



Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls in the Middle East

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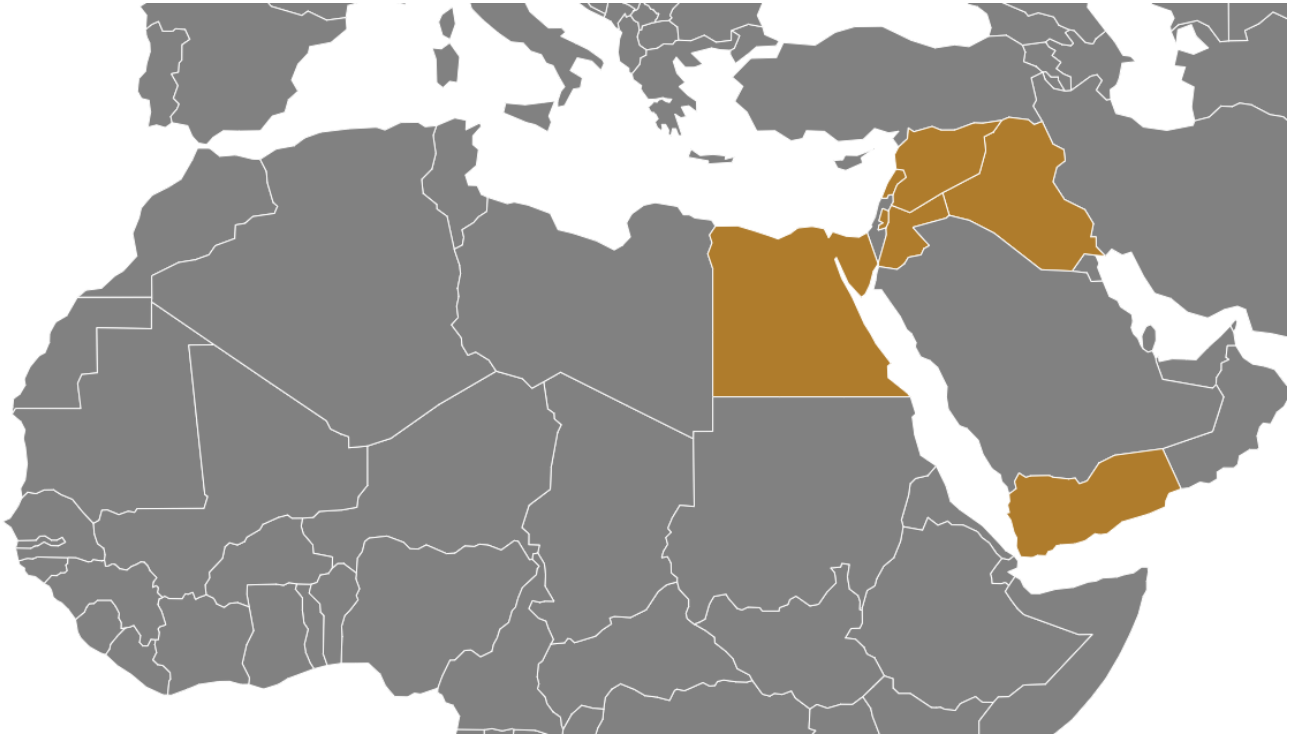
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Forward

Logan Cochrane

People throughout the Middle East and North Africa are demanding change. This should force critical self-reflection within the international community about how business-as-usual partnerships may have maintained and sustained the same structures and systems that people within those nations are rallying against. In addition to reconsidering its relationships and role in the Middle East and North Africa, Canada has re-oriented its own approach to official development assistance, with the introduction of the Feminist International Assistance Policy. This report presents 7 country studies, which are priorities for Global Affairs Canada. The content within the report was informed by the needs of Global Affairs Canada, as it assesses what lessons can be drawn from the past as well as potential new directions for the future. In line with the new orientation, there is an explicit focus on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls throughout.

Countries covered in this report: Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Syria and Yemen.



The authors of the chapters in this report are students in an honours seminar in the Global and International Studies program at Carleton University. Summaries of these findings were presented at Global Affairs Canada in November 2019. The group of authors took on a challenging task, authoring reports in a short period of time and covering new thematic and geographic ground doing so. My appreciation goes out to you for taking this on and producing well researched country reports.

1. Egypt

Melanie Gridley and Audrey Tipson

Executive Summary

This report contains an overview of Egypt's state of gender equality, existing feminist movements, and proven models and best practices from previous projects. We have also mapped potential opportunities for partnerships with other feminist organizations and possible overlapping programming. Issues of gender equality in Egypt are complex and multifaceted, and addressing them requires a multitude of considerations and targeted strategies. The most prominent issue currently in Egypt in regard to gender equality is the prevalence of Gender-based Violence (GBV). Issues of gender equality have cross-cutting social, legal, and economic influences, like inequality of access to education, social and health inequality, and lack of sufficient political representation.

Egyptian women are often actively engaged in gender issues within the country. Most recently, freedom from gender-based violence has been at the forefront of feminist movements as the political environment has shifted. Recent Egyptian feminist movements have, in part, been propelled by a lack of government response to gender-based violence, particularly involving violence at political demonstrations. Egypt's women's movements face a major barrier in terms of international perception, in which approaches often either focus too heavily on law and policy or blame Arab culture or Islam for social issues.

The best model for programming to improve gender equality is one that can be resilient and adaptive in an evolving political environment. For addressing GBV, HarassMap's intervention model has been especially successful at raising awareness and prompting people to question their preconceived notions about the nature of harassment. High prevalence of FGM in Egypt demands a community-based approach so that individuals choosing to abandon the practice are not alienated. Health disparities occur along gender, socioeconomic and gender lines, meaning effective programming will target more vulnerable groups; particularly girls with less educated mothers, living in rural areas. Education systems in Egypt require a focus on quality education for girls, rather than hitting enrollment targets. Behavior-change programming focused on integrating gender-inclusive behaviors and advocacy into communities and regions as a whole have the greatest potential for improving girls' experiences within the classroom. Women's economic development in Egypt is lagging compared to men's. Addressing economic integration with multi-level and integrative approaches proves to be the most impactful and sustainable model in incorporating women into the economy.

Existing programming in Egypt with goals related to gender equality consists of a combination of multilateral projects and efforts by international and local organizations. Multilateral projects are

primarily run and funded by UN agencies (UNDP, UN Women, UNFPA) in conjunction with national Egyptian agencies such as the Egyptian Ministry of Social Solidarity (MoSS). NGOs in the field are numerous, offering a multitude of opportunities for local partnership and informational resources. This report aims to build upon and aggregate knowledge about gender challenges in Egypt in a practical way that can be utilized by key actors in the future. While the following sections do not offer exhaustive summaries on their corresponding topics, our hope is that our research contributes to the ongoing goal of promoting and implementing gender-transformative programming in Egypt.

Country Overview

Egypt's dominant ethnic group is Arab and the official language is Arabic. Bedouins, Nubians, and Armenians also make up a small number of the country's population and Nubian, French, and English are spoken in some areas (JICA 2018, 17). The dominant religion is Muslim, with a smaller population of Coptic Christians (JICA 2018, 17). Egypt's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has fallen in recent years from its peak in 2016 at \$332.928 billion USD to \$250.895 billion in 2018 (World Bank 2018a). In 2018, the population was 98.4 million, meaning their GDP per capita was \$2,549.14 USD which was down from \$3,525.02 USD in 2016 (World Bank 2018b). Egypt's Human Development Index (HDI), a measure of life expectancy, schooling, and economic standard of living, is 0.696, which places the country within the range of 'medium human development' (UNDP 2018).

In 2011, mass demonstrations took place in Cairo's Tahrir Square, which resulted in the end of President Hosni Mubarak's 30-year rule over the country (Kennedy 2016). This violent revolution set in motion a period of political and economic instability. In 2014, the current President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi took power (Fantz 2016). Today, political uprising continues as a response to Sisi's regime. Cuts to vital subsidies has spiked the cost of living for many Egyptians, 32.5% of which already live below the national poverty line (Michaelson 2019). As the standard of living falls, so does support for Sisi as he is unable to hold his promise for economic prosperity.

The political landscape of international development work in Egypt is complex. Starting in 2014, Egypt's authoritarian regime began to target human rights advocacy within the country, seeing their work as a threat to state power (Mansour 2018). This has included Law No. 70 of 2017, which "declared that foreign funding for NGOs must be pre-approved by the state" (Mansour 2018). Violation of this law could result in imprisonment and financial fines of those attempting to complete peaceful work (Human Rights Watch 2019). In 2019, Law No. 70 of 2017 was repealed and reconstructed by Egypt's parliament, which resulted in many of the same restrictions but with the elimination of prison penalties (Human Rights Watch 2019). "The Law on Regulating the Work of Civil Associations" is now in place, which "governs the process by which domestic and foreign nongovernmental organizations can achieve legal recognition and sets forth provisions on their activities, oversight and monitoring, funding, and sanctions for violations of the law" (TIMEP 2019).

The landscape that this history of restrictions created, and the fear of future restrictions being imposed, makes project implementation complex. While there are several sectors which could benefit greatly from international support, the tumultuous political landscape makes donor buy-in and project implementation more difficult.

The State of Gender Equality

Issues of gender equality in Egypt are complex and multifaceted, as is the case in many countries. The United Nations Gender Development Index (GDI) ranked Egypt 115th out of 189 countries in 2017 (UNDP 2018). GDI sex-disaggregates life expectancy, schooling, and Gross National Income (GNI) per capita to find the ratio of female Human Development Index (HDI) to male HDI. Egypt's GDI has been steadily increasing since 1995, meaning that the gap between male and female HDI has been closing (UNDP 2018). Though this is a positive trend, there are other factors that come into play. From 2000 to 2017, Female HDI increased by 0.105, while male HDI increased only by 0.07 (UNDP 2018). Despite this, 2017 female HDI at 0.636 remains below 2000 male HDI at 0.659 (UNDP 2018). Therefore, despite improvements in some areas, there are still several obstacles to gender equality apparent in Egypt today.

Gender-Based Violence

A main challenge facing gender equality in Egypt is the prevalence of Gender-Based Violence (GBV). GBV is an umbrella term for “any harm that is perpetrated against a person’s will and that results from power inequalities that are based on gender roles” (Duvvury et al. 2015, 5). Since global trends show GBV impacts women and girls more intensely and frequently, GBV is often used interchangeably with violence against women. A 2013 study on sexual harassment in Egypt reported that 99.3 percent of female respondents had experienced at least one form of harassment (El Deeb 2013, 20). GBV has both immediate and long-term consequences on women or girls’ physical, sexual, or mental well-being (Duvvury et al. 2015, 4). As a response to growing internal and international concerns about GBV in Egypt, the National Strategy for Combating Violence Against Women 2015-2020 was created by the Egyptian government in 2015 (JICA 2018, 19). Female Genital Mutilation and Cutting (FGM/C) is another issue within GBV facing women and girls in Egypt. FGM/C consists of “all procedures involving the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia due to cultural or other non-medical reasons” (JICA 2018, 21) These practices result in several complications, such as fibrous tissue, scarring, swelling, adhesions, genitalia dysfunction and psychological trauma (EMSP 2015, 7). Egypt’s 2017 Sustainable Development Goals report listed that 87% of women aged 15-49 years of age have undergone FGM/C (MPMAR 2018, 32).

Health

In Egypt, women’s health is another main concern. Egypt’s 2014 constitution states the universal right to healthcare, stating that “each citizen has a right to enjoy a healthy life and to receive

comprehensive healthcare with quality standards” (MPMAR 2018, 28). Health challenges disproportionately impact the rural poor. From 1992/93 to 2016, maternal death per 100,000 live births fell from 174 to 33, which is a significant improvement (MPMAR 2018, 29). Despite this, wealthy women are 20% more likely to receive antenatal care, an important indicator of maternal mortality rates (USAID 2019, 1). Egypt also has a lack of education on safe sex practices and access to sexual health resources, which puts constraints on women’s agency in family planning and sexual health.

Education

Education in Egypt has seen significant improvements in terms of gendered access. Gender gaps in terms of school completion have shrunk, and, in some areas, reversed (Ersado and Gignoux 2014, 5). Gender still does impact education outcomes, as gender roles, prevention of gender mixing, and marriage continue to be listed by former students to explain why they chose to leave school (Ersado and Gignoux 2014, 12). Though these trends exist, gender-based inequalities tend not to explain most of the educational inequalities apparent in Egypt. Distribution of education services tend to also be unequal in terms of socioeconomic and geographical disparities (Ersado and Gignoux 2014, 2). This is a result of a skewed distribution of public resources towards higher education which tends to exclude those with financial or regional barriers to entrance (Ersado and Gignoux 2014, 3). Unfortunately, despite improvements in access to education, labour market integration remains unequal, which limits the economic benefits of girls’ education.

Economic Integration

Women’s economic integration in Egypt lacks equal opportunity. Egypt’s transition to a more market-oriented economy since the early 2000s has resulted in exacerbated income differentials (Hassine 2011, 293). Due to cultural norms, women are expected to have greater familial responsibility. While domestic work is an essential aspect of a functioning society, the lack of agency in choosing that role represents Egyptian women and girls’ inadequate economic empowerment. These norms, along with other barriers to participation in financial institutions and employment practices, mean women remain an under-utilized resource within the Egyptian economy (Alawa 2016, 56). Though the Egyptian government is making efforts to boost economic activity, these efforts tend to lack a gendered focus (Alawa 2016, 12). In 2015, only nine percent of women had bank accounts (MPMAR 2018, 33). In 2017, that number jumped to 27 percent as a result of programming intended to create more inclusive financial programming (MPMAR 2018, 33). This shows that gender inclusive programming has the capability to steadily increase women’s participation in the formal economy. Lack of access to financial services, barriers to markets, and lack of decision-making power in policy creation means that Egyptian women still face an unequal economic landscape.

Political Representation

In terms of political representation of women, Egypt is improving but still well below levels which would be representative of population demographics. In 2015, women made up 14.9 percent of the Egyptian parliament (Abou Zeid et al. 2018, 12). This number is a direct result of the quota system which was used in both the 2010 and 2015 elections. 44 percent of women turned up to vote in the 2014 presidential elections, indicating a notable interest in political outcomes among women (MPMAR 2018, 33). Research has shown that increased political empowerment of women tends to lead to decreased inequalities, increased public confidence in governance, higher overall standards of living, and increased education quality, among other positive changes (Abou Zeid et al. 2018, 10). The Egyptian government has shown increasing interest in gender issues. This is represented in the creation of strategies to address GBV and FGM/C. The Egyptian National Council for Women created the National Strategy of Egyptian Women Empowerment (MPMAR 2018, 32). This strategy focuses on four main pillars; political empowerment and leadership, economic empowerment, social empowerment, and protection (MPMAR 2018, 32). The National Council of Women has also been able to insert itself into other political agendas to lobby for increased considerations of gender equality within government policy and programming (MPMAR 2018, 32).

Final Notes

While using gender as a lens is useful, there is also a space for other intersectional considerations to be made. Feminism does not solely address inequalities based on gender, but also those based on other marginal identities, such as ethnicity, class, ability, or sexuality. Having multiple marginalized identities impacts a person's agency, representation, and security and therefore addressing gender inequalities requires the consideration of intersectional identities as a means to improve the well-being of all women and girls, not only those who are upper class, able-bodied, heterosexual, or urban. The state of gender equality in Egypt has much room for improvement, but there are several indicators that continued positive change will continue in the future. GDI and HDI trends show improvements in the past twenty years, and increased political acknowledgement of gender-based challenges represents a potential future shift in the well-being of Egyptian women and girls. Despite these positive trends, immediate attention and action is necessary to reach higher levels of gender equality in Egypt, particularly in terms of GBV and FGM/C which are actively having negative impacts on Egyptian females.

Existing Feminist Movements

Egyptian women are often actively engaged in gender issues within the country. This includes both advocating for action to address issues that specifically impact women and girls, as well as lobbying for increased consideration of gender and intersectional identities within all aspects of society.

Main Goals of Egyptian Feminist Movements

Egyptian feminist movements are similar to other feminist movements in that they seek freedom of choice, increased economic opportunity, and freedom from gender-based violence. Most recently, freedom from gender-based violence has been at the forefront of the movements as the political environment has shifted. More women are protesting; contesting patriarchal social structures and in doing so, becoming the target of politically-motivated sexual violence meant to stop them from “taking part in demonstrations again” (Magdy 2017) and to keep them out of “male spaces” (FIDH et al. 2014, 25). In response to the violence and changing political environment, more feminists have joined the effort (Magdy 2017). Organizations shedding light on and leading the fight against sexual harassment in Egypt, such as HarassMap have also emerged (Magdy 2017).

Government Response

Recent Egyptian feminist movements have, in part, been propelled by a lack of government response to gender-based violence, particularly involving violence at political demonstrations (FIDH et al. 2014, 25). Some narrow legal reforms have been adopted and others were promised but never fulfilled (FIDH et al. 2014, 27), but all measures so far have been “announced without prior consultation of women’s rights groups”, and do not address “the need for a wide-ranging review of obstacles to women’s access to justice”, or “the deep-seated discriminatory discourse and social acceptance of sexual harassment and assault and discrimination against and marginalisation of women.” (FIDH et al. 2014, 29-30). The Egyptian government in 2015 began to improve on their commitment to addressing gender issues, with the creation of the National Strategy for Combating Violence Against Women 2015-2020 and in the National Female Genital Mutilation Abandonment Strategy (JICA 2018, 19-21).

Barriers to Feminist Movements

Egypt’s women’s movements face a major barrier in terms of perception. Naber emphasizes that international response to gender issues in Egypt tend to have two main responses which do not holistically address the issues that Egyptian feminists perceive. The first approach is culture blaming, “in which Arab culture or the Islamic religion is seen as the cause of women’s oppression” (Naber 2013). This creates friction in Egyptian activists who both identify with feminist values and with Arab culture or Islamic religion. By culture blaming, the international community adapts a homogenous lens of feminism and ignores that complexities of feminist movements based in non-western culture. The second approach is one which is too heavily focused on women’s equality under policy and law (Naber 2013). This approach, again, tends to reduce the complexities of gender equality and does not always reflect true behavior change or ideological shifts in the greater population. This is compounded by the fact that the state has a history of threats and violence towards those involved in political or feminist movements. In Egypt, women participating in protests have been explicitly targeted as an attempt to incite fear and breakdown the collective power of women’s movements (Naber 2013). Female activists are often victim to sexual violence by police and state officials, which reflects why many Egyptian women are not interested in legal policy shifts to address gender equality

and violence against women (Naber 2013). During protests in Cairo, mob violence is extremely common. Operation Anti-Sexual Harassment/Assault (OpAntiSH) was created by volunteers to prevent or mitigate the impacts of mob violence during protests (Ezz 2013). This intense threat to women's physical and mental safety leads to the reasonable assumption that the number and volume of women involved in feminist movements in Egypt is significantly lower in comparison to those who may hold similar values but do not participate due to a fear for their personal security.

Proven Models and Best Practices

The following section analyses policies, projects, and programs implemented in Egypt to address gender-based violence, female genital mutilation, sexual and reproductive health, education for women and girls, and women's economic empowerment. Using evaluations and reports, the following subsections will outline insights into addressing these complex challenges within Egypt.

Gender-Based Violence

Issues of gender-based violence in Egypt are complex, and as such require comprehensive solutions involving the promotion of greater gender equality in social, cultural, and economic life. Improved data collection on GBV has been linked with the "effectiveness of services and programs provided and protecting the safety and security of the victims" (Duvvury 2015, 4). Addressing gender-based violence is often overlooked by governments as not a pressing issue compared to other development objectives due to its perceived lack of economic benefits (Duvvury 2015, 4). In order to refute this assumption, a study was conducted to assess the economic impact of GBV in Egypt (Duvvury 2015). Adding an economic perspective of the problem "provides a new, quite powerful, angle to view the legal, health and other consequences of violence against women and to advocate for action to be taken" (Duvvury 2015, 5). Since GBV is broad in scope and influenced by numerous intersecting societal dynamics, different approaches must be used for different situations. This section will outline two examples of innovative programming to address GBV in two different situations; HarassMap, and Art-Therapy interventions.

HarassMap is an interactive online platform which can be used to report incidents, access services, and raise awareness of sexual harassment, as well as a series of campaigns aimed at changing social norms, perceptions of, and behaviour around sexual harassment. HarassMap stands out as "a sustained effort that has contributed to significant positive change" (Cochrane et al. 2019, 365). Important lessons can be drawn from HarassMap campaigns about the effectiveness of different interventions to sexual harassment in Egypt, which include (but are not limited to) the need to: address common justifications and excuses for sexual harassment directly, avoid negative portrayals of men (which can normalize harassing behaviours), and provide clear examples to broaden understanding and recognition of harassment (Cochrane et al. 2019, 408). HarassMap approaches sexual harassment as "not in a vacuum, but within the broader umbrella of gender-based violence,

gender equality and human rights,” with a focus on long-term impacts of “breaking the silence and creating the irreversible dynamic of contestation against the normalisation of sexual harassment” (Cochrane et al. 2019, 416).

Another innovative approach to addressing GBV in Egypt is the supplementation of arts-based therapy to existing GBV response services such as case management and referral networks (UNHCR 2017, 8). Arts-based therapy workshops were introduced in Egypt to address GBV among refugee populations, but the program could be effective for non-refugee populations as well. The program was reportedly incredibly successful, benefiting participants in the areas of women’s empowerment, men’s attitude and behaviour change, increased well-being, and increased ability to discuss taboo topics openly with other friends and family members (UNHCR 2017, 6). Workshop activities include: “performing puppet shows, clay sculpting, writing, acting, drawing, colouring and discussions about films” (UNHCR 2017, 3). While these interventions might seem trivial, they are aimed at “raising awareness and changing attitudes” and “helping survivors to process the violence they have endured and build their self-confidence” (UNHCR 2017, 3). The workshops “raise awareness among women of their rights while also empowering them, while men are made more knowledgeable about [GBV] and their beliefs about a link between masculinity and violence, challenged” (UNHCR 2017, 4). The workshops segregated groups by sex in order to “provide a platform for both sexes to voice their concerns [and] discuss their experiences and perceptions in the absence of any restrictions or judgement imposed by members of another sex” (UNHCR 2017, 4).

Female Genital Mutilation

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in Egypt, sometimes referred to as Female Genital Cutting (FGC) or Female Circumcision, is a multifaceted issue at the intersection of culture, faith, health, and continuing gender inequality. The motivations for practicing FGM are often attributed to religious values without much consideration of the local context and how religious factors are intertwined with other aspects of culture, gender norms, and rights (Wodon et al. 2017, 7). Analysis of data from the 2014 Survey of Young People in Egypt determined that “religiosity, acceptance of traditional gender roles and gender discrimination, and attitudes towards women’s autonomy” all influence an individual’s likelihood of supporting FGM (Wodon et al. 2017, 7). This research shows that the relationship between religion and FGM is a function of “underlying interconnected and interrelated socio-cultural values that express social norms on gender and sexuality” (Wodon et al. 2017, 3).

Addressing FGM in Egypt is especially complicated because of its medicalization. Medicalization refers to “the process by which nonmedical problems become defined and treated as medical problems often requiring medical treatment” (Conrad 2015, 1). The 2014 Survey of Young People in Egypt found that the percentage of female respondent’s circumcisions carried out by medical personnel was 38%, and their daughters’ at 82% (Wodon et al. 2017, 2); a remarkably high rate considering that the procedure is illegal unless considered medically necessary. It is suggested that medicalization of

FGM could be reduced through offering proper training on the risks of FGM in medical and nursing school curricula combined with informational campaigns targeting the public to reduce demand for the procedures (Wodon et al. 2017, 2). In addition to training for medical personnel, existing laws criminalizing FGM must be paired with strict enforcement (UNDP 2009, 12). Medicalization of FGM in Egypt “persists largely due to physicians’ supporting and performing the practice” and multiple factors may have led to this, including “weak law enforcement and the focus of social marketing campaigns on immediate health complications” (Ghattass 2016, 3-4). To mitigate the effect health campaigns might have on the medicalization of FGM, community-level interventions addressing underlying social causes should be combined with national interventions focussed on law enforcement and policy reform (Ghattass 2016, 4). Interventions could include working with Egyptian government institutions “to design approaches to raise awareness regarding the laws as well as design means to implement the laws and legislations related to combatting FGM in Egypt” (Hassan 2017, 35).

Community-based approaches focus on changing social and community norms, rather than, or in addition to, targeting individual behaviour change. Addressing FGM as part of a broader community-based project was proven to be more attractive to community members than as a stand-alone topic, as “families must be supported with different health, educational, economic and social services that will enable them to abandon FGM” (UNDP 2009, 12). In community based-approaches in Egypt, the support of local religious leaders is important to disassociate religion from the practice of FGM (UNDP 2009, 12). This serves to discourage continuation of the practice among those who cite religion as their primary motivation. The 2014 Survey of Young People in Egypt found that “more religious men were more in favour of the practice” of FGM, and of women who indicated their belief that FGM as “necessary for religious reasons, the probability of saying so is higher for more religious women” (Wodon et al. 2017, 7). For these segments of the population, the support of local religious leaders can be especially influential in altering views and behaviour around the practice.

The decision to practice FGM is heavily influenced by community values and perceptions about its importance, and a family’s decision for their daughter not to undergo the procedure is often faced with stigma (UNDP 2009, 12). Programs directed at individual behaviour change alone are much less effective because they do not address these influences. Social change needs to be directed at the community level to abandon the practice so that no family feels alienated for their choice to abandon the practice (UNDP 2009, 12). It is important that programs aim to change social norms at the community level, in a way that is locally engaging, rather than focussing on individual attitudes (Wodon et al. 2017, 8).

Mass media campaigns have been successful in sending a unified message against FGM and stimulating many rational local debates about the practice (UNDP 2009, 12). However, “the cost of airing spots on all channels including national TV is very high” (UNDP 2013, 8) and so, it may not be

feasible depending on the project budget and focus. Possible solutions include institutionalizing work on deterring FGM within existing government structures to ensure increased national ownership and budgeting of activities, thus increasing the potential for sustainability (Hassan 2017, 35).

Sexual and Reproductive Health

Overall health indicators in Egypt have shown improvement through a series of health-focused national programs in recent years (MNSED 2003, 8), however, improvements may not have been evenly distributed across gender, socioeconomic, and regional lines. Rates of maternal mortality have substantially decreased as a result of an effective government campaign, along with decreased infant and child mortality rates (MNSED 2003, 10). Health gains “have been larger in metropolitan areas, with rural communities, and communities in upper Egypt, lagging behind” (MNSED 2003, 10). Data on child mortality rates suggest socioeconomic and gender divisions in health gains, with “girls being raised in lower income households, and particularly households where their mothers’ educational achievement is low, being at the highest risk” (MNSED 2003, 10). For example, the “post-neonatal mortality rate for girls whose mothers are less educated (less than primary) is almost twice the rate for boys, while the rate for girls of mothers with a secondary or higher level of education is 80 percent of the rate of boys” (MNSED 2003, 11). Regional differences in health improvements suggest a need for better program access in underserved rural areas. Socioeconomic and educational differences in female child mortality suggests a need for specific health programming to target at-risk segments of the population, in addition to longer-term solutions that raise income and increase education which would reduce conditions that put girls’ health at risk.

Education for Women and Girls

Egypt has seen impressive increases in access to education in the past 20 years. In 2016 (most recent data on sex-disaggregated enrollment), data for all primary school aged children indicated that male school enrollment was at 98.3 percent and female enrollment was at 98.7 percent (The World Bank 2013). Despite high enrollment rates, completion rates for girls remained lower than boys due to cultural expectations, financial constraints, and forced marriage. Rapid increase in enrollment also placed stress on the education system, which exacerbated issues pertaining to quality of education (RTI International 2014, 1). The outcomes in Egypt of increased education levels have been unexpected. Generally, women’s educational attainment results in higher levels of women in the labour force (Nazier and Racha 2016, 2). Egypt has seen opposite results, where increasing levels of education for women has been coupled with a fall in women’s participation in the labour force (Nazier and Racha 2016, 2). Therefore, enrollment in formal primary schooling is not the most pressing concern in Egypt moving forward, but there are several other important steps that can be taken to increase the positive impacts of the education system.

USAID implemented the “Girls’ Improved Learning Outcomes (GILO)” project from 2008 to 2013 to focus on improving the quality of girls’ education. The final evaluation of GILO found that improving

girls' participation and engagement in school required consistent and explicit attention to girls as a way to combat the natural tendency for boys to be the principal beneficiaries of the lessons, activities, and projects (RTI International 2014, 6). This reflects the need for further programming focusing on improving girls' experiences within the classroom, rather than simply their access to the classroom. CARE International's evaluation of their "Empowerment of Egypt's Children to Take Actions in Schools and Communities" program highlighted that "empowering children at schools cannot be isolated from empowering the whole community including parents and community institutions" (Hussein 2014, 32). It also noted that future programs should incorporate gender equality into their interventions and evaluations. These recommendations are acknowledging that shifting perceptions and practices within the school systems will not happen with a one-off approach. UNICEF's evaluation of its "United Nations Girls Initiative" in Egypt also noted that community advocacy campaigns were central to increasing community buy-in to gender sensitive educational programming (Shawky 2011, 55). Community buy-in ensures that ideological changes made in projects are sustainable as a result of community accountability.

Teacher trainings have potential but need to be utilized properly. When teachers attend one-off trainings, they are less likely to exhibit change in methods than in interventions which include active use of new methods in classrooms (CID Consulting 2017, 94). Therefore, it would be more useful for future programs to engage with the concept of advocating for teacher to teacher support and accountability for implementing lessons learned from trainings in order to shift the culture of teaching within each school (CID Consulting 2017, 94). This requires a consistent and holistic approach to teacher trainings which acknowledges the naturally stubborn character of cultural norms. Ideally, this would result in a long-term shift in practices around girls' education which would allow teachers to practice and employ new techniques to shift the culture of gender relations within their classrooms.

Gender is not only important in terms of attendance and completion rates, but also in terms of the range of diverse experience within school systems. Arguably, gender is a starting point, but further intersectional considerations such as language, ethnicity, ability and family income levels are necessary to implement a fully inclusive and equitable project. By committing to long-term, gender transformative, and comprehensive approaches, educational programming in Egypt has the potential to improve educational experiences and outcomes of women and girls.

Women's Economic Development

When women are excluded from labour markets and financial institutions, countries lose the potential for major economic gains. The "Sustainable Development Strategy: Egypt's Vision 2030" labels financial inclusion and economic empowerment of women as integral to Egypt's success in national development reform (AFI 2019, 4). In Egypt, women are active contributors to the economy as entrepreneurs and workers, but there are still many barriers which prevent women from reaching

their full economic potential (Nasr 2010, 57). Addressing this gap in economic success will require several tactics. Cultural gender norms continue to negatively impact women's likelihood of getting hired compared to men. While male unemployment was 8.3 percent in 2015, female unemployment reached 25 percent (Alawa 2016, 13). This is linked to both high fertility rates and the perception that women should bear the bulk of domestic responsibility. Changing cultural norms is complex and time consuming. A starting point may be to create programs which promote non-traditional educational opportunities for women and girls (Nasr 2010, 58). Ensuring that educational programs have real utility in lower-income women's lives can result in greater results in programming. To combat concerns from employers about maternity leave, policies can be created that cover maternity leave costs which would decrease this cost incentive to not hire women (Nasr 2010, 58).

Approximately half of Egyptian women who are in the labour force work in the informal economy, where there are no regulations for wages and working conditions (Nazir and Racha 2016, 2). When asked about labour force participation, women list proximity to home, good transportation, suitable hours, and good pay as main factors which impact their decision-making in terms of job selection (Nasr 2016, 59). This suggests that programs targeting women's participation in the labour force must address issues of accessibility, safety, and opportunity cost. This may involve investment in infrastructure and safe roads, increasing access to public transportation, or policy regulations to improve working conditions (Nasr 2016, 59).

Increased access to financial resources is also important in promoting women's economic development. The Egyptian government has made efforts to advance smaller enterprises in the country, but these practices tend to lack a gender focus (Alawa 2016, 12). Microfinance may be a good option to support the needs of lower-income Egyptian women. In order to be successful, microfinance programs should incorporate geographic, gendered, and income-level considerations to ensure both that distribution is progressive and that chosen investments have the highest potential in terms of increased well-being and economic security of recipients (Nasr 2016, 60). The evaluation of 'Securing Rights and Improving Livelihoods of Women (SRILW)' project implemented by UN Women from December 2012 to December 2017 found issues in distribution of program services (UN Women Egypt 2018, 22). Though women targeted by the program were marginalized or vulnerable, the project did not fully impact those most economically vulnerable. This is most likely due to requirements in age, education levels, and possession of official ID (UN Women Egypt 2018, 22). A lack of intersectional considerations can reinforce existing hierarchies of power among women, even if simultaneously improving overall equality between men and women.

When intervening in the economic empowerment of women, a holistic approach tends to yield the best results (Fathi 2018, 47). This suggests that projects which attempt to address only one aspect of women's economic development, such as cultural norms, education, or access to finances, should either reconsider their approach or partner with other programs as a way to create a more

comprehensive and impactful program. Though holistic programming has increased costs in terms of both time and finances, these types of projects are proven to create the greatest impacts in terms of improved livelihood of participants. The Women's Employment Programme (WEPP) Final Evaluation highlighted that "A holistic approach that was both multi-pronged and multi-level was key to the effectiveness of the project" (Fathi 2018, 48). By focusing on education, attitudes, practices, and policy on institutional, community, and individual levels allowed for improvements in income, opportunity, safety, and work-life balance (Fathi 2018, 49). An important practice which would result in more comprehensive programming would be the strategic mobilization of multiple stakeholders (Fathi 2018, 48). The WEPP Final Evaluation noted that linkages between international, national, and grassroots organizations allowed for shared expertise, specialization, and efficiency (Fathi 2018, 48). CARE International also highlighted holistic approaches as integral to successful economic empowerment of women in their 2019 review of their programming in the Middle East and North Africa (CARE International 2019, 3). This review indicated that approaches that increase capabilities, improve decision-making power, and foster an environment which enables women's success would be the only sustainable path to women's economic empowerment (CARE International 2019, 3). Furthermore, programming should not simply be gender inclusive, but be gender transformative where its approach actively "seeks to build equitable social norms, structures, and agency, as well as individual gender-equitable behavior" (CARE International 2019, 22).

Projects which can create financial returns increase the longevity and sustainability of women's economic development (Fathi 2018, 49). Firms that participate in gender-inclusive programming who see economic gains can serve as examples to other firms of the benefits of incorporating women into practices. These gains also ensure that there is an incentive for firms to remain gender-inclusive even after project endpoints. Increased studies are necessary to improve pathways to women's economic development in Egypt. Continued evaluation of ongoing and past projects is essential to the continued improvement of programs (AFI 2019,17). Incorporating mandatory evaluations and reviews, as well as honest discussions about program achievements will allow for greater transfer of knowledge to future programming (Fathi 2018, 48).

The Donor Community

The donor community in Egypt for projects focused on gender equality consists primarily of multilateral bodies and Egyptian government partnerships. In addition to this, several gender-equality and women's-empowerment-promoting NGOs operate in the country. Major internationally-funded projects active in 2019 with gender equality as their principle objective are mostly run by UN agencies, or in conjunction with UN agencies. These projects are centred on capacity building, such as improving legal and social service delivery, and behaviour change such as altering community attitudes about FGM.

Capacity-Building Projects

Capacity building is an approach that focuses on improving the abilities of local institutions and organizations to provide public services, implement initiatives, and self-monitor. This approach is essential to the long-term sustainability of many project impacts and minimizes over-reliance on outside experts as sources of knowledge, resources, and solutions to community issues. Capacity building can also foster a sense of empowerment and provide local institutions with tools to better implement future initiatives. Below, three major projects in 2019 are highlighted.

A project based on legal institution capacity building, “Support Legal Aid & Dispute Settlement In Family Courts”, aims to “strengthen access to justice in Family Courts through the establishment of legal aid offices, enhancing the capacities of dispute settlement offices, and through the automation of the family courts system” (“UNDP: Support Legal Aid & Dispute Settlement In Family Courts” n.d.). A social service capacity-building project, “Strengthening Institutions & Human Resources Capacities Of Ministry Of Social Solidarity” is aimed at strengthening the Egypt Ministry of Social Solidarity (MoSS)’s “capacities to integrate social policies, strengthening the existing units, enhancing the capacity of social workers and upgrade MoSS capacity to provide social services to people with disabilities” (“UNDP: Strengthening Inst. & Hum. Resources Capacities Of Ministry Of Social Solidarity” n.d.). This project’s initiatives use both a gender and disability lens to address issues of social vulnerability.

Finally, a project to strengthen referral networks and state capacities to address GBV, “Combatting GBV in Egypt,” aims to utilize incoming funds from the UNFPA ‘Piloting of the Essential Services Package (ESP) for Women and Girls Subject to Violence in Egypt’ to strengthen future capacity of the system to combat violence against women (VAW) (UNDP n.d., 1-5). These projects are outlined below.

Major projects in 2019	Donors	Initiatives	Timeline	Budget (USD)
“Support Legal Aid & Dispute Settlement in Family Courts”	UNDP Social and Legal Empowerment of Egyptian Women	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) testing and evaluating a legal aid model in three family courts, 2) strengthening capacity, and 3) strengthening service delivery and knowledge management in the pilot Dispute Settlement Offices (Government of Arab Republic of Egypt and UNDP 2008, 5-9).	April 1, 2008 to Dec 31, 2019	1.88 million

<p>“Strengthening Institutions & Human Resources Capacities of Ministry of Social Solidarity”</p>	<p>UNDP Egypt Ministry of Social Solidarity (Moss)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) establishing a technical unit with the Ministry to mainstream social policies across all line ministries, 2) enhancing the institutional capacities of MoSS to effectively deliver quality social protection services to the poor, 3) developing capacity of MoSS staff to deliver social protection services, and 4) developing capacity of MoSS staff to deliver quality to people living with disabilities <p>(MoSS and UNDP 2016, 10-13).</p>	<p>March 1 2019 to Dec 31, 2020</p>	<p>\$609,950</p>
<p>“Combatting GBV in Egypt”</p>	<p>UNDP UNFPA Egypt</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Developing a study on VAW perpetrated against women with disabilities in Egypt 2) Formulating an inclusive national strategy amendment to clearly address violence against women with disabilities 3) Establishing an interactive platform focused on directing victims of VAW to service delivery points 4) Pilot new interactive program <p>(UNDP n.d., 1-5)</p>	<p>March 1, 2019, Feb 29, 2020</p>	<p>\$99,500</p>

Behaviour Change Projects

Behaviour change approaches to projects attempt to shift local opinions, dynamics, or practices to address ideologies or knowledge gaps at the root of problems. These approaches can be especially useful when the practices or assumptions one aims to change are widely pervasive in a culture. For example, behaviour change programs might be effective when a practice is deeply ingrained, and its prevalence is unlikely to decrease substantially with increases in other areas like education or food security.

A behaviour-change-oriented project in Egypt, “Abandon Female Genital Mutilation & Empower Families” aims to “continue addressing FGM within the context of a larger Family Empowerment Package”. The project utilizes a wholistic approach to FGM, addressing “discrimination and different forms of violence against the girl child” (UNDP 2008,11). This primarily includes a focus on challenges relating to female genital mutilation, deprivation of education, and early, forced, and unregistered

marriages (UNDP 2008,11). The project utilizes a narrative of abandoning FGM as one component of broader family empowerment, as this was found to make addressing the issue more locally appealing and engaging (UNDP 2008,12).

Major projects in 2019	Donors	Initiatives	Timeline	Budget (USD)
“Abandon Female Genital Mutilation & Empower Families”	UNFPA Egypt Government of the Netherlands UNDP Egypt UNDP Fund for Women Social and Legal Empowerment Of Egyptian Women European Economic Community	1) capacity building activities, advocacy and knowledge dissemination 2) community level varied activities to reach all families 3) local ownership spearheaded by pressure groups in each community 4) consolidation and coordination among all concerned stakeholders; government partners, NGOs, bilateral and multilateral donors (United Nations Development Program 2008,11)	Aug 15, 2009 to Dec 31, 2019	6.8 million

International NGOs in Egypt

During our research on best practices, the importance of multi-level linkages was listed as integral to program success by several different project evaluations. The following sections outline both international and local NGOs working on women’s issues in Egypt. Ideally, projects can link international to national and local as a way to increase capabilities in country. Multi-level collaboration would also allow for an increased share of knowledge and expertise and may increase access to flows of capital to smaller, grassroots organizations.

Several international NGOs operate in Egypt with goals to increase gender equality. The harmony of goals among Canada’s feminist foreign aid policy and these organization’s existing work in Egypt make them excellent resources or potential partners. CARE Egypt has a variety of projects within Egypt with principal objectives related to gender equality. These include focuses on GBV, women’s economic empowerment, and engagement of men and boys (“Care International Egypt: WOMEN’S RIGHTS” n.d.). CARE Egypt is funded by a combination of bilateral (including GAC), multilateral, and civil society, and private sector partners (“Care International Egypt: Our Partners.” n.d.). The World

Food Programme (WFP) utilizes a “gender transformative approach to food assistance programmes and policies”, with a policy of mainstreaming gender “into all phases of the programme cycle” (WFP Gender Policy 2015-2020, 3). Though not a primarily gender-focused organization, WFP has integrated a gender lens into its programming as a way to improve its services to those most vulnerable in Egypt. Therefore, future partnership with WFP could be beneficial in committing to making all programs gender sensitive. The WFP is funded by a combination of governments, private sector, and individual donations (“World Food Programme: Funding and Donors.” n.d.). OXFAM works with local partners in Egypt to improve gender equality “from countering violence against women, to working on specific gender issues, such as bodily integrity and reproductive rights” (“Oxfam International: Egypt.” n.d.). OXFAM has been working in Egypt since the early 1980s, and advocacy for gender equality has remained one of its main goals within the country. Their work on gender equality in Egypt has covered a wide range of topics, such as GBV, bodily integrity, and reproductive rights (“Oxfam International: Egypt.” n.d.). ABAAD Resource Center for Gender Equality is an organization committed to “sustainable social and economic development in the MENA region” (“ABAAD: About” 2019). These four international NGOs (outlined in brief below) are central to the mainstreaming of gender within development practices in Egypt.

<p>CARE International Egypt</p>	<p>Main focus areas within Egypt:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Tackling Gender-based Violence (GBV). 2) Women’s Social and Economic Empowerment. 3) Engaging Men and Boys (EMB). <p>(“Care International Egypt: WOMEN'S RIGHTS” n.d.)</p> <p>Funding: Bilateral (including GAC), multilateral, civil society, and private partners (“Care International Egypt: Our Partners.” n.d.).</p>
<p>World Food Programme (WFP)</p>	<p>Five main focus areas within Egypt:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Social Inclusion 2) Food Security 3) Resilience Building 4) Nutrition 5) Refugee and Migrant Support <p>Funding: Government, private sector, and individual donations (“World Food Programme: Funding and Donors.” n.d.).</p>
<p>OXFAM</p>	<p>Three main areas of focus within Egypt:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Sustainable Livelihoods 2) Active Citizenship 3) Gender Equality

	<p>("Oxfam International: Egypt." n.d.)</p> <p>Funding: Institutional fundraising (UN, EU, NGOs, Governments) and public fundraising are its two main sources of funding ("OXFAM International: Our Finances and Accountability," n.d.)</p>
<p>ABAAD Resource Center for Gender Equality</p>	<p>Six main pillars of work in the MENA region:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Policy Development 2) End Violence Against Women 3) Women and Survivors Empowerment 4) Humanitarian Action 5) Strengthening Civil and Public Sectors 6) Organizational Development <p>("ABAAD: About" 2019)</p> <p>Funding: ABAAD Resource Center for Gender Equality has an extensive list of partners and donors, including both public and private sector donor relations ("ABAAD: About" 2019).</p>

Local NGOs in Egypt

In addition to international NGOs in Egypt with gender-equality-centric programming, there are also local NGOs that might be excellent resources or potential partners. Some local NGOs include HarassMap, the Egyptian Feminist Union (EFU), the Egyptian Society of Women’s Health (ESWH), Heya Masr, and Salemah for Women’s Empowerment, and The New Woman Foundation (NWF). The organizations outlined below are not an exhaustive list of locally-based NGOs within Egypt, but they represent valuable smaller organizations making impacts to gender equality within the country.

HarassMap is an online platform and organization specializing in local behaviour change campaigns, HarassMap acts “to change the perceptions that create and reinforce a culture of blaming the harassed, excusing the harasser, and accepting sexual harassment” (“HarassMap: Campaigns” n.d.). Through live reporting and research, HarassMap uses technology to work towards their mission of creating an Egyptian society that does not tolerate sexual harassment. In implementing programs addressing GBV and sexual harassment, HarassMap’s resources and deep knowledge on Egypt’s GBV trends would be extremely useful.

The Egyptian Feminist Union (EFU) “seeks to coordinate the interested efforts in women's issues to create an aware society that believes in equality, citizenship, social justice, human dignity and respects women's rights.” (“EFU: About Us” n.d.). This includes creating a database of associations committed to women’s rights, conducting research, increasing capacities of women’s rights advocates and volunteers, and raising overall societal awareness on issues of women’s rights (“EFU: About Us” n.d.). As indicated earlier, linkages are important to project success. EFU’s creation of a

database of women's organizations means it may be a potential partner with great utility in implementing successful, comprehensive programming.

The Egyptian Society of Women's Health (ESWH) is "a nonprofit, nongovernmental organization that promotes and advocates for women's health in Egypt" ("ESWH: About E.S.W.H." n.d.). ESWH specializes in community-based programming focused on increased awareness, access, and action in female health practices. Particularly, ESWH has been a champion in spreading knowledge about women's imaging as an important step in preventative and diagnostic health practices ("ESWH: About E.S.W.H." n.d.). Their work includes the implementation and promotion of early detection, support, training, awareness, and research to address women's health challenges ("ESWH: About E.S.W.H." n.d.). ESWH would be a valuable partner in terms of female reproductive health, as well as a potential example of community-based community health programming in Egypt.

Heya Masr is a non-profit organization aimed at "restoring a sense of dignity and pride in young Egyptian women (ages 9-18) by building their self-confidence and empowering them mentally and physically to develop and strengthen their character from the ground up" ("Heya Masr: About Heya Masr." n.d.). Their work includes a focus on general personal health and wellness, as well as harassment awareness and self-defence ("Heya Masr: About Heya Masr." n.d.). As a partner, they would be valuable in terms of their ability to facilitate educational sessions as well as their relationships with youth centers. Their existing linkages to young women could present itself as a valuable pathway for other projects to reach teens and young adults.

Salemah is "an independent, non-governmental women's organization, working to promote gender equality and strengthen women's rights as human rights" (Salemah: What We Do." n.d.). Salemah specifically collaborates with current organizations and actors who are engaged with the Egyptian Feminist Movement. Their work aims to reshape political, economic, and social systems as well as navigate pathways towards including women in all development processes (Salemah: What We Do." n.d.). Salemah would be a highly valuable pathway to engage individual female activists interested in community development into the decision-making and planning processes. Projects that have community input have increased likelihood of success and buy-in, so using Salemah's existing networks of motivated women could be a useful tool in implementing more community-based and culturally relevant programming.

The New Women Foundation (NWF) is an Egyptian feminist non-governmental organization which focuses on Egyptian women's economic and political empowerment. The NWF also advocates for women "through campaigns including the publication of statements and articles, providing interviews to various media, developing demands and draft amendments to laws that are submitted to parliamentarians whenever this is possible" ("NWF: About Us" n.d.). They focus on policy contribution, engagement of women in civil society and the development of youth leadership focused

on gender equality (“NWF: About Us” n.d.). As a partner, the NWF would be a valuable resource in programs focused on policy creation or legal structures, as it has an existing network of politically-minded Egyptian women willing to contribute to laws that will impact their everyday lives. These organizations are examples of the existing work happening in Egypt to address gender inequalities. In future programming, a combination of partnership with international and local NGOs would be most valuable in enhancing program success. These local Egyptian NGOs are listed in brief below.

HarassMap Egypt	<p>Mission: “To engage all of Egyptian society to create an environment that does not tolerate sexual harassment. To build a society that guarantees the safety of all people from sexual and gender based violence.”</p> <p>Focus: Sexual Harassment and GBV</p>
Egyptian Feminist Union	<p>Mission: “EFU works with different societal bodies to enable different categories of women to practice their human rights and undertake societal responsibilities. EFU also encourages women to participate in public policies, legislations and general decisions to achieve equality and democracy.” (“Egyptian Feminist Union: About Us” n.d.)</p> <p>Focus: Women’s human rights in general</p>
Egyptian Society of Women’s Health	<p>Mission: “We are a nonprofit, nongovernmental organization that promotes and advocates for women’s health in Egypt. ESWH is made up of individuals united in their goal - to bring health and wellness to all women. As the nation’s most passionate champion of women’s health issues, we connect, educate, and enable women to live fuller and active lives.” (“ESWH: About E.S.W.H.” n.d.)</p> <p>Focus: Women’s health</p>
Heya Masr	<p>Heya Masr is a non-profit organization aimed at “restoring a sense of dignity and pride in young Egyptian women (ages 9-18) by building their self-confidence and empowering them mentally and physically to develop and strengthen their character from the ground up.” Activities include: “educational classes on nutritional wellness, harassment awareness, and self-defense.. held in partnership with local organizations, schools, and youth centers to empower young women”. Source: (“Heya Masr: About Heya Masr.” n.d.)</p>
Salemah for Women’s Empowerment	<p>Mission: “To develop, promote, and strengthen progressive feminist discourse based on social justice and gender equality values. To empower women and allow them access and benefit from all available community resources. We contribute to</p>

	<p>the development of community and youth leaders struggling to create a movement capable of achieving these goals” (Salemah: What We Do.” n.d.).</p> <p>Focus: Women’s social, economic, and political empowerment</p>
New Women’s Foundation	<p>The New Women Foundation is “an Egyptian feminist non-governmental organization” which provides training to women; “mainly women workers, on women’s rights, capacity building, skills of negotiation and campaigning”. The NWF also advocates for women “through campaigns including the publication of statements and articles, providing interviews to various media, developing demands and draft amendments to laws that are submitted to parliamentarians whenever this is possible”.</p> <p>Source: (“New Woman Foundation: About Us” n.d.)</p> <p>Focus: Women’s political empowerment</p>

Methods

Our methods mainly consisted of reviewing reports and evaluations of recent development work in Egypt. Focusing on lessons learned from these programs, policies, and campaigns, we drew conclusions about best practices when incorporating gender into development work in Egypt. Access to evaluations was reasonable, but not comprehensive. Therefore, more research on this subject is suggested to move forward with improving strategies to addressing gender inequality in Egypt.

We incorporated our own research on gender equality in Egypt to give context to these programs as well as to highlight the main challenges facing women and girls in Egypt today. While we began our research with the term ‘feminist movements,’ we found most literature was located using the term ‘women’s movements’ instead. We use the term ‘feminist’ in this report to represent all movements which aim to improve the agency and livelihood of women and girls and to reduce the differentials of inequalities seen between men and women. Therefore, ‘feminist’ and ‘womens’ movements are used interchangeably. Through our research on Egypt, we decided to separate FGM/C from GBV to create its own section on best practices due to the large volume of reports and concern on this topic within Egypt.

This report is a starting point Though our methods were in-depth, our access to knowledge was limited by our own geographic limitations (i.e. writing about Egypt without ever living or working there) and by our limited experience working in this sector. Our hope is that this report contributes to knowledge about addressing Egypt’s gender equality without implying expertise on the subject.

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2. Iraq

Danielle Legault and Anyaeleh Aryee

Executive Summary

Emerging out of conflict, Iraq is in a delicate place, requiring humanitarian assistance while simultaneously looking forward to developmental programming to re-establish its economy, political bodies, and the well-being of its citizens. Women and girls within Iraq have demonstrated themselves to be key players both domestically and in the international diaspora, capable of creating change for the betterment of all Iraqis. Nonetheless, there continues to be structural barriers within Iraq's constitutional bodies and policies that limit the progress of gender promotion. To analyse the current situation in Iraq, the following questions were examined; (1) What is the current state of gender equality?; (2) What are the existing feminist movements - who is leading them, what do they look like, and what do they want to achieve?; (3) What are the proven models and best practices for integrating the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment into health, education, and economic development programming?; (4) What does the donor community look like? To answer these questions, academic resources from Carleton University's Summon search engine were used, as well as a wide range of program evaluations completed by international agencies working within Iraq.

Key findings from the research include:

- An intersectional feminist approach is a necessity. This includes both the intersectionality of structures marginalizing women, as well as individual-level intersectionalities (ability, religion, race etc.) for more effective programming.
- The need for an increase in local collaboration to strengthen existing Iraqi actors without dismissing regional complexities. Cooperation with local Iraqi organizations and key individuals throughout the entire program design and implementation process will yield more informed and culturally appropriate plans.
- Gendered approaches need to incorporate men and boys to create lasting and transformative impact for women and girls.

Acronyms

CfW - Cash for Work

CEDAW - Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women

CRC - Covenant on the Rights of the Child

FIAP - Feminist International Assistance Policy

GBV - Gender Based Violence

ICCPR - International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

IDP - Internally Displaced Person

IPV - Intimate Partner Violence

KRI - Kurdistan Region of Iraq, also Iraqi Kurdistan

PHCC - Primary Health Care Centre

SRHR - Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights

WILPF – Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom

Country Overview

The Republic of Iraq has had more than its fair share of tumultuous conflict and growth. Situated between several key powers in the middle east and a narrow strip of the Persian Gulf, Iraq sits in an important geo-political and oil-rich region which has been fraught with internal and external conflict and instability. The latest of such conflicts being the rise and fall of Daesh from 2014-2017, has severely impacted the services, infrastructure and growth of Iraq (Vilardo & Bittar 2018). Much of Iraq’s current dilemmas, such as gender, governance, economy, and climate response have been influenced by this violent history.

Geographically, Iraq is divided into 18 governorates, with 3 of these being under the jurisdiction of the autonomous region of Kurdistan. Iraq has a total population of 38 million, of which 6.9 million Iraqi’s live in Baghdad, making it both the capital and the largest city in the country (World Bank 2019). The next largest cities include Basra (2.7m), Hillah (1.7m), and Najaf (1.3m), with 70% of all Iraqi’s living in an urban region (World Bank 2019). Over half of all people in Iraq are under the age of 24, making it one of the most youthful countries in the world (World Bank 2019).

Iraq is diverse, with multiple ethnic and religious groups and identities varying in numbers across the country. Iraq is 95% Muslim, with Shia Arabs being the most prevalent group, followed by Sunni Arabs and Sunni Kurds. Yet there is a plethora of other identities, including the Turkmen and Black Iraqis, as well as a range of religious beliefs, including polytheistic faiths, such as those of the Yazidi. Ethnic and religious identity have been used by both the Iraqi Government and Daesh, to oppress particular minority groups such as the Baha’i and the Sabeen-Mandean (Pichon 2015). Religion and cultural identity also plays an important role in governance (CIA 2019). As a federal parliamentary republic,

Barham Salih serves as president, and Adil Abd Al-Mahdi as prime minister. An informal agreement has been identified amongst political parties; that the presidency is reserved for the Kurdish, the prime ministerial role for Shia Arabs, and the speaker of parliament for Sunni Arabs (BBC 2019a).

Iraq's economy is undiversified, with nearly all government revenue (99%) being made through the oil sector (UNDP 2019). It is through these funds in part that the Iraqi government is rebuilding infrastructure across the country, yet the oil sector only employs 1% of the entire labour force (Vilardo & Bittar 2018). Thus, youth unemployment rates are high (18%) and pose a serious concern to the stability and security of the state, with the 2019 October protests being partly centered around this (BBC 2019b). Iraq is ranked 123 out of 160 countries on the Gender Inequality Index, with female participation in the labour force being at 18.7 % in comparison to 74.1 % for men (UNDP 2018). Iraqi women also have lower access to education and healthcare, as well as high levels of violence (Vilardo & Bittar 2018).

Iraq in 2019 is in a delicate place; careful and intersectional action needs to be provided to respond to the many intricate layers impacting the experience of people within Iraq's borders.

As a result of its' previous conflicts, Iraq has large numbers of displaced people. Within Iraq, the UNHCR (2019) has identified 6.7 million people in need of humanitarian assistance. This number includes a quarter of a million Syrian refugees, 1.6 million internally displaced people and 4.3 million Iraqi returnees (UNHCR 2019a). The Kurdistan region of Iraq is feeling increased pressure, with 25% of all people (1.5 million) in its borders being displaced (UNHCR 2019a).

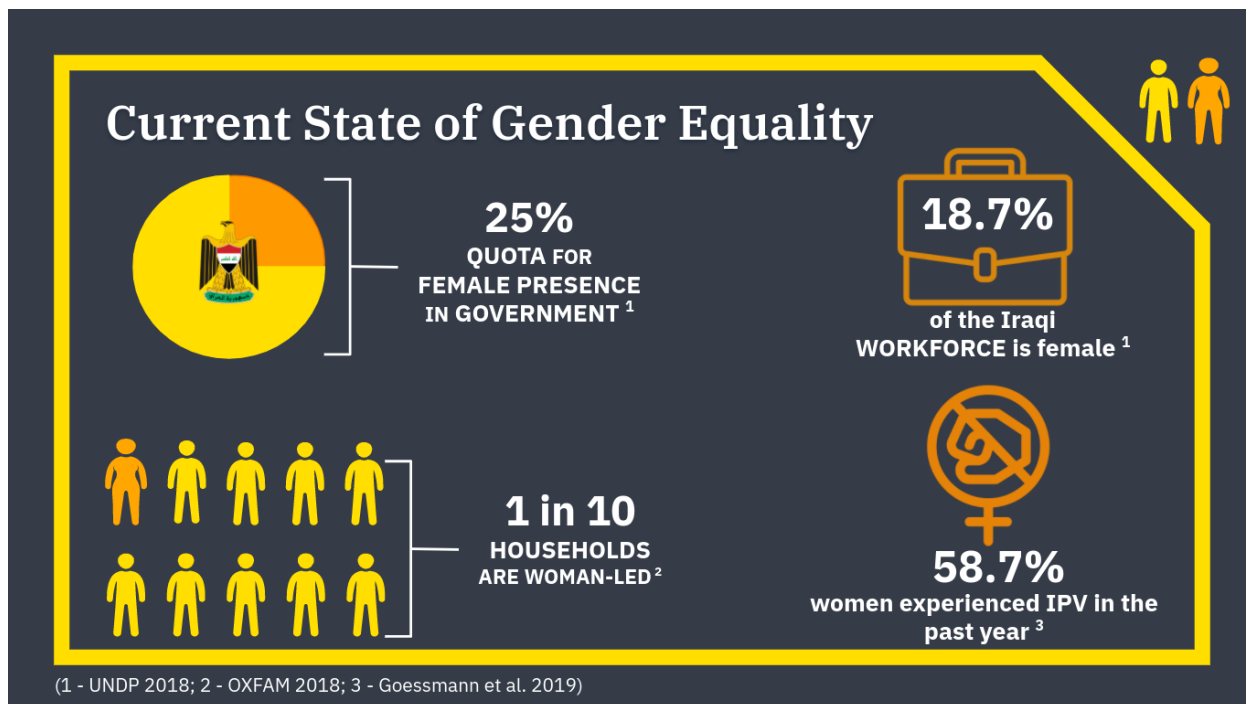
From an environmental standpoint, the increasing effects of climate change in Iraq is of particular concern. Large numbers of cities and towns border and rely upon Iraq's two great rivers, the Tigris, and the Euphrates. These two river systems supply 98 percent of the domestic water supply to this arid country but are increasingly dammed upstream in neighboring countries, polluted and considered unsafe for consumption (Zawahri, 2017). Additionally, much of Iraq's water infrastructure is destroyed or deteriorating due to conflict, and the mismanagement of funds.

Thus, Iraq in 2019 is in a delicate place; careful and intersectional action needs to be provided to respond to the many intricate layers impacting the experience of people within Iraq's borders. Iraq has emerged from conflict, but development efforts need to be made so as not to inadvertently cause another one to occur. Therefore, a response needs to not solely be political, but rather interdisciplinary, through advancing gender inclusiveness, ensuring that the government represents

its citizens, building a diverse economy, and creating a climate response plan through the rebuilding of infrastructure.

The State of Gender Equality

Both men and women in Iraq are subject to a lot of the same conditions (such as war and displacement, low employment levels), but they are not affected identically. The statistics demonstrate these discrepancies in certain sectors. To trace trends and changes that underlie the statistics, the following paragraphs will bring in intersectional factors, or other pieces of identity, lifestyle or situation, that contribute to quantified data and provide a glimpse into the complexities within Iraq.



Politics and Meaningful Participation

The political scene in Iraq is framed in the context of a Constitution that cites Islam as “the basic source of legislation,” and entrusts governing powers over personal status matters to different religious groups and sects on the local level (Vilardo & Bittar 2018). This means that for both men and women, their situation in relation to society depends on the priorities, interpretations and implementation of Islam by generally male-led religious authorities (Vilardo & Bittar). Thus, in a political governance scheme mostly dominated and occupied by men, there have been government efforts to take gender into consideration, such as signing on to CEDAW in 1986, the CRC and the ICCPR (which are all international regimes that have gendered considerations), but, like with any country, constitutional provisions alone are not a guarantee for full rights enjoyment, especially for groups who are not as visible in society (Vilardo & Bittar 2018).

Large-level government efforts to address gaps, along with challenges, have included: the creation of a Ministry of State of Women's Affairs (2003), though it was abolished 12 years later; the implementation of a 25% quota for female presence in governance, though the Ministry of State of Women's Affairs called for higher representation (UNDP 2018); the creation of the Directorate of Women's Empowerment as a subdivision of the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers (2017, post-Daesh), though without a portfolio or decision-making power, the ability to put forward binding recommendations, an independent budget, or full ministry status (Vilardo & Bittar 2018).

Outside of these specific bodies, there is little female involvement or representation in government and politics, especially in comparison to men (UNDP 2018). This has been associated with the marginalization of women's issues, and therefore a "lack of programs aimed at women's economic and social empowerment and integration," as well as weak financial support from Iraqi governmental institutions (Vilardo & Bittar 2018). Certain groups of women who try or want to increase their participation in politics, notably "those with less education and economic empowerment" or certain marital status, are excluded from such spaces and can be the targets of harassment, defamation and cyber bullying (Vilardo & Bittar 2018). The situation is somewhat different in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), where the regional government has taken actions to include different kinds of minorities, specifically in political processes.

Economic Participation

Labor force participation has been hard on both men and women, with high unemployment rates country-wide reaching a severity that has prompted public protests and demonstrations, especially by youth (UNDP 2018). Among those who are employed, men participate in the mainstream labor force at much higher levels, while women's labor is largely unremunerated, commonly in the form of care work (Vilardo & Bittar 2018). This situation increases in contexts of displacement, where men may spend 25% of their day doing unpaid care work (ie cooking, cleaning, caring for children and elderly), and women and girls spend a reported "most of the day" (Vilardo & Bittar 2018).

The post-conflict context has also produced mixed implications for labor activity based on localities and communities. There are spaces where the recent conflict lead to "shifts in the gendered division of labour" as needs arose to allow women to participate in traditionally male dominated sectors (Vilardo & Bittar 2018). While some women interviewed indicated that society had become more tolerant to sector changes, others explained that as the overall country or regional situation improves existing cultural and social norms that prevented women's engagement in paid activities would be sustained (Vilardo & Bittar 2018). There is also the increased vulnerability of women who have been able to enter certain paid spaces in the context of conflict and limited resources, which comes with limited security (Vilardo & Bittar 2018).

Family, Education, and Social Situations

Family make-up intersects with the various realities explored in the previous subsections to create additional layers of complexity in the current state of gender equality. For example, women comprise about half of the Iraqi population, and head 1 in 10 Iraqi households; 80% of these heads of households are “widows, divorced, separated, or caring for sick spouses,” and experience lower levels of income, some employed only doing odd jobs (Vilardo & Bittar 2018).

In part, the possibilities and realities of women’s income generation and sustenance capacity or freedom is impacted by education levels and qualifications for certain work. Women generally spend a shorter time in school, falling behind their male counterparts by an average of 2 years for primary education (UNDP 2018). In terms of secondary schooling, about 56.7% of males and 38.7% of females above 25 have completed their secondary school studies (UNDP 2018). Displacement due to conflict and emergency situations only increases the educational gap for the children who were forced to stop their schooling, posing an additional challenge to equality (Dubai Cares 2017).

The economic status in relation to these family dynamics are further impacted by regional contexts, as increases in power for local religious authorities mean varying interpretations and implementations of Sharia Law, specifically as it may apply to: entitlements in divorce and age of marriage (Vilardo & Bittar 2018).

Health and Security

A woman or girl’s wellbeing, economic or otherwise, is closely tied to her environment, including the influence and decisions of men and other women around her. Health and security therefore varies throughout Iraq, and the challenges vary with these contexts. For example, the issue of intimate partner violence among internally displaced Iraqis has additional considerations and challenges due to the traumas inflicted upon both the men and the women from war, violence and conflict (Goessmann et al. 2019). Mental health is an important intersection that is not always meaningfully considered for men, or for women, in addressing gender attitudes and assessing the commonplace occurrence of intimate partner violence among the displaced (Goessmann et al. 2019).

Women comprise about half of the Iraqi population, and head 1 in 10 Iraqi households; 80% of these heads of households are widows, divorced, separated, or caring for sick spouses.

Existing Feminist Movements



Baghdad, Iraq (Farah Nosh 2019)

Nadje Al-Ali: Al-Ali is an academic who writes on appropriate ways to discuss gender-based violence in relation to the Middle East, and calls for feminist scholars (and others) to look for the “connections, entanglements and multiple forms of power configurations that impinge on people’s lives” in analyses (Al-Ali 2019). She also challenges strict application of Western conceptions of feminism and patriarchy to the complex and distinct Middle Eastern contexts. Rather, she speaks of masculinist restorations (coined from Deniz Kandiyoti), pointing to “historically specific, regionally and locally configured processes and power configurations that contain authoritarianism, Islamism and sectarianism, which all intersect with global structures pertaining to imperialism and neo-liberal economics” (Al-Ali 2019).

Zahra Ali: Zahra Ali writes about feminists and feminist bodies in Iraq that have been pushing in recent years for the “adoption of legal protection against violence as well as for the preservation of their legal rights under threat by sectarian politics,” including; the general directorate in KRI for Combatting Violence Against Women; OWFI, an organization implementing women’s shelters even when it was against government laws; Bushra Al-Aubadi and the IWN more broadly (Ali 2017).

Iraqi al-Amal Association: The Iraqi al-Amal Association operates a Center for Women in Kirkuk that provides legal services, psychosocial support and “a safe space for women and girls who have suffered gender-based violence, including child marriage.” (Ali 2019). The team of activists is composed of 4 men and 6 women who conduct community awareness sessions targeted towards women and men in the interest of total community change. A notable figure in the group and possible point of contact is lawyer Kaiy Abdalstar.

Iraqi Women Journalists Forum (IWJF): The IWJF is a collective of women journalists who track the plights and achievements of various women and women-empowering movements in Iraq. Their work

would include stories such as the rise of women in management within displacement camps, which are generally male-dominated and marginalize women's concerns.

Iraqi Women's Network (IWN): The IWN, coordinated by Amal Kabashi, is a civil society collective that aims to raise awareness of Iraqi and international law; encourages women to engage politically, especially in becoming members of parliament; provides women with training for running a political campaign; engages in current protests for system changes; holds the Iraqi political class to "the highest democratic standards" (WILPF 2019).

Farah Nosh: Farah Nosh is an award-winning Iraqi-Canadian photojournalist who, among other projects, captures war's civilian impact in Iraq. She has also completed projects in Afghanistan, Syria, Pakistan, the West Bank, Gaza, Egypt and Lebanon. Her work (in Iraq) is showcased throughout this report, and can be found at: www.farahnosh.com/photojournalism.

Proven Models and Best Practices

This section will address the proven models of best practices in integrating the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment into 1) health, 2) education, and 3) economic development. To do so, 15 project evaluations selected from various international agencies working in Iraq have been analyzed to extract the successes and challenges encountered in each initiative. Each section will also highlight the various failures encountered by the agencies in implementing gender strategies (or lack thereof). All of this will be done to ensure the future success of Canadian gender programming in Iraq.

Canada, through its Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP) has paved a revolutionary framework to address the need for a gendered lens in international development, working strongly to ensure the global empowerment of women. Yet, the post-conflict situation in Iraq can present significant challenges to the implementation of FIAP. Thus, a common critique that was found of the evaluations reviewed are also relevant to FIAP: there needs to be an *even more* thorough effort made by the international community to understand the intersectional social complexities of Iraq.

An intersectional approach of international development in Iraq is one that addresses the many intersecting positions of identities, including but not limited to; gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, language, religion, class, abilities, age, marital status, sexual orientation, displacement or refugee

Men and masculinities must also be understood and involved in the processes to ensure Canadian initiatives in Iraq have long-lasting and beneficial impacts on the lives of women and girls.

status, health status, association with Daesh, urban vs rural. In a gender-specific context, this also includes paying detailed attention to; female-heads of households, lactating or pregnant women, and single parents. Therefore, an intersectional gendered approach needs to be utilized to understand the varying vulnerabilities and opportunities an individual may have in Iraq.

Additionally, it was found that while many of the evaluations emphasized the importance of gendered approaches in Iraq, they focused primarily on female and feminine experiences, with only one evaluation discussing the possible role of men and masculinities in gender-mainstreaming approaches. This raises questions on the effectiveness and lasting impacts of approaches that attempt to change societal gender norms in Iraq without involving the other half of the population. Male experiences are also gendered, such as the societal expectation of economic provision and through the implications of violence and conquest in the battle against Daesh. This gendered experience also means that men inherently have more influence in Iraq's economic and political spheres, controlling resources and power systems (Wanner & Wadam 2015). Thus, a Gender and Development approach suggests that men and masculinities must also be understood and involved in the processes to ensure Canadian initiatives in Iraq have long-lasting and beneficial impacts on the lives of women and girls.



(Farah Nosh 2019)

Health

Successes and best practices

Healthcare initiatives in Iraq since 2011 have typically been humanitarian – targeting the immediate needs of IDPs and refugees within Northern Iraq, specifically Kurdistan. As Iraq begins to eventually transition from humanitarian to development assistance, healthcare programming also needs to adapt to include more long-term goals, including more family planning within sexual health and reproductive programming.

The 2019 **Evaluation of the UNFPA Response to the Syria Crisis (2011-2018)** examined the UNFPA's specific actions surrounding Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) (UNFPA 2018). The UNFPA had success in achieving gender programming in healthcare initiatives when relationships were established between the implementing agency and the local community, as well as between the UNFPA and relevant directorates of health in each governorate. Implementing agencies noted that it was more efficient to coordinate healthcare efforts with the directorates of each governorate in contrast to the national Iraqi/Kurdistan regions due to high turnover rates in these offices. The UNFPA expressed that it was beneficial to target most of their refugee-related resources to eight of the largest refugee camps in Northern Iraq while supporting displaced people not in camps by improving gender-based programs in already existing Primary Health Care Centers (PHCC).

Within the UNFPA's review, women and girls' only safe spaces were viewed as a very beneficial tool in combating GBV by providing spaces to come together to participate in activities, discuss sensitive matters, and access resources surrounding GBV. The **UNDP's Family Protection Support Project and Justice and Security for Survivors of Domestic and Gender-based Violence Project** successfully implemented Family Protection Units across southern and central Iraq and Kurdistan regions which staffed female police officers to respond to reports of GBV. The number of women seeking support from GBV has risen in areas with female police officers (UNDP 2015). Both examples highlight the importance of providing gender-sensitive strategies to combat GBV in Iraq.

CARE-Iraq's Gaining Recovery: Improvement of Maternal and Child health in Return Areas of North Iraq Project worked towards providing SHRH programming to the established PHCCs in northern Iraq (CARE-Iraq, 2018). The evaluation acknowledged particular difficulties with SHRH programming in the Ninewa governorate, where the distribution of contraceptives caused tension between the community and the project staff. From this occurrence, Care discovered that best



(Farah Nosh 2019)

practices in more conservative governorates were to include the community in every step of planning and designing the project to establish trust and engagement, as well as hold awareness sessions separately for men and women about SHRH (CARE-Iraq 2018, 38-40).

Challenges and areas for improvement

From the program evaluations examined, there were two distinct areas that require improvement in healthcare-based projects in Iraq.

The complete disregard of gender in project-implementation processes.

The **USAID/Iraq Primary Health Care Project**, which was a 75 million USD initiative to increase the capacity of PHCCs in Iraq had very limited gender considerations in its implementation (USAID 2013, 22). The lack of gender-conscious design in the PHCCs, such as the lack of visual privacy in consultations, and the difficulty for rural and vulnerable women to access services resulted in the underutilization of services. There were also structural issues, such as the lack of female doctors, especially in rural regions. The recommendations provided to improve these circumstances was for USAID to design infrastructure with women in mind, to provide mobile clinics where possible to reach women unable to travel to clinics, and to support the training of female medical doctors (USAID 2013).



(Farah Nosh 2019)

The call for greater intersectional frameworks to better serve Iraqi's who need the most assistance. The need for greater intersectional frameworks was noted in all the healthcare evaluations reviewed, especially the need for greater attention to rural women, youth, as well as people with disabilities. Both **UNFPA and CARE-Iraq** evaluations noted the very limited amount of services for people living with disabilities. In both circumstances, they were working predominantly in displaced persons camps in northern Iraq or Kurdistan, and expressed the common knowledge of people with disabilities in the camps but still no services were/could be made to accommodate these people (UNFPA 2018, 27; CARE-Iraq 2018, 41).

A **UNHCR** evaluation found that in displaced persons camps in northern Iraq 9% of all households had one household member living with a disability (UNHCR 2014, 2). Due to inadequate services, many

people with disabilities face isolation from NGO programs and services (Buscher 2018) Isolation especially puts women and girls with disabilities at an increased risk for GBV, and globally very little is being done to improve the circumstances for vulnerable people with disabilities (Buscher 2018). Canada should seriously consider supporting this intersectional approach that acknowledges the increased adversities that women with varying abilities encounter by supporting their access to GBV and SHRH programming.

Education

Successes and best practices

In terms of equality in education, a **UNICEF** midterm evaluation on access to quality basic education pointed to the complexities that posed barriers for certain children, and especially certain groups of girls (UNICEF, 2013). In 2013, there were more female dropouts in school than males, but the female to male ratio was higher in upper primary levels as opposed to basic education levels. In addition to that, the geographical area could be an aggravating or mitigating factor, along with family status (ie early marriage, divorced parents), which meant that programming must be nuanced and catered to specific communities and groups within projects (UNICEF 2013). This also in part informed curriculum development, and specifically the standard that curriculum considers gender aspects alongside individual, community and - even further - labor market requirements.

This was incorporated into standards for child-friendly schools in Iraqi Kurdistan, whose Ministry of Education (MoE) continues to have evaluations conducted on the quality of their education, including administration, school monitoring and teacher training (Vernez et al, 2016). Though not every evaluation is gender-centric, this practice presents a good opportunity to examine gendered and intersectional impacts in evaluation findings and recommendations. For example, there are evaluations done by regionally-grounded academics in science and engineering fields (2019) on physical school building designs, functionality, and conduciveness (Ahmed & Breesam, 2018). These are an arena where a gender-considerate lens could amplify inclusive and promotive practices in education system designs and development, in a way which will improve quality for everyone. This would increase continuity and growth, which, as mentioned throughout this section, is a weakness of international community interventions that are often identified by local actors and community members.

Certain donors such as the UAE are also demonstrating the humanitarian to development shift in projects in Iraq, which is also applicable to the field of education. The **Supporting a Return to Education in Mosul City** program, under the Education in Emergencies initiative by Dubai Cares (part of Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Global Initiatives), was implemented in 2017 in response to the full liberation of the city from Daesh (Dubai Cares, 2017). This one-year initiative launched in partnership with War Child UK aimed to enable 4,800 children's safe return to school, and involved

rehabilitation of 12 schools, intensive training and on-going support and mentoring for teachers and headmasters, training in the Parent Teachers Association, and community outreach activities (Dubai Cares, 2017). The program was designed to also involve key stakeholders in Iraq's MoE in the interest of sustainability. Since then, Dubai Cares announced plans to build on the program in Mosul and Baghdad, and to scale-up the program, paying attention to the continued impact of displacement on causing education gaps (Masudi, 2019).

Economic development programming

Successes and best practices:

Cash-based interventions have been used in more humanitarian-oriented initiatives in Iraq and remain through the relatively recent shift towards durable development-focused project implementation. Such initiatives are often critiqued by academics in the development field (this will be explored further in the next subsection), but certain implementation models used in Iraqi contexts highlight good practices in the donor community.

For example, the **Cash Consortium for Iraq (CCI) project in 2018 lead by Mercy Corps** reached 34,813 individuals in 3 Iraqi governorates (Ninewa, Salah al-Din, and Anbar) with cash transfers meant to meet critical food and non-food basic needs, receiving a positive response from participants who benefitted from the program (Mercy Corps, 2018). The project partners were able to reach the most vulnerable through an intersectional approach that, in addition to their gender, considered women's household situations. In terms of funding and project design, the Cash Consortium project paid specific attention to; women-headed households, which accounted for 32% of families funded; households with lactating or pregnant women; households headed by female children, and with a larger number of children under 18; households with elderly at risk; and any other factors that increase vulnerability or decrease resilience (Mercy Corps, 2018). In terms of intersectional considerations in project implementation, CCI partners adopted intentional measures at cash distribution sites, such as giving priority to beneficiaries with physical limitations to ensure they received their cash first (Mercy Corps, 2018). This practice was effective because in addition to being intersectional, it was also culturally appropriate to the districts they were operating in, as it is culturally accepted to prioritize pregnant women or the disabled elderly, and other members of physically vulnerable groups (Mercy Corps, 2018).

Cash for Work (CfW) initiatives are another model of economic development programming found throughout Iraq in projects involving different partners and donors. These move further away from a humanitarian emergency approach, as the goal is to support women to find long-term, sustainable employment (self or other) that will ensure their safety and security. **UN Women implemented a CfW scheme within their Leadership, Empowerment, Access, and Protection in Crisis Response (LEAP)** program, aimed at Syrian women refugees and internally displaced Iraqi women, as well as

women active within host communities (UN Women, 2018). The LEAP program also incorporated skills training held in UN Women and NGO Safe Spaces, income generation activities broadly, and psychosocial support services through already established women’s resource and protection centres, exhibiting an intervention that is strengthened by combining multiple economic models (UN Women, 2018).

Challenges and areas for improvement

A concern that is a common thread throughout program implementation is overlap and fragmentation, for example, duplicate provisions of cash-based programs with other actors in the region (Mercy Corps, 2018). The **UN Women LEAP** program was one CfW initiative among many projects in the area providing skills development sessions for women looking to develop their career skills, showcasing two relevant problems identified in their evaluation report; i) duplication of support provided by NGOs from a lack of coordination among international actors; ii) an opportunity for women beneficiaries to potentially develop an “unhealthy coping mechanism” in seeking out multiple CfW skills development sessions, a practice which does not promote sustainability (UN Women, 2018). There are potential unintended consequences to consider in workforce development projects that train or equip women to work in sectors that are gendered in a way which has systematically limited women’s agency and social mobility.



(Farah Nosh 2019)

In the case of the **Foras Opportunities Project**, after the women’s workshops, the participants were directed to participate in a sewing workshop, which can be problematic in that such gendered job expectations do not try to change deeper levels of social stratification (USAID, 2015). A key element to note is that there was no gender strategy or explicit incorporation of gender theory into this project’s design, though it was aimed at improving women’s lives.

However, it is important to note that projects that are designed more gender-consciously are still susceptible to reinforcing the same potentially limiting factors through unintended consequences. Certain prevalent women’s empowerment programs within displacement camps in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), for example, turned out to be unsuccessful in providing women with their own livelihoods because of the individualistic nature of the intervention (Kiwani et al., 2016). Focus on empowering the individual woman is commonplace and even prevailing in the development field but

in this specific context, the sewing or cooking-related empowerment programs often could not give women the power to open a business, or keep the revenue of their labor, without their husband’s permission (Kiwani et al., 2016).

A common concern raised among stakeholders and beneficiaries interviewed as part of the report evaluations is the short duration of economic projects, with no continuity or follow-up support mechanisms in place to ensure a sustained positive impact (UN Women, 2018). As the economic empowerment scene in Iraq shifts to longer-term developmental initiatives, this is a lesson that can be valuable to take into consideration.

Summary: Successes and Best Practices

Health	Education	Economic Development Programming
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication between community, agency, and governorate is imperative for success. • Women and girl’s safe spaces are well-received and create positive spaces for GBV programming. • Communities should be involved in the designing of SHRH programs to avoid tensions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By taking into consideration local complexities, curriculum and school programs can increase the access to, and quality of education. • Partnerships with the Ministry of Education are beneficial. • Shifts from humanitarian to sustainable development initiatives promote the long-term success of education programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When using an intersectional approach, cash-transfers greatly benefited the women most in need. • Allowing the most vulnerable in society to access cash-transfers first was deemed culturally appropriate • Cash for Work programs that targeted women allowed for an overall increase in their safety and security.

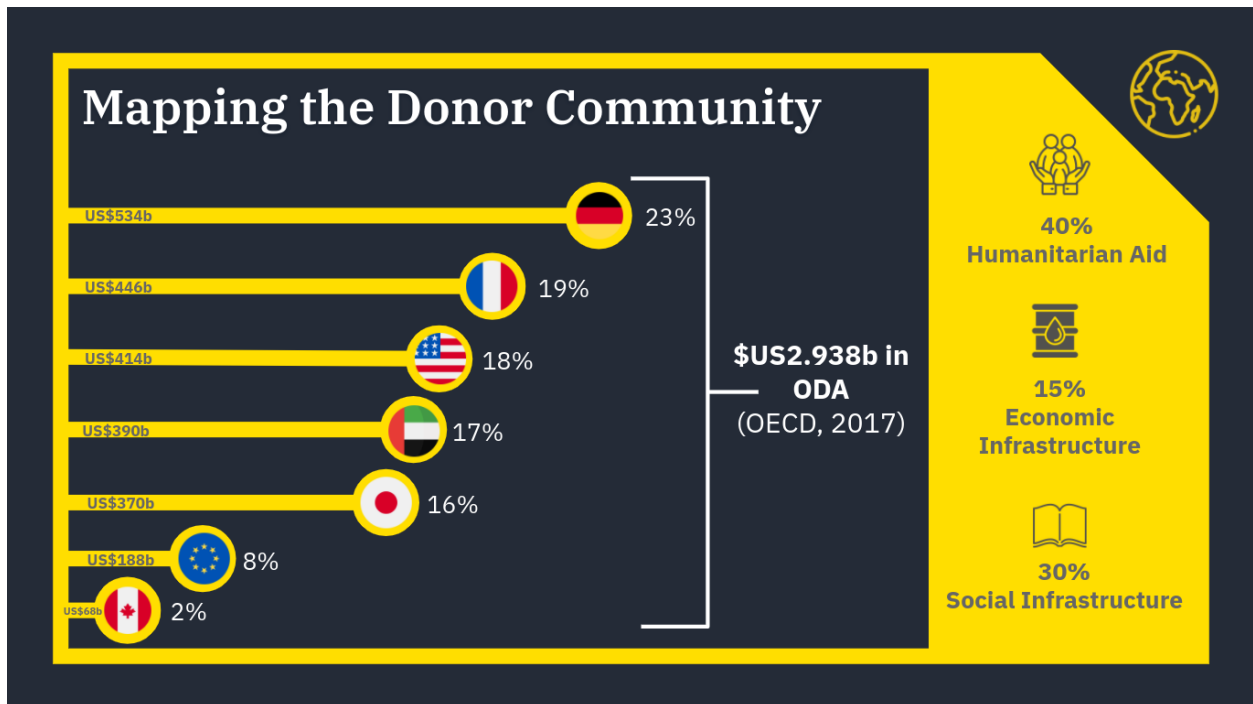
Summary: Challenges and Areas for Improvement

Health	Education	Economic Development Programming
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women and girl’s issues should be an important part in the design of PHCCs • More intersectional approaches need to be considered to ensure that all women, especially those with disabilities have access to GBV programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional education evaluations do not currently use gender as a lens of analysis. By incorporating gender they will be able to more effectively improve the quality of education for all. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a large amount of overlap and fragmentation of cash-transfer and skill development programs with other agencies leading to inefficiencies. • Career development programs should be careful not to reinforce gender stereotypes. • Economic projects are often short-term, with limited follow-up raising questions of their sustained long-term benefits.

The Donor Community

In 2017 the OECD reported 2.938 billion USD in gross total Official Development Assistance (ODA) to Iraq, making it the sixth-largest recipient of ODA in the world. The reasons for this are justified, with donations being used to juggle the humanitarian relief initiatives to assist the many displaced persons within Iraq, as well as the social and economic infrastructure development projects to return Iraq to pre-conflict conditions. This section will explain the most influential donors within Iraq, the initiatives they are working on, the sectors that are being overlooked, as well as the opportunities that exist for Canada to cooperate with other actors to promote a more coherent international community with the best interests for Iraq. This section, unless otherwise stated will use data from 2017, which is the OECD's latest complete fiscal year, as well as information released by each of the selected donors.

The largest contributors of ODA to Iraq include Germany (534 million USD), France (446 million USD), the United States of America (414 million USD), the United Arab Emirates (390 million USD, and Japan (370 million USD) (OECD 2019). Together these five countries contributed to 75% of all ODA within Iraq's borders. The other donors are predominantly European, with the United Kingdom and Canada both falling behind in ODA to Iraq to Italy.



ODA to Iraq by Donor, and by sector (2017) information retrieved from (OECD 2019)

ODA contributions by sector are predominantly directed to humanitarian aid efforts (1.168 billion USD), followed by social infrastructure projects (887 million USD), then program assistance (43 million USD).

USD), and economic infrastructure (304 million USD) (OECD 2019). The remaining funds have been directed for various initiatives, including administration costs.

Additionally, in February 2019 Iraq was pledged 30 billion USD in loan packages to begin reconstruction efforts. However, this number falls short of Iraq's request for 88 billion USD in provisions. The largest single contributor of loans is Turkey at 5 billion USD, with other states choosing different avenues such as through export credits or the promise of private investment (Radio Liberty 2019).

Germany

Germany is notably the largest donor in Iraq and has emphasized “security, reconstruction, and peace” in order to ensure successful and properly timed returns of displaced people (GIZ 2019). Outside of United Nations organizations, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development primarily implements its initiatives in Iraq through the development agency *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit* (GIZ), as well as “churches, political foundations and [Iraqi] NGOs” (GIZ 2019). The largest portion of German ODA has been directed to humanitarian aid initiatives in Northern Iraq, primarily targeting Kurdish and Yazidi populations (“Iraq” 2019). Gender is used as a unit of analysis in German project evaluations but is not the key determinant of success. Unique German programming in Iraq since 2016 include projects such as the Jordan-Iraq Sport for Development initiative, which is a social infrastructure program to unite communities impacted by conflict, as well as a temporary job creation initiatives which pay vulnerable households of IDPs and refugees to rebuild infrastructure (“Sport for Development” 2019; “Jobs Create Prospects” 2019).

France

Similarly, France's approach in Iraq has also been to establish the security and national cohesion of the region, particularly in the post-Daesh governorates bordering Syria (France Diplomatie 2019). The Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs reports that they have contributed 20 million EUR since 2017 alone to contribute to the reconstruction of Mosul (France Diplomatie 2019). France has also placed a large emphasis on health and education programs, but there is no apparent gender approach to their work.

United States of America

Outside of its military aid spending, the United States implements most of its economic aid budget through the *U.S Agency for International Development*. In 2017 the US spent a reported total of 3.4 billion USD in Iraq, but only eleven percent of these finances were directed towards non-military aid (USAID 2019). These non-military initiatives focus primarily on humanitarian aid and promoting democratic governance and stabilization, without addressing direct gender concerns. With the end of American military endeavors in Iraq in opposition to Daesh, it can be expected that their contributions to ODA will continue to decrease in the years to come.

United Arab Emirates

The United Arab Emirates approach in Iraq has been focused primarily on supporting social infrastructure programs such as the provision and return to education of young people impacted by Daesh (UAE 2019). The UAE emphasizes that its foreign aid targets include female empowerment and humanitarian assistance, for which the UAE specifically targets aid to IDPs and refugees in Syria, Yemen, and Iraq (UAE 2019). The UAE places an emphasis on the principle of *tolerance* in their foreign affairs, seeking to encourage cooperation between different cultures while rejecting extremist perspectives (UAE 2019). As of 2019, the UAE has made a substantial contribution of 50 million (USD) to rebuild religious buildings across Iraq, including the Grand Al Nuri Mosque, as well as two Christian churches in Mosul (Hammond 2019).

Japan

The largest portions of Japanese ODA to Iraq have been directed to the reconstruction of economic infrastructure. This falls in accordance with the *Japan International Cooperation Agency's* (JICA) assertion that Japan's role in Iraq is to promote the stabilization of Iraqi oil production to encourage domestic growth as well as Japanese energy security (JICA 2017). Other priorities include the revitalization of electricity to many parts of the country, telecommunications, and WASH programs (JICA 2019). Despite JICA making improvements to adopt a Gender and Development perspective in their programming, which they have implemented in social programming in Iraq, their economic infrastructure programs do not appear to have any gender considerations (JICA 2019).

Iranian and Saudi Arabian Influences

Despite appearing not to make large ODA contributions to Iraq, it is undeniable that both Iran and Saudi Arabia are vying for increased influence within Iraq. Iran invested heavily in this year's Arba'een pilgrimage, which had all but been ended during the years of Daesh. Iran built hundreds of guesthouses, restrooms, hospitals and emergency centres along the pilgrimage route which welcomed 2019's 15 million participants, including 3 million Iranians (New York Times 2019). Iraq, however, drew the line at allowing Iran to bring in their own police security forces for the event. In 2019 Saudi Arabia opened a consulate in Baghdad for the first time in 30 years, provided Iraq with a 1-billion-dollar loan package, and the gift of a 100,000-seated sports stadium (Al Jazeera 2019). Therefore, the dynamics between Iraq, Iran, and Saudi Arabia will be interesting to follow, especially when acknowledging the influence of the United States looming behind this triad.

Final Notes

As Iraq begins its shift to development programming it is important to consider the continued need to support humanitarian initiatives that assist the Iraqi's that require the most amount of assistance. If Canada is interested in maintaining its humanitarian presence in Iraq, the above information indicates that partnerships with Germany should be strengthened due to Germany's similar gender

initiatives and large investments in the region. A stronger and more established relationship with Germany could greatly improve the efficiency of programs.

A sector that is not discussed enough but could make an incredible difference to the future of Iraq is climate resiliency assistance, especially in regards to access to water. Increased pressures on the Euphrates and Tigris rivers systems, which supplies 98 percent of the domestic water supply, pose a serious threat to the future of stability in Iraq (Zawahri, 2017). The impacts of climate change are felt most by women and girls, and by assisting in climate resiliency initiatives Canada can ensure long-term, sustainable improvements for the lives of women and girls in Iraq.

Current (Oct-Nov 2019) protests across Iraq signify the need for careful planning within Iraq to avoid magnifying the situation. These protests exemplify the need for job creation and more government transparency, thus, following recommendations provided by the Brookings Institution on a similar topic, it is suggested that reconstruction and development programs be implemented in a manner that supports existing Iraqi government structures while ensuring greater transparency between these systems and the public (Matsunaga 2019). With large numbers of international actors working in the Kurdistan region, Canada should also be careful not to alienate other populations in northern Iraq that require immediate attention, or peoples living in the central and southern regions that also require assistance.

Methods

This report sought to examine the current humanitarian and developmental trajectory of Iraq in order to inform Global Affairs Canada on the most efficient and effective ways to implement its FIAP. To accomplish this goal, this report focused on synthesizing quantitative data from reputable sources, such as the OECD, the World Bank, and various UN agencies. The Carleton Summons database was used to search for relevant academic articles that built upon our findings. Keys words were employed in this search, including *gender, women, intersectional, Iraq*. To answer question 3, fifteen program evaluations were carefully examined to find trends in successes and challenges experienced by the implementing agencies.

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3. Jordan

Megan Broe and Julia Monahan

Executive Summary

This report provides an analysis of the feminist movement in Jordan. The importance of understanding the nation's history and culture includes a brief overview of the country's history and culture. This facilitates a general understanding of problems faced by women during daily life in Jordan. The key purpose of our work is to synthesize what we know about Jordan and provide insight into how we can shape the state of gender equality in the most fruitful way possible. As you read this report and our recommendations are being put forward, please bear in mind that we inevitably employ a western lens to understand how another society functions, their laws, religion and gender norms. Bluntly stated, this report possesses a western bias and contains many barriers to fully understanding the reality of life and 'issues' in Jordan. In instances of countries in the Middle East, we are interpreting what we view as their problems, from our own point of view. That being said, we must consult with local people in order to tease out more systematic and appropriate solutions.

In order to engage with project planning, we must first base our hypothesis on existing knowledge that others who came before us have gained from fieldwork. Gender inequality in Jordan is deeply rooted in social, political, and economic structures. The inequalities are apparent in political representation and participation, economic inclusion and participation, and social rules and conceived capabilities that limit women's freedom. Increasing the "overall gender equality of a nation" is an extremely complex and multifaceted issue. Accordingly, there are many different strategies and approaches that will successfully benefit the lives of Jordanian women. On the flip side, these approaches hold the risk to create further burdens on women, and add more difficulties and complexities to the issue. This report will feature examples of both successful and unsuccessful strategies to women's equality are analyzed, coupled with a brief overview of international entities that are actively involved in the Jordanian women's movement. Our hope is that this report is utilized as an informative source to understand the current state of gender equality in Jordan, the actors at play, and the best strategies to increase the livelihood of Jordanian women. Some key take-aways from our report will follow such as USAID being a leader in Jordan's gender equality movement, some best practice options near the end of the report and several in-depth case studies of previous notable evaluations and datasets from UN Women and the UNHCR.

Country Overview

Capital city: Amman

Major language: Arabic

State religion: Islam

Judicial system: Sharia Law

Government: Constitutional monarchy

Rulers: King Abdullah II, Prime Minister Omar Razzaz, Queen Rania of Jordan



The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is considered one of the most peaceful nations in the Middle East. As a land-locked, semi-arid country it is surrounded by conflict ridden nations including Syria, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Israel, Lebanon, and the state of Palestine. Jordan's geographical bounds have placed the nation between two refugee crises', making the nation a safehouse for Palestinian and Syrian refugees. Specifically, Jordan is the second largest receiving country of refugees per capita in the world (UNHCR 2019c). As of May 2019, there are over 700,000 refugees in Jordan from Syria. The majority of refugees have come from the previous conflict in Palestine of 1947. As a result, there are 2,117,361 registered Palestinian refugees who are living in Jordan are under the protection of the United Nations Relief and Work Agency for Palestine (UNRWA) (UNHCR 2017, 2). Palestinian refugees currently make up such a large part of Jordan's population and middle class. The remaining lower class is about 17% of them who live in refugee camps. There is no official census data on how many ethnic Palestinians there are in Jordan as relations between Jordanians and Palestinians remain tense. The fear of Jordanian politicians that Palestinians will become the majority of their country is a real fear (Fanack 2019).

As for their military, Jordan boasts a large and well-coordinated police force and military, receiving over \$200 million in Department of Defense (DoD) support from the United States (US Embassy 2018a). The Jordanian state despite its outward appearance of a monarchy, it is considered to be a semi-authoritarian state. The early on political liberalization of Jordan's economy in 1989 by King Hussein at the time were extremely progressive. This is why today Jordan is seen as a "developmental state," as it is heavily funded by foreign aid. The top sending countries of aid to Jordan are the U.S, U.A.E, and Germany (OECD 2018a). Jordan has also been an attractive region for direct foreign investment because of its growing energy and IT economic sectors and strategic geopolitical location. Jordan is depended upon as it is a regional buffer between the surrounding unstable regions. This predicament has influenced how the government prioritizes economic reform before political transformation. Although the liberalization reforms were successful until 2009, the population

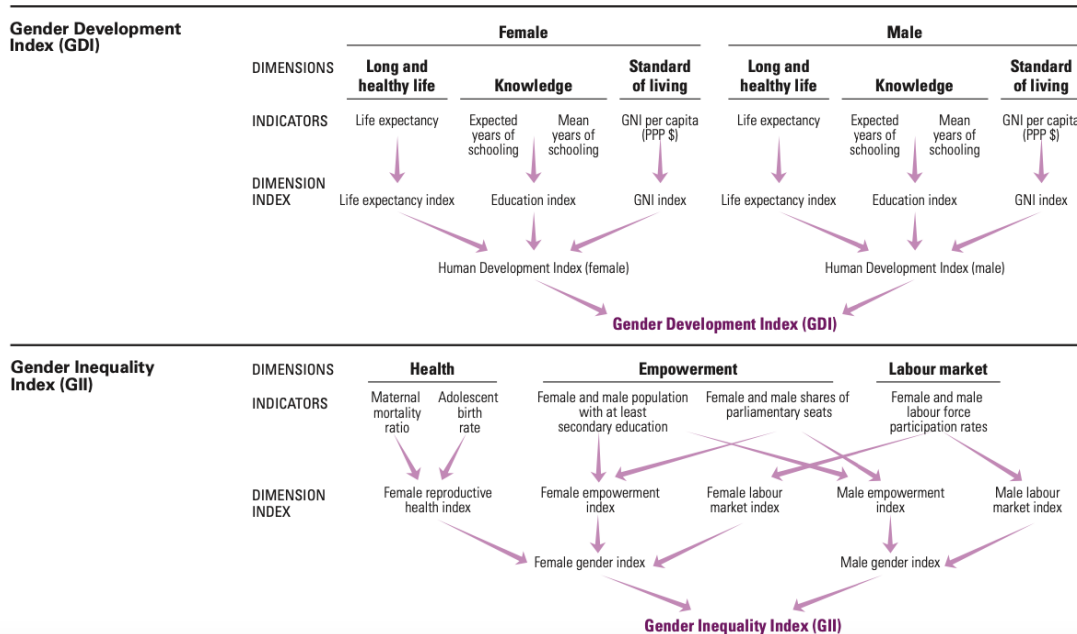
became questioning of King Abdullah II's power in the era of the Arab Spring. As poverty and unemployment increased in 2011, the economy made a comeback and was recognized as an emerging market economy. Overall from the year 1990 to 2017, Jordan's Gross National Income per capita has increased by 39.9% (UNDP 2019). The nation's current gross domestic product (GDP) is 40 billion USD ranking quite competitively against its neighbors. Jordan's largest exports are calcium phosphates 8.2% and knit sweaters which accounts for 6.4% of all exported goods (OEC 2019). The Jordanian economy relies heavily upon clothing, fertilizers, phosphate mining and construction industries. Free trade agreements have emerged between Jordan and many developed nations. The main barriers for further growth remain limited access to water, arable land, and reliance on oil imports. In the 1920s, Jordan had built a comprehensive educational system for the purpose of developing citizens who were ready for the workforce (Al-Hassan 2011, 142). Jordan desires to be a leading nation by expanding its "knowledge economy," and mobilizing citizens to create businesses because of its lack of natural resources.

The Jordanian legal system is based on their constitution which was established in 1948, and their courts which are either governed by Sharia law or Tribunals of other religious communities. The rule of law in Jordan and its functioning was derived from the Ottoman Empire's laws boasting Islamic laws which modified the earlier European models (US Embassy in Jordan 2018b). Fundamentally while learning about the Jordanian legal system there are obvious issues such as inheritance. All inheritance matters are decided in Sharia law courts, such as a son will reap twice as many shares of land than a daughter would. Religious courts have jurisdiction over all personal matters which include marriage or divorce, child custody, adoption, and inheritance matters (King Hussein). Jordan's laws state that fathers are the sole owner of their children. The constitution prestates that Jordanian law discriminates against Jordanian women by not permitting them to pass their nationality to their children on an equal basis with men. Article 3, section (3) Any person whose father holds Jordanian nationality; Art 9. The children of a Jordanian man shall be Jordanian wherever they are born (Kingdom of Jordan 1954). It has been confirmed by the Jordan Ministry of Interior that there are over 355,000 non-citizen "children of Jordanian women" (Human Rights Watch 2018) This not only creates a problem of citizenship, but of belonging and has completely made women question their own identities.

The State of Gender Equality

The challenges that Jordan faces in terms of gender parity and participation are multi-faceted and intersectional. The situation although a relatively stable country in terms of governance and the safety of civilians, women still face societal discrimination in Jordan. The legal system is a mixture of Sharia law which is coupled with the European civil code. Sharia law very prominently dictates women's expected role in society along with gender roles and expectations. Jordan has ranked 138 out of 149 countries according to the Global Gender Gap report (World Economic Forum 2019, 16). This

country ranking has been based on labour force production, wage equality for similar work, and the amount of women working in managerial positions. These factors that also contribute to the Gender Inequality Index (GII).



(UNDP 2019) “Human Development Indices and Indicators.”

Jordan has scored relatively low on many of these indicators, ranking as the 12th worst country in the world (World Economic Forum 2019, 39). In Jordan for every 58 women die per 100,000 births, whereas in Canada only 11 do. Although these are striking figures, the most intriguing is that Jordan has a 97% literacy rate for women and many women are highly educated yet that there is only 14% female participation in the workforce (UNDP 2019, 7). Although this does not take into consideration informal work which will be discussed later in this report. The wage gap between men and women in the private sector is 41% and 28% in the public sector” (International Labour Organization 2013). This wage gap is further intensified because Jordan has less than 1/3 of women participating in the workforce. “Which is one of the lowest rates of women’s economic participation in the world” (USAID 2018c). The immediate reasons that are impeding upon women’s participation outside the household are:

- Fundamentalist Islamic view fears that women and men working in the same work environment would undermine the nuclear family.
- Corruption influences gender equality, gender discrimination, and favoritism in workplaces.
- Women face discrimination in terms of social benefits, pension security and the obvious wage gap.
- The Jordanian law has ratified the UN Convention of Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1992, placing reservations on Articles 9.2, 15.4, 16.1-c-d-g (Zaidan

2013). Even though Jordan has taken the crucial step forward in advancing women's rights by ratifying CEDAW and some laws have been changed the constitution still remains a large barrier in women's equality within the Kingdom.

Jordan is one of the largest receiving states of refugees and displaced persons, which takes a toll on its resources and jobs. When displacement of large amounts of people occur, women and girls as well as men and boys face multiple forms of violence and precariousness. These can include but are not limited to early marriage, sexual violence, and exploitation (UNHCR 2015). The most vulnerable refugees including women and children live in Zaatari, Azraq, and Mrajeeb Al Fhood refugee camps. Zaatari is the largest refugee camp in the world for Syrian refugees it can hold up to 78,000 people. Women face grave challenges including increased instances of gender-based violence (GBV). The lifetime prevalence of beating of women was reported at 44.7% when a survey was taken randomly in different refugee camps within Jordan (Khawaja 2005, 841).

Apart from the refugee situation, women are marginalized through compounding factors such as traditional, accessibility, religious and legal factors. UN women (Hassan 2019) conducted a study on existing gender laws and equality in Jordan. An assessment on the current state of gender equality states that "the Constitution does not distinguish between women and men" (UNFPA 2018). This becoming at the forefront of our inquiry into gender parity in Jordan. The Jordanian constitution established in 1948 proves very problematic for the state of gender equality. Article 23 states that "every worker shall receive wages commensurate with the quantity and quality of his work" (King Hussein). This promotes the positive right of a man and disregards women's positive right to work. Even in practice the government produces ads to that openly request only male applicants for job offers such as in the technology, energy, and the IT sector (Khader 2018). Muslim men are allowed to marry non-Muslim women, but Muslim women are forbidden from marrying non-Muslim men. Also the practice of polygamy for Muslim men in Jordan is quite common and there are no laws against having more than one wife (US Embassy in Jordan 2019). For example, in "civil courts, a woman's testimony is equal to that of a man, while in Sharia courts the testimony of two women is equal to that of one man" (UNICEF 2011). Human Rights Watch declares that there are 15-20 honour killings per year in Jordan (Human Rights Watch 2018). It is very hard or near impossible for women to find work that is not directly near their home. As moving around alone outside the household is forbidden. If women do find a job in Jordanian society there should be no foreign men working nearby. The salaries and benefits aren't enough compared to the price of childcare which means going to work would be pointless. These conditions are not encouraging enough for women to work (Khader 2018). Informal work which is done in the household is not registered, taxed or even counted by the government. When the government misses out on half the "woman" power, national income invested on women's schools does pay itself back through women working, buying goods nor paying taxes. It must be noted that women will always face some traditional, cultural and societal restrictions in the scope of employment, property ownership and financial independence. The fact

that most women do not participate in the Jordanian economy creates a large problem for the government as there is an undeniable deficit without women in labour and capabilities.

Existing Feminist Movements

The feminist movement in Jordan has achieved many successes throughout its history. Jordanian civil society and international organizations such as the United Nations have successfully encouraged the Jordanian Government to commit to close the gender equality gap by 2030 (UN Women 2017). The government initiative consists of intensifying efforts to align national legislation with the Kingdom's international and regional commitments in a participatory manner that ensures gender equality and the elimination of violence against women. "The Government pledges to accelerate the implementation of resolutions to which it has committed itself before international committees and review relevant national plans and strategies to bring them in line with the Sustainable Development Goals for 2030, as well as provide the necessary financial and human resources to carry them out" (UN Women 2017). **The Jordanian government** has implemented strategies to expand the economic, social, cultural and political support given to women and girls, with special emphasis on vulnerable women, rural women, women with disabilities, female refugees, displaced women and survivors of gender-based violence. These strategies include:

- Working to address social norms and stereotypes that cause discrimination against women through education, cultural and media productions that promote positive roles of women as active partners in sustainable development and community building (UNICEF 2011, 2).
- Further commits to enhance women's access to justice and promote gender sensitization among judges in regular and Shari'a courts, general prosecutors and judicial police; and to accelerate the adoption of a national action plan to implement Security Council's resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, and all subsequent resolutions".
- Empowering the Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW) as a mechanism to achieve national goals for gender equality as well as supporting and facilitating the work of civil society organizations, offering protection and social, economic and legal empowerment services to women throughout the country, including refugee camps and host communities (UN Women 2017).
- Increase in the budget allocated to the Jordan National Commission for Women to expand its influence across the nation.

The Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW) is the leading body of the feminist movement in Jordan (JNCW 2018). According to OECD, the JNCW is the reference authority for all bodies relating to women's affairs across the country. The JNCW is a semi-governmental committee chaired by Princess Basma Bint Tala. A convening force is created for national institutions, civil society, and organizations concerned with women's issues and rights promotion in and outside of Jordan (OECD

2018b). This facilitates “close relations with civil society and women’s associations, while at the same time, remaining close to top-tier decision-makers and the opus of power through its governing board, the Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) and close relations to the Royal Court” (OECD 2018b 4). The Commission systematically works to promote the status of women, empower them, and achieve their equal and full participation in all spheres of life, in addition to eliminating gender-based discrimination in Jordan’s laws, policies, programs and national strategies. With the ability to facilitate dialogue and generate consensus among CSOs and activists on important issues – such as amendments to the Labour Law and Personal Status Code - the coalition is used to compel government or parliament to act (JNCW, 2018b).

The Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) on women’s empowerment and gender equality in Jordan was established in 2015 to provide leadership, coordination and accountability for action across governmental bodies. The committee works with the JNCW to achieve commitments related to women’s human rights within Jordan’s Vision 2025 and other national priorities. The work of the JNCW has helped produce gender units within the majority of ministries, in order to promote mainstream gender in their actions and promote gender equality within their sectors. These ministries include the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, the Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MOPIC), Ministry for Justice, Ministry of Social Development, and the Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs (MoPPA).

In cooperation with JNCW, MOPPA works to make progress in specific areas that limit women’s overall political agency and participation. To do so, JNCW is working to implement developments including:

- Creating a receptive legislative and inclusive policy-making context;
- Increasing women’s involvement in senior positions throughout the public sector;
- Increasing women’s representation in elected positions (including professional associations, political parties, etc.);
- Building on women’s capacities and knowledge;
- Nurturing a supportive social context for gender equality;
- Reinforcing networking and partnerships and supporting women in parliamentary and local council elections.

The JNCW is also working towards the economic equality of men and women. Despite the high rate of female enrollment and significant achievements in education, there are large deficits in the economic participation of women in Jordan. There are three structural reasons for this: the lack of affordable childcare services, dangerous inefficient transportation services, and the wage gap between men and women. Accordingly, the “Right Alliance” was created to achieve justice for Jordanian women (JNCW 2018b). The “right alliance” as an umbrella organization comprising the following:

-
- Jordanian National Commission for Women
 - Friendship Foundation
 - General Foundation of Trade Unions of Jordan
 - Arab Women’s Association
 - Legal Network for Arab Women
 - House of Workers Studies Center
 - Tamkeen Association
 - Campaign with the Teacher
 - My Nationality Coalition is a Right for My Family
 - North Society for Sustainable Development

The Right Alliance pushes for the adoption of amendments to the special articles of the Labor Law that contribute to increasing women's economic participation and justice. They specifically include the definition of flexible work, the inclusion of the principle of fair wages. The NGO Coordinating Committee of the National Commission for Women was established in 1996 and is one of the executive arms of the JWNC. The aim of its establishment is to reflect national initiatives of gender equality and to maintain those needs at the non-governmental level. Member organizations include many different factors of gender equality to promote overall equality of men and women. Member organizations include initiatives for gender specific needs that required by civil society. These NGOs and leaders include (as reported in JNCW 2018b):

- Secretary of the Jordanian National Women’s Committees
- President of the Jordanian Women’s Union
- Empowerment of University Women in Jordan
- Head of Family Awareness and Counseling Center
- President of the Jordanian Association for Psychological Rehabilitation
- President of the Arab Media Women Center
- President of the National Union of Women Entrepreneurs and Professions
- Chairperson of the Jordanian Business and Professional Women Forum
- Head of the Circassian Charity Association – Women Section
- International Solidarity Institute for Women
- President of the Third Millennium Women’s Association
- President of the Jordanian Women’s Union
- Al Ahliya School for Girls
- Queen Zain al Sharaf Institute for Development
- President of the Arab Women Association in Jordan
- Human Rights Forum
- Director General of the General Union of Young Women Christian Societies in Jordan
- Al Badia Girls Association for Development and Charity Training
- Secretary General of the National Council for Family Affairs
- Secretary General of the Supreme Population Council
- Commissioner General of the National Center for Human Rights
- Director of the Center for Women’s Studies – University of Jordan
- Balance
- Women Committee – Hashd Party
- Arab Regional Network for Women in Good Local Governance
- Center for Women’s Programs – UNRWA
- Arab Network for Legal Women
- Major of al Hassa Municipality

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- Al Aqsa Charitable Society
 - International Women’s Forum
 - Journalist Syndicate
 - Women Committee – General Federation of Trade Unions in Jordan

Women throughout Jordan are faced with multiple forms of violence in their daily lives. This is due to the deeply embedded inequalities throughout their societal structures. In 2009, the Women’s Complaints Bureau was established within JNCW to collect information on violence against women and provide legal aid to victims (JNCW 2018b). The JNCW has established several networks and working groups, and produced studies and guidance on particular subject, including “the Network on Violence Against Women, an NGO Coordinating Committee, a Legal Working Group, analytical studies on the progress of Jordanian women and gender in the private sector, and legal guides on marriage and the rights of working women under Jordan’s Labour Law” (OECD 2018).

The Network Against Violence Against Women represents an effective network with an “integrated, multi-dimensional, participatory approach that works to build strong community partnerships to coordinate national efforts and develop best practices to reach a society free of violence, safe women, with human dignity, quality justice and equal opportunities” (JNCW 2018b). This has helped contribute to the development of a national strategy, which aims to eliminate violence against women in Jordan, provide protection for victims, and address the after effects of violence against women.

Other examples of the feminist movements present in Jordan include:

Increased political participation: typically approached through female empowerment and placing quotas on government agencies. Other strategies include and providing safe spaces for women where human rights and politics can be discussed, which facilitates a gradual increase in political participation. Programs involved in increasing women's political participation and representation include those spearheaded by the JCNW, as well as subtler approaches such as the “cup of coffee” program.

Increased economic participation: increased economic participation is approached by government, actors in the private sector, and CSO’s. Strategies for women’s economic equality include implementing quotas and merit-based hiring, early advocacy for young women in education to participate in the communication and technology sector, and providing cash handouts to refugees and displaced women to prevent economic dependency on men. Programs include the Arab Women’s Enterprise Fund which works to promote more inclusive economic systems supporting poor women’s participation in markets in Jordan and other Arab states, and

SGBV: prevention of Sexual and Gender based violence has been a movement greatly endorsed by the international community. UNHCR’s global SGBV strategy, entitled Action Against SGBV, focuses

on “improving the quality, effectiveness and coherence of SGBV programming, while tackling the root causes of SGBV by empowering women and girls, working constructively with men and boys, and promoting nondiscrimination”. Additionally, Jordan has implemented a special branch of the police force to respond to domestic violence titled the Family Protection Department (UNHCR 2015).

Anti-radicalization: The UN Women Peace and Security in the Arab States program possesses many strategies to promote safety of women in Jordan. Amongst these strategies is the anti-radicalization initiative which has identified Jordan as a high-risk environment for radicalization. The program uses training to mothers and daughters on warning signs of radicalization amongst fathers, brothers, and sons.

Women's sexual and reproductive health: Although Women's sexual and reproductive health does not take major concern within the JNCW, there are movements headed by CSOs and international organizations to increase access of these types of health services to women in Jordan, specifically refugees. These programs include Action Aid's Reusable period pads and sustainability program.

Protection of female Syrian refugees from multiple sources of oppression and violence co-chaired by UNHCR and UNICEF and as of May 2017 has 30 members from 22 different organizations (UNHCR 2017b).

Proven Models and Best Practices

There is no doubt that the feminist movement in Jordan is continuously developing in size and efficiency. However, there are many obstacles INGOs must overcome in order to implement successful women's equality programs in Jordan. Gender inequality is embedded within political, economic and social structures that remove women from active participation in many aspects of society. Moreover, the meaning of “gender equality” translates differently to the context of Jordanian society than how it is defined and practiced within Canada. In an Islamic nation, religious rights must be adhered to in this society and Imams of the community must be partnered with in any development project in order to prevent pushback. That being said, there are common ideals of gender equality that Canadians will wholeheartedly agree upon. These shared goals include:

- Decreasing the instance of sexual and gender based violence against women (SGBV).
- Decreasing the wage gap between men and women.
- Improving education quality for refugees and Jordanian citizens.
- Securing employment for women close to the household setting in order to give women more financial responsibility and therefore expand the economy and workforce.

Barriers

There are many barriers to achieving gender equality within The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. The current state of gender development presents a multifaceted issue due to the many forces and variety of actors at play, including civil society organizations (CSOs), the government, the royal court, and international nongovernmental organizations. UN women report a clear lack of coordination and responsibility amongst CSOs in Jordan, and a prominent need for capacity building and institutional strengthening (Hassan 2019). The current dominant entity for achieving gender equality in Jordan is the JNCW. The JNCW represents the government, the Royal Court, and has a major influence on the prioritization of development initiatives throughout the country. Thus, working with the JNCW should be a priority when implementing new development programs. Achieving this partnership removes many potential barriers and provides a preexisting network of actors striving for women's equality.

Gender inequality is deeply embedded in social structures and norms within Jordan. Namely, women are considered of a lesser social status than men. There is a perception that women and girls need guardianship, supervision and protection. This translates into restrictions on freedom of movement, social engagement and civic participation, specifically in the southern part of the nation where society tends to hold more conservative ideals, including the Ma'an governorate. An indicator of this was during the 2016 elections, when only 32% of eligible female voters voted (OECD 2018b). This coincides with the belief that women do not belong in politics, and are unable to adequately participate, and perpetuates many societal expectations of women being primary caretakers of children and family. The local media acts as a barrier to the involvement of women in the political sphere by pushing women running for ministerial and political positions out of the conversation of politics, and only airing discussions surrounding family, or women's issues. This boxes in women MPs while reinforcing gender stereotypes.

Socially constructed gender roles dictate what job sectors women can and cannot participate in even outside the political sphere. Specifically, social constructs push women to participate in education and healthcare positions. According to the World Bank, this is a major explanatory factor for the income disparity between men and women. Education and healthcare are more stagnant economic sectors, experiencing very little economic growth. This means limited job creation, and limited opportunities to increase wages. The Jordanian workforce is primarily based in Information Technology (IT) industries, military, and police forces which are fields dominated by males. As a result, higher paying wages, and new job creation are allocated to the male population. Also, the fact that husbands and families would not prefer their wives to work in close proximity or during the same working hours as foreign/refugee men. This facilitates the economic dependency of women on their male counterparts.

The Syrian refugee crisis has also created barriers for women's economic empowerment. This is due to the inflow of lower skilled migrant workers and the outflow of high skilled workers. This has greatly

increased the amount of informal employment. As a result, there are many barriers to women entering informal employment including the wage to hours expectation, and minimum wage (set at JD 190 or US \$270 in monthly terms), which can prohibit lower skilled women to work (World Bank 2016). This is mutually constituted by the social and cultural expectations of women, specifically in reference to their roles in the family and at home (World Bank 2016). Additionally, Jordan has a “missing middle” regarding firms, meaning a small amount of established companies and many small enterprises, making it difficult to transition to ‘middle’ enterprises, or experience economic growth (World Bank 2016). Not only does the Syrian refugee influx impact the economic capabilities of women, it also impacts the fiscal ability of the state. The growth of the informal sector means shifting economic activity out of the tax base. When analyzing Jordan’s development through a wide scope, the Jordanian government can be seen as a barrier to sustainable change. This is due to the fact that the government has been criticized for maintaining a dependency on foreign aid. More specifically, foreign aid as a domestic flow reduces the taxation incentives to prevent tax evasion. Although the government has clearly defined goals for gender equality, there is not a systematic approach in daily government business. (World Bank 2016).

The inflow of Syrian women has been a major source of foreign aid many of which focused on the economic empowerment and independence of Syrian women. However, there are notable barriers to these programs. When implementing programs focused on increasing women’s economic independence through providing cash handouts, the lack of accessibility to other services was a considerably large barrier to the project's main goal. Specifically, the lack of access (or perceived lack of access) to funded health care services have led to program participants using their cash incentives on non-funded health care facilities which is similar to non-compliance (Care 2019). Thus, the projects intended impact reducing economic dependence of refugee women on men - was not always achieved. More simply, the lack of awareness on social and health services provided to families across Jordan continues the perceived need of these services. This inherently impacts the development of qualities of life that are not considered ‘basic needs’. Greater access, or awareness of access to healthcare, should be provided to impoverished populations in order to successfully implement the women’s equity agenda.

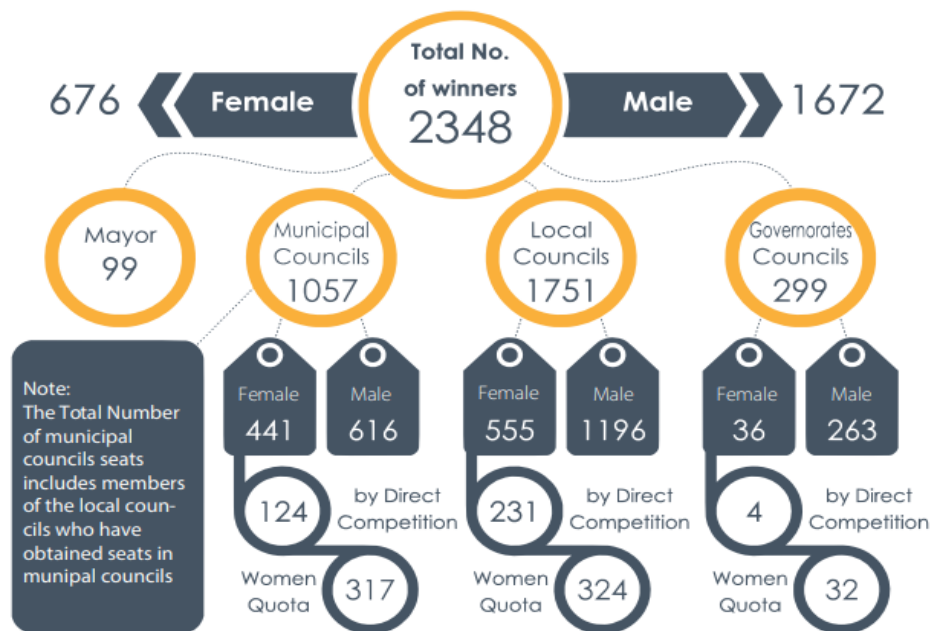
Syrian Crisis in Jordan

As the Syrian refugee crisis emerged in 2012, humanitarian projects have been at the forefront of donors aspirations as many refugees settled and integrated in Jordan. The Women’s Refugee Commission did an in-depth study of refugees in these major refugee camps within Jordan to assess what has been done and how the use of funding could be improved. In our own research of projects that focused on gender, many of them were to fund services in Jordan for women and girls to combat gender-based violence (GBV). The UN Women conducted a survey of randomized sample of women and girls living in rural and urban areas. The survey indicated that 83% of those surveyed indicated they were not aware of any services on GBV (Women’s Refugee Commission 2014, 13). As was stated

before, Jordanian women feel confined to the house and this is a fundamentalist traditional practice, this blocks a pathway to access of information on services and programs that are available to them. As well as there is a gap for male populations whom lack access to mental health services especially inside and on the fringes of refugee camps. Men are the most vulnerable to mental illness as they are the ones to experience violent situations and deal with them so that their families can reach the refugee camp safely overcoming disaster.

Strategies for Overcoming Barriers

- The JNCW worked with the OECD-MENA initiative to implement Quotas to ensure increased representation of women within government positions. The implementation of quotas is used to enforce the increased political participation of women in the short term, with the hope that trust is built at large for capabilities of women in the political sphere. Ideally, the population will no longer need quotes to ensure adequate representation of women within the political sphere (OECD 2018b).



(OECD 2018b)

- Civil society organizations utilize many successful strategies for increasing women’s participation in politics. “Women’s advocacy organizations play a major political role whereby they are active in parliamentary elections, developing programs, holding training sessions, workshops and lectures to prepare women for the elections and train them in using strategies that will support their campaigns” (OECD 2018b, 60).
- Utilizing subtle methods of women's rights education has proved a successful strategy for expanding human rights within the more conservative southern region of the country. This strategy is used within the “cup of coffee program” in Ma’an, where a local woman invites

other women from their community into her home to discuss politics and educate them about their rights. Those women would then host their own session with a new group of women and so on. This strategy is an effective way to educate a large number of women while raising less eyebrows throughout the community (OECD 2018b, 61).

- UN Women utilized workshops as a strategy to develop action plans to address different aspects of gender equality. Notably, the UN worked individually with relevant stakeholders such as Jordan's Armed Forces and the Peacekeeping Training Center (Hassan 2019). The strategically brought together the Peacekeeping Training Center and the Swedish police (existing partners) in October 2017, with support from United Nations Department of Peace Keeping Operations (UNDPKO) and the participation of JNCW. The workshop focused on ways to improve the role of women in peacekeeping operations. "The recommendations that emerged from this activity were adopted by the Peacekeeping Training Center. Likewise, a gender audit conducted by DCAF/NATO of JAF resulted in an action plan developed by JAF to increase the participation of women at various levels in the army" (OECD 2018b, 60).
- Development programs led by USAID assisted the government with introducing merit-based hiring and strategies to increase women's involvement in political and legal sectors. Additionally, USAID implemented incentive-based strategies for increasing women's participation in male dominated labour forces including the political sphere. The implementation of the 'Future Judges Scholarship Program' for women studying international law is an example of this strategy. This has helped the number of female judges in Jordan go from 6% in 2006, to 22% in 2018 (USAID 2018b).
- Successful strategies for solving the deep labour market segmentation and low levels of employment for women (only 12%) were utilized by the OECD-MENA initiative. These strategies include funded training on IT and tech, in addition to teaching girls about their ability to entering the IT and tech industries. Furthermore, training provided to men and boys on principles and benefits of inclusion further removes social barriers to the gender segregated workforce (OECD 2018b).
- An effective strategy for the expansion of women's involvement in the economic sector is expanding opportunities for females to start their own businesses. This has a multiplier effect on employment of females; when females do start their own firms, they are more likely to employ other females. This strategy was utilized by The Jordan Hashemite Fund for Human Development (JOHUD). The initiative coupled funding/cash with training entrepreneurship for women throughout 6-month programs. (JOHUD 2016).
- Staffing women's centers with refugee women facilitated greater trust and thus greater usage of these services. This strategy can be used to erase the perceived lack of access to essential services that may act as a barrier to other development programs such as cash vouchers. "Women's centers staffed by refugee women themselves have gained unparalleled trust from the community, and become a second home for many. Using strategies such as this increases access to non-discriminatory health services, psychosocial support, rights-based education,

and leadership skills. “We need smarter investments in programs that enable refugee girls and women to lead better futures, including through education and quality vocational and life skills training, as well as access to sexual and reproductive health care” (JOHUD 2016).

- An effective strategy to decrease these social assumptions regarding the lack of political and economic capabilities of women is by increasing the participation and agency of women within the household, and thus increase participation of women within society. Providing cash handouts to women was an effective method to increase their participation in financial decisions within the household, However, this method was vastly more effective when paired with financial literacy trainings for the women including entrepreneurship, or given out during a humanitarian crisis. Moreover, increasing financial resources of women, provides them with individual aspirations, which also enhancing their bargaining power. This strategy was utilized by CARE to promote economic interdependence amongst displaced women (Care 2019).
- USAID successfully uses the media to supporting women's rights in Jordan, which can bypass many barriers that are faced on non-virtual platforms. USAID has used campaigns on Youtube, Twitter etc to support women’s participation in the workforce. This resulted in 1,173,000 instances of online participation “outreach resulted in over 1,173,000 instances of online social dialogue, fostering dynamic, open dialogue that creates space for change in gender norms and expectations” (USAID 2018c).

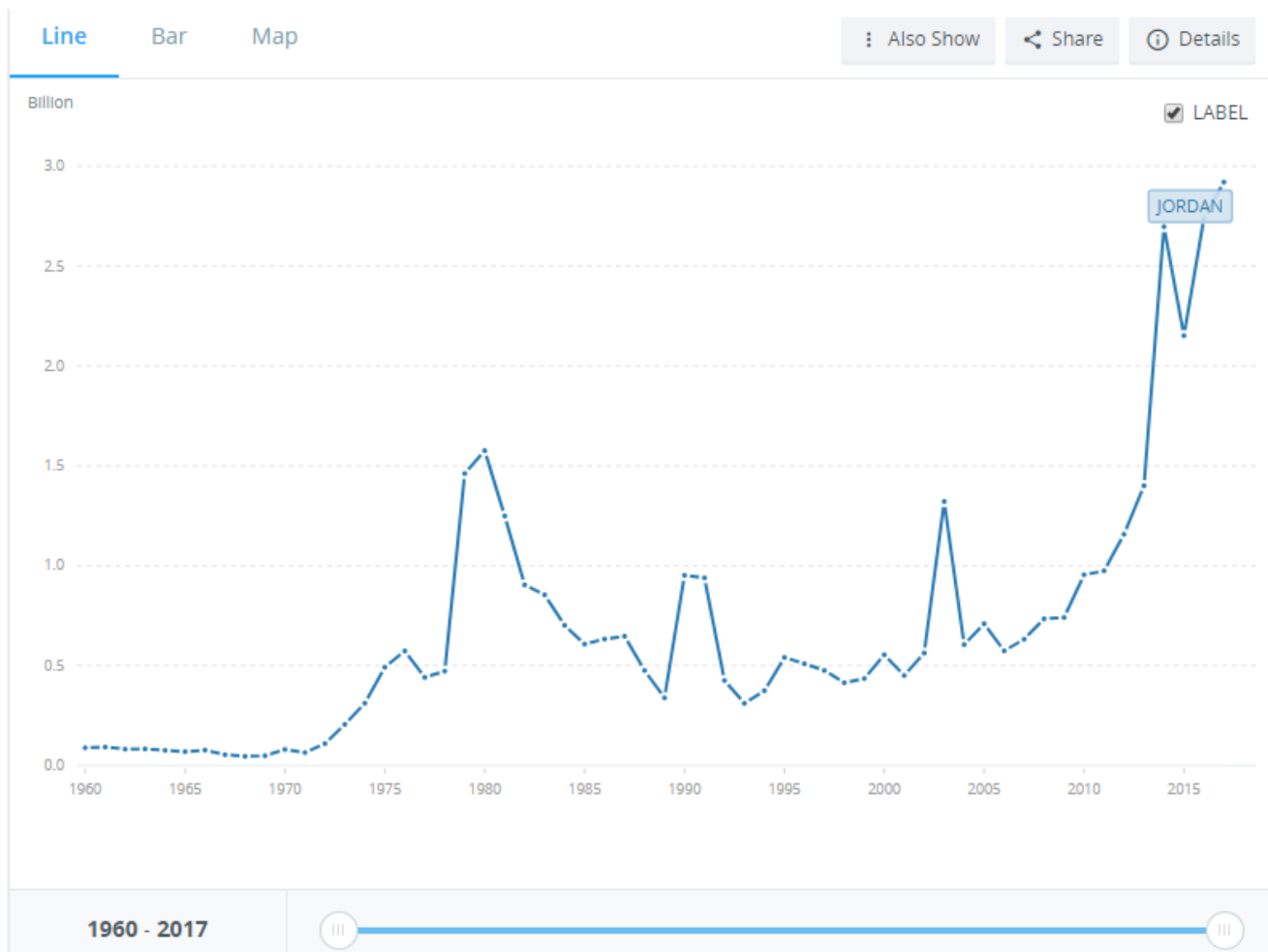
Recommended Practices

Best practices are the practices that perform superior to all other sound instruments or solutions. The goal of best practices in development are to improve the quality of life using measurable or personal indicators. Some of the best practices utilized to increase Jordan's gender parity are:

- Involving on the ground Jordanian women’s organizations such as JNCW and JWU. They are at the forefront of efforts to improve women’s participation in all social, intellectual and political spheres.
- Convincing the government and community members about how the project will benefit them so it can be successful.
- Pool funding methods Jordan’s national action plan (Hassan 2019).
- Creating safe spaces: close to women’s home, and trusted by other family members to avoid shaming.
- Long term sustainable project planning: handing off the project to locals and ensuring that enough funding exists or local skills development.
- Building local capabilities: Jordan’s “knowledge economy”.
- Reduce tensions between host community and refugee community.
- Women advocacy at the local level self- family empowerment as a prerequisite for political empowerment.
- Focusing on husband notions of gender roles to strengthen women’s empowerment.
- Leave no trace behind: physically and mentally.

- Building trust with service providers.
- Working with volunteers, community buy-in.
- Conducting a gender based analysis before the project.
- A gender cap advisor and standard operating procedure for SGBV and child protection should be applied to every project on this sensitive topic. The UNHCR has worked diligently on this criteria for their projects dealing with gender violence (Women’s Refugee Commission 2014).
- Cash advances paired with trainings on human rights and financial literacy effective in USAID program.
- Long term development projects of funding effective, short term ie 6-12 month unsustainable (OECD 2018b).

The Donor Community



(World Bank, 2016)

Jordan is set to receive 1.27 billion dollars in aid from the U.S alone in 2019. The donor community consisted mostly in our research of western aid to region, USAID being a key player in disseminating programs to Jordan. These programs aim to address 5 overarching initiatives including:

- Expand Jordan's contributions to bilateral and coalition efforts to address the threat of ISIL and other regional threats;
- Accelerate inclusive economic development;
- Strengthen Jordan's ability to deliver essential health, education, and water services;
- Strengthen democratic accountability and enhance effective governance
- Enhance gender equality and female empowerment (Foreign Assistance 2019).

This request also includes humanitarian assistance to support programs within the refugee population. A large amount of foreign aid in Jordan is represented with humanitarian response programs to assist refugees. In terms of women's rights, refugee women are thought to be at the most risk, and thus attract a good portion of women's rights development programs.

USAID

As the country's biggest aid provider, USAID endorses many women's rights movements within the country. Apart from assistance allocated to humanitarian response, notable USAID programs include employment initiative for women. These programs work to reduce the labour segregation and thus facilitate participation of women in the economic and political spheres of society, as well as promote economic equality between men and women. This is done by advocacy to implement mandates and merit-based hiring, providing training for, and incentive-based promotion for participation of women across these sectors ie. Scholarships, funded training sessions, training on benefits of women's participation, etc. Furthermore, USAID is partnered with many ministries to promote their overarching themes of development. These ministries include:

- Ministries of Education, Health and Labor
- Jordanian National Commission for Women
- King Abdullah II Center for Excellence, Legislative and Opinion Bureau
- Telecommunications and Information Technology
- Water and Irrigation
- Income and Sales Tax Department
- Social Security Cooperation
- Planning and International Commission
- Political and Parliamentary Affairs
- Public Sector Development
- Social Development

Department for International Development UK (DFID)

DFID represents another major international body for foreign assistance. One notable program funded by DFID is The Arab Women's Enterprise Fund. The AWEF worked to promote more inclusive economic systems by supporting poor women's participation in markets. The AWEF is a partnership with the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), with both donors contributing £10 million each, and worked to address the gaps in women's economic empowerment in the MENA region (Arab Women's

Enterprise Fund 2019). Other programs include the Multi-purpose Cash Assistance to Refugees in Jordan program. This program directly supports 22,000 of the most vulnerable refugees through regular cash-transfers, by covering their basic needs for rent, food, and essential items like blankets and heaters in the winter. This 5-year program commenced on August 1st 2019, and projected to be completed in 2024. This program represents an effective method for women's empowerment, protection, and human rights advancement (Arab Women's Enterprise Fund 2019).

Global Affairs Canada

Global Affairs Canada in our research provide majority of the development assistance to Jordan is dedicated to the education sector. There are many projects such as Right to Play projects that enable refugees free time, aid in the Syrian outflow of refugees to Jordan, and also to combat gender-based violence. Canada as mentioned in the FIAP document has many concerns about the current state of gender equality and how Canada could aid in closing the gap between men and women. We recommend for Global Affairs to partner with the Jordanian Women's Union and see what leverage they could use as a trading partner with Jordan to encourage the government to enforce stricter gender laws that will aid in women's emancipation (Global Affairs Canada 2016).

United Nations

The United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (OHCHR) has endorsed a variety of development and advocacy programs within Jordan. Some notable examples include programs on Human Trafficking, Sanitation and clean water access, freedom of religious belief, and movements against torture and other inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment (OHCHR 2019).

UN Women has a strong influence on the women's rights movement in Jordan. UN Women is partnered with the JNCW, facilitating its effect on the advancement of the national agenda. UN Women formed a coalition that includes relevant stakeholders from the security sector (army, civil defence and peace-keeping operations), relevant government ministries, and CSOs (Hassan 2019). An example of this the successful promotion of women's participation in the Jordanian Armed Forces and peace keeping missions. Additionally, UN Women's peace and security program has endorsed many successful programs in the nation including the anti-radicalization movement, and action against Sexual Gender Based Violence. In parallel to this project, UN Women in Jordan has also been implementing a complementary project in close collaboration with CSOs. The project, Women Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF), focuses on increasing the participation of women at the local level in activities that affect their lives. WPHF provides both consultation sessions as well as psychosocial support to women, which enhances the overall approaches advocated by Jordanian National Action Plan in increasing the participation and involvement of women affected by conflict in decisions that affect their lives. "This indirectly supports the promotion of the role of women leaders and their engagement in decision making processes. CSOs implementing this project were part of the coalition leading the development of the JONAP" (Hassan 2019).

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has implemented many successful programs to assist the refugee population in Jordan. In addition to the UNHCR's cash assistance program, they have also implemented successful projects on SGBV. Their strategy, entitled Action Against SGBV, focuses on improving the quality, effectiveness and coherence of SGBV programming, while tackling the root causes of SGBV by empowering women and girls, working constructively with men and boys, and promoting nondiscrimination. UNHCR supports multi-sectoral SGBV prevention and response programming in four key areas of intervention (health, psycho-social services, protection, and legal aid) at structural, systemic and operative levels. The need for continued financial support was referenced by the UNHCR for the continued development of the SGBV program (UNHCR 2015).

Methods

Our research has been conducted through an analysis of program summaries, evaluations, and donor websites. Specifically, key words such as 'Jordan', 'Gender', were used throughout large databases to find relevant sources for our research. These databases include:

- The World Bank database (<https://datatopics.worldbank.org/gender/>)
- The United Nations Development Programme (<http://hdr.undp.org/en/data>)
- UN Women (<https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications>)
- Department For International Development UK (<https://devtracker.dfid.gov.uk/>)
- USAID (<https://dec.usaid.gov/dec/home/Default.aspx>)
- United Nations Evaluations (<http://www.uneval.org/evaluation/reports>)
- Global Affairs Canada (<https://w05.international.gc.ca/projectbrowser-banqueprojets/>)
- Reliefweb (<https://reliefweb.int/>)
- Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (<https://www.ohchr.org/en/issues/ipeoples/ipeoplesfund/pages/sources.aspx>)
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (<https://www.oecd.org>)

Through searching these databases, we discovered an emphasis of information and partnership with the Jordanian National Commission on Women (JNCW), which sparked further research into this entity. The JNCW spearheads the feminist movement in Jordan and had a significant network of international partnerships. This motivated the emphasis of the JNCW in our report. Additionally, USAID was established to be the biggest donor entity in Jordan. This motivates further investigation into USAID, its presence in Jordan, its local partners, and the programs it funded.

The emphasis of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals on the Jordanian National Strategy in terms of women's rights prompted an in-depth investigation into the United Nations programs present in Jordan, specifically the UN Women Peace and Security Program. The majority of

our research findings were centered around women’s economic and political empowerment and participation, as well as programs to prevent Sexual Gender Based Violence. Thus, our report focused on an in-depth analysis of these initiatives as they represented the dominant feminist movement within the nation. This resulted in a knowledge gap of health-based development programs

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4. Lebanon

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Executive Summary

The government of Lebanon in a joint effort with local organizations and international non-governmental organizations, communities and civil society have made it a part of their agenda to improve gender equality and gender empowerment in Lebanon. Gender equality is focused on the inclusion and full participation of men and women, while women's empowerment focuses on empowering the role of women within various sectors. Although women are economically becoming more involved, understanding male attitudes given that they make up most of the formal sector is critical to achieving gender equality. This is critical as patriarchal attitudes which are deep-rooted in culture and tradition in Lebanon, often challenge improvements in gender equality. However, improvements to gender equality and women's empowerment, must also be centered around male initiatives which will influence workplace, education and health attitudes towards gender equality and women's empowerment in Lebanon.

Current initiatives have been placed on gender and decreasing the gender gap. However, within these initiatives there is a strong focus on Syrian refugees. Lebanon is currently hosting a significant number of refugees, which adds numerous challenges to the country in terms of demography and geography. Generally, the focus within Lebanese country reports focuses on both Syrian refugees and gender equality, placing an increased focus on sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) against women and young girls. Primarily, the refugee populations are designated as the most vulnerable and thus, most current interventions and programs are directed towards addressing SGBV of Syrian women and girls. To add, development initiatives for gender equality, have become compromised by current demands to assist refugees and their emergence into the economic sector. Proven models and best practices for gender equality have had mixed results, as some models or practices advance gender equality and women's empowerment, while some initiatives fail to target the greater number of individuals within the expected outcome.

In terms of Sexual and Reproductive Health, numerous programming interventions have encouraged the infusion of this subject in educational systems as well as public governance structures. Syrian refugee populations hold the majority in the central part of numerous programs, thus the host populations may be undermined and irrelevant, deeming this to be a conflict. Moreover, multiple projects and their objectives and results will be discussed in the sections below.

Country Overview

Lebanon is situated in the eastern basin of the Mediterranean Sea and shares its borders with Syria in the North and Israel in the South. The area covered is approximately 10,000 sq km and its capital is Beirut. The country's population comprised of 6 million people and their official language is Arabic (BBC 2018). The main ethnic groups residing in the area are Arab (95%), Armenian (4%) and other (1%) (Lebanon Fast Facts 2019). Religious groups are categorized into Muslim (57%), Christian (36%), and Druze (5%) approximately (Lebanon Fast Facts 2019). In terms of education, well-established education systems are in place, formed by both public and private sectors, however, the latter sector tends to be more "financially privileged" than the former (Mouhanna et al 2017, 197). In other words, private schools are more preferred in comparison to public schools.

The conflict-ridden country that lies in the Middle East and North Africa region has a history of civil conflicts and is currently experiencing one of the largest influxes of migration from its neighbour, Syria (Oxfam Lebanon). As of 2019, UNHCR has recorded that less than a million of Syrian refugees reside in Lebanon (both documented and undocumented). UN-Habitat has outlined that the influx of refugees has increased the population density from 400 to 520 person/km² (UN Habitat 2019). Moreover, UN-Habitat estimates that the main cities of Beirut, Tripoli, Saida and Tyre currently host around 65 percent of the Lebanese population, 30 percent of Syrian refugees and about 90 percent of Palestinian refugees. Within this, 67% of "deprived" Lebanese peoples and 80 percent of Syrian refugees reside in poorly constructed public infrastructures (UN Habitat 2019).

It is important to note that the implementation of international programs and projects outline significance for Syrian refugee populations, specifically around resettlement for the refugee populations and reducing sexual and gender-based violence against women and children. Diversity of challenges such as population displacement and conflict has put additional pressures on the country of Lebanon, in terms of natural and socio-economic resources (Mouhanna et al 2017, 197).

Lebanon is currently going through a "nationwide protest" movement and its main goals include people challenging the sectarian government, which has officially led to the "toppling" of the government (D'Amore 2017). The Prime Minister, Saad Hariri, who was "blamed" for bringing the country to a stage of bankruptcy officially resigned on October 29th 2019 (D'Amore 2017). An ongoing country-wide conflict has brought the country to a standstill. The protests are primarily intersectional in nature; women are advocating for their rights in politics, LGBTQ rights are also being advocated by activists and much more is coming to the surface (Harb 2019).

The State of Gender Equality

Results in qualitative assessments show different results in the perceptions and attitudes towards gender equality in Lebanon and the adverse challenges faced by women. Policies and initiatives have been adopted, but there remains a gap in gender equality between persistent laws and their implementation (“From Ministerial Conclusions to Gender Equality” 2016, 9). In collaboration with various organizations and political institutions, there is international pressure on the promotion of gender equality and women’s empowerment. One of the main challenges within the Lebanese society is that there are gender stereotypes which are deep rooted within the culture and tradition, in regard to the gender division of roles. Trends currently show that gender equality is decreasing, while there is no current information on reduced gender inequalities (Sachs et al. 2019). There is a wide gap between the attitudes of the political community expectations in women’s organizations and non-government organizations who are involved in women’s rights (“UN Committee on the Elimination” 2014, 25). According to the Global Gender Gap Report, Lebanon is currently ranked at 140 out of 149 countries and 65th in terms of gender inequality Index (Global Gender Gap Report 2017, 157). Results from the gender gap index has been very stagnant, with each year concluding with different results on gender equality. In 2016, according to the World Bank collection of development indicators, women accounted for 49.70 percent of the population (“Population, Female (% of Total Population) - Lebanon” 2019) . Although in this population, as of September 2019 there were 919,578 registered Syrian refugees hosted in the Lebanon (“Operational portal” 2019). The need to support the large refugee population, also compromises vulnerable women and girls (“Lebanon” UN Women”). It helps to add that regional municipal authorities, have a high degree of influence in shaping policy decisions, such as wage norms and job creations, in which they can directly engage in the process of advancing gender equality and gender inclusive development in Lebanon (Azargoshasb 2016, 37).

Data presented by UN Women Lebanon and the National Commission for Lebanese Women (NCLW), shows that there has been an increase in numbers. The number of women candidates and winning women candidates in parliamentary elections have increased from 6 in 1992 to 23 in 2013 (“3rd yearly report” 2015, 49). Records show that the highest percentage of women in parliament seats on record was in 2005, with 4.7 percent of women within parliament, from the previous year at 3.1 percent (“The Global Gender Gap Report 2018” 2018, 157). Given that there has been an increase in women candidates, numbers remain low in comparison to male candidates in decision-making positions. Over the years significant progress has been made in closing the gender gap within the labor force but is also a widening gender gap within political empowerment with 3.1 percent of women in parliament versus 96.9 percent of men (“The Global Gender Gap Report 2017” 2017, 208).

In the education sector the enrollment between boys and girls, varies according to region and educational level. There still persists an unequal relation in the access of rural women to reproductive

health services and education with high illiteracy rates (“Mapping of Gender and Development” 2006, 51). Although, it has been noted that “Lebanese laws do not discriminate between women and men in education opportunities” (“Lebanese NGO Forum Women's Rights” 2000, under “Woman and Education”). Within primary education, there is a lower percentage of gender disparity between boys and girls with 98.4 percent girls enrolled and 98.3 percent boys enrolled between ages six and eleven (“UN Committee on the Elimination” 2014, 64). In addition, there have been high literacy rates amongst women, but their economic participation remains low (“3rd Yearly Report” 2015, 15). Although the disparity between men and women in educational opportunities are lower, the greatest inequalities are between women in different areas of the country. Subsequently, there still remains groups of officials in public agencies and institutions who are unaware of the structural discrimination against women in all institutions (“UN Committee on the Elimination” 2014, 7). Adversely this causes challenges in the way that women gain access to different institutions and how it oppresses their economic empowerment.

The economic activity of women is 22.8 percent, while the rate for men is 72.8 percent, and the unemployment rate is 10.4 percent for women in comparison to 5 percent for men (Ibid., 77). It also helps to include that there is an income gap between men and women in all sectors at 6 percent, with the highest income gap reported in 2007 within the agricultural sector, at 21.0 percent (Ibid.,78). In comparison to previous years there has been a decrease in the female to male labor force participation rate which was calculated at 32.6 percent (“Sustainable Development Index”, 271). There are existing challenges in the lack of equality in the advancement and promotion of women in different job sectors (“UN Committee on the Elimination” 2014, 79). Women also face challenges in the available career options, which allow them to be economically independent and performing their domestic responsibilities, which hinders their economic mobility and access into the private sector.

Male attitudes in society believe that it is more important to educate sons over daughters and that men should have access to the job market over women, which can support the data presented that shows that there are 70 percent of men in the job market in comparison to women who make up 23 percent in the job market (El Feki, Heilman and Barker 2017, 156). Given these stats, challenges still pertain. There is a societal challenge in changing cultural norms, as men and women are not seen as equal. Men still believe that they should have more access to jobs and education over women when resources are scarce (Azargoshasb 2016, 157). Although, given these challenges, there is a shared perception with 68 percent of men and 87 percent of women who believe that there is more work that is needed to be done, to promote equality for men and women (Ibid., 157).

Existing Feminist Movements

The feminist movements in Lebanon are rooted in challenging social gender injustice and patriarchal systems (Moughalian & Ammar 2019). The constant marginalization of women from public and political spheres stands to be inclusive of aspects such as archaic family laws built against women and low representation in politics (Geha 2019). For instance, the proportion of seats held by women in the Parliament is less than 10 percent, which contributes to the strengthening of male-dominated ideological structures set in Lebanon (World Bank 2017). Furthermore, societies in the Middle East define violence against women and young girls as a part of the “private sphere” and places the victims as the central “culprit” , instead of the accused male (RDFL 1a 2018). Public attitudes force the blame to be shifted to the victim, and thus, many feminist movements are primarily centred around putting an end to the injustices suffered by women and young girls, in terms of gender-based violence (RDFL 2018). Moreover, women stand at the forefront of ending disproportionate levels of violence, risk and trauma inflicted on women through implementation of important factors (Global Fund for Women). These factors include community-building, sustainable change and “protection and extension of human rights” for women (Global Fund for Women).

However, due to chronic underfunding and constant backlash and resistance by public authorities, women’s rights organizations and feminist movements have adopted diverse tactics and strategies to combat challenges (Moughalian & Ammar 2019). Several organizations have also been playing a central role in furthering feminist movements, primarily through social media campaigns. For instance, ABAAD- Resource Centre for Gender Equality is a UN Economic and Social Council accredited organization that aims to further gender equality, which will provide as a “stepping stone” in sustainable, social and economic development in the Middle Eastern and North Africa region (MENA) (ABAAD 1a). It is one of the leading agencies on promoting gender equality in the MENA region that works on protection programs and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) (ABAAD 1a). This organization is involved in multiple projects and spearheads online campaigns, which have attracted a large following. One of the most popular campaigns, starting from 2018 till now entails altering stigmatization towards women, regarding rape cases and it is known as “Shame on Who” campaign (Advocacy and Policy Development Programme, ABAAD 1b 2018). Multiple activities are involved in this campaign, which include conducting a social experiment, immersive play and participating in marathons (ABAAD 1b 2018). During the 2018 Beirut Marathon, sexual assault survivors were encouraged to hold up signs that read, “This Year, I will not run. I will face my rapist” and “This year, I will face the people who blamed me” (ABAAD 1b 2018). This was encouraged to create awareness about the societal attitudes on “victim-blaming” and to increase tough sanctions on the male perpetrators (ABAAD 1b 2018). These movements and campaigns have been organized by an organization and led to the establishment of a large online following.

However, one recent uprising, known as the “leaderless” movement, is primarily focused on the increased inclusivity of women in the political spheres (Geha 2019). The uprising officially began on October 17th, 2019 and since then, active participation has ranged from rallying against police violence to writing statements that illuminate the discriminatory nature of the political systems against women (Ibid). The method of organization as well as the demands of the “October Revolution” are “feminist” in nature and thus, the uprising has one main aim: women should be a part of the “heart” of the transition phase (decentralization of patriarchal structures in political institutions to a more inclusive one) and contribute to embracing the role of “crafters” of the “new Lebanese state” (Ibid).

Non-profit organizations play an important role in mobilizing support and gathering of feminist activists on an important issue. Moreover, as mentioned above, social media has contributed to the formation of several activist-oriented followings online. Another example of a significant feminist movement and campaign taking place right now in the MENA region is the “Zero Tolerance for Violence Against Women and Girls” (RDFL 2019). A Regional Media Campaign was launched in September 2019 and this was funded by the European Union and funded by EuroMed Feminist Initiative, in connection with nine women’s rights organizations in seven countries of the MENA region (RDFL 2019). The two main non-profit organizations that participated in its launching via the organization of a press conference in Beirut on September 23rd 2019 are Association Najdeh and the Lebanese Women Democratic Gathering (RDFL). Both are feminist-oriented organizations that combat the violence against women and girls and help raise awareness about the rights of the two groups in Lebanon (RDFL 2019). The campaign encourages women and girls to come forward and share their stories of violence with the hashtag, “Shu Ostik/Shu Ostak”. This movement has garnered massive support online, thus establishing a strong following online. Moreover, it is similar to the online campaign launched by ABAAD, however, the latter was a prominent movement that occurred at the end of last year and the former campaign provokes discussion on the amendment of legal legislations such as the Domestic Violence Law and Penal Code (RDFL 2019). Most importantly, both campaigns contribute towards furthering advocacy for women’s movements on violence against women and girls.

Movements in Syrian Refugee Camps

Lebanon sharing borders with the war-stricken country, Syria contributed to implications for both the countries’ peoples, especially women and young girls. About a million refugees have entered Lebanon so far, and the numbers are increasing (UNHCR 2019). One of the most vulnerable communities in Lebanon are the women and young girls from Syria, as they handle the “burden of war and displacement”. Financial burden increases and thus, due to stress of debts as well as psychological distress, child marriage and domestic violence are on the rise in refugee camp sites. As a result, a group of Syrian women in the town of Arsal, have established Women’s Social Rally and their aim is to combat child marriage and prevent young girls from dropping out of school. The lack of

documentation provides incorrect statistics, which may lead to increase in undocumented child marriages. Thus, this group is currently advocating for documentation of unions and divorces as well as providing psychological stress for domestic and sexual assault survivors. More importantly, this kind of a localized movement holds the potential to spread across numerous refugee camp sites and mobilization of support can contribute to spreading awareness on the importance of education for young girls, as well as criminalizing domestic and sexual violence against women (Ahmado 2019).

Final Notes

In conclusion, it is important to note that feminist movements and campaigns have been spearheaded by NGOs and non-profit organizations in Lebanon. However, feminist researchers have argued that “NGO-ization” of women’s rights issues may shift the focus from combating structural and institutional injustices and instead, choose to focus on “quick-based solutions” and implementations (Moughalian. C & Ammar. Z 2019, 14). Thus, it is important to keep note that activism in the MENA region, as a “full-time job” is considered extremely challenging and financially constraining (Ibid., 14). NGOs and non-profit organizations and international donors should direct their resources towards programs that increase awareness of the legal and institutional systems and provide resources to local women’s rights organizations. Resources, in other words, can signify monetary tools and skills (provided to the Women’s rights organizations) so that they can choose to challenge the laws of the country and possible infusion of material directed towards minimizing violence against women and girls can be implemented in the education system.

Proven Models and Best Practices

To ensure that these models and practices are beneficial for integrating and promoting the integration of women, it requires continuous measurement to ensure that these models and practices are promoting gender equality and women's empowerment into different sectors. Not only that, but it is important to understand male attitudes towards gender equality, to eliminate cultural and traditional norms which hinder the promotion of women's empowerment. In addition, the best practices for integrating the promotion of gender equality is through policy practices that support equality. There have been efforts made to amend the National Law in favor of gender equality, such as in Article 7 of the Lebanese constitution which states that “all Lebanese shall be equal before the law. They shall equally enjoy civil and political rights and shall equally be bound by public obligations and duties without any distinction”(The Lebanese constitution 1997, 226). In fact, there is such importance in involving men within key strategies towards socio-cultural norms and emphasizing the importance of the equal participation of women, men, boys and girls in planning, implementing and evaluating programs (Carreras and Wakim 2017, 21).

Education

Thus far, there has been an improvement in practices towards literacy and education. Women's NGOs and other actors, have provided literacy programs and reached out to women in remote regions, resulting high literacy rates among women ("Mapping of Gender Development" 2006, 11). Increasing women's access to education, can be valued as a competitive advantage towards their economic process in the country. Women's organizations have implemented gender-sensitivity training for workers in formal and non-formal education, to expand the range of the target group ("Lebanese NGO Forum Women's Rights" 2000, under "Woman and Education"). Promoting gender equality and empowerment in education, works best through teaching strategies that address key issues within the Lebanese society which act as barriers in achieving full equality between men and women. However, studies also show that "some Lebanese educational institutions still practice inequality and prefer men over women" (Haidar 2018, 1). This hinders organizational efforts, if traditional and cultural attitudes are not tackled, as a way to promote gender equality within education institutions. In addition, findings on educational practices found that misrepresentation, bias and stereotyping in higher education institutions, hinders women from achieving full equality at higher institutional levels in Lebanon (Ibid., 1).

Economic Development Programming

There has been a substantive increase in increasing the role of women in economic and development planning. Statistics on the participation of women in Lebanon, illustrate that "only 33 percent of women participate in the economy, in comparison to 97 percent of men" (Lebanon Response Plan 2014, 11). A model which works to empower women is in the use of information communication technologies (ICTs), which allows organizations to reach a wider audience and mobilize women within various communities. Studies show that exposure to ICTs have a positive effect on increasing women's empowerment into the economic sector (Daou 2015, 11). For example, in Gaza, women reported that working in the ICT sector provided them with opportunities to grow without limits and has flexible working hours which increases women's access into the economic sector ("From Where I Stand: 'ICT Empowers Me to Grow Without Limits'" 2018). As a result, ICTs can act as a strategy to support women to get involved with other women empowerment initiatives across various local and virtual communities.

Female entrepreneurs provide greater employment opportunities for other females. Survey data shows that "47 percent of the labour force in female owned enterprises was composed of women, in comparison to 34 percent in male owned enterprises" ("Gender-based differences" 2009, 1). By promoting and improving women owned businesses, encourages female employment amongst other women and empowers women to find jobs outside of the domestic realm. Thus far, women non-government organization have demonstrated to have a positive impact on women's empowerment and understanding their rights in Lebanon ("The role of women NGOs" 2015, 11).

On the contrary, international organizations that fund local organizations are not sufficiently targeting women in urban areas (Abdo and Kerbage 2012, 76). As a result, middle-income women are missed from women entrepreneurship development initiatives. In addition, an estimated 30 institutions lending to small-scale rural projects, only nine provide men and women with equal conditions (“Atlas of Gender and Development” 2010, 157). Proper management and collaboration is needed to ensure the success of projects. Moreover, although there have been positive results in the work of NGO initiatives for women’s empowerment in the economic sector, there have also been limited success in upgrading technical and vocational skills (The role of women NGOs” 2015, 11). Furthermore, what is not working to promote economic empowerment, is that when donor agencies impose their agenda and projection plan to local organizations, local organizations tend to alter their initial priorities to reflect the agenda of their donor for funding (Abdo and Kerbage 2012, 77). This can imply for the challenges in achieving gender equality and women's empowerment within health, education, and economic development planning.

Support Programs

One of the top root causes of women’s inequality in the subordination of women is patriarchy. Working in coalition and in partnership means that women can work with each other and support each other. Recently, public awareness campaigns and advocacy efforts by women’s rights organizations have led to the successful repeal laws, such as article 522 that forced women to marry their rapist, which was removed in 2017 (UN-Women “progress of the worlds women” 2019, 27). The effectiveness of women's empowerment programs and practices are based on the link between women in the grassroots policies, policy makers and the international arena, which is a major element of success. Additional best practices are in engaging fathers within gender equality initiatives. For example, the Positive Fatherhood Program is an initiative by Care Lebanon, which aimed to enhance the role of fathers in the lives of their children in an equitable way and the relationships with their wives (Carreras and Wakim 2017, 14). The benefit of this initiative is that it will strengthen equitable relations within households and also teach young boys within their early stages of life against patriarchal norms and gender stereotypes. For Care, by “promoting the role of fathers, the initiative seek[s] to address key concerns related to gender equality” (Ibid., 14). Promoting men in various initiatives helps to decrease patriarchal attitudes in society and change the perception men have on traditional gender stereotypes.

Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) remains to be a prevalent issue in the MENA region and it is further exacerbated by fear of retaliation and stigmatizing social attitudes. In addition to the existing gender disparities and violence against women and children in Lebanon, the influx of refugees has triggered protection concerns, especially gender-based violence (UNDG 2018). More than 75 percent of the refugee population comprises of women and young girls, and the burdens of displacement has

contributed to increased risks and vulnerabilities (UNDG 2018). Due to the constant influx of refugee population into the country, additional pressure is placed on limited availability to quality services, specifically from legal and judicial actors (UNDG 2018). Thus, under-reporting is an added consequential component of Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV) and GBV. In terms of the cases that are reported, most common ones include physical assault, domestic and sexual violence, forced child marriage and sex work for coverage of financial needs (Kevorkian 2016, 6). This information is provided by sources such as Gender-Based Violence Information Management Systems (GBVIMS) and participatory assessments and monitoring frameworks.

Interventions in Lebanon for host communities (Syrian women and girls as secondary actors)

Many programs have been implemented in the country of Lebanon that assist in increasing accessibility to SGBV prevention resources for female refugee populations. One program that has yielded successful results is the Mobile SGBV Prevention and Response Services, which was led by the International Rescue Committee (IRC), with financial support from UNHCR, in five areas in the Tripoli region of Lebanon (Kevorkian 2016, 2). The project yielded successful results due to the following reasons:

- The age-appropriate program allows services to be offered in locations that the women and young girls choose (the services were provided in areas with high SGBV with low levels of access). In other words, mobile services such as courses and psychosocial support sessions offered to the participants contributed to building social cohesion and more access to information for Syrian women and girls. Moreover, women and girls have a choice whether to attend the sessions and thus, communication is increased between Lebanese and Syrian women and girls, as information is orally distributed and communicated (Ibid, 3-6).
- The IRC is focused on the capacity development of outreach volunteers (belonging to both the host and refugee populations), providing and distributing the materials, thus there is easier access to information, which is accompanied with stress relief. There were more opportunities to strengthen feedback mechanisms, due to the lack of language and cultural barriers (Ibid., 3-5).

However, SGBV survivors are limited, in terms of access to services, due to the multitude of economic, legal and socio-cultural discriminatory factors. Thus, the mobile services proved to be challenging, in terms of implementation, despite the objectives outline healing and coping strategies for SGBV survivors (Kevorkian 2016, 5). For instance, the parents of adolescent girls, upon reading the sexual education modules refused participation due to inappropriate material. In this case, the report outlines that outreach volunteers and case management officers strengthen outreach activities by signifying the importance of sexual education for adolescent girls. Secondly, strategies to increase participation from both girls and boys were discussed in the report: i) door-to-door visits about the program. ii) increase outreach and encourage participation by establishing dialogue (word of mouth)

between female students (Ibid., 5). Thus, the project can be amended and implemented in a more proactive way for better results.

Another effective evaluation was conducted on the UNICEF Child Protection Programme for Vulnerable Children and Women in Lebanon (2013-2016). This project was organized by combining the efforts of UNICEF, the Lebanese government and multiple civil society stakeholders, in response to the emerging response to the Syrian crisis in 2013 (Huijbregts et al 2017). The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the efficiency, effectiveness and cohesion of the Program as well as to identify the good practices and lessons learned, in terms of promotion, prevention and response (Ibid., 8). Focusing on the GBV elements of the program, outreach and awareness activities and more importantly, community-building approach were to be analyzed (Ibid., 9). The important points derived from the evaluation are as follows:

- With the country context in a protracted state, “standardization” of child protection and combating against GBV by creation and sharing guidelines at the national level contributed to a “shared understanding”. (Ibid., 54).
- Mixed activities, combining both host and refugee populations may prove to be challenging in the short-term, however, cultivation of a protective environment for both children and women should be a priority. (Ibid., 54).
- Higher rate of community coordination can be achieved if all community-based structures and groups mobilized to achieve implementation of “shared” guidelines and tools at the community level. Child protection and GBV coordination committees stand to benefit most from this (Ibid., 54).

The UNFPA-UNDP are also major UN implementing entities that have contributed to the implementation of programs in Lebanon. “Preventing and Responding to SGBV with a special focus on Syrian Conflict related sexual violence, through Capacity Building, Advocacy, and Knowledge Products” had an annual progress report published in 2018 (UNDP 1a 2018). The main objectives were focused on capacity development of law enforcement actors for improving response to SGBV survivors (UNDP 1a 2018). Moreover, improvement of evidence-based and knowledge products on enhanced SGBV prevention and response was also an important objective. The lessons that were derived from the progress report are as follows:

- The tools and implementation of SGBV prevention and response curriculum at the Internal Security Forces Academy (ISF) was challenging and lengthy, however, it proved to be a success as the endorsement of material and development review were achieved. This way, GBV focused trainings stand to benefit the ISF by enabling capacity development, in terms of tactful response and prevention to stressful situations (UNDP 1a 2018)

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- Regarding gender issues and youth focus, coordination and alignment with the national Ministries are necessary so as to increase the potential of ensuring full ownership and “taking on future actions”. (UNDP 1a 2018)

A similar type of evaluation of UNHCR prevention and response to SGBV in the refugee population of Lebanon revealed similar results. Firstly, the engagement of UNHCR Lebanon with multiple stakeholders and sectors (public and local communities) ensures an effective agenda of SGBV response (Hanley et al 2018). Secondly, national capacity building can determine a higher level of success, if “hands-on approach and practice-based coaching” (peer-to-peer approaches and assessment of participants’ aims in beginning of year) if preferred (Hanley et al 2018, 45). This way, practical knowledge proves to be more beneficial as well as proven to show positive results in an increase in knowledge, skills and networks between individual case workers and organizations (Ibid., 46).

Project(s) for Syrian refugee populations residing in Lebanon

Community-based programming approaches has proved to be one of the most successful interventions. Since 2015, Oxfam teams have implemented four different lighting projects in the Bekka Valley of Lebanon, which housed 500,000 Syrian refugees (Oxfam & WEDC 2018). The Protection program essentially supports Syrian refugees and provides multiple opportunities to engage in community-building, engagement with multiple stakeholders in the area and facilitation of community meetings (Oxfam & WEDC 2018). Lack of an electricity grid in the area leads to stretches of darkness for more than 12 hours in a day. Moreover, women and young girls stated that harassment ensued more than often after dark, and thus, it became more difficult to access sanitation facilities, water tanks and perform essential activities such as disposal of garbage (Oxfam & WEDC 2018).

Thus, Peer Groups were established in the region by electing representatives from the community (6-12 men and women), who carried out a threat analysis for identification of protection and safety concerns (Oxfam & WEDC 2018). Oxfam and Peer Groups coordinated solutions, and thus, it was decided to distribute solar lights to each family or tent. Oxfam’s post monitoring reports revealed that “users” (women) were far more comfortable going outside after dark. In this case, two goals were simultaneously achieved: Community-building was established amongst the people and the risk of GBV was addressed through the implementation of a practical solution (Oxfam & WEDC 2018). Lacking an electricity grid in the area was one major limitation, however, the solar lights proved to be an effective “immediate solution.” (Oxfam & WEDC 2018).

Sexual and Reproductive Health-Centered Assessments

In terms of sexual and reproductive health, it is vital for the educational awareness to be cultivated surrounding this issue. The findings of the “Rapid Assessment Tool for Sexual and Reproductive

Health and HIV Linkages in Lebanon” indicate that national stakeholders showed strong support for Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) and integration of HIV services in one package (IPPF et al 2011). However, cultural barriers led to reduction in integration of HIV services and SRH sectors in Lebanon (IPPF et al 2011, 8). Moreover, despite increased national support from stakeholders, assessment concluded that financial support is minimal (21.7 percent) (IPPF et al 2011, 8). One strong recommendation provided by the assessment report is focused upon the integrational research development in SRH and HIV services to reduce stigma, surrounding the issue (IPPF et al 2011, 8).

A successful study was done in specific Lebanon schools, which outlined the priorities of integrating SRH in the school curriculum (Mouhanna et al 2017, 203). The results revealed that open discussions between parents and children as well as increased awareness about alcohol drinking prompted more interest in SRH being integrated in the school curriculum (Ibid., 203). This signifies that children and adults engaging in discussions that involve sensitive material are more open to integration of topics such as sexual and reproductive health. Moreover, a 2011 study revealed that middle school children were interested in learning more about SRH and thus, this can lead to possible implementation of programming interventions that are inclusive of children’s interests in gaining knowledge about important issues such as SRH (Mouhanna et al 2017, 202).

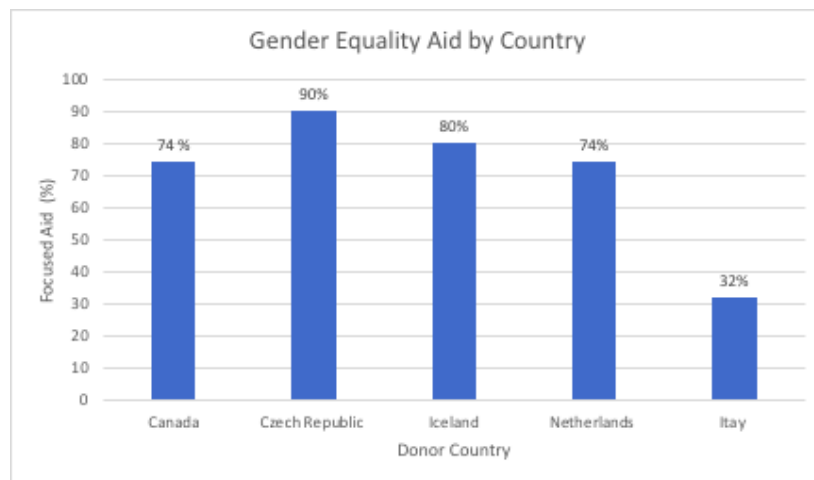
The Donor Community

Based on the research conducted and data that was gathered in the completion of this report, multiple donors were identified and many co-joined in overlapping projects. UN-Habitat has listed many donors that have expressed consistent interest in Lebanon’s development and capacity building. The leading participatory mechanisms are as follows:

- UNICEF
- UNHCR – This organization is an important one as Lebanon is recording high number of refugee influxes annually.
- United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security
- United Nations Office for Project Services
- Oxfam

The United Nations is working closely with national actors to promote gender equality, the legal status of women and address gender-based violence, by providing services to women and girls, raising awareness of ministries, and supporting social development centers (“Working together” 2019, 19). In terms of UN sister agencies, strategic partnerships are made between national and local stakeholders on the ground. The UN entities, heavily involved in Lebanon UNDP, UNFPA, and UN Women (UN Habitat 2019).

There is greater synergic overlapping opportunities, when collaborating with women’s rights organizations. Many women’s rights organizations such as the Resource Center for Gender Equality (ABAAD), Lebanese Council of Women (LCW), Enough Violence and Exploitation (KAFA), Institute of Progressive Women’s Union, and Jabal Amel Women’s Association (JAWA). It was surveyed that individuals who engaged with WNGO activities mentioned that it increased their knowledge on women’s rights and gender equality actions and practices, empowered them to provide technical assistance to women’s rights and gender equality in their own communities, shaped their public and leadership skills to participate in public life, and boosted their confidence to revolt against traditional norms and patriarchal attitudes ingrained in their households and communities (Daou 2015, 19).



Leading donor countries with aid focused sectors contributing to gender equality includes; Canada targeting 74 percent of aid in Lebanon towards gender equality within education and health and population (“Aid in Support of Gender Equality” 2019, 10), Czech Republic focused 90 percent of their aid towards gender equality within the multi sector and other social infrastructure (Ibid.,11), Iceland targeted 80 percent of their aid towards social infrastructure for women’s equality and the multisector (Ibid., 19) and the Netherlands dedicated 74 percent aid into health and population and other social infrastructure (Ibid., 24).

Many countries are also categorized as leading donors, primarily from the European Union. Countries such as Norway, Poland, Switzerland, United Kingdom and Italy have funded different types of programs and projects in the country of Lebanon. It is important to keep note that the projects are often concentrated in the MENA region or some countries from this region are included, and Lebanon, with its status as a refugee influx “state” is part of many projects. They are, however, limited in terms of women’s empowerment and SGBV (UN Habitat 2019).

All in all, working in collaboration with women’s rights organizations and leading donor countries such as Czech Republic, Iceland and the Netherlands, will be a great way to target communities effectively, to ensure the most vulnerable women are targeted and the right amount of funding is

allocated between communities. In addition, as mentioned in an earlier section, municipal authorities have a high degree of influence within policy decisions, wage norms and job creations, thus working alongside municipal authorities will be an intrinsic opportunity to advance gender equality and inclusive development between women and men in Lebanon (Azargoshasb 2016, 37).

Final Notes

Currently, Lebanon is in a conflicted position, as in experiencing constant influx of refugees from multiple countries and also, in the midst of a nationwide protest movement. However, many ongoing development projects are aimed towards increasing access to education, employment and engaging in response and prevention responses to Sexual and Gender Based Violence. This signifies that the country is aware and is responsive of the measures that have to be taken to prioritize women and young girls and their empowerment through increased participation in various structures listed above. Moreover, the role of the donor community and funding agencies as well as agencies that are responsible for implementing development projects is crucial and their engagement with the country's national and regional and local authorities marks the international community's desire to adopt positive practices such as peer and community engagement.

Methods

In this report, both qualitative and quantitative research was conducted. Statistics were gathered from primary data i.e., reports of official intergovernmental organizations such as the United Nations and its numerous entities. Secondary research was also performed for assessment of the issues discussed in this report. Journal articles were closely examined for observation of trends in various sectors of Lebanon. Evaluation reports were examined and the evaluations were primarily performed by organizations such as Oxfam, UNHCR, UNDP and other United Nations sister agencies. In addition, news articles were also accessed to gather proper data on current events occurring in Lebanon. A mix of primary and secondary data were established in the news articles, as statistical data was also derived from the articles.

One of the major limitations in conducting research for this topic is that many of the projects were published in early 2010's and additionally, many projects are ongoing. More importantly, as mentioned before, the current interventions are directed towards refugee populations and this can potentially lead to ethnically based conflicts. Moreover, intervention programs and their access were limited as insufficient information was found on Lebanon. Lastly, most projects that are upcoming revolve around interventions which address SGBV in both Syrian refugee populations and Lebanese host communities. This may be advantageous and fruitful, as connections can be made, however, biases can occur and one community may receive higher or lower benefits, based on the type of organization that is funding the project.

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5. Palestine

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Executive Summary

Palestine is considered to be one of the most complex contexts with a number of unique multi-layered development and humanitarian needs due to the territory having been under occupation for over 50 years. Israeli issued blockades, the impact of occupation politics, and years of conflict and corruption have all left a damaging impact on Palestinian economy, society, family and kinship organization, and even more so on the degree of women's activism and freedom. The most pressing issues for women in Palestine remain strong gendered social roles, a low rate of political participation, a severe lack of participation in the labor market, access to sufficient and gender inclusive healthcare and the presence of gender-based violence (GBV). Gender situations in Palestine are extremely complicated and diversified and this report will attempt to address some of the ways change is measured and examine the progress and challenges of international aid projects. The state of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and Gaza can be thought of as a product of the male dominated culture which has left a norm that women must remain bounded to roles of the mother, wife, and caretaker of the family. This is illustrated in the report with careful consideration of both the role of Israeli occupation politics hurting women coupled with unchanging norms and behaviors towards women. The role of the Israeli occupation, blockades and checkpoints are framed within the various oppressions and barriers felt by women and men in Palestine and must not be excluded when discussing what sorts of challenges are being faced. Palestine's high levels of gender-based violence is seen as a prevalent reality that has been normalized and exacerbated due to the social/gender norms practiced in Arab and Islamic culture, traditions and values. Action against gender-based violence is still lacking however and with new mediums such as the internet, policies must adapt to the changing environment of violence. It must be highlighted that Palestinian women have had no significant influence on politics, which is in part due to the unfavorable environment against women's movements and opinions that have taken place in past years. The current wave of feminism is starting to reshape this however, with marches led by key female leaders who are attempting to inspire women to take a stance on their rights and freedoms. Furthermore, unique to the Palestinian context is the prominent role of donors and the international community. The lack in transparency for where funding goes, how to better partner with, and target women is something that requires better analysis and context understanding. Lastly, this report will attempt to highlight the differential experiences between women in Gaza and women in the West Bank and where that leaves policies and interventions working simultaneously in both territories, and what sorts of adjustments and changes need to be made in order to better address each territory.

Country Overview

The United Nations Special Committee on Palestine's (UNSCOP) Resolution 181 proposal to partition the land of Palestine into two states: one Jewish and one Arab was passed by the UN General Assembly on November 29, 1947. The resolution was accepted by the Jews who declared the State of Israel, which was then declared by David Ben-Gurion, Executive Director of the World Zionist Organization, on 14 May 1948 (UNFPA 2017). The UN resolution was immediately rejected by the Arabs both in Palestine and in the surrounding countries who immediately declared war on Israel. This resulted in a conflict known in Hebrew as The War of Independence, and in Arabic as The Nakba, or Catastrophe. Since the UN Partition the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has remained one of the most damaging conflicts in recent world history (UN Women, 2013). In 1993 Israel and the PLO (as the representative of the Palestinians) agreed to a series of agreements as a framework for peace including the establishment of an elected Palestinian governing body, a Palestinian police force and other elements of self-government. Although the status of Palestine was upgraded to a 'non-member Observer State' following a vote at the United Nations General Assembly in November 2012, the peace process has had no significant changes (UN Women 2013). Israel continues to not recognize Palestine as a State and upholds their de facto military control and occupation in all areas even ones officially under the government of the PNA (UN Women, 2013). The 2000-2005 second Intifada resulted in nearly 6,000 fatalities and the subsequent internal Palestinian political struggles between the political parties of Fatah and Hamas culminated in the 2007 Battle of Gaza, and the effective division of the Palestinian territory into two separate political blocs, West Bank and Gaza (UN Women 2013). The Gaza War of late 2008-early 2009 between Israel and Palestinian militants resulted in over a thousand deaths. As a result of the withdrawal of Fatah from Gaza, Egypt and Israel have also effectively blockaded the Gaza Strip since 2007, controlling and restricting movement of people and goods (UNFPA 2017). The Hamas-Fatah political division has effectively resulted in the collapse of bipartisan governance, and the freezing of the Palestine Legislative Council (PLC) (UN Women 2013). The last elections in Palestine were in January 2006 for a four-year term; since then Fatah has ruled in the West Bank under President Abbas (whose legal term expired in 2009) and the fundamentalist Hamas party has controlled Gaza. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians have been displaced from what is now the State of Israel. The United Nations Relief Works Agency, UNRWA, was created in 1948 with the task of providing assistance to Palestine refugees (UNFPA 2017).

Though both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip are classified as one Palestine, they are very different, and this is an important fact that must be recognized. From location and terrain resulting in different natural resources and different ways to create an income. The total area between the two territories that represent Palestine is 6,220 square kilometers; the West Bank, located along the Western side of the Jordan River being the larger territory consisting of an area of 5,628 square kilometers while Gaza being the much smaller territory, located on the Mediterranean coast between Egypt and Israel being 365 square kilometers. The combined population total between the two territories is approximately

4.70 million with a population growth rate of 2.5 percent per year. Differences between the two territories are stark, the population of the West Bank is 2.88 million while Gaza's population is significantly smaller with a population of 1.9 million, however they live with a much greater population density due to the much smaller territory. The two areas also have an extremely different situation of political leadership with no unified government between the two. The Gaza Strip is controlled by Hamas as opposed to the Fatah-controlled Palestinian Authority in (parts of the) West Bank, with significant challenges working across West Bank and the Gaza Strip (UNFPA 2017). There are also differences in the structure of laws, roles, and services that can be observed. Furthermore, refugees, West Bank and Gaza 'citizens', East Jerusalemites and Palestinians with Israeli citizenship all have different accesses to rights which has created a large variation and fragmentation which only works to complicate efforts to organize a united agenda (Richter-Devore 2011). Most reports and statistics show both territories together and this results in inadequate figures that do not truly represent each region correctly. In this report Palestine statics will be given, however there will also be a breakdown of these numbers in each of the territories.

The State of Gender Equality

The Palestinian Basic Law of 2002 amended in 2003, "forms the basis of the constitution and affirms equality regardless of sex, race, religion, race, political views or religion as well as the right to be free from duress or torture, freedom of opinion, freedom of movement, the right to education, and the right to political participation" (UNDP 2012). There still remains however, significant challenges for women, and these must be framed within the longstanding conflict in the region, and the political, economic, and social dimensions of Palestinian life which have all come to shape the current state of gender equality. In recent years, socio-economic life has diminished in the West Bank and Gaza, with Gaza having experienced four wars in the past decade which has left a large majority of the population in poverty (JICA 2016). There have been some steady improvements to the state of gender equality with the percentage of women aged 20-24 years who were married before the age of 18 years is decreasing in Palestinian society from 30.3% in 1997 to 10.8% in 2017 (PCBS 2018, 26). The percentage of female-headed households in Palestine has also increased from 8% in 2007 to 10.0% in 2017 with the percentage in the West Bank being higher with 10.4% female-headed households compared to Gaza with 9.4% in 2017 (PCBS 2018, 28). Life expectancy in Palestine is 75 years old for women and 72.7 for men (PCBS 2018, 24). Life expectancy is higher for both men and women living in the West Bank compared to those living in the Gaza Strip, with life expectancy being 75.3 for women and 73 for men compared to 74.5 for women and 72.3 for men in Gaza (PCBS 2018, 24). Still, the status of women in terms of their control over economic empowerment, politics and forms of gender-based violence will be examined in this section along with the various challenges that women face in Palestine and how these have created barriers for success and progress towards equality.

The current situation of gender equality must be understood along the basis of social norms which have been developed from cultural and religious values and norms. This has taken shape in the low status of women in the political sphere as women's representation in political leadership positions is at 16.25% with women holding only 8% of the Palestinian National Council seats (Hillis and Constant 2018, 7). Another major challenge for women in Palestine is the prevalence of various forms of GBV. While both men and women can experience GBV, it is women and girls who are the most vulnerable and severely affected by such acts of violence. A large part of this has to do with notions of masculinity and expected roles in the household, there are large gaps in these perceptions with eighty percent of men believing that a woman's primary role is to cook and maintain the home compared to 59 percent of women who agree (Hillis and Constant 2018, 6). Furthermore, intimate partner violence is quite high as statistics showcase, with stark differences between the two Palestinian territories: 29.9 and 51.1 percent of women in West Bank and Gaza, respectively, have been exposed to some form of intimate partner violence between 2010 and 2011 (Hillis and Constant 2018, 6). In addition, social norms of what is accepted within this society is evidenced in that 50 percent of Palestinian women and 63 percent of Palestinian men agreed that a woman should tolerate violence in order to keep the family together (UN Women, 2018). It has also been observed that when questioned about violence, a small percentage reported to have sought refuge at a relative's house with an even smaller number who have sought assistance from women-based organizations or services provided by the government (Hillis and Constant 2018, 6).

Another challenge of gender-based violence unique to Palestine is occupation-related violence which is seen in the growth of mass demonstrations, impacting the psychological stress of women and subjecting them to greater risks of gender-based violence (ESCWA 2019, 6). Mothers reported an increase in the psychological and emotional violence from husbands and other family members who blame the women for their children becoming injured while participating in protests because they allowed them to attend (ESCWA 2019, 6). Claims of Israeli settler violence, characterized by physical assaults, stone throwing, vandalizing of farmland and damaging property often in response to actions by Palestinians against the Israeli settlers in a tit for tat type of escalation, has increased against Palestinian women and girls since the beginning of 2017 (ESCWA 2019, 7). There is a great lack in the continued accountability for such cases however which makes targeting the issues more challenging (ESCWA 2019). Furthermore, gender-based violence must be addressed in new forms of exposure and expression such as on social media. According to The Arab Center for the Advancement of Social Media, 16% of women reported being sexual harassed online, while all the interviewed focus groups, from various geographic locations, confirmed awareness of at least one case of sexual harassment (Odeh 2019, 7). Their findings also revealed Palestinian women resorted to coping methods similar to in-person assault and sought familial support rather than going to the police which is largely due to the lack of trust in the police (Odeh 2019, 7). Their research concluded that Palestinian women and girls' freedom of expression is greatly impacted by factors such as the patriarchal society and the

Israeli occupation as well as a lack of trust in Israeli and Palestinian institutions to deal with and solve such cases (Odeh 2019, 7).

In Palestine, the translation of high education rates into the labor market is proven to be a crucial challenge to their empowerment. The educational attainment, secondary and above, for women is at 49.1% which is higher compared to males at 43.9% in 2017 (PCBS 2018, 30). However, as mentioned this has not effectively resulted in their active participation in the economy, with less than 20% of the women currently in the labor force (JICA 2016). Data shows that males employed in the informal sector is higher compared to females, and young women with tertiary degrees make up the bulk of the female labor force and represent the largest share of the total unemployment rate (JICA 2016, 6). Women continue to hold positions in more traditional occupations, with more than half of women working as technicians, specialists, and clerks, while 15% of them work in Services, and 6.4% work as skilled workers in agricultural (PCBS 2018, 51). Constraints to women's empowerment are due to a multitude of factors including legislation and regulations that limit women's choices in careers, sectors, and occupations, some of which do not apply equally between married women and married men which serves as a means of disabling autonomy (WBG 2018). The absence of laws that safeguard women against equal pay for equal work, sex-based hiring, or questions regarding family status have all been devised as means to keep women from attaining effective economic empowerment (WBG 2019). Another crucial challenge is the lack of satisfactory job options available, which only worsens achieving inclusive growth, peace and stability in the region (WBG 2018). The limited availability of jobs is further rooted in the low levels of private sector investment which ultimately weakens job creation and growth (WBG 2018). Furthermore, issues surrounding the Israeli occupation and restrictions as well as the lack of safety when commuting to work should be understood as further constraints impacting women's ability to access their immediate surroundings (WBG 2018).

In conclusion, the variations between Gaza and the West Bank must also be explored since Gaza is controlled by the fundamentalist Hamas whereas the West Bank is under a somewhat more secular control, as a result, any implementation of policies or services to Palestinians living outside of the West Bank have suffered great limitations or have not occurred at all. There is a lack of clarity in how institutions or laws can effectively govern women's equality issues (Hillis and Constant 2018, 30). Women's rights in Palestine must not therefore be addressed without taking into account the layers of complexities rooted in the occupation, political context, cultural/ social norms and structures.

Existing Feminist Movements

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, Palestinian women's activism has been influenced by its identification with the national liberation struggle and Palestinian women's activism can be traced back to 1921 with the foundation of the Palestinian Women's Union, which has effectively led demonstrations against the Balfour Declaration and organized the General Palestinian Women's

Congress in Jerusalem in 1929 (Abdulhadi 1998, 654). These women's organizations however were characterized and limited by their urban, high social-class leadership and the necessary support of male-dominated nationalist movements (Jad 1995, 23). Further challenges came from the Oslo Accords which created the Palestinian Authority and left many grassroots activists who had led the various uprisings marginalized in the formation of new leadership structures with women excluded from any participation at all (Marlowe and Abu Shammalah 2018). The second intifada quickly escalated to an armed resistance with women even less active in the movement (Marlowe and Abu Shammalah 2018). This has come to be seen as a serious challenge facing the Palestinian women's movement in the past with some current themes still at play in current movements.

Waves of active feminist participation is changing however with women like Samira Abdelalim as one example. Abdelalim, the director of the women's department at the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions, leads the March's women's committee in Rafah, the southernmost town in the Gaza Strip. Along with her committee members, she organizes the women in the march, and arranges logistics such as water and buses, and plans youth-empowerment and cultural activities (Marlowe and Abu Shammalah 2018). The weekly border "March of Return" in Gaza, March has been characterized as a mostly nonviolent mobilization with the hopes of achieving self-determination and peace, as well as the breaking of boundaries between women and men as women become more confident in their demand for rights and freedoms (Marlowe and Abu Shammalah 2018). Women like Abu Mosa, 20-year-old activist in an organization called the Palestinian Students Labor Front believes that marching sends a clear message to the international community. This is what many of the women desire from these marches and movements, is to continue gaining international media attention towards their situation. Women like Abdelalim are hopeful that protests like this are a positive step towards a new phase of women's activism in Gaza. The context for women's participation in marches and protest movements has not come without challenges and significant progress has been made. Another protest later in September of 2019 showcased thousands of Palestinians who continued the fight demanding safety, freedom and a better future, speaking out against gender-based violence and marginalization towards women (Marshood 2019). This protest is known as the Tali'at movement, which calls for demonstrations in every place where Palestinians live, and features extensive media campaigning (Marshood 2019).

Since the 1920s, Palestinian women's activism has been linked with the resistance movement, and Palestinian women's movement has developed through its association towards more wide-reaching issues of the nation as the process of resistance against the occupation has inevitably altered class and gender consciousness which has affected women's agenda for freedom and attainment of their own rights (Kuttab 2016, 106). The participation of women in the national struggle is perceived as a necessary factor with many women expressing their belief that the struggle for women's liberation is not isolated from the desire for national independence considering that all the Palestinian people, men and women alike, were being denied their basic human and national rights (Kuttab 2016, 106).

There are nonetheless women-focused aspects to their activism, and targeting issues present for women and young girls. This can be seen in movements like those by Amani Thawabta, a law school graduate from Palestine who is lobbying for women's rights. Amani is from a village in central West Bank, where young women are unable to take part in public life or claim their rights due to the conservative culture (UN Women 2015). Amani is part of a group of 26 young women and men who represent 25 Palestinian community-based organizations who formed a coalition called the Constitutional Shadow Committee and drafted an alternative constitution which opposes the lack of gender equality and prevalence of men in its signing (UN Women 2015).

Despite barriers and challenges, there have been, and continue to be, stories of feminist movements which have worked to lead change and empowerment within their communities. Even in light of limited political participation, women and young women alike have played important roles in the current marches like the 'Great March of Return' and the Tali'at movement, and there are also women collaborating and forming coalitions which are challenging the state of gender in legal documents. The role of key specific leaders in these feminist movements have proven to be effective drivers of change, giving a face to the cause, and leading women of all ages to participate and provide a sense of confidence and hope, showcasing the possibilities for women to have a voice and use it.

Proven Models and Best Practices

The challenging nature of the West Bank and Gaza means that any intervention must be well adapted in order to be effective towards establishing better programs and models for targeting the most pressing issues. International assistance in the Palestinian territories covers a range of programs, with a number of organizations focusing on women's empowerment and gender equality. Evaluating program models and practices that have been proven effective is important, as well as understanding the challenges which threaten the positive changes and improvements. Some of the best models and practices for integrating gender equality and empowerment in the sectors of health, education and economic development have laid the framework for current and past successes and should be assessed in terms of their impact and support throughout the Palestinian Territories. The same is true for culturally sensitive sexual/ reproductive health programs, gender-based violence interventions and other realms of mobility and agency integration.

Economic Empowerment

Targeting women's economic empowerment is a crucial component to achieving gender specific policies and practices. There have been different projects in the West Bank and Gaza which are directly contributing to the economic empowerment agenda. According to the evaluation of joint UN gender equality programs from 2013, many of their programs helped to place national and international commitments towards gender equality in Palestine and contributed to raising the national profile of work on gender (UN Women 2013, 26). In an effort to enhance gender

mainstreaming across government entities, the establishment of the National Committee on Women's Employment in February 2010 as an advisory body to the Minister of Labor helped increase employment rates for women participants in job placement training (UN Women 2013, 44). This helped strengthen the focus around improved national capacity and structures for tackling gender equality and the empowerment of women, as well as improved planning and supervisory for gender mainstreaming within governmental institutions and ministries (UN Women 2013). Other approaches to improved economic development include the Deprived Families Economic Empowerment Programme (DEEP) through UNDP where microfinance/micro-grants and vocational training support livelihood projects of deprived households (JICA 2016). Although both men and women are targeted, due to the importance of women's economic empowerment, approximately half of the projects supported are by women. Another is the job creation program run by UNRWA, which supports Palestinian Refugees by providing temporary jobs, with approximately 60% of the jobs targeted at women and, since 2015, attempts have been made to create non-conventional jobs for women such as female security guards in UNRWA facilities (JICA 2016, 82).

Further programs such as the Abraham Path Initiative, worked at addressing the challenge of gender gaps in the tourism industry by exploring how to create culturally acceptable opportunities for women to get involved with tour-guiding (Hillis and Constant 2018). The project carried a gender analysis of how the communities benefited from various trainings carried out and how these have generated a number of jobs (Hillis and Constant 2018). In conjunction with this, there has been considerable effort to encourage female graduates to move into innovative STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) fields such as the one financed by the Education to Work project (Hillis and Constant 2018). For example, while still outnumbered by men, the Jerusalem Tourism Augmentation study program at al Quds University, aims at developing the tourism sector by utilizing recent technologies such as animation and mobile applications. There is an emphasis to get female students interested in the field and not just for teaching or theory but pushing the envelope on STEM and linking opportunities to more productive economic sectors (Hillis and Constant 2018).

Lastly, addressing the economic empowerment agenda must include appropriate discussion of the impact of Israeli issued blockades, and hence broader politics. This requires a well-focused political analysis approach which takes into the account the current state of economic freedom and movement, which will inevitably play into the extent to which policies or programs are able to be successful.

Equality in Healthcare

Gender sensitive approaches in the health sector have been supported through multifaceted outlets such as flagship projects supported by The US Agency for International Development Mission in the West Bank and Gaza, USAID/ WBG and guided by fieldwork and interviews led by a team of gender experts. Some of the key highlights from these innovative approaches included providing gender-

based equity in healthcare through a bottom-up and top-down approach (Al-Rifai et al. 2013). The bottom-up approach encouraged local decision-making, community participation and grassroots mobilization and awareness building, while the top-down approach focused on lobbying and bargaining with the Ministry of Health decision-makers (Al-Rifai et al. 2013). This combined approach allowed for pressure to bring about health development and promotion towards giving all citizens fair access to quality health services. There have also been improvements towards community-based initiatives to empower women within the health sector. For a number of years, USAID and the Ministry of Health were working in towns and villages in the West Bank to meet local health priorities using the innovative ‘Champion Community Approach’. This approach works by selecting a “community-based organization to work in communities to implement health promotion activities, coordinate with the community clinic, and take the lead role in engaging the community to become proactive in helping to improve the health services in their area” (Al-Rifai et al. 2013). This approach promotes transparency and participation, where clinic-community boards are established, and various health assessments are done in order to identify gaps in each community, and patient satisfaction surveys are conducted to measure health care services perceptions (Al-Rifai et al. 2013). This approach is encouraged in rural communities where women have come to the forefront as leaders and change agents in mobilizing communities and health-care facilities for increased partnership in reforming service quality improvements (Al-Rifai et al. 2013).

There have also been programs supporting adolescent and youth sexual and reproductive health services in Palestine. The UNRWA family health and women’s department has been successful in implementing sexual and reproductive health programs in community-based organizations. These are working to provide comprehensive health services including counseling, disease or acute illness treatment, and increasing the availability of contraceptives and condoms to both young men and young women (Hamdam and Imam 2019). An important factor to these models of healthcare services is their location. Having such facilities in spaces where adolescents gather such as schools, markets, home and youth clubs makes for better integration of these services, especially in densely populated areas like Gaza (Hamdam and Imam 2019). The nature and condition of these services are effective for targeting younger people in that services are provided by individuals trained in proper communication skills to allow for judgment free spaces and are trained in other topics of interest such as psychological support which is an aspect very necessary within conflict zones and spaces (Hamdam and Imam 2019).

Forms of Gender Based Violence

Gender based violence has remained a concern within the West Bank and Gaza as a significant challenge for the wellbeing and livelihoods of women. The UNFPA Country Office has been increasing its attention to the response, prevention, and the elimination of GBV across the development and humanitarian spheres. GBV work is embedded within the UNFPA Palestine Gender Program, with a focus on strengthening government and civil society capacity to address the issue. In 2014, Denmark

funded gender-based violence programming through UNFPA, whereas the Palestinian Government implemented the “Working Together to Stop Gender-Based Violence” from May 2014 to December 2016 (UNFPA 2012, 19). Key achievements of this project have contributed to improving the political will to addressing gender-based violence within the Ministry of Health, improved equipment for health facilities, the establishment of five safe spaces based on the one-stop shop model, and guidelines for GBV and Child Protection (UNFPA 2012, 19). Another approach has been the integration of coalitions with UNFPA funding which have established and continued support as a critical contribution towards strengthening national capacity to address GBV (UNFPA 2012). The al-Muntada coalition is a coalition of approximately 10-15 organizations working in the West Bank to tackle GBV issues (UNFPA 2019, 22). The importance of the Danish funding has allowed the UNFPA to expand their gender and GBV team from one staff member in 2013 to four staff in 2017, which has allowed the UNFPA to increase additional funding and strengthen the GBV programs. The new levels of funding have meant UNFPA can create more GBV activities including supporting trainings and planning for the Clinical Management of Rape training (UNFPA 2019, 20). Working together to stop GBV, supported by UNFPA, has improved the access of GBV survivors to reproductive health services and psychological care services through a referral system (JICA 2016). The GBV Referral System has also been used by the UNRWA which has been activated in UNRWA-managed facilities targeting GBV survivors in Palestinian Refugee Camps to improve their access to quality medical, psychological and legal supports (JICA 2016).

The International Labor Organization (ILO) completed a final joint evaluation in 2013 which focused on a Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Program in the Palestinian territory (ILO 2013). The joint program was integrative and holistic in nature due to the high levels of participation by social, political and economic actors from the region (ILO 2013). Activities were implemented using a two-tier model by which research was linked with policy action in order to improve regional service provision, institutions and civil society organizations (ILO 2013). This also helped to develop sustainable institutional capacities which inevitably encouraged innovative projects (ILO 2013). Measurable and achieved progress as a result of this initiative included the development of a media and advocacy strategy on gender focused issues and the publication of a gender sensitive “violence survey” which allowed policy makers to address violence cases in a much more targeted and comprehensive way (ILO 2013). In addition, there was the introduction of guidelines for Family Protection Units of the Police, one for combatting violence against women in schools and one for lawyers, judges and prosecutors on how to deal with such cases of violence (ILO 2013). Lastly, addressing violence in all facets is important and this can be observed in active work of UNRWA who have been protesting Israeli authorities on child fatalities and injuries caused by armed violence (UNRWA 2016, 13). A main focus of the advocacy in relation to education in the West Bank has involved conducting field visits to the UNRWA schools for diplomats and other stakeholders who meet with school parliaments, and to hear from the students themselves about their concerns (UNRWA 2016, 13).

Women's Agency

In tackling issues related to gender equality and empowerment it is important to address agency and the multiple expressions of agency such as political participation and freedom from gender-based ownership. The Water sector is an example of a dynamic way to promote women's engagement and gender equality, having a National Gender Strategy for the Environment Sector: Water and Solid Waste, Women and children participate in International Water Day in Management from 2013-2017. This initiative tackled challenges such as lack of awareness on gender issues in the sector, weak political will, lack of instruments and tools to implement practical solutions on gender, and a disassociation of institutional mechanisms to operationalize gender (Hillis and Constant, 2018, 24). This was a combined effort which sought to bring together different ministries and development partners/ donors to discuss the issues and design a framework for action (Hillis and Constant 2018, 24). Organized around three pillars, the strategy that was used allowed for mainstreaming gender towards policymaking, building the capacity of women as decision-makers in the sector, and encouraging women's awareness and engagement on water related issues at the community level. Since then, this has led to multiple training workshops and other related activities which have had significant insightful and practical recommendations (Hillis and Constant 2018, 24). This a component to women's equality and empowerment that is necessary to further tackle in more projects and policies, as it has been proven to be very useful in the context of limited women's rights and political/ economic voices.

Concluding Remarks

These are a handful of some of the proven models and best practices for integrating the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment into economic development programming, health and education. Addressing gender-based violence remains an important focus for the region with examples of culturally appropriate sexual and reproductive health programming interventions, and methods for how to tackle the issues through multiple approaches and policy models. In respect to any gaps found in the evaluation literature, an area that should be better addressed is bringing together violence and distress felt by both women and men in the context of the occupation and ongoing conflict. There is also the necessity to better bridge gaps between men and women in terms of gender-based violence, and ways to tackle the issue through corporation and awareness. Lessons learnt and areas that must be continually addressed is the direct role of mobility and lack of access. The influence of blockades and politics on a broader scope, as well as the cause for national liberation and the emotional distress of living in a state of occupation. Furthermore, the issues faced by women in Gaza and women in the West Bank are different and must be always thought of in that sense, there cannot be a one size fit all approach when tackling each of these territories. In addition, the trust of the Palestinian people towards the police, and the government is something that must be taken in account as observed in the findings on internet GBV.

The Donor Community

According to the Financial Tracking Service, total funding reported to the FTS for Palestine in 2019 was US\$304.9 million with Germany and the EU commission as some of the top funding donors, along with the United Arab of Emirates government (FTS, 2019). The report also broke down where donor funding goes by sector, and it can be seen that over \$118,900,000 (USD) went to food security, while support services, coordination and emergency shelter was around \$5,000,000 (USD) (FTS, 2019). The UNWRA remains the most funded of the UN recipients with 156.7 million, while UN women is only at 0.6 million (FTS, 2019). When mapping the donor community and analyzing who gives money where and to whom, it is clear that there is no consistent, detailed dataset which documents overall aid to Palestinians (Tartir & Wildeman 2016, 16). Rather than one clear dataset with all donor information, there are multiple different resources which offer only partial information and partial impression of the aid environment to the region. The paragraphs below in this section will attempt to map the donor community for select donors in the past two years and what the current state of donor funding is in Palestine and what progress is being made.

OPT Humanitarian Fund

The oPt HF was established in 2007 as a multi-donor country based pooled fund (CBPF) which actively supports the disbursement and allocation of donor funding and resources towards humanitarian agencies (OPT 2018, 12). The Fund is designed to support strategic humanitarian responses under the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) while also reserving some funds to go towards unforeseen situations and needs. Total donor funding was 32.0 million in 2018 and the chart below maps some of the countries who donate funds.

Contributions in 2018 (Top 5 Countries, in USD\$)

Australia	7.5 million
Norway	7.2 million
Germany	5.9 million
Sweden	3.6 million
Switzerland	3 million

European Commission

The EU announced in 2019 that €22.5 million would be allocated to support the most vulnerable in Gaza and in the West Bank (ECHO 2019). This additional assistance funding is set to be given towards

emergency preparedness and response, health, food security and protection (ECHO 2019). In the past the European Commission has provided €46 million in humanitarian funding as well as €5.9 million to families in the West Bank living in Area C and East Jerusalem for legal assistance and emergency response to demolitions and evictions. They also provided funding which focused on safe education for girls and boys who were affected by the crisis (ECHO 2019). That same year, €40.1 million was given to programs in the Gaza Strip which provided support for those affected by the blockade in the form of shelter assistance, emergency healthcare, water and sanitation services, and disaster preparedness (ECHO 2019).


UNRWA

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine in the Near East (UNRWA) is an UN agency created in 1949 which aims to support the relief and human development of Palestinian refugees with past projects focusing specifically on education, health care, social services, camp infrastructure and improvement, protection and economic empowerment (UNRWA 2016). The UN based organization however has suffered recent cuts and funding gaps in the face of the current political environment with the Trump administration. Trump’s government has drastically cut the U.S contribution in 2019 from the \$360 million they provided in 2017 to \$60 million (Lederer 2019). The UNRWA responded to this with stating they are currently requesting from donors to up their funding (Lederer 2019). They are furthermore attempting to boost their platform in order to better mobilize the donor community (Lederer 2019). It has been somewhat successful, since the US cut their funding however around 40 countries and institutions have increased their funding to UNRWA, including Germany, Japan, Canada and Australia, as well as Saudi Arabia, UAE and Kuwait which gave \$50 Million (Lederer 2019).

OCHA OPT

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) country office in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) heavily relies on the various levels of donor support which come from a multitude of countries as either as earmarked or unearmarked contributions. Some of the key achievements in 2018 such as gender-based violence reduction and support for feminist movements will be shown below.

Key Activities in 2018 (OCHA 2019)

 <p><small>Created by Creative Minds from Neout Project</small></p> <p>Feminists Movements</p>	<p>Assisted in the provision of support towards international attention to the crisis in Gaza and to increase awareness of marches like “Great March of Return”. 25 public statements were drafted, as well as media outreach activities with 16 journalists from international, such as BBC and CNN, and local press agencies like Jerusalem Post, KAN, and Time of Israel.</p>
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Gender Based Violence

OCHA provided partners in country support to UNFPA in the development of GBV quarterly monitoring database and dashboard. This included mapping the status of mobile clinics and provided technical support to PCBS in the efforts to better distribute their census.

Concluding Remarks

When examining where the funding from the international community is going in Palestine it is extremely important to note that security forces and the security sector is in fact the category with the highest spending, however this is specifically hidden from the public, within other categories. Palestine is one of the top recipients of non-military aid per capita in the world yet, there is skepticism of this aid (Cope 2018, 168). A Ministry of Finance report placed security forces and security sector costs at \$1 billion out of \$3.8 billion in 2014, or 26% of the budget, as compared to 19% in 2013 (Ministry of Finance 2014). Deputy parliament speaker, Hassan Khreisheh questioned the authenticity of the public data published by the Ministry of Finance, since, “the numbers are inaccurate and represent an attempt to embellish the situation”. He went as far as saying in 2015, “the security-related expenditures are much higher, reaching 35% of the public budget” (Khreisheh 2015). It is also important to note that the Palestinian Authority approves the budget without consulting the PLC and often as a result the figures produced to the public are inaccurate and an attempt to misrepresent the real figures (Tartir & Wildeman 2016, 24). As a result of this misuse of international funds, aid is often criticized for not going to where it was intended such as state building and economic empowerment (Cope 2018). According to the Palestinian Authority’s Ministry of Finance, between 2012 and 2016 they received approximately \$4.48 billion in aid funding (Tartir & Wildeman 2016, 17). Of this aid they claimed that 39% was from Arab donor countries and agencies while the other 61% came from non-Arab donor countries and agencies (Tartir & Wildeman 2016, 17). They claimed that of the total funding they received over those 4 years, 87%, or just under \$4 billion, was allocated directly to Palestinian Authority budget support and the remaining 13%, just over half a billion dollars, was allocated towards development aid (Tartir & Wildeman 2016, 17).

Methods

The methodology utilized for this country report on gender equality and empowerment of women in Palestine has come from the active collection of research findings from secondary sources. The collection of such findings was completed by firstly researching various government and non-government sources who have current and/or past work experience in Palestine. This led to finding relevant project evaluations, proposals, databases, think tank research, and institutional resources which all served as tools for understanding the necessary political, social and cultural context of Palestine and provided information to frame the questions in terms of the current, past and future

environment of gender equality in the region. Useful evaluations by USAID projects, UN Women, UNFPA, UNRWA, and JCIA were all key sources for the completion of the third section on best models and practices. Language was strategic in refining the search and keywords that were used to guide the search were gender equality models, policies on health and economic empowerment, and gender-based violence intervention policies. Furthermore, it was important to ensure multiple titles for 'Palestine' were used considering its political status is disputed, resulting in a need to use all known titles in order to best expand the search. Lastly, it must be articulated that this report has presented initial findings of the topics discussed and does not proclaim to take an excerpt stance. There must continue to be further investigation and discussion on such prevalent and important issues.

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6. Syria

Elvis Besingi and Abdulhameed AlShelian

Executive Summary

The following is an evaluation report of Syria with a focus on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. The goal of this report is to discuss the current gender inequalities and feminist movements occurring in Syria, in refugee camps outside of Syria, and outside of refugee camps, and to evaluate the developments in Syria as a result of those overall influences. The main purpose of our work in this report is to qualify and synthesize what we know about Syria based on reviewed literature and provide insights into how best to shape the state of gender equality and gender-based violence against women and girls in the most fruitful way. Gender equality is an extremely complex and multifaceted issue in Syria. And in other, for us to make sound comments on the evolution of programs and projects being carried out in Syria, we have based our hypothesis on existing knowledge (literature review) that those who worked in this area before us have gained and shared. This entails identifying and extracting key barriers that exist to gender parity in Syria. Looking at the big players in the game and what they are funding, and what do their interventions mean. From the reviewed literature, we noticed that gender inequality in Syria is deeply rooted in social, political, and economic structures. Namely, inequalities are apparent in political representation and participation, economic inclusion and participation, and social rules and conceived capabilities and expectations which limit women's freedom. This report finds that joining humanitarian and development funding will support to a greater extent Syrian women and girls communities to maximize donor funding and encourage donor commitments in taking the lead on policy dialogue and advocacy efforts. Thus, donors must be tactical and informed when implementing new development projects and programs in Syria. Again, we looked at successful and unsuccessful strategies to women's equality are analyzed throughout this report and it concludes with proposed recommendations based on the literature review examined throughout the research of women's equality and gender-based violence in Syria. Our hope is that this report serves as a source of information to better understand the current state of gender equality and gender-based violence in Syria, the main actors working on these issues, and the best strategies working to resolve and improve the overall conditions of women and girls in Syria.

Country Overview

Geography

Syria is a country located in the Middle East with the capital city of Damascus (The World Factbook, 2019). Syria's neighboring countries are Turkey, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Israel (The World Factbook, 2019). The only body of water surrounding the country is the Mediterranean Sea, which is

located along the coastline of Syria's most popular beaches in the city of Latakia (The World Factbook, 2019). The Euphrates and Tigris rivers are the two major rivers that flow across Syria (The World Factbook, 2019).

Demography

50% of Syrians are Arab, 15% are Alawite, 10% are Kurds, and the other 15% include people from ethnic minorities (The World Factbook, 2019). 87% of the Syrian population is Muslim, 10% of the population is Christian, and 3% of the population are Druz and Jewish (The World Factbook, 2019). The sex ratio of the Syrian population is 1.01, meaning that the number of males and females are approximately equal (The World Factbook, 2019).

Government

The Syrian government operates as a republic, despite its authoritarian regime (The World Factbook, 2019). Syria celebrates its independence day on the 17th of April due to the termination of the French and British Mandate in 1946 (The World Factbook, 2019). The legal system comprises of both civil law and Islamic shariah law (The World Factbook, 2019). Syria's current president is Bashar Al-Assad (The World Factbook, 2019). According to Article 88 of the renewed Syrian Constitution in 2012, a president is elected for seven years and can only run for two consecutive terms (International Labour Organization, 2012). However, the 1973 Syrian Constitution only mentioned that a president would be elected for seven years, meaning they could run for as many consecutive terms as they can (Carnegie Middle East Center, 2012). President Bashar Al-Assad has been ruling Syria since 2000 (19 years), and his father, Former President Hafez Al-Assad ruled the country from 1970 to 2000 (30 years), thus violating the current Syrian Constitution (The World Factbook, 2019).

History

Despite the land's ancient historical roots during the Assyrian, Egyptian, and Ottoman reigns, Syria's current borders and identity as a nation-state were officially recognized by the UN in 1946 after France and Britain terminated their occupation in Syria through the UN Security Council (The World Factbook, 2019). During the establishment of Syria, the country was ruled by military coups due to the absence of political stability (The World Factbook, 2019). In 1958, Syria and Egypt formed the United Arab Republic, however, the union came to an end in 1961, and Syria reformed itself as the Syrian Arab Republic (The World Factbook, 2019). In 1970, Hafiz Al-Assad became the president of Syria through the socialist Ba'ath Party and brought political stability (The World Factbook, 2019). During the reign of Bashar Al-Assad in 2011, people across the country started a peaceful protest against the authoritarian rule of the Al-Assad family. As a result of the government's response to annihilation, imprisonment, and torture of its people, the protest turned into a national war. 5.6 million Syrians fled the country and sought refuge in Turkey, Jordan, Iraq, Egypt, and North Africa. As of April 2018, there are 13.1 million Syrians in need, 6.6 million are internally displaced, and there are 2.98 people in "hard-to-reach and besieged areas" (UNHCR, 2018).

Economy

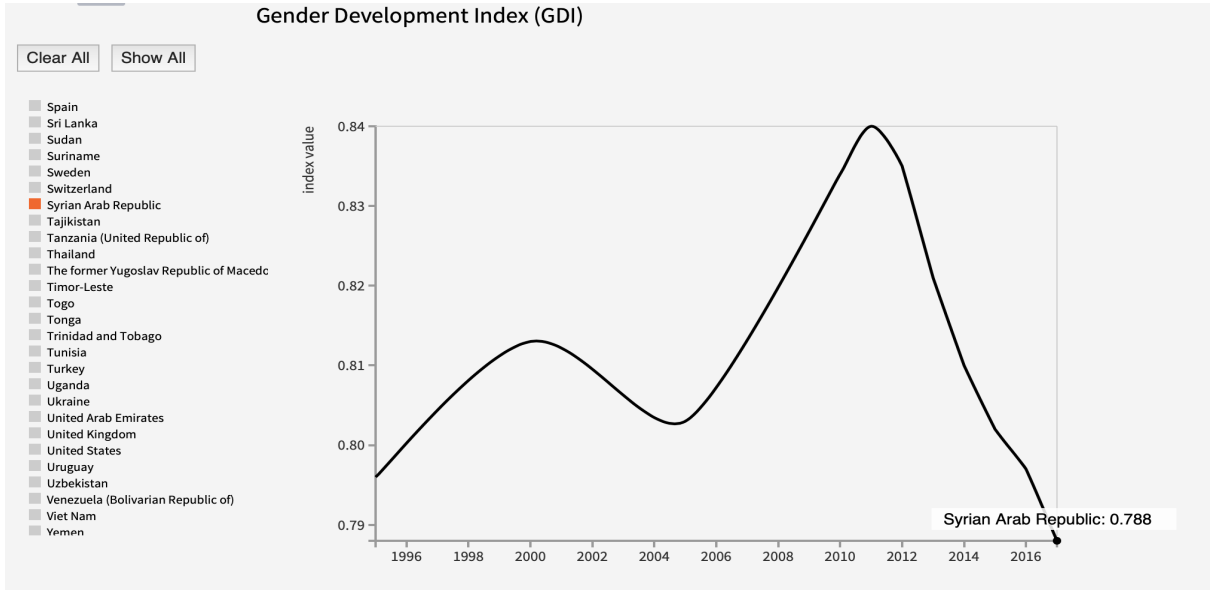
Ever since the Syrian crisis, the country's economy has declined by more than 70% from 2010 to 2017 due to "international sanctions, widespread infrastructure damage, diminished domestic consumption and production, reduced subsidies, and high inflation, which have caused dwindling foreign exchange reserves, rising budget and trade deficits, a decreasing value of the Syrian pound, and falling household purchasing power" (The World Factbook, 2019). Syria's GDP fell from \$61.9 billion in 2013 to \$50.3 billion in 2015 (The World Factbook, 2019). The national unemployment rate is at 50%, and more than 80% of the population live below the poverty line (The World Factbook, 2019). In addition, public debt comprises 94.8% of Syria's GDP (The World Factbook, 2019).

Gender Equality

Overall, the current state of gender equality in Syria is not ideal. This paper will further examine how Syrian women and girls do not have the opportunities to work in the labor force, live in safe environments, have access to legal services, legal protection, and proper education, and are undervalued and unrecognized for their domestic work. The reason why Syrian women and girls have fled Syria was mainly due to these circumstances that led many of them to engage in movements in and around the country in order to change the way society treats them.

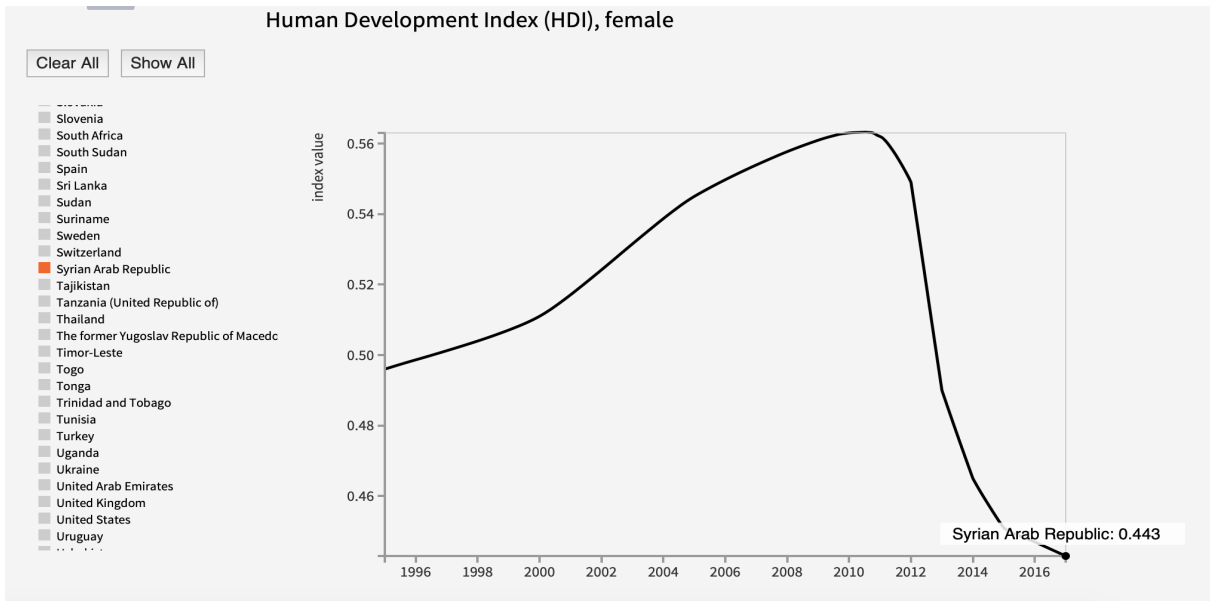
The State of Gender Equality

Throughout the research towards the current state of gender equality in Syria, results have shown different experiences of gender inequality for Syrian women in the country and Syrian women who have been seeking refuge: Using the Human Development Data from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), statistical evidence illustrates a steep downfall in developments related to the future of women in Syria. The Human Development Index (HDI), expected years of schooling, mean years of schooling, gross national income per capita, Gender Development Index (GDI), Gender Inequality Index (GII), unemployment rate, suicide rate, labor force participation rate, and vulnerable employment rate show very unpromising results for women residing in the country (UNDP, 2017). Despite the gender commonality in the declining HDI, specific categories such as mean years of schooling and gross income per capita show more favorable results for men (UNDP, 2017). In addition, the only category that is showing signs of development in Syria is the male HDI (UNDP, 2017).



Source: UNDP Human Development Index

Moreover, the UNDP states that the major issues Syrian women face are “sexual violence and exploitation, the unequal division of unpaid care and domestic work, and discrimination in public office” (UNDP, 2016). With high unemployment rates in the country, many women and girls are forced to engage in prostitution, organ selling, and drug abuse in order to survive (North Press Agency, 2019). Domestic work is common since women and girls are expected to take responsibility for household duties, thus eliminating their chances for proper education and employment.



Source: UNDP Human Development Index

Gender inequality is common in Syria, however, fleeing the country and seeking refuge poses different threats to Syrian women and girls. In refugee camps, it is reported that Syrian women and

girls are all vulnerable to further physical, psychological, and sexual violence. An article written by UN WOMEN states that “Syrian women residing in the north have experienced GBV perpetrated in Jordan, either at the hands of their husbands, Jordanian men, or even service providers from different CBOs, and reported cases where women had to exchange sex for aid” (UN Women, 2013, p. 24). In addition, Syrian girls in Jordanian schools have been isolated and sexually harassed, leading to the absence of many girls from attending school to ensure their safety (UN Women, 2013, p. 24). In regards to sexual violence, Syrian women and boys were the most vulnerable to sexual harassment and violence as a form of torture (UN Women, 2013, p. 25). Moreover, 80% of reported cases of gender-based violence were caused by non-Syrian men who married Syrian women trying to become part of the Jordanian community, which leads to more harm and vulnerability since the men have control over their living conditions (UN Women, 2013, p. 27).

The main obstacle that is promoting further gender-based violence is silence. Many Syrian women fear to tell their stories due to cultural influences that shame and further abuse them if they speak out, making them appear as disgraces to their families (UN Women, 2013, p. 24). Approaches to gender-based violence in refugee camps are not at all efficient since many cases occur from service providers who have control over Syrian women, which leads to the conclusion that non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations cannot provide a solution to violence (UN Women, 2013, p. 24). Syrian women need safe environments that allow them to speak their truths and access health care without jeopardizing their confidentiality and their culture (UN Women, 2013, p. 27). Currently, Syrian men are the only group that has access to mobility and access to safe spaces such as mosques where they can build a community (UN Women, 2013, p. 27). Women, girls, and boys all lack access to mobility and are more vulnerable to feelings of stress and isolation because women do not have proper access to psychological health, and children do not have access to protected playing environments (UN Women, 2013, p. 27).

Existing Feminist Movements

When speaking about existing feminist movements, it is crucial to include activism in Syria, activism in refugee camps, and activism outside of refugee camps. The following research illustrates different types of activism that tackle different issues that eventually cause gender-based violence against Syrian women and girls.

In Qamishli, a Kurdish region in northeastern Syria, a community called Jinwar was built by women and only for women as a “sanctuary from war and men” that promotes female empowerment and independence from the “constraints of the oppressive power structures of patriarchy and capitalism” (Hall, 2018). In addition, Jinwar was built as an armed safe space for the purpose of protecting women from being captured by Isis and becoming sex slaves (Hall, 2018). The community provides benefits to women and children such as shelter and education, and they keep up with expenses

through agricultural work (Hall, 2018). Jinwar further promotes feminism by writing empowering sentences on walls, such as “without women, there is no freedom” and “until women educate and empower themselves, there won’t be freedom” (Hall, 2018). What is interesting about Jinwar is its fight to end discrimination and violence against women and girls and its ability to ensure that women get to fully participate in their communities and have equal access to labor, services, and income.

Moreover, an organization called Women Now for Development was created by Syrian journalist Samar Yazbek who challenges the Syrian regime in hopes of building a democratic society that no longer normalizes domestic violence and financial dependence on men, and a society that criminalizes gender discrimination (Shackle, 2017). Women Now has two centers in Lebanon and five centers in Syria that provides “psychosocial support, skills training (in English and IT among others), and economic empowerment” (Shackle, 2017). More importantly, the organization’s main goal is to provide more awareness about women’s rights and encourage women to make their voices heard in safe environments (Shackle, 2017).

In the Zaatari refugee camp in Jordan, a similar approach to Women Now was taken by UN Women that established the Women and Girls Oasis Center (UN Women, 2013). The organization is a safe space for women where they can freely spread awareness about gender-based violence and where survivors of gender-based violence can get “psycho-social and legal support” (UN Women, 2013). The Oasis Center provides women the opportunities to independently generate income through “vocational training in skills of their choice, including tailoring and hairdressing, literacy, English and French language courses, as well as providing in-kind grants to sustain modest economic activity” (UN Women, 2013). In addition, women and girls can also enjoy creative activities such as sports, drawing, and mosaic projects (UN Women, 2013). One particularly successful workshop in the Oasis Center is the Tailoring Workshop that allows tailors and hairdressers to gain a sustainable source of income (UN Women, 2013). Women in the workshop have expressed the independence they have gained from the workshop that allows them to support their husbands and children who were heavily affected by the Syrian crisis (UN Women, 2013).

On the outside of refugee camps exist several conferences that unite Syrian women and encourage more women to get involved in the political conversation regarding the future of Syrian women despite their political differences. In Lebanon, 200 Syrian women gathered for a conference held by UN Women called “Toward a Framework for the Syrian Women Movement” for the purpose of uniting Syrian feminist workers and leaders and building a political feminist coalition (UN Women, 2018). Another conference held by UN Women was the “Syrian Women Peacemakers” where women discussed how female representation can be increased in the “formal peace process” in order to better approach Syrian women’s issues, such as “the refugee crisis, the status of education, food security, healthcare services and infrastructure inside Syria, the impact of economic sanctions on Syrians inside and the issue of detainees and the kidnapped” (UN Women, 2016).

Furthermore, the Women’s International League for Peace & Freedom held a conference in Beirut for Syrian feminist organizations to discuss particular issues surrounding gender inequality in Syria, including “humanitarian relief and women’s economic empowerment, to gender equality, awareness-raising, women’s active political participation, and peace-building” (Hooij, 2018). However, the conference emphasized the lack of female participation in Syrian politics, expressing the urgent need for women to have political powers to influence policy and legal changes and social power through social media platforms in order to make Syrian society more accepting of women and change their views on gender (Hooij, 2018).

Proven Models and Best Practices

In this report, we looked at a couple of project and programs which have been carried out in Syria and have had some positive impacts on women and girls. In the subsequent paragraphs, we shall be looking at donors and objectives of the project implemented in Syria. The first project was “Support refugee-hosting countries to better understand, plan, and mitigate the impact of forced displacement” (Improvement for Livelihood of Syrian Refugee Women, 2019, 24). This project had as objective to ensure that refugees are fully able to avail themselves with long term durable solutions. This included support of socio-economic development that will benefit refugees and host communities. From this project what has been seen to work include, education, water and sanitation, skill development and vocational training have turned to work pretty well in Syria. Again, involving women in local and national decision-making processes will go a long way in improving the gender situation of women and girls in Syria. Without the help of civil society groups who work in the field assisting the international donors and partners has proven basic social rights and socio-economic vulnerability of women and girls rising sharply.

As lessons learned and what works, in this particular project commissioned by JICA and implemented by local NGOs, joining humanitarian and development funding will support to a greater extent Syrian women and girls communities to maximize donor funding and encourage donor commitments in taking the lead on policy dialogue and advocacy efforts.

In addition, another report “The EU Regional Trust Fund” 2019, 3 in response to the Syrian crisis, had as objective educational promotion, protection and youth engagement of young people, both refugee children and vulnerable children in host communities in a bid for them to enjoy quality education on equal access for girls and women. This will, in the long run, create increased access to vocational training thereby reducing pressure on countries hosting refugees.

Good Practice: As a good practice, regional-scale allowing for multicounty actions will help in creating synergies and prioritizing larger multi-partner actions. Adapting to developments in the region should

be interlinked to be able to create and make funding available at short notice which is very practical taking into consideration the context to serve Syria in reconstruction, improved government support and guarantee safe passage for voluntary return.

Lessons learned: The lessons drawn from this report is the fact that coupled with assistance and high-level political dialogue both collectively and bilaterally with countries hosting Syrian refugees is very primordial to ensure that protection and solutions for women and girls in Syria and the region can be guaranteed.

Another report looked at was the “Study on Water Sector for the Host Communities of Syrian Refugees in Northern Governorates”, (mapping donor practice 2017,10) commissioned by the Japan International Cooperation Agency. This report had as objective to conduct an assessment of the effects of migration of Syrian refugees on water supply and wastewater management services.

Good Practice: Here, the takeaway point in terms of good practice is the fact that joint programming and the developed master plan were also utilized by the Ministry of Water and Irrigation and the Government of Syria to access further assistance from several other cooperating partners.

Lessons Learned: As a lesson learned from this report and which should be considered for future interventions cross-analysis, and the development and adaptation of a master plan on a common platform to understand and process further development interventions, is very useful for both the recipient countries and relevant stakeholders.

Moreso, a report, Contribution to “Agriculture and Livestock Support for Syrian People” commissioned by Italy and implemented by the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari (IAMB). This project had as objective to increase the local capacity of councils and local administrators in order to increase the efficiency of services provided rural communities held by the moderate opposition. This report and activity targeted seemed to work perfectly in Syria as agricultural and livestock production and household income of local communities were engaged in this project and benefitted massively from its intended impacts.

Good practice: This Programme was very successful because, during the initiation process, members of the communities where the project will be implemented were consulted during the planning stages of the project. It also adopted a market-based approach that is unique inside Syria, and all inputs and services are provided directly to beneficiaries using a “revolving fund system” (p.g 10). This meant beneficiaries benefitting from the services and inputs of the program will repay for these services at a price corresponding to 75% of its value.

Lessons Learned: The subsidized approach to prices of inputs and services helped in lowering production cost, thereby increasing the overall profitability for the breeders and farmers. The adoption of a revolving fund in a war-torn country like Syria proved to be effective and sustainable, challenging the more common approach of distributing free inputs typical of humanitarian relief.

Finally on a report for “the Improvement for Livelihood of Syrian Refugee Women” commissioned by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) had as objective to seek possible ways of increasing the daily income and livelihood of Syrian refugee women.

Good practice: The good practices to be taken out in this report were an adaptation of a formally successful program for Palestinian refugees, training resumed on a pilot basis, after a positive evaluation of the project and a request from the Government of Syria.

Lessons learned: were to ensure consent from recipient government institutions to facilitate sustainable interventions. However, this report’s findings were not conducted without risk and challenges such as to obtain consent from the government for the project were a challenge since they are mandated to serve their own nationals. Many organizations and personnel had a hard time obtaining work permits, approval for certification to establish companies/ organizations, and slow process of creating files for approvals on products and services developed by refugees for merchandising outside the refugee camps.

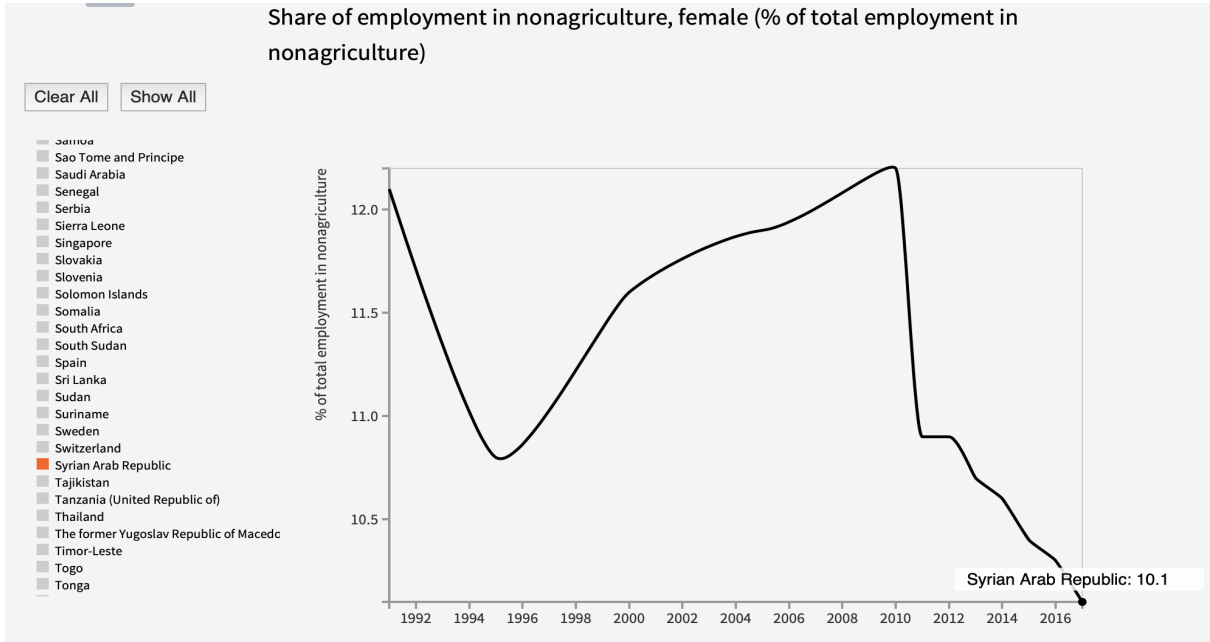
Methods that could Tackle Barriers

- UN Women utilized workshops as a strategy to develop action plans to address different aspects of gender equality. (UN WOMEN 2018)
- The JNCW worked with the OECD-MENA initiative to implement Quotas to ensure increased representation of women within government positions. (OECD 2018b)
- Civil society organizations utilize many successful strategies for increasing women’s participation in politics. (OECD 2018b, 60)
- Development programs led by USAID assisted the government by introducing merit-based hiring and strategies to increase women’s involvement in political and legal sectors. (USAID 2018b)
- Utilizing subtle methods of women's rights education has proved a successful strategy for expanding human rights within the more conservative southern region of the country. (OECD 2018b, 61)
- Staffing women’s centers with refugee women facilitated greater trust and thus greater usage of these services. (JOHUD 2016)
- An effective strategy for the expansion of women’s involvement in the economic sector is expanding opportunities for females to start their own businesses. (JOHUD 2016)

Strategies that were Unsuccessful

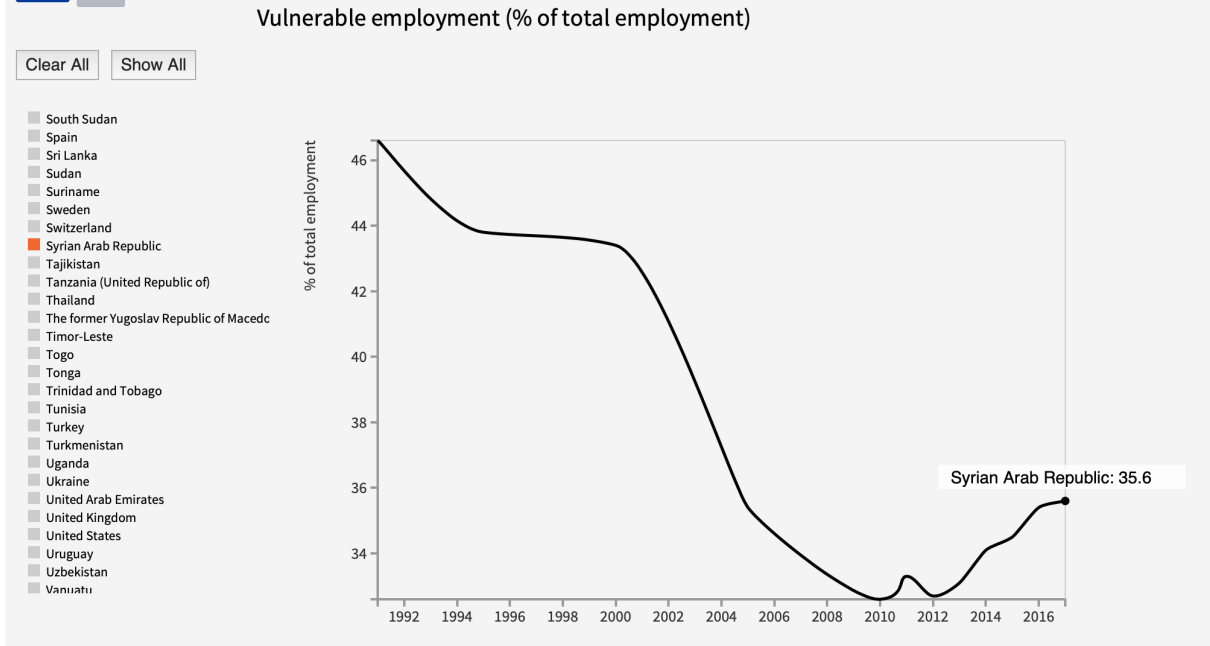
- Projects that focused pieces of training on women's rights and capabilities to only female participants were not as effective as pairing these pieces of training with sessions composed of male participants. (UN WOMEN 2018)
- Short term aid and development contracts are criticized as an unsustainable and relatively ineffective method to facilitate gender equality in Jordan. This is due to the long term nature of enacting sustainable change. (Princess Sarah Zeid 2019)
- Though cash incentive programs created some immediate positive effects, these programs had some unsustainable and ineffective qualities. Recipients of Care's cash vouchers quoted that they required further assistance in healthcare, and with paying education tuition (Care 2019)

Based on the UNWOMEN report of 2016, women and girls face discrimination and violence every day due to gender inequality, and these conditions are further exacerbated in crisis and displacement contexts such as Syria. With women and girls making up an “estimated 50 percent of the over 65 million” (UN WOMEN Report 2014, p.g 4) forcibly displaced worldwide, it is necessary to ensure that, civil society, states, the international community address not specific needs, and aspirations tailored to their interest, but also seek out and utilize their various contributions and specialized capacity in a manner that is informed and aimed at putting in place positive transformation and empowerment. According to Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) country gender profile report on Syria of 2016, the current situation of the Syrian women by sector including but not limited to Educational Sector, Health Sector, Agricultural Sector and Economic Sector, have not shown any major progress compared to their data in 1998 in the same country and on the same sample group and size. Looking at the economic sector, for example, Employment: The economic situation of women in Syria is characterized by a high rate of unemployed women as shown by the diagram below.



Source: UNDP Human Development Index

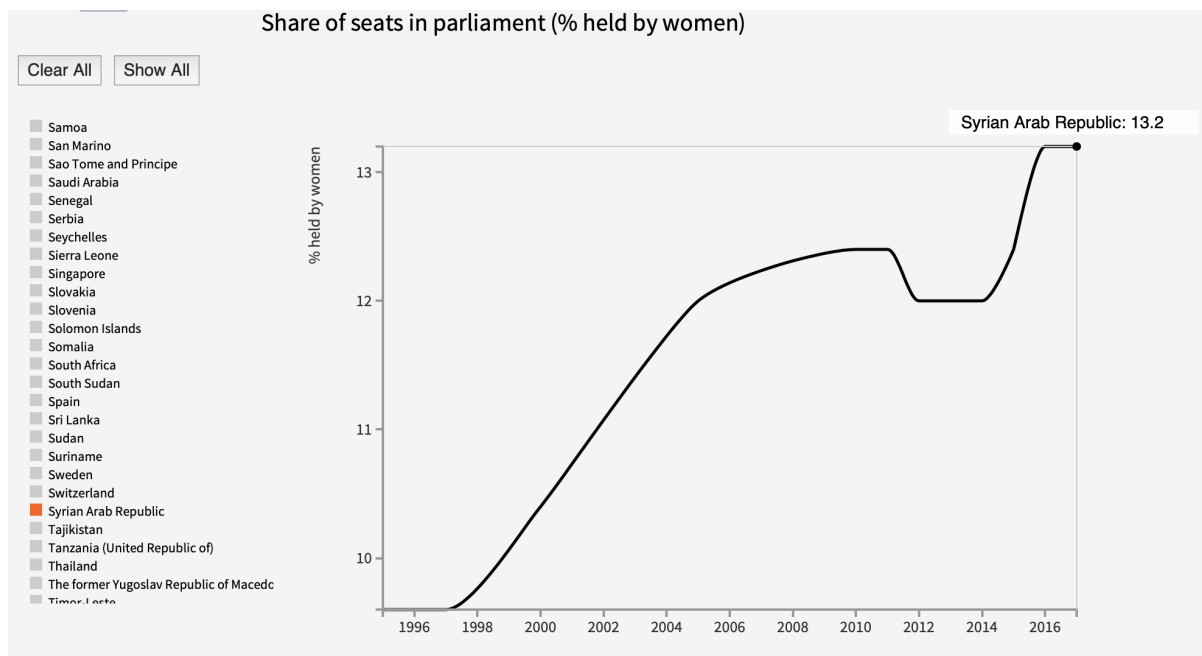
The total women labor force is around “three million, and only 1,050,000 are employed” (UNDP country report, 2017, p.g 18). The rest theoretically are mostly housewives who play the role of housekeepers which are much more than needed in the present-day crisis situation. At least 58 % of these women and girls work in agriculture in rural areas, while the rest work in urban areas in different fields mainly services and manual labor. Unemployment is also a major issue in most rural areas in Syria which needs much attention as shown in the graph below.



Source: UNDP Human Development Index

Women and girls are the most vulnerable group to this category of the unemployed group with relatively very little to be done to prevent child labor and encourage investors in Syria. Encouraging investors to start food industries in agricultural areas. As a solution, therefore, to encourage investment and employment for women and girls, capacity building workshops and vocational training should be conducted in different fields that suit women’s interests specifically textile, food processing, cloth making and in services and health.

Moreso another working area that will definitely contribute to the welfare of women and girls in Syria is their inclusion in the decision-making process and the role of the media in supporting women’s rights is a paramount and effective tool to help women take the lead.



Source: UNDP Human Development Index

As seen from the graph above, the situation in Syria is not discouraging, as they exist real obstacles from the strong influence of religious leaders, and the societal setting on the uneducated women and the authority of men. The solution to these grave problems which hinder the progress of women in taking leadership positions and media is now an area of priority to organizations such as Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, UN Women and other governments donor agencies like DFID and JICA encouraging that women take the lead in political, and media advocacy for women and girls in Syria.

Similarly, the UNDP country report on Syria 2018, (UNDP-Syria Resilience Programme) focused on enhancing the self-reliance of Syrians in a bid to help women and girls especially regain control over their basic needs in terms of housing, livelihoods, and access to essential services with a special focus on vulnerable groups of women, girls and persons with disabilities. In 2018, UNDP’s inputs on intervention reached more than 2.8 million (UNDP country report on Syria, 2018, p.g 16) persons

affected by the crisis as total beneficiaries who received support for improved basic service and contributed directly to support improved livelihoods of both the receiving country members and the internally displaced persons (IDPs). This support was made possible through vocational training job creation and productive assets distribution. As the crisis in Syria continues in its seventh year, the humanitarian community estimates that 13.5 million people in Syria are in need of various kinds of humanitarian assistance. Four out of five Syrians live in poverty and 64.7 percent of the population live in extreme poverty” (UNDP country report, 2018, p.g 23). The deep economic recession has heavily weakened the national currency, coupled with international sanctions that have soaring food and fuel prices, and disrupted markets have contributed to the extreme vulnerability of Syrians across the country.

The Donor Community

In this section, we shall look at the various organizations working in Syria and what they are funding and what their intervention means in helping development and gender-sensitive programming and gender equality in Syria. The donors funding projects and programs in Syria include governments (Denmark, EU, Netherlands, UK, Ireland, Czech Republic, Norway, Switzerland, European Union, and independent EU member states), Non-Government Organizations such as UNDP, UNHCR, JICA, UN WOMEN, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Soro Foundation, etc. We shall be looking at what these organizations are doing in response to gender and how are donors monitoring sex data. UNDP country report on Syria 2018 and the global gender gap report of 2017, both stipulates that many organizations do great work in Syria but yet the country remains the lowest end of the regional table. Syria, having closed 57% and 52% of its gender gap, respectively (UNDP country report, 2018, p.g 34).

USAID

As the country’s biggest aid provider, USAID endorses many women’s rights movements within the country. Apart from assistance allocated to humanitarian response, notable USAID programs include employment initiatives for women and girls. (USAID 2018)

Department for International Development UK

DFID represents another major international body for foreign assistance. One notable program funded by DFID is The Arab Women’s, Enterprise Fund. (DFID 2016)

Global Affairs Canada

Global Affairs Canada in our research provides the majority of the development assistance to Syria is dedicated to the education sector. There are many projects such as the Right to Play projects that enable refugees’ free time, aid in the Syrian to combat gender-based violence. Canada, as mentioned in the FIAP document, has many concerns about the current state of gender equality and how Canada could aid in closing the gap between men and women. (Global Affairs Canada 2016).

The United Nations

The United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (OHCHR) has endorsed a variety of development and advocacy programs within Syria. (OHCHR 2019)

Why do we need to prioritize Gender Equality in Syria?

According to the DFID 2017 report on the need to tackle gender issues in conflict areas and in Syria in particular. This is so because most of the organizations working in Syria including the UN agencies, World Bank, Gates Foundation, MasterCard Foundation, Soros Foundation, Japanese International Cooperation Agency just to name these few, have all agreed in their various reports that tackling gender issues will help in improving; Peace and stability outcomes, humanitarian and poverty reduction and lastly security will improve while and radicalization will be reduced and better contained. Evidence was gathered from the shared UK government approach to gender in Syria and JICA reports in March 2018 that meaningful inclusion of women in peacebuilding efforts increases the probability of violence ending in Syria within a year by 24% and makes possible peace agreements 35% more likely to endure for over 15 years. (Source: DFID gender approach on Syria, 2018 p.g 3) The continuous absence of women at peace negotiation tables gives an important signal to donors and international organizations working in Syria that most gender-sensitive programming fails to yield fruits due to the absence of women in the design process of these interventions. This, therefore, needs to be addressed in order to maintain a correlation between gender equality and stability in Syria.

Following the same pattern, the humanitarian need to impact poverty reduction in Syria needs to pay attention to gender. Women and girls experience conflict differently to men and boys. Women and girls, in general, do experience way more vulnerability in conflict-affected areas than men and boys. Therefore, tackling gender-based inequalities is critical to transform and see long term development outcomes for women and girls in Syria as this will go a long way in addressing sexual and gender-based violence. Donors such as DFID, US AID, Bill & Milinda Gates foundation including Soro Foundation working in Syria are particularly interested in and most of their resource priorities are geared towards reducing domestic gender-based violence in Syria. On the security and radicalization perspective, the role of women and girls has been overlooked. It, therefore, requires more attention and efforts to contain and prevent more women and girls being used by extremist groups as instruments for violence.

The documentation process had a few limitations and challenges, we saw from the literature reviewed that, they were some considerable disparity in the sector coordination and integration of gender equality in programming for interventions in Syria. They were differences in the willingness to discussing, and understanding the better implementation of gender equality in some sectors while some sectors have not seen the need to prioritize gender equality in the face of competing demands.

Therefore, there is a need for partners and donors intervening in Syria to incorporate gender equality measure, sex-segregated data and performance indicators and a clear line of the contribution of the respective stakeholders intervening in Syria. The full application and support for the total application and follow up of gender equality measures at the international level and amongst donor organizations and partners in the network of development players in Syria will require additional efforts.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This analysis has confirmed that gender inequalities and deeply rooted social norms existed before the conflict in Syria began, and have persisted, and in many cases worsened, over the past six years. In southern Syria, women are significantly less involved in public life and leadership roles than they were before the start of the conflict, and women's mobility has become severely restricted. However, many women, particularly those now heading a household, have had to take on greater, and often traditionally male responsibilities.

Based on this analysis, which has provided an improved understanding of the interplay between gender dynamics, protection and governance in southern Syria, a number of key recommendations for immediate action have emerged:

- Involvement with Syrian partner organizations to fight against gender-based violence and promote gender equality.
- Further education of women and men on gender-based violence in order to eliminate the triggers that cause them.
- Increase the participation of Syrian women in international organizations to gain more qualitative information regarding gender-based violence.
- Increased well-coordinated intervention in Syria by donors, partners, and international organizations in order to improve and sustain the livelihoods of women and girls
- Increase in communities that provide safe spaces and medical, psychological, educational, career, and legal services to Syrian women experiencing gender-based violence.

The findings in this report show, first, the key roles that men play in private life and public governance. The findings show that men are under pressure to act in highly masculinized ways, even where these are not the most sustainable personal coping mechanisms or crisis response strategies. Finally, men hold a very broad range of knowledge and attitudes regarding gender issues. Given their decision-making positions, this set of knowledge and attitudes directly affects how women, girls, men, and boys access the goods and services they need to cope with this crisis.

Methods

Methods applied in the preparation of this report were mainly the review of literature focused on gender in Syria. Reports reviewed range from organizations that worked and still working in Syria including but not limited to government and nongovernmental organizations, think tanks, foundations, local organizations and aid agencies, (JICA DFID, OECD, UNWOMEN, CARE, OXFAM, UNDP,) European Union, and individual EU member states, governments, and Non-Governmental sources. Keywords searched were gender violence, inequality, Syria, policies on health and economic empowerment, reconstruction and rehabilitation, Improvement, Livelihood, Refugee Women.

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7. Yemen

Emily Van Hoeve and Benjamin Bushell

Executive Summary

This paper provides insight into the current state of gender equality in the Republic of Yemen and best practices for implementing gender-based programming in the food security, education, sexual and reproductive health, gender-based violence (GBV), water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), and early recovery sectors.

Yemen is one of the poorest countries in the world and is currently experiencing the worst man-made humanitarian crises. The source of the crisis can be attributed to several factors: a decade of conflict beginning with the Arab Spring in 2011; political turmoil with the resignation of President Ali Abdullah Saleh and the appointment of current President Abdurabuh Mansur Hadi in 2012; the capture of the country's capital city Sana'a in 2015 by the Houthis; and an ongoing civil war between the Houthis and a Saudi-led international coalition which aims to restore the Hadi government in the Sana'a region. The international coalition has blocked port entries to the country, limiting the receipt of humanitarian aid, which has resulted in pervasive food insecurity and the risk of famine. Of even greater concern to humanitarian organizations is the widespread lack of access to healthcare, particularly in rural areas, which has generated the fastest-growing cholera epidemic ever recorded. As a result, for the past three years, the United Nations has labeled Yemen a level three humanitarian emergency, which requires the highest level of mobilization across the global humanitarian system.

Yemen has the worst ranking in the world for gender equality. Women and girls are an extremely vulnerable group in locations facing conflict and experience considerable gender discrimination. Since the onset of the civil war, a wide range of organizations and donors have focused on integrating gender-based programming into their humanitarian and development projects throughout the country. Some of the most influential Yemeni feminist organizations supporting this work include the Yemen Women Union, the Yemeni Women's Pact for Peace and Security, the All Girls Foundation for Development, The White Ribbon Alliance, the Yamaan Foundation, the Abs Development Organization for Women & Children, and the Al-Aman Organization for Blind Women Care. The top ten donors financing gender equality programming in 2017 include: the United Kingdom (\$188.82M); the European Union (\$50.5M); Germany (\$45.62M); Canada (\$41.54M); the Netherlands (\$41.36M); Sweden (\$37.69M); Japan (\$28.37M); Belgium (\$11.79M); Ireland (\$5.91M); and Norway (\$5.19M).

Best practices regarding the implementation of gender-based programming in different sectors include the use of multi-purpose cash transfers alongside livelihood investments and the

rehabilitation of community assets to improve food security and build resilience at household and community levels. Evidence also suggests that school meals programming in emergencies is an effective intervention that provides intersecting benefits across nutrition, protection, food security and education sectors. The rehabilitation of damaged schools and non-functional school latrines can increase school enrollment, particularly among girls, as they are more vulnerable than boys to the absence of adequate sanitation facilities.

A strong body of evidence exists to support the use of multi-component gender-based violence (GBV) interventions over single-component interventions, especially those that work with both women and men or the whole community. Reproductive health vouchers may increase access to reproductive health services in the context of increasing instability. Finally, water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) programming that implements clean water sources in communities, such as rainwater harvesting reservoirs, improves the lives of women and girls by removing the extensive daily travel time for fetching water.

Country Overview

Yemen, officially known as the Republic of Yemen, is a country located on the southern end of the Arabian Peninsula, it is bordered by Saudi Arabia to the North, the Red Sea to the West, the Gulf of Aden and the Arabian Sea to the South, and Oman to the East (Maxwell et. al. 2019, 6). The country has a population of approximately 28 million, an average life expectancy of 66 years, and more than sixty percent of the population is under 25 years of age (World Bank 2018; Maxwell et. al. 2019, 6). Yemen is an extremely poor country with the lowest GDP per capita in the Arab world. Due to several years of conflict, more than 22 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance and nearly 16 million face severe acute food insecurity (Gressmann 2016, 6; Maxwell et. Al. 2019, 9).

The modern Republic of Yemen was established in 1990 when South Yemen merged with North Yemen. The country's first president was Ali Abdullah Saleh who governed the country in an authoritarian manner until his resignation in early 2012 (Maxwell et. al. 2019, 6). The Arab Spring, a series of protests and rebellions that spread across the Arab world, resulted in a widespread uprising across the country in 2011. The poor socio-economic living conditions in the country, and the immense corruption of President Saleh's government, contributed significantly to the popularity of the uprising. President Saleh was forced to hand his power over to Vice President, Abdurabuh Mansur Hadi in November 2011 (Maxwell et. al. 2019, 6). President Hadi became Yemen's head of state in February 2012 when he won an uncontested presidential election, as a result he remains the country's president today.

Another influential political force in Yemen is Ansar Allah, also known as the Houthi movement. The Houthis began as a theological movement in the 1990s preaching peace and tolerance in Yemen with

the goal of eradicating political corruption and authoritarian governance and supporting a more democratic republic (Maxwell et. al. 2019, 6). The Houthis have clashed with the government since 2004 and the conflict between these groups escalated when the Houthis took control of Sana'a, Yemen's capital city, in 2015. In response, a coalition of Arab states, led by Saudi Arabia, with the support of the United States, United Kingdom, and France, intervened in the conflict to restore President Hadi's government. (Maxwell et. al. 2019, 6). In addition to the conflict between the Houthis and the international coalition, there is also an ongoing conflict with al-Qaeda in the southern region of the country. These persisting conflicts have placed Yemen in what has been described as the world's worst man-made humanitarian crisis in modern history (Maxwell et. al. 2019, 8).

For the last three years, since 2016, the United Nations has placed Yemen as a level three humanitarian emergency, which requires the highest level of mobilization across the global humanitarian system (Maxwell et. al. 2019, 9). As a result of the conflict, almost three million Yemenis have been displaced and roughly eighty percent of the country's population are currently in need of humanitarian assistance (Gressmann 2016, 8). More than 10,000 civilians have been killed since 2015 and many more have lost their lives to food insecurity and disease (Coppi 2018, 1). The international coalition has blocked port entries to the country, limiting the receipt of humanitarian aid, which has resulted in pervasive food insecurity leaving the country on the brink of famine (Coppi 2018, 1). Of even greater concern to humanitarian organizations is the widespread lack of access to healthcare, particularly in rural areas, which has generated the fastest-growing cholera epidemic ever recorded (Coppi 2018, 1). A wide range of local, national and international actors have responded to the crisis, including political authorities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international humanitarian organizations and the private sector (Coppi 2018, 1). Gaps in the current international response to the crisis include an almost exclusive focus on humanitarian aid and a lack of development focused programming, as well as a greater need for gender-based approaches to the humanitarian response, as women have a significant role to play in the peacebuilding process (Coppi 2018, 1).

The State of Gender Equality

With a 0.425 on the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) gender development index (GDI) and a 0.835 on the gender inequality index, Yemen currently has the worst ranking in the world for gender equality (UNDP 2017). The country is also failing to meet objectives for gender related Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets (UNDP 2017). For SDG 5, gender equality, Yemen has yet to meet the demand for contraception, due to a wide gender gap in female to male mean years of schooling and labour force participation and poor democratic participation – women currently hold less than one percent of seats in national parliaments (UNDP 2017; UN Women 2019). The three leading causes of gender inequality in Yemen are: (i) the current humanitarian crisis, as women are

vulnerable to violence, abuse and exploitation during a conflict; (ii) the conservative Islamic government; and (iii) sociocultural beliefs and practices that severely limit women's rights and freedoms (UNFPA 2015; Elham 2010).

Gender-based violence is the greatest concern for the well-being of women and girls, as the conflict increases their risk of experiencing violence, including harassment and abuse, sexual and labour exploitation, and early and forced marriage (Gressmann 2016, 11). This can be demonstrated through the upward trend of recorded GBV incidents, with seventy percent more incidents reported in early 2016 than in early 2015 (Gressmann 2016, 11). As well, survivors of GBV have little to no access to support services or knowledge of where existing services caused by the dismantling of social and health related infrastructure due to the conflict (Gressmann 2016, 11). Another form of GBV is the denial of access to resources, opportunities and services that Yemeni women face (Gressman 2016, 11). Women and girls in Yemen face gender discrimination in almost all aspects of their lives, including in the home, in the legal system, in the criminal justice system, in the workforce, in education, in health, and more (Elham 2010).

In the home, women in Yemen do not have the same familial rights as men, as under the country's constitution a wife is required to follow her husband's orders and rape within marriage is legal (Elham 2010, 430). In the Yemeni legal system, women are not recognized as full persons before the court, they do not enjoy the same citizenship rights as men, and their freedom of movement is restricted as they are unable to obtain a personal identity card or passport without the consent of a male guardian (Elham 2010, 426-429). In the criminal justice system, the majority of Yemeni women hesitate reporting GBV cases for fear of being harassed or abused by law enforcement (Elham 2010, 427). Yemeni women face huge inequality in regard to economic rights, as most women are forced to be financially dependent on their male relatives due to social norms that prevent women from entering the workforce, the lack of daycare facilities in workplaces, and the significant gender gap in education (Elham 2010, 433). Moreover, women in Yemen have much lower levels of education on average compared to men. The gender gap in education is demonstrated through a lower female to male literacy rate, a higher school dropout rate for girls than boys, and lower elementary school completion rates for girls than boys (Elham 2010, 434-435). Regarding school dropouts, girls represent 63 percent, as families are more likely to keep their daughters at home to save money than their sons and many young girls are also pulled out of school to be forced into early marriage (Gressmann 2016, 14). Yemeni women lack the freedom to make their own decisions about their health and reproductive rights and many also lack access to adequate health services (Elham 2010, 441). For example, Yemeni women must obtain permission from their husband before they can obtain contraceptives (Elham 2010, 441). This problem is magnified by the collapse of the healthcare system, which has interrupted sexual and reproductive health services (SRH). In addition, there is a shortage of female staff who can deliver healthcare services due to access constraints imposed by the conflict. The urgent need for female staff is underscored by the socio-cultural context, which requires

that women receive reproductive healthcare services from female personnel (Giulio 2018, 8). Because of this lack of access to sexual and reproductive health services, including contraception and the result of husbands spending more time at home due to loss of employment, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of pregnant and lactating women in Yemen, as this demographic, which made up 23.4 percent of households in 2015, increased to 44.3 percent in 2016 (Gressman 2016, 11).

Thousands of NGOs have been active raising awareness of and combating the many inequalities that women face in Yemen, but they have yet to make a significant impact, as gender equality programming is not a priority. In addition, the conflict has impeded the ability of feminist activists to publicly protest, and women's rights groups continue to face criminalization – including detention and harassment by law enforcement. (UNFPA 2015; Elham 2010, 428).

Existing Feminist Movements

Some of the most influential feminist groups in Yemen include the Yemen Women Union, the Yemeni Women's Pact for Peace and Security, the All Girls Foundation for Development, The White Ribbon Alliance, the Yamaan Foundation, the Abs Development Organization for Women & Children, and the Al-Aman Organization for Blind Women Care. These groups range from NGOs, to civil society groups, to grassroots movements and focus on a range of gender-based issues from peacebuilding, to political representation, to health, to education, to economic empowerment and more.

The Yemeni Women's Pact for Peace and Security was established with the support of UN Women. It advocates for women's participation in all political dialogues in Yemen, particularly those involving the peacebuilding process (United Nations 2018). The pact submitted policy recommendations to the Yemeni government in 2015 to end the war and start a peacebuilding process. The group also meets regularly; for example, an eight-day gathering in Amman, Jordan was organized in March 2018 to discuss women's issues in Yemen and to create a better understanding of women's roles in the peace process (United Nations 2018).

The Yemen Women Union is an independent NGO that was established in the 1960s and seeks to empower women and support their capacities to effectively contribute to the achievement of gender equality in Yemen through eliminating all forms of discrimination against women (Yemen Women Union 2019). The Union focuses a portion of its programming on women's political empowerment, but also operates a wide variety of projects in the protection, shelter, food security, WASH, health, education and early recovery sectors. (Yemen Women Union 2019).

The All Girls Foundation for Development is another organization that is focused on women's, as well as youth, empowerment. The All Girls Foundation for Development was founded in Sana'a in 2003

and concentrates its programming in two specific areas - education and empowerment (All Girls Foundation for Development 2019). The Foundation's education programming encourages local communities to send their children to school, with a focus on enhancing girls' education (All Girls Foundation for Development 2019). The Foundation also works to support women's economic empowerment and improve their food security. Of particular interest is their "listener club" programming, which provides a platform for women to be heard and to discuss issues that affect them. The Foundation's secretariat training program also provides employment for Yemeni women and GBV training to community leaders. (All Girls Foundation for Development 2019).

Abs Development Organization for Women & Children strives to "create a better standard of living for women, children and youth in Yemen" (Abs Yemen 2019). Abs was founded in 1996 and operates throughout the country, but primarily targets neglected rural areas along the coast of Tehama (Abs Yemen 2019). Abs, like Yemen Women Union, is a holistic organization that concentrates its programming across multiple sectors that affect gender equality, including women's civil and political rights, humanitarian aid, health services, and GBV. (Abs Yemen 2019).

The Yamaan Foundation for Health and Social Development is a relatively new locally owned and operated NGO in Sana'a that was established in 2010. The Yamaan Foundation is primarily concerned with health-related issues and conducts programming that aims to increase the provision of health and social services to Yemeni women (Yamaan Foundation 2019). Examples of their projects include social marketing for reproductive health services, a voucher program for safe motherhood and family planning, the building of midwife networks to increase family planning capacities, and an emergency obstetric and neonatal care training program (Yamaan Foundation 2019).

The al-Aman Organization for Blind Women Care is a non-profit organization established in 1999. Its purpose is to improve women's health in Yemen, with the specific goal of achieving total involvement of blind women in Yemeni society by providing them with health, social, and educational services (Al-Aman Organization 2019).

Finally, the White Ribbon Alliance is also focused on advocating for improved women's health. The Alliance is a locally led, but globally connected grassroots movement that works in Yemen through the National Safe Motherhood Alliance (NSMA), which is playing a key role in the dialogue in Yemen to support the adoption of a "safe motherhood law" and create productive national dialogues around the issues of free healthcare, the age of marriage, girls' education, and violence against women (White Ribbon Alliance 2019). The Alliance is particularly focused on the current cholera epidemic, which has significantly impacted pregnant and breastfeeding women (White Ribbon Alliance 2019).

Proven Models and Best Practices

Food Security

To prevent the further deterioration of the food security situation, the provision of life-saving humanitarian assistance is the most urgent priority in Yemen. The World Food Programme (WFP), which has been responding to the crisis since 2015, has found that life-saving assistance must be coordinated and integrated within and across sectors to prevent famine and contribute to restoring livelihoods (World Food Programme 2018, 10). Assistance should be prioritized to women, girls, households headed by one person, people with disabilities, and pregnant and lactating women due to their increased vulnerability to food and nutrition insecurity (World Food Programme 2018, 10). Evidence suggests that food programs that integrate gender equality considerations have positive effects on a variety of humanitarian outcomes (Food and Agriculture Organization 2017, 15). When gender equality programming is integrated in humanitarian interventions, dual improvements have been observed in “both food access and food security, and gender equality in terms of food access and consumption” (Food and Agriculture Organization 2017, 15). The most successful interventions are those that (i) prioritize women as collectors of food, (ii) ensure women’s participation in economic activities (food-for-work programs), and (iii) distribute seeds to women (Food and Agriculture Organization 2017, 15).

More broadly, there is growing evidence that school meals programming in emergencies is an effective way to protect children and meet basic hunger needs (Bundy et al. 2017, x). A study of 45 school meals programs found that children who receive a school meal during the entire school year attended school 4-7 days more than those who did not (World Food Programme 2019, 2). In addition, a meta-analysis of school meals programs across 32 sub-Saharan countries found that when school meals were combined with take-home rations, girls’ enrolment increased by 12% (World Food Programme 2019, 2). School meals also provide a financial incentive for families to send their children, particularly girls, to school. It has been estimated that the value of school meals programming is equivalent to 10% of a household’s income (World Food Programme 2019, 3). In its 2019-20 Yemen Interim Country Strategic Plan, WFP indicates that it will expand its school meals programming to achieve education outcomes and support the transformation of the program into a platform for nutrition-sensitive and gender-transformative programming in the coming years (World Food Programme 2018, 11).

Education

Yemen has a very poor quality of education, ranking 178 out of 188 countries on the UNDP’s 2017 Education Index (UNDP 2017). Yemen also has one of the lowest mean years of schooling for females compared to males, with women obtaining an average of only 1.9 years of schooling and men obtaining 4.2 years of schooling (UNDP 2017). This huge gender gap in educational attainment is a result of cultural barriers that impede girls’ access to education and the current conflict, which places

women and girls in a highly vulnerable position. Currently, two million Yemeni children remain out of school as a result of the humanitarian crisis, which has put financial stress on many families, causing them to pull their children out of school. In addition, three-quarters of public school-teachers no longer receive salaries and are vulnerable to violence, as many schools have experienced attacks and damage due to the conflict (UNICEF 2019).

An evaluation of UNICEF’s educational programming in Yemen found that the best solution to getting children back in school is the rehabilitation and re-opening of schools that have been damaged and/or closed down. Since 2016, UNICEF’s school rehabilitation projects have facilitated access to education for 204,340 children, through repairing 18 affected schools and non-functional latrines in 218 schools (UNICEF 2019). More than half of children affected by this programming were girls, as the rehabilitation of latrines has a large impact on increased school enrollment of girls, given that girls are more vulnerable than boys to lack of access to proper sanitation facilities at school (UNICEF 2019). Girls experience disproportionate barriers to education in Yemen compared to boys because of cultural norms that shape gender roles and severely limit their agency and individual autonomy. Many projects have found that providing educational resources for empowering Yemeni girls and young women greatly increases their leadership development and likelihood of staying in school (USAID & CARE 2011). Specifically, USAID found that their implementation of the Power to Lead Alliance (PTLA) in Yemen, a project implemented in six countries with the goal of promoting girl leaders in vulnerable communities, fostered girls’ agency through empowerment building activities including art clubs, debate clubs and civic action opportunities (USAID & CARE 2011, 57).

Lastly, a wide range of projects in different sectors have found that conditional cash transfers (CCTs) are an effective method to increasing welfare. CCTs are programs that “give money to people in return for specific behavioral conditions (WHO 2008). A CCT program in rural Yemeni communities in 2013, where cash stipends provided to families required their daughters to maintain no less than 80% school attendance, found, according to Dr. Abdulrazzak Al-Ashwal, Yemen’s minister of education, that there are more girls enrolled in school in remote areas and that they have been promoted to continue their schooling in advanced grades (World Bank 2013).

Sexual and Reproductive Health

Sexual and reproductive health refers to a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being in all matters relating to the reproductive system and its functions and processes (Inter-Agency Working Group on Reproductive Health in Crisis 2018, 1). In humanitarian settings, the provision of SRH services can prevent death, disease, and disability related to unintended pregnancy, obstetric complications, sexual and other forms of gender-based violence, HIV infection, and a range of reproductive disorders (Inter-Agency Working Group on Reproductive Health in Crisis 2018, 2). Providing SRH services in emergencies requires a multi-sector, integrated approach, this includes protection, health, nutrition, education, WASH, and community service personnel (Inter-Agency

Working Group on Reproductive Health in Crisis 2018, 2). Research suggests that the most effective way to ensure that SRH services meet the needs of affected populations is to involve beneficiaries in every phase of program design and implementation (Inter-Agency Working Group on Reproductive Health in Crisis 2018, 2).

In Yemen, an estimated six million women and girls need assistance (UNFPA 2019b, 1). As a result of eroding healthcare, lack of food, and poor nutrition Yemen has one of the highest maternal mortality ratios in the Arab region (UNFPA 2019b, 1). Proven evidence-based strategies like emergency obstetric and neonatal care (EmONC) are crucial to reducing maternal morbidity and mortality (Casey 2015, 5). Moreover, recent evidence suggests that shifting post abortion treatment from sharp dilation and curettage (D&C) to the use of aspiration techniques and medical treatment with misoprostol improves health outcomes (Gallagher et al. 2019, S231). In Yemen, a Save the Children run project applied this approach and reported the following: In 2013, 25% of all PAC clients in Yemen were treated with D&C; this percentage was reduced to 3% in 2017 (Gallagher et al. 2019, S231). Moreover, the percentage of PAC clients choosing voluntary contraception rose from 17% in 2013 to 38% in 2017 (Gallagher et al. 2019, S231). This indicates that service providers can move away from D&C as treatment for PAC and that contraceptive uptake by PAC clients can increase significantly (Gallagher et al. 2019, S231).

Recent evidence also suggests the utility of reproductive health vouchers, where the flow of public funds to health providers has been halted due to conflict. In Yemen, RH vouchers may have enabled more women to access a basket of reproductive health services in the context of increasing instability, due to a much higher than expected number of institutional deliveries (by 25%) over one year (Grainger et al. 2017, 8). Voucher programmes are well aligned with crisis situations, given that they can be set up quickly and are highly flexible in their design (Grainger et al. 2017, 7).

Finally, another study of RH programming in Yemen found growing evidence that women affected by conflict require family planning services, and that demand does not decline as long as quality services remain accessible (Morris et al. 2019, 100). Central to the maintenance and expansion of quality RH services was an adaptable programme model, which enabled the project's implementers to respond to challenges imposed by the conflict and political environment (Morris et al. 2019, 108).

Gender-Based Violence

Gender-based violence is a term that is used to describe any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will and that is based on socially ascribed differences between males and females (UNFPA 2019, v). Before the conflict, early and forced marriage, genital cutting, and mobility restrictions were commonplace in Yemen (CARE International 2016, 2). A Demographic and Health Survey conducted in 2013, found that 92 percent of women interviewed said that violence against women was common in the home (International Rescue Committee 2019, 4). The conflict has only exacerbated pre-existing vulnerabilities (Bhattacharjee et al. 2013, 23; Heinze 2016, 4). In November 2017, OCHA reported that

incidents of GBV had increased by over 63 percent since before the conflict (International Rescue Committee 2019, 3). The increase in all forms of violence against women and girls has been attributed to several factors, including the conflict's effects on households and on the country's public services and infrastructure (International Rescue Committee 2019, 7).

Addressing GBV requires implementing programs that reduce the risk of GBV, promote community resilience, support survivors, and strengthen local and national capacities (UNFPA 2019a, vi; UNHCR 2015, 16; International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies 2015, 42). However, the evidence suggests that there has been an insufficient focus on gender equality in the overall planning and response to the conflict (International Rescue Committee 2019, 8). This includes gender-blind needs assessments, a lack of gender disaggregated data, and insufficient funding for reproductive health and GBV services (International Rescue Committee 2019, 8).¹ Existing GBV prevention and response structures need to be scaled up, including psychosocial support, legal assistance, and safe shelter for GBV survivors, as well as training for health and community-based service providers to listen and provide emotional support (CARE International, OXFAM, and IASC 2016, 47).

At the local level, one report noted the preference by Yemeni women's civil society organizations not to use the terms "women's rights" and "women's activism" (Heinze and Stevens 2018, 31). This finding is important for understanding how to frame future support for women's rights and decision-making in Yemen (Heinze and Stevens 2018, 31). A recent study by Oxfam and International Alert also found that donors and INGOs are inadvertently hindering the gender justice agenda by exerting a "disproportionate level of influence on national NGO and CSO priorities and programming" (Anderson 2017, 5). As a result, it is imperative that donors and INGOs partner with local women led CSOs to deliver humanitarian programming, while also supporting the needs and priorities of women at the grassroots level.

More generally, a strong body of evidence exists in favor of multi-component interventions over single-component interventions to prevent GBV (Fulu, Kerr-Wilson, and Lang 2014, 3). A systematic review of 35 reviews on the impact of interventions to prevent violence against adolescent girls and young women in low- and middle-income countries found that "multilevel interventions that rely on community engagement to create a favorable environment, and interventions with adolescents to enhance their social resources outside the family and their voice/agency show promise to reduce VAWG" (Yount, Krause, and Miedema 2017, 11; UNHCR 2019, 6). This is corroborated by a rapid review of existing evidence, which found that interventions that work with both women and men or with the whole community are more effective at preventing GBV than single-sex interventions (Fulu, Kerr-Wilson, and Lang 2014, 3).

¹ As of September 2019, UNFPA's Yemen 2019 Humanitarian Response Plan was 42% funded.

WASH

WASH is an acronym that stands for water, sanitation, and hygiene, and amidst the current conflict, what was left of Yemen's water and sanitation infrastructure has been destroyed. The absence of clean drinking water and adequate sanitation systems has resulted in the worst cholera outbreak in history, with almost 3,000 deaths reported to date (Abu-Lohom, Muzenda, & Mumssen 2018). Women and children are the most vulnerable populations to contracting cholera and other waterborne diseases and pregnant and lactating women experience an especially high risk. The highest number of cholera cases have been reported in places where wastewater treatment plants are non-functional, leading to the contamination of shallow aquifers and wells, where local communities collect their drinking water (Abu-Lohom, Muzenda, & Mumssen 2018). WASH interventions have mainly targeted water treatment by providing chlorination of water sources, piped networks and private water trucks, and disinfection of water at the household level through the distribution of hygiene kits to schools and homes, but without the adoption of gender-sensitive programming, which is essential, as women and children are the most affected population (Abu-Lohom, Muzenda, & Mumssen 2018).

Gender-focused WASH projects that have been found to improve water and sanitation conditions for Yemeni communities, especially women and girls, are those focused on building clean water sources within communities to reduce women and girl's travel time for water collection (UNDP 2018). UNDP's Social Protection for Community Resilience Project, which engaged Yemeni households in constructing rainwater harvesting reservoirs, found that in addition to improving water and sanitation conditions for communities, women and girls' lives were improved as they no longer had to travel for hours a day to fetch water for their families (UNDP 2018). Not only did this project improve women's and girls' sanitation and health, but it also improved their access to education and reduced the risk of GBV. One explanation for this finding is that women and girls face an increased risk of harassment and abuse during their long journey to fetch water for their household. In addition, time spent fetching water also negatively impacts girls' school attendance (UNDP 2018).

Early Recovery

Early Recovery is "an approach that addresses recovery needs that arise during the humanitarian phase of an emergency, using humanitarian mechanisms that align with development priorities, build resilience, and establish a sustainable process of recovery from crisis" (Global Cluster for Early Recovery 2016, 12). In the most vulnerable districts, there is a need to implement early recovery activities, which includes supporting lifesaving services and livelihood opportunities. UNDP's 2018 Yemen Multi-Sector Early Recovery Assessment found that diminished livelihood opportunities have forced many to adopt negative coping mechanisms, including selling core household assets (Lambert and AFAR Consulting 2018, 18). Economic hardship is widespread across all geographic areas, population groups, and livelihoods (Lambert and AFAR Consulting 2018, 18). The most vulnerable

households are more likely to be located in the al Hudaydah hub, be female-headed, and have experienced displacement (Lambert and AFAR Consulting 2018, 18). Women are more likely to struggle with livelihood issues due to a lack of mobility, decision making power, and a lack of access and control over resources (UNOCHA, n.d.). Across all hubs, the proportion of female-headed households earning over YER 50,001 a month is 16%, compared to 22% for male-headed households (Lambert and AFAR Consulting 2018, 19). Over a quarter of female-headed households in Yemen are reliant on aid, while 12.6% are dependent on remittances from other sources (Lambert and AFAR Consulting 2018, 19).

There is growing evidence that a combination of multi-purpose cash transfers (MPC), livelihood investments, and rehabilitation of community assets builds resilience at household and community levels. In 2017, a consortium of CARE and Action Contre la Faim implemented a European Union-funded multi-purpose cash project in the Abyan and Amran governorates. The project aimed to improve food security and support livelihood activities through the provision of lifesaving assistance and the rehabilitation of community-identified shared assets (CARE International 2019a, 1). Nearly all “(96%) of project beneficiaries reported that the project had high benefits and positive impact” (CARE International 2019a, 3). Approximately 70% of surveyed female-headed households felt that the project played a role in their ability to influence financial decisions in the household (CARE International 2019a, 4). The selection of water tanks for community asset rehabilitation reduced womens’ time and labor hauling water (CARE International 2019a, 4). Likewise, the provision of MPC supported the ability of some school age girls to rejoin schools (CARE International 2019a, 4). The project’s accompanying study, “The Gendered Dimension of Multi-Purpose Cash Supporting Disaster Resilience,” suggests that MPC transfers in Yemen are a critical factor in allowing households to reduce risky behaviors, by enabling beneficiaries to meet their basic needs (CARE International 2019b, 17). If MPC programming ends, resilience activities “are less effective or end all together” (CARE International 2019b, 32). While an emerging area of study, the use of MPC to meet basic needs alongside livelihood investments presents an avenue for early recovery programming that should be investigated further. To protect gains, “it may be necessary to continue MPC during resilience programming” (CARE International 2019b, 7).

The Donor Community

The situation in Yemen remains precarious, with roughly eighty percent of the population requiring humanitarian assistance (UNOCHA 2019a, 5). The international community’s response is primarily focused on providing humanitarian assistance, with space for nexus programming focused on livelihoods to address the root causes of food insecurity. In June 2019, 117 organizations were active in 332 of 333 districts (99.6%). This includes 10 UN agencies operating in 331 districts, 32 INGOs in 266 districts, and 75 national NGOs in 308 districts (UNOCHA 2019b, 1). The largest number of

organizations are active in al Hudaydah (52), Taizz (47), Amanat Al Asimah (38), Hajjah (34), and Lahj (33).

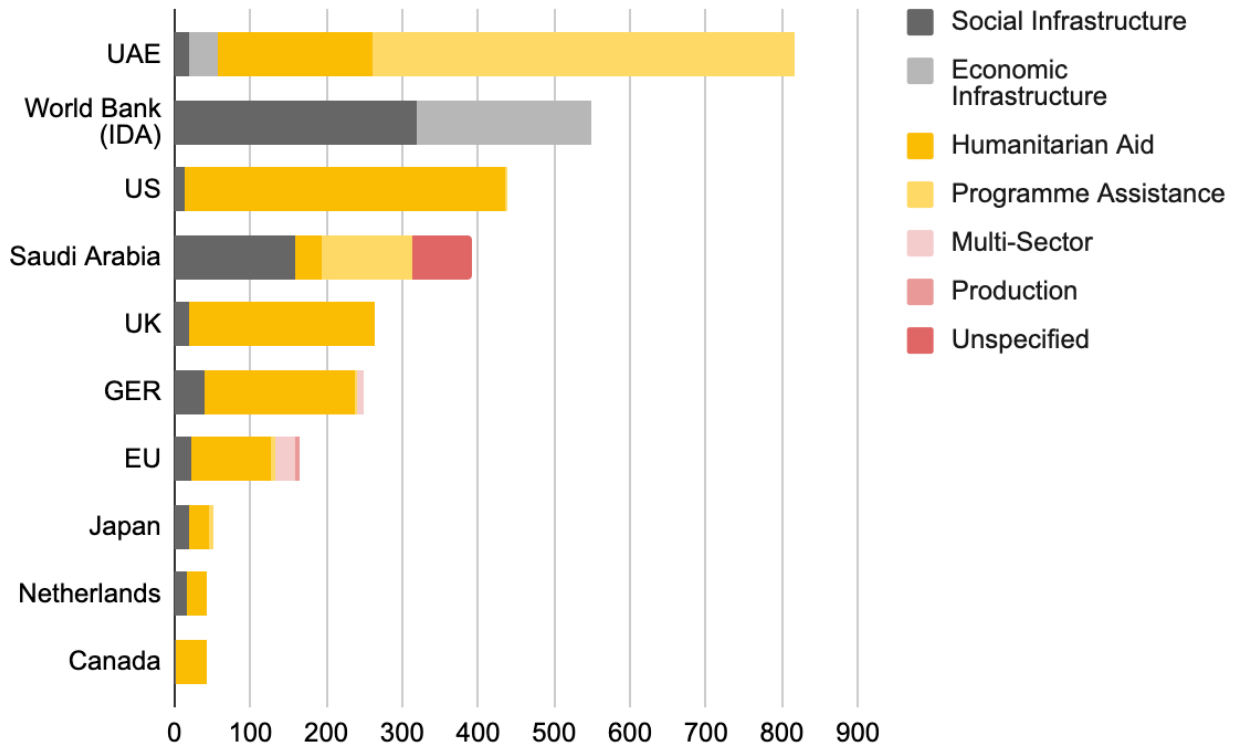
UN Agencies, International NGOs, and Local NGOs responding by Cluster, Top-5 Governorates

Cluster	Al Hudaydah	Taizz	Amanat Al Asimah	Hajjah	Lahj
FSAC	WFP,FAO, IRY,VHI,SCI,CARE,ADRA,DRC,IRC,KSRELIEF,RDP,SFHRP,LMMPO,YDN,NFDHR,SHS,SFD	WFP,CARE,MC,SCI,KSRELIEF,SFHRP,YFCA,BCHR,FMF,SHS,TYF,BCHD,CSSW,SFD	DA,CARE,AFDC,YLDF,SFD	WFP,FAO,NRC,ADRA,DRC,HAY,VHI,RI,CARE,SCI,KSRELIEF,BCHR,SFHRP,NFDHR,SFD	WFP,FAO,ADRA,CARE,SCI,HAY,CSSW,FMF,NMO,SFD
Health	UNICEF,UNFPA,IOM,WHO,ACFF,QRCS,HAY,ADRA,IRC,ADD,MSIY,IRY,SCI,YFCA,AGFD,ADO,BFD,MMFY,Taybah	UNICEF,UNFPA,IOM,WHO,IMC,QRCS,ADD,FHI360,MSIY,IRY,SCI,TYF,DEEM,IYCY,SAWT,SHS,CSSW	UNICEF,UNFPA,IOM,WHO,IRC,MDM,HI,QRCS,MSIY,YFCA,BFD	UNICEF,UNFPA,IOM,WHO,RI,ACFF,ADRA,INTERSOS,ZOA,SCI,Taybah,BFD,SDF,YRCS,YFCA	IOM,WHO,IRC,ADRA,INTERSOS,ACF-F,SCI,Yamaan,CSSW,YFCA
WASH	UNICEF,SI,SFD,RHD,NFHD,Taybah,YOPY,NPF	UNICEF,IMC,NRC,INTERSOS,OXFAM,GWQ,RHD,SFD,SOUL,RSD	UNICEF,UNOPS,IMC,OCFD,PWP,OMD,SFD,RHD	UNICEF,OXFAM,ZOA,SFD	UNICEF,IOM,ZOA,ADRA,SI,Taybah
Protection	UNICEF,OHCHR,UNHCR,UNFPA,QRCS,CARE,IRC,DRC,HGF,SDF,HGSDF,YWU	UNICEF,OHCHR,UNDP,UNHCR,UNFPA,QRCS,INTERSOS,DRC,DEEM,AOBWC,SFD,YDRD,RF,AFD,YWU	UNICEF,UNHCR,UNFPA,HI,SCI,SDF,YEMAC,FCDF,YDRD,RF,LMMPO,YWU	UNICEF,OHCHR,UNFPA,ADO,AOBWC,YWU	UNICEF,OHCHR,UNHCR,UNFPA,NRC,INTERSOS,AOBWC,HYAC,YWU
Nutrition	UNICEF,WFP,ACF-F,IRY,RI,ADRA,FHI360,SCI,CSSW,BFD,RRD,MMFY,ADO	UNICEF,WFP,IMC,FHI360,QRCS,SCI,SAWT,SHS	UNICEF,WFP,QRCS,RI	UNICEF,WFP,RI,ACF-F,ADRA,VHI,ZOA,SCI,YFCA	UNICEF,WFP,UNHCR,IMC,IRC,ADRA,INTERSOS,ACF-F,SCI,CSSW,YFCA
Shelter	UNHCR,IOM,DRC,AGFD,JAF,NMO	UNHCR,IOM,NRC,GWQ,YCF,GRASSROOTS,DEM,BCHD,YWU	UNHCR,IOM,AOBWC,SDF	UNHCR,IOM,DRC,ADO,AOBWC	UNHCR,IOM,KSRELIEF,NMO,BCHR,DF
Education	PWP	MDF	UNICEF	SCI,PWP	SCI
RRM	UNFPA,IOM,NRC,VHI,ADRA,IRY,HGF,Banan	UNFPA,ACTED,FMF	UNFPA,ADRA	UNFPA,NRC,RI,VHI,DRC	N/A
RMMS	N/A	N/A	UNHCR,IOM,IRD,QRCS,INTERSOS,CSSW,SDF	N/A	UNHCR,IOM,INTERSOS,CSSW,SHS

Where are the largest donors directing their funds?

In 2017, the most recent year for which individual project information is available, ten donors accounted for more than \$3,000M in official development assistance to Yemen. This figure was split between the following OECD-DAC sectors: 21% social infrastructure; 9% economic infrastructure, 43% humanitarian aid; 23% program assistance; 1% multi-sector; and 3% unspecified. From largest to smallest, this includes the following donors: the UAE (\$818.14M); the World Bank (\$547.9M); the US (\$440.44M); Saudi Arabia (\$391.61); the UK (\$263.9M); Germany (\$248.96M); the EU (\$163.42M); Japan (\$50.64M); the Netherlands (\$42.88M); and Canada (\$41.97M). The table below details the top ten donors to Yemen in 2017 and the sectoral distribution of their funds.

Top 10 ODA by donor and sector, USD million, 2017



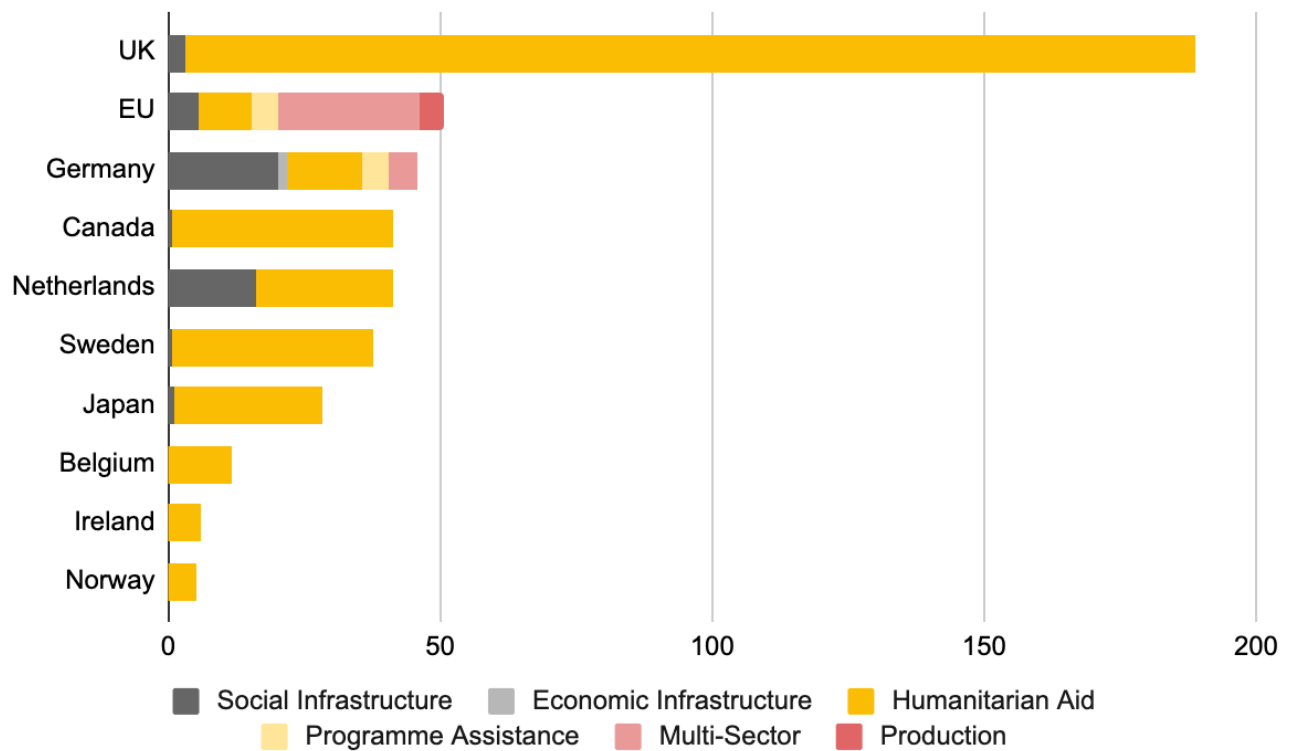
Who is funding gender equality programming and where is it directed?

The landscape of donors shifts significantly when only programming targeting gender equality is considered. The top ten donors, by programming marked for gender equality (GE 1 and GE 2),² in 2017 were: the UK (\$188.82M); the EU (\$50.5M); Germany (\$45.62M); Canada (\$41.54M); the Netherlands (\$41.36M); Sweden (\$37.69M); Japan (\$28.37M); Belgium (\$11.79M); Ireland (\$5.91M); and Norway (\$5.19M). When gender equality programming is examined by first-level recipient, it is possible to identify where the ten largest donors are channeling their funds. Two-thirds of gender equality programming is channeled to multilateral organizations, this includes WFP (\$133.44M), UNICEF (\$59.55M), OCHA (\$28.32M), UNDP (\$17.73M), and UNHCR (\$16.64M) among others. One-fifth of gender equality programming is channeled to NGOs. The remaining 14% of funds are channeled through the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (8%), public sector organizations (5%), and recipients labeled “Other” or “private sector institution” (1%). These figures match global trends in crisis financing, which indicate that governments direct two-thirds of their funds to multilateral organizations (Development Initiatives 2019, 63). Funding often passes through the first level recipient to an implementing partner, however data on these transactions is limited (Development Initiatives 2019, 63).

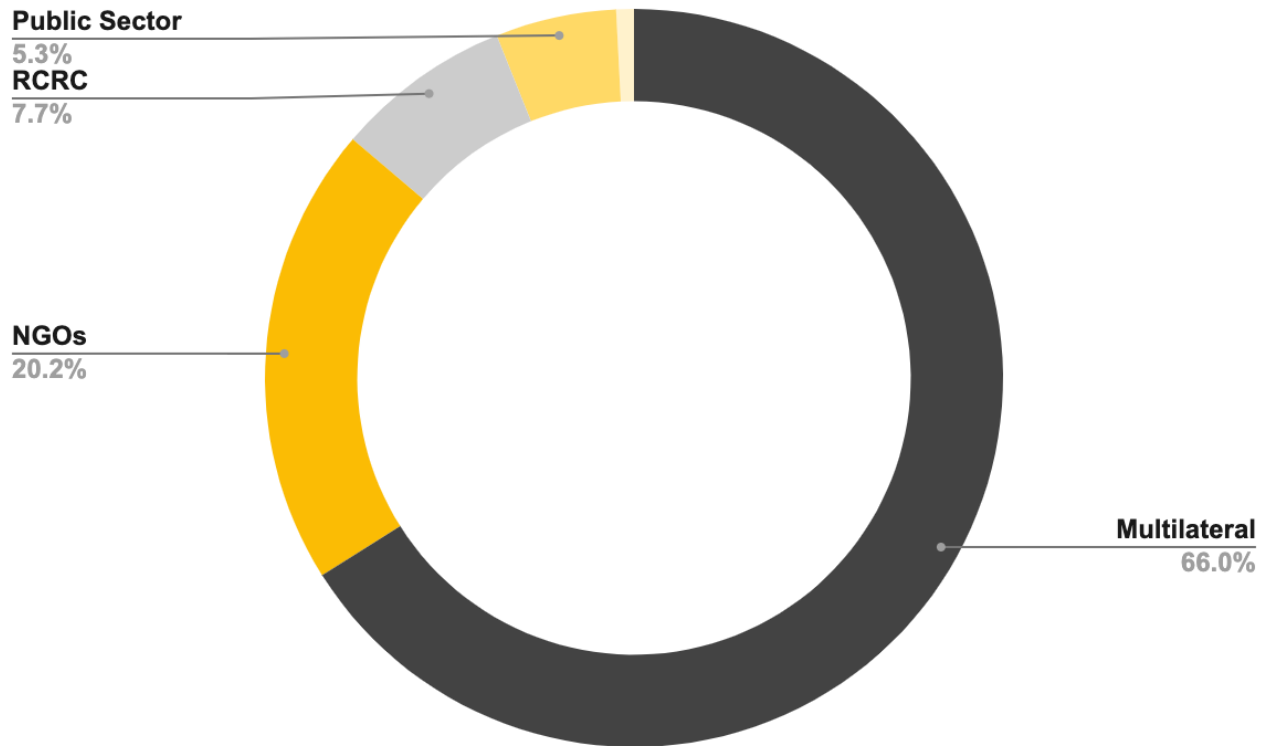
² See “Methodology” for more information on these markers.

Of the 206 GE projects analyzed, 181 were marked GE-1 and 25 were marked GE-2. Of the projects marked GE-2, indicating that gender equality was a primary objective of the project, one project – a Dutch activity with Care International – was humanitarian. The remaining 24 projects targeted peace and development initiatives: 9 focused on women’s leadership and democratic participation (\$5M); 7 targeted SRHR and family planning (\$5.8M); and 6 focused on civilian peacebuilding, mine removal, or child soldiers (\$1.8M). The remaining two projects addressed training and multisector aid (\$0.100M). It is important to note that of the 206 GE projects analyzed, 107 were not humanitarian (\$94M). The remaining 99 projects were marked “humanitarian aid” and totaled \$362M. Thus, in 2017 the ten largest GE donors to Yemen directed three quarters of their funds to humanitarian projects. One quarter of this funding went to development and peace programming. While \$456.8M was directed to GE programming by the top ten GE donors overall, only \$12.7M, or 2.7%, focused on gender equality as an explicit objective of the project (GE-2). It is not within the scope of this paper to consider whether gender transformative outcomes are possible in humanitarian contexts. However, as the international community discusses methods for bridging the humanitarian-development divide, this paper finds that there is also space to reflect on and fund interventions that bridge the gap between gender aware and gender transformative programming.

Top 10 ODA targeting gender equality by sector and donor, USD million, 2017.



Top 10 ODA targeting gender equality by first-level recipient, 2017



Methods

This paper employed two methodologies: a desk review of published and grey literature, including available donor reports, ongoing policy guidance, Demographic and Health Survey data, World Bank and UNDP gender equality data, gender programming documents, annual reports, needs assessments, United Nations and INGO evaluations, and other materials; and an analysis of data reported to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC). The authors performed database searches between October 13 and November 10 of 2019 using PubMed, Google Scholar, The Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab, and relevant United Nations and INGO evaluation databases. Eligibility was determined after the authors screened titles and abstracts. Local women’s civil society organizations were more difficult to identify. OCHA’s Financial Tracking Service (FTS) was used to identify humanitarian flows to local CSOs. This produced a list of local organizations, which were manually reviewed to determine eligibility. A limitation of this method is that funds received does not necessarily reflect the size or influence of a local organization.

Data from the “OECD.Stat” database was analyzed based on individual project flows reported by OECD and non-OECD donors in the Creditor Reporting System. Project flows were analyzed for the top ten donors to Yemen by gross disbursements (Figure 6.2). Project flows were categorized based on the DAC sector registered against each project. Information on gender equality and women’s

empowerment was analyzed using the same database (Figure 6.3). Gender equality information was identified by narrowing the scope of applicable projects to only those registered as GE 1 or GE 2.³ Gender equality markers used in the Creditor Reporting System do not align with those used by Global Affairs Canada. The OECD marker allows for an approximate quantification of aid flows that target gender equality: a “not targeted” score of 0 indicates that the project does not target gender equality; a “significant” score of (1) indicates that gender equality was a secondary objective of the project; a “principal” score of (2) indicates that gender equality was the primary objective of the project. Data analysis prepared using “OECD.stat” serves to provide a general indication of aid flows in the Yemeni context. However, these figures are subject to error, given that sector codes are selected by donors, which may lead to inconsistent activity pairing with DAC criteria. Figure 6.4 was prepared using the same methodology as Figure 6.3. Project flows were categorized as “Multilateral,” “NGO,” “International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (RCRC),” “Public Sector,” and “Other” based on an analysis of the channel name registered against each project.

List of Operational Organizations (June, 2019)

Organization Name (UN Agency), (International NGO), (Local NGO)		
Food and Agriculture Organization	Vision Hope International	National Forum Human Development
International Organization for Migration	ZOA International	Nahda Makers Organization
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights	Ability Foundation	National Prisoner Foundation
United Nations Development Programme	Abs Development Organization	Old City Foundation for development
United Nations Population Fund	Advance Foundation Development	Ola Al Majd for Development
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	Al-Mohseneen Foundation for Development and Charity	Public Works Project
United Nations Children's Fund	All Girls Foundation for Development	Relief and Development Peer Foundation
United Nations Office for Project Services	AL-ZAHRA AL-ZAHRA Foundation and Development	Raimah Foundation for Development and Humanitarian Response

³ More information on DAC sector codes, including code lists, see: <https://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/dacandcrscodelists.htm>.

World Food Programme	Alaman Organization for Blind Women Care	Rofqa for humanitarian development
World Health Organization	Alatta for Relief & Development	Responsiveness for Relief and Development
Action Contre La Faim (Action Against Hunger) - France	Abana Saada Association For Development Social And Charity	Raeduun for Sustainable Development
Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development	Baader Development Foundation	Health and Education Association for Development SAWT
ADDITION FOR DISASTER ASSISTANCE AND DEVELOPMENT	Banan	Student Association For Youth Development
Adventist Development and Relief Agency	Basma Foundation for the Development of Children and Women	Sustainable Development Foundation
CARE International Yemen	Bena Charity for Humanitarian Development (Taiz)	Selah Selah Foundation for Development
Direct Aid	BENEVOLENCE COALITION FOR HUMANITARIAN RELIEF	Social Fund for Development
Danish Refugee Council	Building foundation for Development	School Feeding and Humanitarian Relief Project
Emirates Red Crescent	Civic Democratic Initiatives Support Foundation	Society for Humanitarian Solidarity
360 Family Health International	Charitable Society for Social Welfare	SOUL for Development
Global Communities	DEEM For Development Organization	Taybah Foundation for Development
German Society for International Cooperation	Diversity Foundation	Tamdeen Youth Foundation
Humanitarian Aid and Development Organization	Democracy School	Yamaan Foundation for Health and Social Development
Human Appeal Yemen	Empower Foundation for Development and Humanitarian Response	Yemen AlKhair for Relief and Development
Handicap International	Family Counseling and Development Foundation	Yemeni Association for Reproductive Health

International Medical Corps	Field Medical Foundation	Youth Creativity Foundation
Intersos - Humanitarian Aid Organization	Grassroots Yemen	Yemen Development Foundation
International Rescue Committee	Generations without Qat	Yemen For Development Institution
International Relief and Development	Hudaydah Girls Foundation	Yemen Development Network
Islamic Relief Yemen	Hodeidah Girls Social Development Foundation	Youth Determination for Relief and Development
King Salman Humanitarian Aid & Relief Centre	Al-hikma Al-yamania Association for Charity	Yemen Executive Mine Action Center
Mercy Corps	International Youth Council Yemen	Yemen Family Care Association
Médecins du Monde	Jeel AlBena Foundation	Yem. Gen. Union of Sociologists, S. Workers and Psychologists
Marie Stopes International Yemen	look inside foundation development	Yemen Health Organization
Norwegian Refugee Council	Life Makers Meeting Place Organization	Youth Leadership Development Foundation
Oxford Committee for Famine Relief	Millenium Development Foundation	Yemen Organization for Permanent Peace and Youth Skills Development
Première Urgence - Aide Médicale Internationale	Medical Mercy Foundation Yemen	Yemen Red Crescent Society
Qatar Red Crescent Society	Mwatana Organization For Human Rights	Yemen United Care
Relief International	NAHD DEVELOPMENTAL FOUNDATION	Yemen Women Union
Save the Children	National Foundation for Development and Human Response	
Solidarities International		

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