, to develop the activities more so that the local economy as a whole would benefit, and to expand the activities to a larger area.

Within the current project design, activities, and monitoring, gender consideration is not specifically incorporated. As to CBT, 6 local groups are conducting respective activities as pilot projects, with support from the Project. In selecting these groups for CBT pilot projects, very naturally considering the theme of the Project, tourism promotion potential was most important. As such, selected 6 groups work on activities including production and sales of traditional handicrafts and food (for souvenirs as well as on-the-spot consumption) and experience tours of traditional local lifestyles. As production of handicrafts and food are traditionally done by females, it happens to be that in 4 out of 6 pilot projects, many of the project activities are in the women's hands.

### **[Lessons Learned and Challenges for Strengthening Gender Mainstreaming]**

The Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, C/P agency of the Project, states that while the Project did not consciously include gender considerations in selection criteria of CBT pilot project, as long as women are active in the selected groups, the Ministry would be happy to provide support as much as possible within the framework of the Project<sup>332</sup>. For one, a pilot project group which works on production and sales of traditional mosaics is a cooperative established and led by a local woman, with women comprising approximately 80% of members. The cooperative works with an objective of providing better job opportunities for local women, but due to still-slim revenues, it is yet to produce

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332 Interview with Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities



many job offers<sup>333</sup>. The Jericho office of the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, responding to the group leader's request, has supported the cooperative by introducing potential buyers and advising for the production skills improvement. Actually, the CBT pilot project scheme itself was introduced to the leader by the Ministry office<sup>334</sup>. This case indicates that the support and cooperation of the Ministry has been indispensable for the leadership of the group leader and the work of the cooperative as a whole.

While the support for local women in the Project is observed, although by no means intentional, a CBT pilot project group with a risk of negative impact on gender situations is also found: a Bedouin cooperative which works on production of traditional woollen fabrics. It is known that in Bedouin communities in general, traditional gender norms including gender division of roles are strict, with decision making almost predominantly done by males, and women suffer from severe workload. As to production of traditional woollen fabrics, the working process is almost entirely done by women, except for the very first step of shearing the livestock. In this case as well, the vast majority of the workers are females. However, the CBT project participation was initiated and designed by males, and communication with out-of-community people, including that with the Project, is done exclusively by males. Within the process so far, decision making is predominantly done by males with nominal participation of women. As the production of woollen fabrics had been worn thin before the CBT project, it would be possible that the women were mobilized, as workers, regardless of their actual wills/preference, putting more burden on their already-high workload, whereas their participation in the decision making process is hardly advanced<sup>335</sup>. (It should be noted that this study refrains from being too judgmental on this potential negative impact, and its severity, as the field research on this matter is not very much in-depth, due to time limitations.)

It would be interpreted that this negative impact (or the possibility for it) was brought out because the Project did not—or could not—examine the CBT pilot projects (in planning and in implementation) from proper gender perspective. If an Expert, or a C/P personnel, with professional gender-related knowledge and skills was working in or for the Project, it would have been possible not to select a potentially problematic group such as the one described above, or, to support the group's planning and activities in the direction of promoting and realizing women's empowerment. The other example, the mosaic cooperative, could also be supported more effectively in terms of gender mainstreaming. Within the same activity, that is, CBT pilot project scheme, totally opposite (positive and negative) impacts are observed. An important lesson learned here is that, gender consideration and gender analysis should be incorporated in every process and activity in a project so that there is a check

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333 Interview a CBT pilot project group, working on production and sales of traditional mosaics

334 *Ibid.*

335 Interview a CBT pilot project group organized by Bedouin tribes

function; any potentially negative occurrence could be avoided or corrected, and positive occurrence would be reinforced or fostered further.

In the case of the Bedouin cooperative (woollen fabric production), there seem to be some people within the Project circle who regard the project as gender empowering activity, simply because there are many women involved. However, participating in a cooperative itself does not guarantee the women to be empowered<sup>336</sup>.

Furthermore, as discussed in 4.1 above, gender issues in Palestine are extremely complicated and diversified. Generic gender components would, as said before, yield few positive outcomes—or could bring about negative outcomes, whether intentionally or not. This understanding should be a premise in development activities in any sector. Therefore, it would be desirable to have components and activities related to gender ‘tailor-made’ as much as possible in projects in the tourism sector, as well as in other sectors. ‘Tailor-made’ here refers to, for example in the context of this Project, to implement pre-activity in-depth gender analysis for all CBT pilot project plans and groups, and according to the results, to employ different approaches for respective pilot projects. Another important point here is that the gender Expert who leads these suggested activities should have enough skills and expertise to be able to understand complicated gender-related social context of Palestine and to deal with the various situations properly. In order for the gender Expert to be effective, in turn, the other Experts and project personnel should have capacity development opportunities on gender mainstreaming, continuously and systematically, so that the opinions and activities of the gender Expert would be incorporated into the overall project in the right timing and with proper attention.

As to this particular Project, due to limited time left before the termination, it would be difficult to make changes in the operation. It would have been desirable if, at least for CBT pilot projects, in-depth gender review be done by a gender expert to identify positive and negative impacts which materialized, so that the lessons learned would be passed on to similar projects in the future. Or, possibly after the Project termination, a freestanding research on gender-related impact could be considered, as it was done in EVAP 1 (see 4.1 above), for the betterment of similar and/or succeeding projects in this field.

This study understands the CBT activities as primarily aiming for economic empowerment of local people. However, if seen from gender perspective, with the actual examples of the two cooperatives described above, economic empowerment only would not be enough. Women need to be empowered socio-culturally within the cooperative/group as well as in the wider community of theirs, including having more negotiation power/skills against men. It would be advisable for JICA to have more

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336 ILO (2010, 2014). See also 3.2 and 3.3 above.

gender-considered project designs for similar and/or succeeding projects to come, which incorporate holistic—i.e., not only economic but also socio-cultural and other life-skills related— gender empowerment.

### 4.3 **Project for Business Development Service (BDS) Enhancement for MSMEs**

(Project Time Frame: September 2013-September 2016 (planned))

#### **[Project Overview and States if Gender Mainstreaming]**

MSMEs are important as job creation sources in Palestine. While MSMEs suffer from vulnerable management foundations, management capacity, and lack of market information, they are in need of new market opportunities, including those in the overseas market, as the Palestinian market is limited. Therefore, MSMEs and their management require business development services (BDS): that is, training/capacity building, advisory services, and consultations on marketing, quality improvement, and management. The reality in Palestine is, however, that quality BDS are too expensive for MSMEs whereas affordable BDS are poor in quality. In this context, JICA has started the “Project for Business Development Service (BDS) Enhancement for MSMEs” (hereafter referred to as the Project) in order to cultivate national experts who would provide BDS with better qualities to MSMEs<sup>337</sup>.

C/P institutions for the Project include Ministry of National Economy, Federation of Palestinian Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture (FPCCIA), Palestinian Federation of Industries (PFI) and other business associations. The Project provides lectures and training sessions targeting these institutions as well as their staff aiming for the development of their capacity as quality BDS providers. As to gender consideration, it has not been included in the Project design in particular. However, in the first year of operation, one of the C/P institutions (PFI) suggested a business women’s association called BWF to be added into the Project as another C/P institution, which was accepted. PFI and BWF have been proactive to include women trainees in the Project activities. As a consequence, the Project has achieved women’s participation to a certain extent<sup>338</sup>.

Although not directly related to the Project activities, another C/P institution, FPCCIA, has started women targeted activities. The factors behind this are that they, as a business federation, would need to increase the federation members (i.e., companies) as well as to improve their services toward the member companies, and there are women-led enterprises although the vast majority of them are informal micro enterprises. Their newly created women targeted activities include establishing gender focal points in their local offices and planning of BDS targeting women entrepreneurs<sup>339</sup>.

All C/P institutions interviewed for this study, including PFI, FPCCIA, and BWF, expressed their

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337 JICA (2015 g)

338 Interviews with PFI and BWF

339 Interview with FPCCIA. The recent activities targeting women entrepreneurs of the FPCCIA are supported by other donors including GIZ.

hope/willingness of incorporating activities related to women-targeting BDS in the Project<sup>340</sup>.

### **[Lessons Learned and Challenges for Strengthening Gender Mainstreaming]**

As discussed in 3.3 above, MSMEs by women entrepreneurs in Palestine are still very much of a minority. The problem is argued to include many women entrepreneurs establish their tiny businesses out of necessity for survival, with neither business mind-set to develop and/or expand the business, nor information, technology and skills required for business development. Another issue reported is that male businesspersons often (if not always) do not treat women businesspersons as their equals<sup>341</sup>.

However, as described in the section above, business federations and associations who are C/Ps of this Project are inclined to take in women entrepreneurs and their enterprises, however micro they are. It could be said that the favourable environment for women entrepreneurs in the Palestinian industrial circle has started to evolve, though maybe slowly.

In parallel, increase/promotion of women's labour force participation has been sought with the Ministry of Labour as a lead<sup>342</sup>. Concerned issues include gender gap in wages and needs for improvement in working environment. Another point here that could be considered would be the limitation of access by women to wider job varieties and industries (sectors), as discussed in 3.3 above; in the context of the Project, awareness raising as to the various potential of women workers/professionals could be useful.

Due to the limited time left before the completion of the Project, it might be difficult to incorporate gender-related activities from now on. However, in similar/succeeding projects in the future, gender considerations should be included from the beginning, i.e., from the designing phase of the projects. The following are some suggestions in this regard:

- In designing (including PDM formulation):
  - To conduct research, data collection, and analysis on women's participation in MSMEs as well as in the economy in general;
  - To conduct detailed gender analysis on the needs of the target population; and,
  - According to the results of the above, to examine women entrepreneurs and female businesspersons as one of the target groups.
- In implementation:
  - To develop BDS targeting women entrepreneurs and female businesspersons;
  - To develop BDS and to conduct training on how to do business with businesswomen, targeting male businesspersons;

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340 Interviews with PFI, FPCCIA, and BWF.

341 ETF (2014), interviews with PFI, FPCCIA, and BWF

342 See 3.3 above.

- To develop BDS and to conduct training on how to improve working environment for women workers and how to prevent and deal with sexual harassment, targeting both male and female businesspersons; and,
- To conduct training/awareness raising on the potential of women workers in the jobs and sectors that are currently not accessible by women.

In the Project, the Ministry of National Economy is the C/P institution within the government. It would be possible to invite the Ministry of Labour as well. Thus, in addition to the support of women as employers (entrepreneurs, businesspersons), as considered in the current Project framework, the support of women as employees could be strengthened.

Last but not least, as a very basic suggestion, the data of the Project as well as of the future similar projects should be gender-segregated.

## 4.4 Refugee Camp Improvement Programme in Palestine

(Project Time Frame: February 2016-January 2018 (planned))

### [Project Overview and States of Gender Mainstreaming]

The living environment including hygiene in Palestinian Refugee Camps is poor, as discussed in 3.1 above, with infrastructure (water system, electricity, roads amongst others) as well as housing not properly built/maintained. Infrastructure and social services are provided by local authorities and UNRWA, but local authorities are constantly short of funds and UNRWA also recently suffers from insufficient finance. Consequently, public services including infrastructure building/maintenance are dependent on non-consistent support by donors and NGOs.

While a fundamental political solution for the Palestinian Refugee issue is unlikely to be found anytime soon, it would be necessary to tackle the existing problems such as living environment with whatever available; this would include problem solving with and by the Refugees (residents) themselves, through promotion of their active participation in planning and implementation of environmental improvement programmes. At the same time, as Refugee Camp residents suffer from higher poverty rate than others, livelihood improvement could also be addressed in participatory manner. Based on this understanding, a new project by JICA, “Refugee Camp Improvement Program in Palestine” (hereafter referred to as the Project) is in formulation.

The project formulation survey is being done with gender consideration, with interviews with Women Centres always included in the field data collection in Camps. What is also important now would be how to actually and effectively incorporate women’s voices and needs into the participatory planning as decision making of the respective Camps.

### [Lessons Learned and Challenges for Strengthening Gender Mainstreaming]

#### ● Involvement of Men including Popular Committees

Gender mainstreaming is not a simple ‘support for women’; rather, it is about the relationship between males and females. In current international consensus in development assistance, involvement of the community, particularly males, plays a significant role in addressing gender issues. In this context, it would be important for the Project to find ways how to incorporate male actors, in addition to females, in gender mainstreaming of the Project. The Project may want to draw lessons learned from another JICA project in neighbouring Jordan, that is, “Project for Capacity Development for Improvement of Livelihood for Palestinian Refugees” (current phase implemented until September 2016), since this project in Jordan also tackles living conditions in Palestinian Refugee Camps through residents’ participation. This project, in its efforts to support livelihood improvement

of the women in the Refugee Camps, first constructed a cooperation and communication structure with Camp Committees<sup>343</sup>. Then, utilizing the relationship as leverage, has conducted gender awareness raising workshops and other events targeting men and women in the Camps<sup>344</sup>. Obviously it should be noted that in Palestine and in Jordan, with different political and social contexts, automatic duplication of the project component(s) would not work, even though both projects work in Palestinian Refugee Camps. Still, the experiences of the project in Jordan could shed some practical light on the coming Project<sup>345</sup>.

### ● **‘Participation’ of Women in the so-called Participatory Decision Making**

International experience on participatory development tells us that women’s physical ‘participation’ itself—for instance, the mere fact that women are present in meetings— does not necessarily guarantee the women’s voices will be heard and appreciated. This would be especially so in Palestine, where traditional gender norms set decision makers as men and regard women’s interaction with non-family men as inappropriate. Recent rise of conservatism, as discussed above, may further induce men’s conscious and unconscious negative reaction against women assuming new role as participants in joint decision making, in participatory planning, next to men. It is reported that women on the ground have already employed coping strategy for similar problems; for instance, in order not to offend men’s masculine pride, women consciously underrate their own economic and other contributions<sup>346</sup>.

Considering these issues, it would be conceivable that when both men and women are physically present, women tend not to speak up their true opinions and/or pros and cons toward certain topics. When holding ‘participatory’ meetings, whether or not men and women should sit in should be examined, according to the circumstances. It could be considered to organize women-only organisation, such as women’s committee for the Project, where women’s opinions and suggestions would be formulated without being shy in the presence of males. It could be further plausible that quota-like system would be constructed, that is, at least certain number of suggestions provided by the women’s committee must be included/reflected in the participatory planning of the Camp. In management of the women’s committee, it should be noted that if the supporting outsider (Expert, C/P, and/or local consultant) is male, then his intention may disproportionately influence the argument and/or conclusion of the women’s committee, specifically because it is a *male* intention. Obviously, it is not that male outsiders should not deal with women’s committees. However, they must understand

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343 Self-governing body of the Camps organized by Camp residents. Equivalent to Popular Committees in Camps in Palestine.

344 This project, for instance, has produced a DVD as awareness raising workshop material, in which a famous Islamic scholar corrects the prevailing yet wrong interpretation of Islamic teaching, by preaching oppressing women is not truly “Islamic”. This, or similar attempt, could be useful in the Project (JICA (forthcoming)).

345 JICA (forthcoming) discusses the experiences of and lessons learned from this project.

346 World Bank (2010)



gender sufficiently, and be prepared for what could happen<sup>347</sup>. In addition, this sufficient understanding on gender would not come, in the greatly complicated and diversified gender context of Palestine (see 4.1 above), by simply taking generic gender training.

The discussion in 4.1 above finds out, along with diversity of gender situations, that male gender awareness would be a useful variable to measure/predict the group's potential for gender inclusiveness (at least in the short run). Thus, it would be desirable for this Project to research and analyse male (and female) gender awareness in each Camp, at the beginning phase, so that the findings and analysis would be utilized in the actual Project activities in the respective Camps. It should be noted, though, that the discussion in 4.1 is, as stated, crude and provisional; more arguments and analysis are in great need, on actually how male (and female) gender awareness influence the behaviour of the group, what formulates this gender awareness and how, and what are the other influential variables than gender awareness.

#### ● Utilisation and Strengthening of Women Centres

As discussed in 3.1 above, there are Women Centres established in the vast majority of Camps both in the West Bank and in Gaza. While some are more active than others, the Centres seem to be the most important base of the organized (group) activities of the women who live in respective Camps. Thus, the Project could include utilisation and strengthening of these Women Centres within its gender component(s), unless any other—and more active/influential—women's organisations are discovered, which this study did not identify.

Existing support for Women's Centres is mainly by UNRWA, in some cases supplemented by other donors including NGOs. Women involved in Women's Centres express their anxiety and discontent toward shrinking support from UNRWA (as UNRWA has been in shortage of funds) and wider international community<sup>348</sup>. In other words, these women are yet to have the self-sustained mindset to develop their Centres and the activities by their own sustainable and continuous efforts. Taking advantage of the Project's major framework of participatory development, it would be desirable for the Project to promote and encourage women's own initiatives to protect and develop the Centres, so that not only the Centres are strengthened but also the women themselves are more empowered.

The scope of the Project incorporates livelihood improvement of the residents, in addition to infrastructure improvement. In this regard, as far as this study could identify, livelihood support activities in Women's Centres so far have been predominantly those which are 'appropriate/traditional female jobs': typically they include embroidery, tailoring, handicraft making,

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347 This does not mean woman outsiders have no problems. They, unfortunately, often do, due to their insufficient understanding of gender/gender issues.

348 Interviews with Refugee women in the Palestinian Refugee Camp, JICA (2015a), UNRWA (2015a)

and catering. As repeatedly discussed in 3.2 and 3.3 above, concentration on ‘female appropriate’ jobs, i.e., lack of diversity of women’s employment opportunities, hinders potential for economic empowerment of women and could work to reinforce conventional gender division of roles. It would be desirable for the Project to consider, when working on livelihood improvement of women, to include non-conventional job opportunities for women.

Last but not least, it should be noted that women currently involved in Women’s Centres are comparatively empowered, as they could go out of their houses on their own and have social life outside family life; considerable number of women are likely to be (practically) confined in their houses as family and relatives do not allow them to go out freely (see discussion in 3.1 above). If the Project is to embrace the will of the Refugee women, it should always remember these ‘hidden’ women, and stop to think how to listen to their voices<sup>349</sup>.

#### ● **Gender Mainstreaming with Considerations for Political Context**

When and if the Project considers cooperation with Popular Committees in relation to gender mainstreaming/consideration, as suggested above, it would be advisable for the Project to decide plans and activities based on the good understanding of political context, especially in Gaza. In Gaza, where Hamas is the de-facto government, ‘modern’ and/or internationally accepted gender mainstreaming sometimes receives negative reactions<sup>350</sup>. It would be also possible that Popular Committees themselves are politicized.

#### ● **Flexibility for Plans ‘with Women’s Perspective’**

In the field research conducted by this study, what was ‘popular’ amongst the programmes targeting women in Refugee Camps includes recreational programmes such as motor-coach tours<sup>351</sup>. It would be interpreted that these recreational programmes were appraised because they contribute to lessen the women’s tremendous stress as well as they enable them to visit different parts of the Territory which would be impossible on their own due to various restrictions of movement. This is a mere anecdote, but it could provide a hint as to when in the Project the women formulate their own participatory plans; if and when the participatory plans by women go out of Project framework of infrastructure and livelihood improvement, how would the Project react? If the Project could support these out-of-framework plans in some ways, that is, not reject them outright, then it could be meaningful in

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349 Having said that, it is not the intention of the author to urge/encourage the Project to physically bring out these “hidden” women out of their houses; for example, it is not to say the “hidden” women should be present in the Project’s participatory planning meetings—it is simply not realistic. Rather, by developing capacity of the more outgoing women (e.g., women involved in Women Centres), the Project may be able to collect the opinions of “hidden” women more effectively as the outgoing women may become more capable of listening to them. Or, these outgoing women may serve as role models so that in the longer run, the “hidden” women may be able to change their behaviours.

350 See 2.1 and 2.2 above.

351 Interviews with Refugees residing in a Refugee Camp in West Bank, and with UNRWA-Jerusalem

terms of the improved quality of life of the women, but moreover, it would contribute to the women's empowerment as active agents (as opposed to passive recipients) by strengthening their planning capacity and acting power.

## 5 Gender-related Assistance by International Agencies and Other Organisations

Programme/Project	Agency	Outline
<b>Gender in General/Gender Mainstreaming at Policy Level</b>		
Increased Accountability in Financing for Gender Equality	UN Women	Capacity building targeting governmental personnel toward gender budgeting and its practice; related consultation.
Gender Tracking in DARP System	UN Women	'Gender Marker' is incorporated into DARP (Development Assistance and Reform Platform), a donor-fund tracking system, so that concerned circle is able to monitor and analyse how (or not) donor fund is utilized in gender mainstreaming.
Gender Initiative Programme	UNRWA	Partnering with mainly local NGOs as implementers, the programme provides vocational training, health education and awareness raising on gender issues targeting Gaza women.
<b>Rule of Law</b>		
Strengthening the Rule of Law in the oPt: Justice and Security for the Palestinian People	UNDP & UN Women	Strengthening the rule of law through capacity building for the security force and the judicial professionals (judges, prosecutors and lawyers) in order to better protect women. Expected to improve GBV survivors' protection.
<b>Livelihood Improvement and Economic Development</b>		
Deprived Families Economic Empowerment Programme (DEEP)	UNDP	Through microfinance/micro-grants and vocational training, the programme supports livelihood projects of deprived households. Although targeting both men and women, due to consideration given to the importance of women's economic empowerment, approximately half of the projects supported are by women.
Job Creation Programme	UNRWA	Supports Palestinian Refugees in poverty by providing temporary jobs. Approximately 60% of the jobs target women. Since 2015, attempts have been made in creating non-conventional jobs for women including female security guards in UNRWA facilities.
Private Sector Development Programme (PSDP)	GIZ/SIDA	While the programme basically aims for development of MSMEs and strengthening concerned organizations such as business associations, gender mainstreaming is incorporated in the design which has led to the programme's support on gender units establishment in business organizations.
<b>Community Development</b>		
"Together We Stand"	UNFPA	Targeting youth of 18-24 years of age, the programme provides life skill training and supports their small-scale initiatives. The

		youth are expected to build their life capacity and potential for livelihood improvement through the participation.
GBV		
Working together to stop GBV	UNFPA	Improving the access of GBV survivors to RH services and to psychological care services through a referral system.
GBV Referral System	UNRWA	Referral System has been activated in UNRWA-managed facilities in Palestinian Refugee Camps, which enables GBV survivors to have better access to quality medical, psychological and legal supports.

## **6 Challenges and Considerations for Gender Mainstreaming in Development Assistance<sup>352</sup>**

### **6.1 Significance of Understanding Diversified Gender Situations**

As discussed repeatedly in this study, gender situations—gender norms as well as empowerment/disempowerment of women in Palestine are tremendously diversified, depending on various factors including groups' attributions and experiences (Refugees or not, Bedouins or not, having migrated or not, or how many times, and location of the community, to name but a few). Social, political, and economic differences including those of the West Bank and of Gaza also have influences. Consequently, it would be possible for one programme/activity to induce both positive and negative outcomes<sup>353</sup>.

This being the case, ready-made gender mainstreaming measures including generic gender training are unlikely to achieve much, if not to bear (unintentionally) negative impact. Gender mainstreaming and gender-related development assistance in Palestine should be premised to be 'cumbersome' by nature. It would be thus very important for all programmes and projects to incorporate gender experts who are equipped with expertise, skills and experiences that enable them to sufficiently analyse and deal with complicated individuality of respective cases, based on the socio-political context of Palestine. It would be further desirable to have 'tailor-made' as many plans and activities as possible, so that they would be in line with the specific nature of the target group(s).

It would not be realistic for all programmes/projects to have gender experts throughout the time frame. Then, at least, all programmes/projects should be equipped with gender experts in important points, including the times of: programme/project formulation, PDM formulation/revision, selection of beneficiaries, introduction and alternation of component(s), and monitoring. In JICA's work, these gender experts could be Short-term Experts. The work of the gender experts in this manner is expected to have activities 'tailor-made' as much as possible and to improve the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming/ gender empowerment, while avoiding any possible negative impact. It would be advisable for programmes/projects to have inputs from gender experts in all phases of the implementation cycle, including review and evaluation.

It would be suggested that the gender experts, when involved in the manner above, would research and analyse the attributions and characteristics of the target group(s) from gender perspective; an attempt to give an example is provided in the 4.1 above as A Case Study on Diversity and Gender

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<sup>352</sup> This section discusses challenges and considerations required for gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment in development assistance, with Japan's ODA in mind. However, the discussed points should also be applicable to development activities conducted by other actors, to a considerable extent.

<sup>353</sup> See 4.1 and 4.2 above.

Situation of Farming Communities (note that this suggested research and analysis should be done at the beginning of the activities, rather than in retrospect, so that the results would be practically utilized). In the Case Study, it is indicated that male gender awareness could be specifically correlated with the gender situation of the group. Therefore, a first step could be measuring and analysing male (and female) gender awareness. However, as noted in 4.1, the Case Study is a crude springboard for further discussion. There could well be other, and possibly more important, elements than male gender awareness that are significant in Palestinian context. Also, the categorisation on intensity of gender norms by group attribution (see 2.1 above) is another attempt in this study that awaits further discussion and revision.

In relation to the above, it is also suggested that this type of research and analysis should be conducted in various sectors, with the results accumulated in a cross-sectoral manner. If done, it would serve as an invaluable resource of intellectual property which contributes in support for Palestine in the medium and long run<sup>354</sup>.

In addition, it would be advisable for these researches and analysis to target women in various family positions. Conventionally, gender-related assistance as well as researches and analysis tend to focus on women as wives. In this study, then, it is indicated that unmarried women (such as daughters and sisters of the household head) could be in even more difficult/complicated situations than wives, with high risks of being exploited<sup>355</sup>. Yet, it is beyond the scope of this study to probe deeply into the issue. Further data collection, researches and analysis would be desirable.

## 6.2 Potential of Livelihood Support as GBV Countermeasure

As gender issues in Palestine are wide-ranging, it would not be realistic for each assistance scheme to cover everything. However, GBV protection/prevention and livelihood support could be, at least to a certain extent, “killing two birds with one stone”.

It is understood that access to safe and stable livelihoods works as effective means for prevention and protection against GBV<sup>356</sup>. As GBV is a social taboo, there may be social or political circumstances where programme(s)/activities which explicitly focused on GBV are difficult to design/implement. Even in these circumstances, ‘programme(s)/activities for livelihood improvement with (non-vociferous) attention to GBV protection/prevention’ could be implemented.

According to previous studies on correlation between GBV/DV and livelihoods, when a woman starts working outside home, the male in the household (e.g., her husband) tends to become more violent as

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354 When/if detailed research/analysis suggested here is physically unavailable, it is important at least to collect and accumulate data related to programmes/projects segregated by gender.

355 See 4.1 above for actual cases.

356 UN Women (2014b)

his authority and identity as the breadwinner of the house is perceived as threatened. However, this tends to be resolved as time passes and as it becomes clear to him and to other members of the family that the woman's income benefits all in the household<sup>357</sup>. While these findings should be seriously noted in livelihood support, in Palestine, changes in gender roles as to who the breadwinner is (or are) are already observed, as discussed above, as the economic contribution by women has become more and more crucial for family survival. Which is to say, it is already likely that husbands are feeling threatened as breadwinners and to have become violent<sup>358</sup>. This being so, livelihood support for women would be even more meaningful so that this negative occurrence would be reduced as soon as possible.

While livelihood support targeting women is often discussed in the context of economic empowerment, as this study has argued so far, gender issues in Palestine have evolved as consequences of the interaction of various political<sup>359</sup>, socio-cultural, and economic factors. Because elements are diversified, interventions to tackle them are also to be multi-dimensional. This, on the other hand, means that a successful intervention could empower the beneficiaries multi-dimensionally.

Therefore, development assistance in the area of gender should examine the challenges and their elements as such, and accordingly, approaches and activities as such, and finally, should aim to achieve empowerment in a multi-dimensional manner. Livelihood support and protection/prevention of GBV should also be considered in this manner; an intervention may want to set targets not only on economic empowerment and physical and mental security, but also on political and social empowerment including increased bargaining power and re-examination of traditional gender/social norms within the community.

A supplementary suggestion is that GBV-related intervention would have difficulty to bear visible/tangible outcomes even when successful, as GBV itself is hidden. It would be important to examine how to design, implement and importantly, evaluate, these invisible outcomes.

One issue raised in the female labour participation is the scarcity of support/services to take care of the young children. A livelihood-targeting intervention could consider a component which deals with this problem including providing/supporting childcare service(s). This would be particularly helpful for beneficiaries from socially/economically vulnerable groups. Supplementarily, a childcare service would serve as a job-creation centre as it would require service providers such as nursery teachers.

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357 Women's Refugee Commission (2009)

358 The World Bank (2010) reports that women with unemployed husbands intentionally underrate their own economic contribution to the household income (especially in the presence of their husbands), so that the husbands' pride would not get offended. This behaviour could be interpreted as a coping strategy against the VAW mechanism described here.

359 'Political' here is not limited to that in relation to the political system (such as voting and running for an election); rather it includes that concerning power relations/balance in a large and small scale, for example, a wife's bargaining power against her husband is a political matter.



### 6.3 Gender Situation in relation to Monetary Control

In relation to the section above on livelihood support, this section takes note of monetary control. As discussed in 2.1 above, how much access to and control of resources a woman has is an important point of view to measure how much she is oppressed (or empowered)<sup>360</sup>. In today's society where a cash economy is almost universal, proper attention on control of money would be indispensable when considering empowerment of women in Palestine. As said in the former section, empowerment here is not only economic empowerment, but is a wider and multi-layered concept, which encompasses political empowerment including strengthened negotiation power and socio-cultural empowerment.

Firstly, it should be remembered that it is a male role to control money in the household, as a social norm<sup>361</sup>. To make the matter complicated, though, households may have more than one male. EVAP Gender Research indicates that the 'family wallet' takes various patterns depending on the household. Many variables including nuclear or extended family, who has and who doesn't have income, who is indebted, and whether the income is stable or temporary, all influence the 'wallet' pattern of the household. Even within the same household, the pattern may change in relation to seasons and life cycles of family members<sup>362</sup>. The implication is that, when and if the woman assumes control of the money, even if partially, then it would let her have a big step forward toward empowerment, but her route to this control may be totally different from that of her neighbour. That is, in the same manner with other gender issues discussed in 6.1 above, it would be extremely difficult to prepare a one-size-fits-all manual on how to support the women toward monetary control. While it would be desirable to have a 'tailor-made' support for each case, the reality is that even broad knowledge/tendency on this matter is scarce, what is needed first would be information. Possible variables include locality, social and/or economic strata, tendency in relation to profession/job (employed wage worker, farmer, self-employed, or day labourer), the job sector, and household size. It would be desirable for research on this topic to be conducted. If large-scale research is difficult to conduct, then it could be considered that interested projects include this topic within their base-line survey.

Secondary, microfinance is briefly discussed. While microfinance is established itself as a means to access for women to financial services, its achievements are mixed in Palestine<sup>363</sup>, as in other countries and regions. Cases are reported in which microfinance has negatively impacted women; women take loans from women-targeting microfinance programmes, without control of the money

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360 The Institute of Women's Studies at Birzeit University (2013). In some cases, women have some pot money to which they have the control. It seems some husbands know and approve it, while others do not, but the information available is sporadic and scarce (JICA (2015b))

361 See 2.1 above.

362 See 4.1 above.

363 See 3.3 above.

(that is, she becomes the ‘loan window’), then it does not lead to their empowerment. Rather, it could lead to their disempowerment, when, for example, ‘the husband uses the money the wife borrowed, and then the wife has to repay so that she borrows more money from other sources, resulting in multiple debts’. Apparently, there are also cases in which the women do have the control of the loaned money, with which livelihood improves, resulting in their empowerment. At any rate, considering microfinance as a part of the assistance programme for women, the potential risks should be considered and addressed.

#### **6.4 Potential for Support to Help Women Step Out of ‘Female Appropriate’ Areas**

The discussion above in relation to women’s work/employment and education in this study clearly indicates that one of the major factors which hinders women from more labour force participation and economic empowerment is their confinement in the ‘female appropriate’ areas (of work as well as of study)<sup>364</sup>. The ‘female appropriate’ areas of work/study, that is those close to domestic work and motherly role, are where women have traditionally and intensively worked, and this study does not have any intention to deny it as these are areas where women have current comparative advantage over men. Yet, it would be fair to consider the over-concentration on these areas makes the women compete with each other for rather a small pie.

This being so, when assisting women in Palestine in livelihood improvement and/or in development of the private sector, as well as in education, it could encourage women to step out of these traditional ‘female’ areas so that more options would be available. A proper attention should be given, though, to the reasons for why women select these narrow areas; they choose these areas not only because they may be interested in them; but also, or rather than that, they may have no other choice because people around (parents, husbands, and/or the community) would not approve other areas. Thus, when encouraging women to venture on non-traditional areas, it would be needed to encourage and/or persuade not only the women themselves but also the people around them.

#### **6.5 Securing Commitment with Checklists**

Development assistance of Japan in relation to gender mainstreaming and women’s empowerment in Palestine would be required to commit and comply with the following two documents:

- 1) National Action Plan of Japan for UN Security Council Resolution 1325<sup>365</sup>
- 2) Gender Charter for the Aid Coordination Structure in Palestine<sup>366</sup>

JICA as Japan’s international cooperation agency would obviously comply with these. However, in

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364 See 2.1, 3.2, and 3.3 above.

365 <http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/files/000101797.pdf> (accessed 11/Dec/2015)

366 See 2.2 above.

practice, it would be ineffectual and inefficient for each and every project/personnel to examine these documents in detail in order to properly commit to them. It would be advisable, therefore, that required considerations, actions, to-dos and not-to-dos for compliance with the Plan as well as the Charter are organized and compiled into some sort of checklists. Ideally, the checklists would be instructive for the personnel concerned in every phase of the project/programme cycle—planning, designing, implementation, and evaluation.

As to 2) above, this Gender Charter is formulated as an international consensus. It would also be useful in terms of avoiding overlapping amongst the donors. Those who are in charge of donor coordination in relation to the Gender Charter are: Ministry of Women's Affairs in Palestinian Authority, and Local Aid Coordination Secretariat (LACS), in cooperation with UN Women, in donor circle. Communication and coordination with these actors would be important when dealing with the Gender Charter.

In addition, as discussed in 2.2 above, the Palestinian Authority is also in preparation of National Action Plan for UN Security Council Resolution 1325. When the Plan is finalized, a similar checklist could be compiled.

## 7 List of Organizations working on Gender

Name of Organization	Activities	Contact
<b>Governmental and Academic Institutions</b>		
Ministry of Women's Affairs	Promotes gender mainstreaming in the government as the national machinery, including national and sectoral policies. Coordination with the civil society organizations working on gender.	P. O. Box 4616, Al-Beireh, West Bank
The Institute of Women's Studies at Birzeit University	Research and education on gender issues and women's affairs.	Birzeit University, PO Box 14, Birzeit, West Bank women-inst@birzeit.edu
<b>International and Donor Agencies</b>		
UN Women	Gender mainstreaming, women's empowerment including political empowerment. Gender budgeting, GBV, capacity building of the government. Works on both policy and project levels.	P. O. Box 51359, Jerusalem
UNFPA	RH, sexual health, GBV. Empowerment of women and youth. Works on both policy and project levels.	P.O. Box 67149, Jerusalem 91517
UNICEF	Empowerment and protection of children and youth. Gender is mainstreamed in projects and plans. Works on both policy and project levels.	P. O. Box 25141, Jerusalem
UNDP	Human development, poverty reduction, strengthening rule of law, infrastructure. Works on both policy and project levels.	4A, Ya'kubi Street, P.O.Box: 51359 Jerusalem
UNRWA	Supporting Palestinian Refugees. Provided services include education, health, basic needs and livelihood improvement.	Gamal Abdul Nasser Street, Gaza City / Sheikh Jarrah, East Jerusalem
Palestinian Women's Research and Documentation Centre, UNESCO	Research as well as collection of data and information on gender issues.	Info@pwrdc.ps/z.kamal@unesco.org
OCHA	Coordination amongst international and donor agencies in the areas of emergency and humanitarian aid. Information management in the areas.	MAC House 7 St. George Street. P.O. Box 38712, East Jerusalem
LACS (Local Aid Coordination Secretariat)	Coordination amongst international and donor agencies.	Al-Rimawi Building, Al-Ersal Street, Al-Masayef, Ramallah, West Bank secretariat@lacs.ps
<b>Private Sector and Civil Society Organizations</b>		
Business Women Forum – Palestine	Organization of businesswomen. Capacity building of women micro entrepreneurs including marketing and legal support.	2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor, Al-Fare' Building, Al-Bireh, West Bank

Name of Organization	Activities	Contact
PNGO (Palestinian NGOs' Network)	Umbrella organization of Palestinian NGOs. Networking of Palestinian NGOs, advocacy, capacity building of NGO staff.	Jerusalem Main Street Beside Al Swees Station, Ramallah , West Bank
Aisha Association for Women & Child Protection	Various gender-support activities in Gaza, including livelihood improvement, legal and psychological support, and awareness raising.	Gaza Seaport, Gaza City, Gaza Strip
ASALA (The Palestinian Businesswomen's Association)	Support for women micro entrepreneurs; microfinance services, capacity building.	Issa Suleiman Building, 2nd Floor, Al Mubadeen St., Al Bireh, West Bank
PWWSD (Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development)	Economic and political empowerment of women.	Alanbia Street, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Floor, Real Estate Company Building, Ramallah, West Bank
WATC (Women's Affairs Technical Committee)	A leader organization of women's movement. Awareness raising, advocacy.	P.O.Box 2197, Ramallah, West Bank / Awad Center, 2nd Floor, Radio Street , Ramallah, West Bank.
WCLAC (Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling)	Research and analysis on gender issues. Advocacy.	23 Wadi'a Shatarah Street, Batn Al-Hawa, Ramallah, West Bank

## 8 Technical Terms and Indicators

### Technical Terms

Term	Explanation
Empowerment	To be empowered is for an individual to have control over his/her own life. To be able to lead his/her life based on his/her values, to aim for what he/she wants, to be independent to make decision(s) either individually or collectively.
Gender	Gender refers to male-female differentiation, but is not about biology (which is referred to as sex). Rather, gender is about masculinity/femininity formed and developed socially and culturally.
Gender budget	To analyse the budget of state/local administration/ministry from the point of view of gender equality, and accordingly, to revise policies/programmes and/or to redistribute the budget so that the policy/programme would have an equal and fair effect on both men and women.
Gender mainstreaming	Based on the understanding that each and every policy, programme and measure affects men and women differently, gender mainstreaming is a process in which issues, needs and impacts of men and women are made clear in each stage of the policy/programme/measure. This being so, gender mainstreaming would work as a means to achieve gender equality.
National Machinery	Central policy-coordinating unit in the government in relation to gender equality and women's empowerment. The national machinery works in order to mainstream gender government-wide by supporting various government actors and institutions to strengthen their gender consideration and to promote gender equality in all policy areas.
Reproductive Health (RH)	RH refers to physical, mental and social health related to reproductive functions and systems. In good RH, a person is able to have a satisfying and safe sex life, has the capacity to reproduce, and freedom to decide if, when, and how often to do so. The concept encompasses access to not only health and medical services, but also sexual/reproductive education and protection and prevention services of sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS.

### Indicators

Indicator	Definition
Gender Development Index (GDI)	GDI measures disparities in HDI (see below) by gender, as a ratio of HDI values estimated separately for women and men. The closer the ratio is to 1, the smaller the gap between women and men.
Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM)	A measure to examine whether women and men are actively participating in economic and political life and participating in decision making. By considering gender gaps in political

Indicator	Definition
	representation, in professional and management positions in the economy, as well as gender gaps in incomes, it seeks to evaluate relative female representation in economic and political power.
Gender Inequality Index (GII)	Based on the lessons learned from GDI and GEM which are indices that measure gender situation, the new index GII measures gender inequalities utilizing data from three areas: RH, empowerment, and economic status.
Gini Index	Aggregated numerical measures of income inequality ranging from 0.00 to 1.00. A Gini index of zero represents absolute equality, while an index of 1.00 implies absolute inequality. A well-used indicator to express income disparity.
Gross Enrolment Rate	The total number of students/pupils who enroll in a given level of education regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population in the theoretical age group for that level of education.
Human Development Index (HDI)	A well-used index created by the UNDP, HDI is a summary measure of the average achievement in key dimensions of human development: (1) a long and healthy life, assessed by life expectancy at birth; (2) being knowledgeable, by mean of years of schooling for adults (aged 25+) and expected years of schooling for children of school entering age; and (3) having a decent standard of living, assessed by GNI per capita.
Infant Mortality Rate	Probability of a child born in a specific year or period dying before reaching the age of one. It is a probability of death expressed as the rate per 1,000 live births.
Labour Force Participation Rate	The proportion of the population aged 15 and older that is economically active (either employed or unemployed); all people who supply labour for the production of goods and services during a specified period.
Maternal Mortality Ratio	The number of women who die from pregnancy-related causes while pregnant or within 42 days of pregnancy termination per 100,000 live births.
Net Enrolment Rate	The total number of students/pupils in a theoretical age group who are enrolled, expressed as a percentage of the same population.
Total Fertility Rate (TFR)	The number of children that would be born to each woman if she were to live to the end of her child-bearing years and bear children at each age in accordance with prevailing age-specific fertility rates in a given year/period, for a given country, territory or geographical area.
Under-5 Mortality Rate	Probability of a child born in a specific year or period dying before reaching the age of 5. It is a probability of death expressed as rate per 1,000 live births.
Unemployment Rate	Definition and presentation of unemployment vary from country to country. ILO defines unemployed persons as all persons above a specified age who during the reference period were without work, currently available for work, and seeking work.

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