Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment
Occupied Palestinian Territory: July 2022
Gender and Inclusion

Background
The Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza has resulted in a protracted crisis for Palestinians, impeding access to essential services and livelihoods, and threatening their resilience and well-being. These challenges, further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the escalation of the crisis in Gaza in 2021, particularly affect communities already vulnerable to pre-existing inequalities, such as women and girls. The purpose of this brief is to offer a comprehensive overview of gender and social inclusion issues, considering various intersecting factors such as: livelihoods, health, education, and accountability to affected people (AAP).

Key findings
- Reported rates of school attendance were slightly higher for school-aged girls than boys. This difference was particularly noticed at the secondary school level. Among the reasons for not regularly attending school or dropping out of school, boys were more commonly reported to lack interest in school or to have to work or support the household than girls.
- 19% of households in Gaza and 13% in West Bank reported having at least one member that was pregnant or lactating at the time of the data collection. Access to specialized reproductive health service for women of reproductive age (15-49 years) was perceived to be very limited in both regions, with respectively 86% of households in Gaza and 88% in the West Bank reporting no access to such services.
- Among households reporting risk of eviction from their shelter, female-headed households in West Bank (49%) were more likely to report fear of eviction due to Israeli orders compared to male-headed households (22%).
- 12% of households in the West Bank and 11% in Gaza reported that women and girls avoid certain areas because they feel unsafe there. An increase of safety concerns and signs of psychosocial distress for both boys and girls was observed compared to last year’s MSNA.

Key demographics

West Bank household demographics
Composition of assessed households

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Female (51%)</th>
<th>Age Male (49%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11% 60+ 7%</td>
<td>25% 18-59 25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10% 6-17 11%</td>
<td>5% 0-5 6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

27% of households are refugees

Gaza household demographics
Composition of assessed households

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Female (50%)</th>
<th>Age Male (50%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5% 60+ 6%</td>
<td>25% 18-59 25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13% 6-17 14%</td>
<td>6% 0-5 6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

67% of households are refugees

Of all assessed households:
- 14% have at least one member with a disability
- 6% have at least one child with a disability
- Among children aged 5 and above:
  - 2% of boys have a disability
  - 1% of girls have disability

Key limitations
Findings disaggregated by the gender of the head of household are indicative only in nature. Individual level indicators were asked to respondents by proxy and therefore may reflect the perceptions of the respondent rather than the lived experience of specific individual household members. For other limitations, please refer to the full MSNA 2022 report.
Livelihoods and gender

Many Palestinians are denied access to livelihoods which impact the capacity of households to meet their basic needs, resulting in a high reliance on aid and the usage of negative coping strategies. This has led to high levels of food insecurity and limited access to essential services for the most vulnerable households.

According to MSNA findings, 60% of households in Gaza and 21% in West Bank reported having at least one member (aged 15 years or over) unemployed and seeking work at the time of data collection. While investigating the gender dimension of this indicator, 15% of HHs reported having a female member unemployed and seeking work at the time of the interview, while this proportion was higher for men, with 27% of households reporting a male member unemployed and seeking work.

% of HHs in the oPt who reported ...

- a female member unemployed and seeking work at the time of data collection: 15%
- a male member unemployed and seeking work at the time of data collection: 27%

% of female-headed households (962 HHs) by most reported primary income sources:

- Support from community, friends, family: 36%
- Retirement fund or pension: 18%
- NGO or charity assistance: 16%
- Employment: 14%
- Daily work: 12%

% of male-headed households (7,369 HHs) by most reported primary income sources:

- Employment: 28%
- Daily work: 23%
- Self-employment (own business): 23%
- NGO or charity assistance: 18%
- Work in Israel or the settlements: 15%
A large proportion of households in the oPt reported a decrease in their typical monthly income in the year prior to the data collection. Specifically, 38% of female-headed households and 44% of male-headed households reported a decrease in income.

Among West Bank female-headed households, 35% of households reported “support from community, family, and friends” as their primary income source, compared to 7% of male-headed households. Of all population groups assessed in the West Bank, female-headed households aged 60 and above were the most likely to report community support as their primary source of income (47%). In Gaza, 60% of female-headed households reported “NGO or charity assistance” as their primary income source (compared to 50% of male-headed households) and 39% reported community support as a primary income source (compared to 17% of male-headed households).

Specific employment barriers were reported for certain vulnerable population groups in the West Bank and Gaza (including women, older persons, and persons with disabilities). When assessed households were questioned about the main barriers to employment for women in the oPt, the following were the most commonly identified barriers:

- (42%) reported high competition for jobs and not enough jobs are available
- (26%) reported a lack of employment opportunities for women
- (22%) reported a lack of consent from a husband or male guardian
- (17%) reported that childcare was either unavailable or unaffordable

It was more commonly reported for boys than girls to lack interest in school or to have to work or support the household, which might explain these differences in attendance.

### % of school-aged children (5-17 years) attending school regularly (4 days a week), across the oPt:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Girls (93%)</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Boys (89%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16-17</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-15</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Among West Bank female-headed households, 35% of households reported “support from community, family, and friends” as their primary income source, compared to 7% of male-headed households. Of all population groups assessed in the West Bank, female-headed households aged 60 and above were the most likely to report community support as their primary source of income (47%). In Gaza, 60% of female-headed households reported “NGO or charity assistance” as their primary income source (compared to 50% of male-headed households) and 39% reported community support as a primary income source (compared to 17% of male-headed households).

Specific employment barriers were reported for certain vulnerable population groups in the West Bank and Gaza (including women, older persons, and persons with disabilities). When assessed households were questioned about the main barriers to employment for women in the oPt, the following were the most commonly identified barriers:

- (42%) reported high competition for jobs and not enough jobs are available
- (26%) reported a lack of employment opportunities for women
- (22%) reported a lack of consent from a husband or male guardian
- (17%) reported that childcare was either unavailable or unaffordable

### Education and gender

Reported rates of school attendance for basic and secondary education were slightly higher for school-aged girls than for school-aged boys. The difference between girls and boys was more pronounced at the secondary school level, with 94% of school aged girls (16-17 years old) attending school compared to 78% of school-aged boys (16-17 years old).
Health and gender

Maternal care and access to services

The Health Cluster estimates that there are 210,000 pregnant and lactating women in the oPt. A 2021 study estimated that, in Gaza, 15% of pregnant women were expected to experience complications, while another study assessed that one-in-four pregnant women is at risk of death during childbirth. These figures, combined with the general difficulties in accessing healthcare observed in the MSNA, suggest that women are a particularly vulnerable group in terms of health, given the risks and challenges that they face during pregnancy and childbirth.

Overall, among the 72% of households in oPt who reported needing to access healthcare in the three months prior to data collection, almost all (98%) reported encountering at least one barrier when trying to access healthcare services, with no reported difference between male and female-headed households.

In Gaza, 90% of households reported a member of their household having a healthcare need in the three months prior to data collection. Among those, every household reported encountering barriers to accessing healthcare services, highlighting the difficulties faced by all groups of population in the region. Regarding maternal care needs, 19% of households reported having at least one member that was pregnant or lactating at time of MSNA data collection. Additionally, among households who reported a healthcare need, 3% needed to access safe delivery services and 11% of households needed to access antenatal or postnatal services.

In the West Bank, 63% of households reported a member of their household having a healthcare need in the 3 months prior to data collection, among whom 7% of households reported needing to access antenatal or postnatal services. 13% of households reported having a member of their household that was pregnant or lactating.

Access to specialized reproductive health service for women of reproductive age (15 - 49 years) was perceived to be very limited in both regions, with respectively 86% of households in Gaza and 88% in the West Bank reporting no access to such services. The Women Center for Legal Aid Counseling has raised concerns about equipment shortages and restricted mobility negatively impacting maternal healthcare, with essential natal care services being “inaccessible particularly to women in remote or restricted areas” (such as Gaza, Area C, H2 and areas cut off by the wall or settlements). Among households who reported a healthcare need in the three months prior to data collection in the West Bank, 4% of the households reported obstacles in the form of movement restrictions, such as checkpoints and permit requirements as hindering their access to health services. This percentage was especially high in Area C (21%), highlighting the detrimental impact of the occupation on Palestinians’ healthcare access in this area.

Among female-headed households, 71% of whom needed to access medical care, the most common barriers were:

- Cost of services/ medicines was too high: 52%
- Distance too far, transportation constraints: 27%
- No treatment available: 15%
- No medicine available: 15%

In Area C, 55% of female-headed households reported needing healthcare, with 29% of them citing movement restrictions and checkpoints as a barrier to accessing it.

- Cost of services/ medicines was too high: 55%
- Distance too far, transportation constraints: 31%
- Movement restrictions (permit/checkpoint): 29%

Gender-based violence (GBV) and Mental Health and Psychosocial Services (MHPSS)

Across the oPt, vulnerable groups (women, girls, and children with disabilities) are highly exposed to the risk of GBV and are more likely to report showing signs of distress or trauma. A study conducted by PCBS in 2019 found that 29% of currently married or ever married women (18-64 years) in the oPt experienced at least once a form of domestic violence in the 12 months prior the interview, of which 57% experienced psychological violence, 41% economic violence*, 33% social violence**, 18% physical violence, and 9% experienced sexual violence.

*economic violence is the use of economic resources (i.e., money) as sanctions and threats towards women
**social violence refers to abuse by individuals or community that has a social impact (e.g. isolation of the person)
According to UN Women, incidents of gender-based violence, particularly against women and girls, have been increasing since the recurrent lockdowns in the Gaza Strip, and negative coping mechanisms, such as school dropouts and early marriage, have also increased. UNICEF attributes limited access to services related to gender-based violence to cultural norms and a general stigma around mental health issues, which may explain why households did not report a need for accessing GBV services in the MSNA.

Research from the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UNESCWA) has shown that women and girls in areas affected by conflict and displacement, such as Gaza, Area C, and East Jerusalem, are more likely to experience GBV, including domestic abuse, sexual abuse and exploitation, and forced marriage.

These communities also tend to have limited access to multi-disciplinary protection services. The areas with the lowest percentage of households reporting availability of PSS services in case of GBV were East Jerusalem (9%), Gaza (32%) and Area C (39%).

### Access to services for women and girls

% of households that reported the availability of services that women and girls in their community can access, by type of service, location and by the gender of the household’s head.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Female-headed HHs</th>
<th>Male-headed HHs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medical services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oPt</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaza Strip</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Bank</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oPt</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaza Strip</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Bank</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health and psychosocial services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oPt</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaza Strip</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Bank</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not aware of any</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oPt</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaza Strip</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Bank</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Multiple choice question
12% of households in the West Bank reported that women and girls avoid certain areas because they feel unsafe there. Such concerns were especially pronounced in H2 (25%) and Area C (20%). These concerns are likely to be directly linked to conflict-related threats, as the most commonly reported areas in West Bank that women and girls avoid because they feel unsafe, among households who reported such a problem, were near settlements or crossing checkpoints (38%), specifically, among households in Area C (74%). This was followed by “public transportation” (28%), “markets” (26%) and “on the way to school” (27%).

In Gaza, among the 11% of households who reported women and girls avoiding certain areas, 15% identified the Access Restricted Areas (ARA) as one of those areas. The most commonly reported area, however, were on the way to school (39%).

Among households reporting risk of eviction from their shelter, a noticeable percentage of female-headed households in the West Bank (49%), specifically in Area C (74%) and H2 (100%), reported fear of eviction due to Israeli orders. This is in contrast to the lower percentage of male-headed households who reported the same (22% in West Bank). The occupation’s impact on housing and infrastructure is particularly evident in Area C and H2, where the highest rates of eviction and households with standing demolition orders were observed. Loss of home and eviction have effects reflecting in humanitarian needs including facing livelihood crisis. In both Gaza (34%) and the West Bank (33%), lack of funds to pay rental costs was one of the most reported reasons for fearing eviction.

**Shelter and gender**

Female-headed households (7%) surveyed in the MSNA were slightly more likely to report a risk of eviction from their shelter compared to male-headed households (5%). This difference was more pronounced in Gaza (17% of female-headed households at risk of eviction compared to 8% of male-headed households).

Among households reporting risk of eviction from their shelter, a noticeable percentage of female-headed households in the West Bank (49%), specifically in Area C (74%) and H2 (100%), reported fear of eviction due to Israeli orders. This is in contrast to the lower percentage of male-headed households who reported the same (22% in West Bank). The occupation’s impact on housing and infrastructure is particularly evident in Area C and H2, where the highest rates of eviction and households with standing demolition orders were observed. Loss of home and eviction have effects reflecting in humanitarian needs including facing livelihood crisis. In both Gaza (34%) and the West Bank (33%), lack of funds to pay rental costs was one of the most reported reasons for fearing eviction.

**DAMAGE TO SHELTERS IN GAZA**

% of households in Gaza who reported that their shelter was damaged by bombardment in 2021:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Governorate</th>
<th>Female-headed households</th>
<th>Male-headed households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North Gaza</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaza</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khan Yunis</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rafah</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deir al-Balah</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Among those, 91% of female-headed households and 94% of male-headed households indicated that the damage to the shelters were minor.

% of households among the 12% (694 HHs) of households in West Bank reporting areas in their location that women and girls avoid because they feel unsafe, by most frequently reported location:

- Near settlements and checkpoints: 38%
- Public transportation: 28%
- Markets: 26%

% of households among the 11% (742 HHs) of households in Gaza reporting areas in their location that women and girls avoid because they feel unsafe, by most frequently reported location:

- On their way to school: 39%
- Markets: 23%
- Social/community areas: 22%
More generally, there has been an increase in the number of households in oPt reporting safety or security concerns for both girls and boys. In 2021, 26% of households reported concerns for girls and 27% for boys, while in 2022 the figures have risen to 33% for both groups.

Among those who reported security concerns for children in West Bank, % of households by most frequently reported main safety and security concerns for children were:

**Girls (1819 HHs):**
- Being kidnapped: 31%
- Verbal harassment: 29%
- Wildlife: 14%
- Being threatened with violence: 14%
- Sexual harassment or violence: 13%

**Boys (1857 HHs):**
- Being kidnapped: 33%
- Being threatened with violence: 15%
- Being robbed: 14%
- Bullying: 14%
- Being detained: 11%

Among those who reported security concerns for children in Gaza, % of households by most frequently reported main safety and security concerns for children were:

**Girls (1391 HHs):**
- Verbal harassment: 49%
- Wildlife: 32%
- Sexual harassment or violence: 20%
- Bullying: 18%
- Being threatened with violence: 13%

**Boys (1218 HHs):**
- Verbal harassment: 31%
- Wildlife: 29%
- Unsafe transportation infrastructure: 15%
- Being threatened with violence: 13%
- Sexual harassment: 12%

According to findings, female-headed households in both the Gaza Strip and West Bank reported a higher likelihood of receiving aid in the six months preceding the survey, compared to male-headed households. Although households overall in the West Bank were less likely to report receiving aid, 21% of female-headed households reported receiving any form of humanitarian aid, compared to male-headed households (6%). In Gaza, 88% of female-headed households reported receiving any form of humanitarian aid, and 72% of male-headed households reported receiving aid.

Households in Gaza were much more likely to receive aid due to the context of the blockade in Gaza, the lack of livelihood opportunities and highly reported rates of unemployment. Half of Gaza households (51%) have reported aid from NGOs or charities as a primary source of income.
Among households that reported receiving any form of assistance in the oPt, female-headed households (85%) were more likely to report satisfaction with the aid received compared to male-headed households (71%). Among female-headed households in Gaza, dissatisfaction was highest in Deir al Balah (51%), while in the West Bank, the highest rates were observed in Area C (32%). In both areas, the most commonly reported reason for dissatisfaction, among households who received aid and reported dissatisfaction, was the insufficient quantity of aid. Notably, 75% of female-headed households in Area C mentioned as well delays in receiving aid as a reason for dissatisfaction. Importantly, female-headed households (31%) were much more reluctant to report a willingness to use complaint and reporting mechanisms (CRM) as compared to male (61%).

The high dependency on aid in the oPt is a serious concern. According to a report by the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, nearly 2.1 million Palestinians, out of a population of 5.3 million, require humanitarian assistance. This is particularly true in Gaza, where 80% of the population is dependent on aid. This dependency undermines the opportunities for sustainable development, creates fragile stability and makes the population more vulnerable. Additionally, a notable number of households in the MSNA are relying on negative coping mechanisms such as relying on NGO or charity assistance as their primary source of income and taking on debt to meet their basic needs.

Endnotes:

1. UN women, Gender Alert 2021: A Multisectoral Gender Analysis to Inform the 2022 Humanitarian Programme Cycle in the oPt, 2021.
6. However, findings might need to be mitigated as, according to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees’ (UNRWA), 94% of registered pregnant refugee women in Gaza attended four or more antenatal visits in 2021. See UNRWA, Health Department Annual Report, 2021.
11. UN ESCWA, Social and economic situation of Palestinian women and girls, 2023.
ASSESSMENT CONDUCTED IN THE FRAMEWORK OF:

- WASH Cluster
- Protection Cluster
- Food Security Cluster
- Health Cluster Occupied Palestinian Territory
- Shelter Cluster
- Occupied Palestinian Territories Education Cluster

Funded by:

- oPt HF

With the support of:

- OCHA
- PCBS

About REACH:

REACH Initiative facilitates the development of information tools and products that enhance the capacity of aid actors to make evidence-based decisions in emergency, recovery and development contexts. The methodologies used by REACH include primary data collection and in-depth analysis, and all activities are conducted through inter-agency aid coordination mechanisms. REACH is a joint initiative of IMPACT Initiatives, ACTED and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research - Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNITAR-UNOSAT).