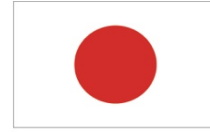




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من الشعب الياباني  
From the People of Japan



# Midterm Thematic Programme Evaluation

## Path to Economic Recovery

### Facilitating Decent Jobs in the Gaza Strip

EVALUATION



September 2021

**GENERAL**  
Consulting & Training  
جنرال للاستشارات و التدريب

Prepared by: GENERAL Consulting and Training (GCT)

### Programme and evaluation information details

Project/outcome Information		
<b>Project/outcome title</b>	Path to Economic Recovery: Facilitating Decent Jobs in the Gaza Strip	
<b>Atlas ID</b>	Award ID: PAL10-00116171; Output ID: PAL10-00119089, PAL10-120609, PAL10-116580	
<b>Corporate outcome and output</b>	UNDAF (2018-2022): Outcome 3.2: Palestinians have greater access to decent productive jobs PPF Output 3.3: Access of youth, women and rural communities to skills and financing for economic empowerment and entrepreneurship improved	
<b>Country</b>	State of Palestine	
<b>Region</b>	Gaza Strip	
<b>Date project document signed</b>	January 2019	
<b>Project dates</b>	<b>Start</b> 01 January 2019	<b>Planned end</b> 31 December 2022
<b>Project budget</b>	US\$ 8,600,000 US\$ US\$ 4,782,677.00 (until 31 March 2021) with the following breakdown:	
<b>Project expenditure at the time of evaluation</b>	Government of Norway (Phase I):	US\$ 1,280,912.00
	Government of Norway (Phase II):	US\$ 501,765.00
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<b>Funding source</b>	Government of Norway, Government of Japan, and Swiss Agency for Development & Cooperation (SDC)	
<b>Implementing party<sup>1</sup></b>	UNDP/PAPP is responsible for implementation of the programme, in partnership with local NGOs/entities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gaza Cultural Development Group (GCDG).</li> <li>- Palestinian Fund for Employment and Social Protection for Workers (PFESP).</li> <li>- Cooperative Agriculture Association Beit Hanoun (CAAB).</li> <li>- Democracy and Workers' Rights Center Society (DWRC).</li> <li>- The Society of Women Graduates (SWG).</li> <li>- Job creation program (JCP).</li> <li>- Palestinian Federation Industries (PFI).</li> </ul>	

<sup>1</sup> It is the entity that has overall responsibility for implementation of the project (award), effective use of resources and delivery of outputs in the signed project document and workplan.

Evaluation information		
<b>Evaluation type (project/ outcome/thematic/country programme, etc.)</b>	Thematic Programme Evaluation	
<b>Final/midterm review/ other</b>	Midterm Evaluation	
<b>Period under evaluation</b>	<b>Start</b>	<b>End</b>
	January 2019	June 2021
<b>Evaluator</b>	General Consulting and Training (GCT)	
<b>Evaluator email address</b>	info@general-gct.com	
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	03 June 2021	01 October 2021

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### List of acronyms and abbreviations

CWG	Cash Working Group
CAAB	Cooperative Agriculture Association of Beit Hanoun
DWRC	Democracy and Workers Rights Centre Society
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
HACT	Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers Framework
CfW	Cash for Work
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
GCDG	Gaza Culture and Development Group
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GCT	General Consulting and Training
IDB	Islamic Development Bank
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IPs	Implementing Partners
JCP	Job Creation Programme
KII	Key Informants Interviews
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoE	Ministry of Education and Higher Education
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoL	Ministry of Labour
MoPW	Ministry of Public Works
NGO	Non- Governmental Organization
NDC	Non-Governmental Organizations Development Centre
NMFA	Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PFI	Palestinian Federation of Industries
PFESP	Palestinian Fund of Employment & Social Protection for Workers
PLA	Palestinian Lands Authority
PPF	Palestinian Programmatic Framework
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SDC	Swiss Development Cooperation
SWG	The Society of Women Graduates
UNDP	United nation Development Program
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistant framework
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency

## Executive summary

The Path to Economic Recovery: Facilitating Decent Jobs in the Gaza Strip Programme, hereinafter referred to as 'programme' is implemented (2019-2023) in line with the Palestinian National Policy Agenda (NPA) 2017 – 2022, and with UNDP's overall approach of Transformative Resilience and adopting the SDGs 'Leave No One Behind' principle. The Programme is implemented through different activities designed to stimulate the Gazan economy and lead to further employment creation. The programme is funded by Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC), Qatar, Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), Norway, Japan, German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ), Denmark, German Development Bank (KfW) with a total budget of US\$ 25 million. The programme has four outputs: 1) Gazans have greater access to short-term dignified job opportunities in private and public sectors (including Cash for Work initiatives and internship/apprenticeship opportunities), 2) Youth have improved capacities in technical and vocational education and training, 3) Young entrepreneurs have greater access to medium- and long-term employment opportunities (particularly through e-works or electronic platforms to access opportunities outside of Gaza), and 4) SMEs have strengthened capacities in sustaining and growing their businesses in the market. The programme aims to economically empower Gazan women, and marginalized groups in the Gaza Strip by providing them with greater access to decent productive jobs in the private and public sectors and contributing to sustainable and inclusive economic development. The target beneficiaries were from different competency levels including unskilled workers, skilled workers, and skilled graduates by providing them with opportunities for short-term job, apprenticeship, training, and incubation of new enterprises. While on the short-term facilitating opportunities for income generation, the programme is expected to contribute towards and improved access to more sustainable job opportunities and strengthened social cohesion on a medium to long term. The programme activities are implemented through UNDP Implementing Partners (IPs) who are expected to play a significant role laying the foundation for the sustainability of the programme.

The main purpose of this thematic evaluation is to provide evidence and recommendations on the achievements and results of UNDP's short-term job creation interventions against the results and resources framework. The evaluation will also determine the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability of the initiatives under output 1 of the programme. Recommendations, lesson learned, and good practices revealed from the evaluation will be used by both UNDP and donors to inform programme development and implementation in close communication and collaboration with implementing partners. Particularly when it comes to future interventions and strengthening the linkages between short-term and longer-term interventions. The evaluation can be of benefit for other development/ humanitarian organizations working within the same field in both Palestine and across the globe.

Key evaluation questions for each of the evaluation criteria were formulated. For each evaluation question, specific questions with their related indicators were developed. The evaluation used a mix of quantitative and qualitative data. In addition to the review of programme documents, the following tools were used: review of additional documents gathered during the inception and field work phase, key informant interviews, focus groups with partners, stakeholders, and beneficiaries of the programme, phone survey with a sample of beneficiaries of the programme interventions.

The Evaluation Team systematized the data collected from both secondary and primary sources. The collected data from desk reviews, interviews, FGDs and direct observation was categorized and analysed (content analysis) to derive the key findings. SPSS software was further used as analysing tool for the data collected through surveys. The data analysis was conducted taking into consideration UNEG/OECD norms and standards with the aim of answering the evaluation questions developed. All information gathered

went through a triangulation process to ensure all reported data is reliable and could therefore be transformed into convincing conclusions.

### ***Key findings of the evaluation***

The following is a summary of the key evaluation findings. More details are provided in this report.

#### **Relevance**

- The evaluation revealed that the programme is highly relevant to the needs of the targeted beneficiaries, both women and men, by providing them with opportunities for short-term jobs to ensure that vulnerable families have access to basic services. The relevance of the programme was confirmed by its alignment with UNDP strategy (2018-2022) and its contribution to both the national priorities, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), in particular Goals 1, 5, and 8.
- The programme approach for recovery is consistent in linking the emergency employment to help people to stabilize livelihoods with capacity building of local human resources and business development. However, the programme needs to further upgrade its interventions in relation with labour market components, including access to finance, market base economic initiatives, and enhance private sector participation.

#### **Coherence**

- The evaluation revealed that the programme interventions address the synergies and interlinkages with other UNDP programmes on keeping people out of poverty, increased community resilience, and women empowerment. The programme coherence with other actors is found to be high at the coordination level between individual actors. From the beginning of the programme, UNDP has been coordinating with different relevant actors in Gaza involved in cfw interventions. UNRWA confirmed high level of coordination with UNDP, including beneficiary selection criteria, wage rates and monitoring progress to ensure coherent approaches and no duplication of beneficiaries. Moreover, UNDP is a member of the Cash for Work Coordination mechanism facilitated by UNSCO. Through the platform, UNDP is exchanging with other UN Agencies, including UNRWA and UN Women, regarding related initiatives ensuring complementary interventions. In addition, The World Bank also confirmed high level of coordination with UNDP's programme in sharing information to verify the list of beneficiaries before final approval to avoid duplication and ensure a wider coverage of communities and target groups. However, limited level of complementariness was found on the sectorial level in relation to planning, design and sharing of information among the different actors. If there were a better level of sectorial coordination in terms of planning, design and sharing of information among the different actors, the impact of the CfW interventions could potentially be enhanced. This by informing actors providing CfW services about lessons learned from previous interventions, the needs of beneficiaries, as well as other CfW service providers' interventions and target areas. This would make sure that implemented interventions applied best practices responding to the needs of the beneficiaries, avoided duplication of efforts and potentially covered a larger geographical area.

#### **Effectiveness**

- The programme was effective in empowering both women and men in the Gaza Strip and support their access to decent jobs. Through providing more than 3,590 short term job opportunities (a total of 353,019 working days) and improve the ability of the beneficiaries to face the deteriorating socioeconomic conditions and sense of hopelessness.
- Though the programme was successful to create job opportunities for the beneficiaries in the public and private sectors, there was little awareness among the beneficiaries on the other components (i.e.



outputs 2, 3, and 4) of the programme regarding vocational training, microfinance business development. In addition, the majority of IPs (5 out of 7 IPs) reported that they are unaware of the other programme interventions regarding micro grants, business development, and 3x6 approach.

- The programme was effective in promoting the coordination between the implementing partners and stakeholders to fill the several gaps in the public and private sectors. This was a joint effort by UNDP and the MoL where the target beneficiaries are selected from quality database of the unemployed people on the MoL platform and the interviews for the candidates supported by the IP, host organization and MoL. This approach has strengthened the capacity of partners and matched between the qualification and skills of the beneficiaries and the needs at the host organizations.
- The target beneficiaries indicated that they have limited awareness about the feedback and compliance mechanism in place, i.e. the mechanisms to share feedback and complaints with the UNDP Programme Team during the job placement. This will support to resolve issues and concerns raised by beneficiaries, strengthens relationships with communities, and identifies gaps and areas for improvement.
- The 3x6 approach is still in the pilot phase; therefore, the programme was less effective when it comes to the creation and development of small businesses. Little results were achieved to date by the businesses in terms of job creation and sustainability, and further assessment of the approach should be conducted after the end of the pilot.

### **Efficiency**

- The programme was efficient to adopt the HACT framework for transferring cash to the implementing partners. In addition to conducting capacity assessment for the IPs to support a closer alignment of development aid with national priorities and strengthen national capacities for management and accountability towards gradual shifting to national systems. However, through the interviews with the IPs, the evaluation found challenges regarding the coordination between the different IPs as well as the awareness of each other's roles and interventions across the outputs.
- The programme was efficient to implement the various activities according to the plan and allocated resources. However, the implementation took in some cases longer time than expected. This is mainly due to a longer identification period of stakeholders' needs, selection process of the beneficiaries, and COVID 19 lockdown in the Gaza Strip.
- The programme has developed and applied an efficient mechanism in coordination with the IPs to match the demands through developing clear selection criteria of the beneficiaries. The selection and matching process, therefore, required fewer inputs to be finalized, as the partners had an established guiding tool for filtering. The programme was also efficient to develop and implement a reasonable scale for the daily rate for the beneficiaries as it was based on competency levels of the beneficiaries and the minimum daily wages in Palestine.
- The programme was efficient to use the available budget to create job opportunities for about 3,590 beneficiaries with a total of 353,019 working days. However, the evaluation found low level of satisfaction from both the beneficiaries and stakeholders involved in the 2-3 months' employment periods. Therefore, the programme should expand the duration period to avoid 2-3 months job opportunities, however, this would require additional financial resources. Alternatively, the total number of beneficiaries could be reduced, and the employment periods expanded. This would allow to address the issue within the available budget.
- The current allocation of M&E activities and the allocation of resources to this activity are not covering the whole programme. M&E activities are mainly focused on output 1 of the programme and only at monitoring level to follow up the implementation of the planned activities, while the evaluation found limited evidence of M&E reporting for the other programme outputs. The M&E assistant is conducting

regular field visits to the IPs and the beneficiaries at the host organizations to monitor the progress and implementation of the programme activities. However, these interventions and tools are oriented to monitor the implementation of CfW activities and not monitor progress at programme level. Hence, not covering all four programme outputs and its linkage to UNDP/PAPP Palestinian Programmatic Framework Output and Outcome.

### **Impact**

- Assessment of the long-term change in people's lives (i.e., impact) it is not possible within the scope of a midterm evaluation. Instead, this evaluation includes an assessment of the immediate identified effects on people's life of the various external influencing factors and predicting the possible impact on the longer term.
- The evaluation found that the programme has likely positive impact to change many aspects of beneficiaries' life beyond the cash assistance, and the programme supported them to become ready for the labour market and find job opportunities in the future. On the short term the programme interventions resulted in immediate improvement of quality of life for beneficiaries, particularly women. This was attained through the provision of short-term employment opportunities, which improved the economic conditions of the beneficiaries, and had a positive effect on their personal life and their families' life. This was the case for both women and men, in terms of having respected role in the society, increased networking, self-esteem and self-confidence during the employment period.

### **Sustainability**

- The sustainability of programme's results is different from one component to another across the four outputs. The programme interventions are found to be sustainable particularly if the commitment from stakeholders, including local government, continues. This will increase the momentum that has been generated. However, availability of funds and financial resources will remain major challenges for sustainability after the end of the programme.
- The IPs confirmed their commitment and endorsement to support future CfW intervention, and the programme under output 1 supported the selected IPs to acquire institutional structure and capacity that will allow them to achieve sustainability in the implementation of CfW interventions in the short-term. However, there are challenges regarding the capacity of the IPs to individually lead CfW interventions, which is related to their mandates, integration with other programmes and strategic objectives of the IP. Some of the IPs also have limited capacity in job creation and enhancing employability interventions.

### **Cross-cutting issues**

- Substantial progress was made by the programme towards gender equality and integration of women in the labour market. Women and girls expressed high satisfaction for having better job opportunities and having received significant positive immediate influence on their socioeconomic conditions.
- The IPs achieved good progress to support the matching of the beneficiaries in a suitable workplace. However, the evaluation found limited progress and support from the IPs to the beneficiaries in relation to follow up and enhance integration of female in the workplace and inclusion of PwDs.
- Limited progress was achieved on inclusion of PwDs in the programme, the evaluation found that the total number of PwDs targeted in the programme was 48 (about 1% of the target beneficiaries).
- The programme took into consideration environmental issues as a cross-cutting issue, and the environmental impacts are well addressed in the programme interventions, in particular, to engage the beneficiaries in work that address the environmental issues in the public sector and the local municipalities.

## **Conclusions**

The programme is well designed to address some of the extreme challenges facing the population in Gaza, namely, extreme poverty and unemployment. Furthermore, the programme was successful in mobilizing all stakeholders, including relevant ministries, municipalities, and private sector to support the implementation of the programme in line with national priorities and SDGs. This was also proven during the programme flexibility to respond to the needs of the public sector during the COVID-19 epidemic. The programme was effective to empower the beneficiaries, both women and men, in the Gaza Strip and support their access to decent jobs through the provision of short-term job opportunities. This has resulted in improved quality of life, brought the hope for a better future for the youth, and alleviating the deteriorated socioeconomic conditions of the target beneficiaries.

UNDP is considered a main partner in Palestine for the donors and stakeholders involved in CfW interventions. This stems from UNDP long lasting experience in implementing local development and economic recovery interventions, in addition to its capacity to transfer knowledge and experience to other partners and stakeholders while ensuring their endorsement and ownership. From the beginning of the programme coherence with other interventions has been high at the coordination level. UNDP is coordinating with UNRWA and the World Bank on cfw interventions to ensure coherent approaches and no duplication of beneficiaries. In addition, UNDP is a member of the Cash for Work Coordination mechanism facilitated by UNSCO. Through this platform, UNDP is sharing information with other UN Agencies, including UNRWA and UN Women, to ensure complementary interventions within the field of cfw. However, limited level of complementariness was found at sectorial level regarding planning, designing, and sharing of information between the main actors and donors. Though the programme was able to adapt to the local context to link short term employment with the economic development, UNDP recovery approach for decent jobs requires further integration between the four programme outputs.

Sustainability of the programme was confirmed through involving local IPs in the implementation of the programme intervention to acquire institutional structure and capacity that will allow them to achieve sustainability in the implementation of CfW. However, financial sustainability will remain a major challenge after the end of the programme to access the needed financial resources.

In this programme, UNDP played a significant operational role in promotion of gender equality and inclusion of PwDs. However, more actions are required by UNDP to respond to the needs of women and PwDs , both during the design as well as the implementation of the programme interventions.

The weakness of the programme has been the limited synergies between the different outputs, which would improve UNDP response to address the challenges of recovery, resilience, and long-term economic development in the Gaza Strip. Only few synergy interventions between output 1 and the other outputs has so far been implemented, as this has not been the main focus in the implementation of the programme to date. The M&E system focused too much on process monitoring and not on output/outcome monitoring. Emphasis was rather given to quantitative indicators to assess the programme achievements with little attention to qualitative indicators that focus on capacity development of beneficiaries, improving quality of life, self-confidence, and enhanced attitude to find job opportunities in the future.

## **Lessons learned**

- The majority of stakeholders reported that they invested time and resources in building the capacity of the beneficiaries, so that the beneficiaries were ready to actively support the host organization during the employment period. Further support was expected from the programme for those

beneficiaries whose capacity was built and showed high performance during their employment. For example, the beneficiaries serving GIS activities at the municipalities, and other skilled technicians and experts in specific fields who developed outstanding results could be candidates for further support.

- The beneficiaries faced difficulties to manage their emergency or sick leave, as they decided to come to work to avoid losing more working days from the contract. This needs further response or more clarification from the programme team.
- UNDP's ability to link short-term employment with economic development was functioning well despite the economic crisis and working in an unstable and fragile context in the Gaza Strip.
- The beneficiaries reported that there were delays in receiving payments and they experienced for a few times waiting about 2 weeks before receiving their payment. The Programme Team and IPs confirmed that the review to the attendance sheets of beneficiaries is very crucial to decide on the number of working days and prepare the bank lists with the respective due payments to beneficiaries. The process of paying salaries starts by the end of each month of employment and after the review and endorsement of the responsible IP and UNDP team then processing of the payment follows. Such process causes some delays.
- Most of the time, beneficiaries did not receive the full salary due to things out of their control like holiday deduction (e.g., Eid), corona lockdowns, etc.
- Placement of the beneficiaries in the private sector has highly motivated the private sector to benefit from their services in the companies. The skilled graduates were able to provide financial management, and technicians supported the production lines and processing. However, the capacity of the private sector is still limited and its ability to absorb more workers is challenging in the current situation in Gaza.
- There are different terms used to define the target groups across the different outputs such as beneficiaries, youth, and Gazans, which has made it difficult to disaggregate data and use the terms coherently throughout the evaluation. For instance, is the age group of youth influenced by different definitions, which means that the definition changes across the different outputs. To be coherent the evaluation has therefore used the term "beneficiaries" instead of "youth."

### ***Recommendations***

1. Improve the programme results framework to cover the qualitative indicators in the programme.
2. Enhance high level of coordination and relationship among donors and main actors in the field of CfW and job creation interventions to ensure stronger coherence not only for checking lists, but more importantly to fulfil the strategic objective of the CWG which is to promote a collaborative approach for vulnerable populations across relevant sectors, promoting strategic planning, and leading information sharing and mutual learning among members.
3. Apply a participatory approach through engaging the beneficiaries in the design of future programmes, in particular identification of their needs and priorities, to enhance their role during the implementation of the programme interventions.
4. The duration of the job opportunities for the beneficiaries needs to be a minimum of 6 months
5. Integrate performance appraisal mechanism for the beneficiaries during the employment period
6. Conduct community awareness campaign to disseminate the programme intervention and UNDP recovery approach.
7. Maximize sustainability of the programme through reviewing the roles and responsibilities and improve the capacity of the implementing partners.

8. Support the development of comprehensive recovery approach for employment that focuses on the labour market components including private sector development and funding mechanism.
9. Consider expanding the duration of monitoring and follow-up for following up activities after the establishment of the start-ups.
10. To give priority to IPs that are able to complement UNDP's recovery approach with additional resources and, hereby, contribute to ensuring success and sustainability of the programme towards medium- and long-term employment and business development.
11. To enhance UNDP M&E role in the programme using the available resources to assess progress in terms of tracking progress against the programme objective and outcomes with no additional costs.
12. Strengthen gender equality aspects and inclusion of persons with disabilities in the different phases of the programme including the design and implementation of the planned interventions. Their needs and priorities will have to be addressed to achieve high integration in the workplace and enhance medium- and long-term employability.

## 1. Introduction

The purpose of this thematic midterm evaluation is to provide evidence and recommendations on the achievements and results of UNDP's short-term job creation initiatives under output 1 of the programme entitled 'Gazans have greater access to short-term dignified job opportunities in private and public sectors (including CfW initiatives and internship/ apprenticeship opportunities),' against the results and resources framework. Furthermore, the report will be used to assess results and apply recommendations to adjust approaches to attain better achievements at the end of the programme. The programme is being evaluated at this stage because it provides an opportunity to assess already completed interventions, while many are still ongoing which is considered the convenient time for the midterm review.

The evaluation will also determine the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability of the initiatives under Output 1. The progress and achievement under Output 1 will be assessed for the interventions under the projects funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Japan and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

The evaluation will assess the effectiveness of the approaches and strategies used under the job creation initiatives for greater access to decent productive jobs and identify the extent to which the interventions have contributed to positive changes in the lives of beneficiaries on the short-term, and the possible positive changes on long-term. Recommendations, lesson learned, and good practices revealed from the evaluation will be used by both UNDP and donors to inform programme development and implementation particularly for future interventions and strengthen the linkages between short-term and longer-term interventions. The evaluation can be also used by other development/humanitarian organizations working within the same field both in Palestine and across the globe.

For this evaluation, a theory-based approach was used applying mixed qualitative and quantitative methodology. The evaluation team gathered information about the key indicators of output 1. This approach focused on analysing how the programme has and can achieve the agreed results through the selected strategy, including objectives and assumptions, and assess its dynamics and realism according to Gaza context. This also included project design and activities investigated along with the changes occurring during the project implementation phases.

This report includes the data collection methodology, a presentation of the applied approach, the evaluation questions and analysis to reach the key findings. Conclusion, recommendations, and lessons learned were developed based on the evidence-based findings.

This evaluation was conducted by General Consulting and Training GCT. The evaluation team is composed of 1) a highly qualified team leader expertized in conducting evaluation, studies, and surveys, 2) a national development expert with proven experience in the labour market policies, cash interventions, and approaches to enhance employability, 3) a SPSS Expert, and 4) an Admin Assistant to support data collection phase across Gaza strip.

## 2. Description of the programme

Due to the occupation, the Palestinian economy has been suffering for decades from restricted access to national resources as well as movement of people and goods, geographic fragmentation, and blockade of Gaza. Experiencing a two-year fiscal crisis due to reduction on the transfer of the Palestinian Authority (PA) own revenues by the Government of Israel's (GoI), the economic contraction is expected to result in at least 40% fall of government revenues. This is adversely affecting social protection measures, including cash transfers to vulnerable households as well as salaries/ pensions of civil servants.

With nearly 53% of the Gaza population living in poverty (compared to 14% in the West Bank)<sup>2</sup>, families have been suffering loss of income and higher living costs. The rate of participation in the workforce in Gaza during the second quarter of 2020 was 34.5% (15% among females across Palestine), a drop of roughly 11% compared to the previous quarter. According to the figures, some 42,900 people in Gaza lost their source of income since the end of March 2020. The Ministry of Social Development estimates that at least 53,000 families have fallen into poverty in recent weeks, where the World Bank estimates that the share of poor households in Palestine is expected to increase to 30% in the West Bank and 64% in Gaza on the account of COVID-19.<sup>3</sup> According to the PCBS, the labour market is considered the most affected sector during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic since the beginning of March 2020, as the Palestinian government has taken several measures in addition to an emergency plan to limit the outbreak of the pandemic.<sup>4</sup>

The 'Path to Economic Recovery: Facilitating Decent Jobs in the Gaza Strip Programme' was a response to the growing challenges, including high poverty rate and worsening unemployment situation in the Gaza Strip. It was designed in line with the Palestinian National Policy Agenda 2017 – 2022, National Priority 6, which states that 'economic policy under occupation must strike a balance between measures that will create immediate jobs and those required to lay the groundwork for a competitive, independent economy in the post-occupation era, to build the resilience of the Palestinian people'. The programme is part of the PAPP country programme to support the Palestinian People to realize the right to development for its people and support their socio-economic resilience. The programme's design is in line with UNDP's larger work on preserving gains across the SDGs by adopting the SDGs principle 'leave no one behind' and be aligned with UNDP's overall 'Transformative Resilience Framework.' The programme aims to stimulate the Gazan economy by linking short-term dignified job opportunities to longer-term sustainable employment. This by combining short, medium, and long-term job creation initiatives with support to existing enterprises and incubation of new enterprises.

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<sup>2</sup> PCBS (2017) Poverty profile in Palestine

<sup>3</sup> World Bank (2020) [Palestinian Economy Struggles as Coronavirus Inflicts Losses](#)

<sup>4</sup> PCBS (June 2020) [Labour Force Survey](#)

The Programme's short-term jobs creation initiatives focus on sectors with greatest and urgently personnel need to deliver the required basic services to the public. It simultaneously addresses humanitarian needs while building the capacities of future human resources within the targeted sectors. UNDP's strategy to link short-term temporary employment to longer-term savings generation, skill building, and business development in this programme is based on pilot-testing of the '3x6 approach'<sup>5</sup> which has been implemented by other UNDP offices in the region – while focusing on social cohesion and inclusion. The 3x6 model is an innovative UNDP programme approach to promote sustainable livelihoods for vulnerable groups living in transition countries and/or affected by crises triggered by disasters or violent conflicts. The model is based on linking short-term temporary employment with intensive focus on skills building and support to business development. The approach is aiming at supporting livelihood stabilization with a longer-term vision for building resilience, market development, capacity development, local economic recovery, and inclusive economic growth.

UNDP's participatory approach within the programme was based on implementing the job creation activities through local implementing partners (IPs) who play a significant role in creating the foundation necessary for the sustainability of the programme. Details of the IPs and their role are provided in section 5.3 of this report, and the list of IPs is provided in Annex 6. UNDP team coordinates closely with the Ministry of Labour (MoL) to obtain the lists of needed human resources at the different ministries. The programme reviews these needs in coordination with the relevant ministries through matching the skills of the target beneficiaries with the needs of the stakeholders based on the technical specialty required for the specific host facility.

Under the rubric of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), UNDP/PAPP focuses on democratic governance and the rule of law, economic empowerment and private sector development, environment and management of natural resources, public and social infrastructure, as well as gender equality.

The programme has four outputs, which are contributing to the following outcome and output under UNDP's Palestine Programme Frameworks:

**PPF level: Access of youth, women and rural communities to skills and financing for economic empowerment and entrepreneurship improved.**

- Outcome: Palestinians have greater access to decent productive jobs
- Output: Access of youth, women and rural communities to skills and financing for economic empowerment and entrepreneurship improved

**Programme level:**

- Output 1: Gazans have greater access to short-term dignified job opportunities in private and public sectors (including CfW initiatives and internship/apprenticeship opportunities).
- Output 2: Youth<sup>6</sup> have improved capacities in technical and vocational education and training.
- Output 3: Young entrepreneurs have greater access to medium- and long-term employment opportunities (particularly through e-works or electronic platforms to access opportunities outside of Gaza).
- Output 4: SMEs have strengthened capacities in sustaining and growing their businesses in the market.

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<sup>5</sup> The 3x6 is an innovative UNDP programme approach to promote sustainable livelihoods for vulnerable groups living in transition countries and/or affected by crises triggered by disasters or violent conflicts.

<sup>6</sup> UN definition of youth as the individuals in the age group (15-24 years).

The interventions in this evaluation are implemented under the programme's output 1 through the CfW to generate job opportunities for the beneficiaries in the public and private sectors, funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Japan, and Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC). These interventions aim to empower Gazans, both women and men by providing them with greater access to decent productive jobs. The longer-term aim is to contribute to sustainable and inclusive economic development. The total programme budget is 8,600,000 US\$.

A total of 3,590 workers in the age category 18-60 will benefit from job opportunities in the public and private sectors during 2020-2021 under output 1, including unskilled workers, skilled workers, and skilled graduates. This through the short-term employment opportunities for 3-10 months (Table 1).

*Table 1: Distribution of the beneficiaries according to the competency level.*

	Unskilled workers	Skilled workers	Skilled graduates	Total
Completed	566	990	1059	2615
In-progress	225	175	575	975

A group of 38 professional skilled graduates were also selected to provide support to the IPs in the implementation of the programme activities. According to the competency level, each beneficiary was paid between 270-510 US\$ per month. Payment included transportation and lunches, while the insurance was covered according to the ILO and MoL requirements and included work injuries. The IPs were paid to cover the costs of personal protection equipment, maintenance materials, communication, transportation, administrative costs, and the salaries of the IP staff.

The programme also provided job opportunities for the beneficiaries in the local municipalities to support in developing and upgrading the GIS within two municipalities in the Gaza strip. They received technical training and on-site coaching according to their needs.

The evaluation approach and methodology were designed by including cultural contextual considerations which enabled an additional assessment on the support and promotion to gender equality and inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs).

### **3. Evaluation scope and objectives**

#### **3.1 Evaluation objectives**

The main purpose of this thematic evaluation is to provide evidence and recommendations on the achievements and results of UNDP's short-term job creation initiatives under output 1 of the Programme against the results and resources framework. The evaluation was conducted in the Gaza Strip, where interventions took place during the programme implementation period from June-September 2021.

#### **3.2 Evaluation criteria and questions**

The evaluation has assessed programme's performance in accordance with the standard OECD-DAC criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, (likely) impact and sustainability of the interventions, including gender equality and inclusion of PwDs, as well as environment as cross-cutting issues<sup>7</sup> under output 1 of the programme: Gazans have greater access to short-term dignified job opportunities in private and public sectors including CfW initiatives and internship/apprenticeship

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluationnetwork>



opportunities. Key evaluation questions for each of the evaluation criteria were formulated, revised, and agreed upon with UNDP through the development processes of the Inception report. For each evaluation question, sub-questions with related indicators and success standard criteria were developed. These criteria were selected to answer the evaluation questions and assess the actual achievement within the programme. Hence assessing UNDP's approaches and strategies to provide Gazans greater access to decent jobs, and how the programme can contribute to longer-term employment opportunities of the target beneficiaries. Furthermore, this includes identification of lessons learned to inform future similar interventions and strengthen the linkages between short-term and longer-term interventions.

An evaluation matrix displaying each of evaluation questions, the data sources, the data collection tools or methods for each data source, and the standard or measure by which each question is provided in *Annex 3* of the report.

## **4. Evaluation approach and methods**

### **4.1 Evaluation approach**

A theory-based approach is used by applying mixed qualitative and quantitative methodology to conduct this thematic evaluation. The theory-based approach has been applied in order to determine to what extent the results – which the programme planned for – have been achieved so far and use this further to assess the likelihood of this approaches to link short-term expected results to longer-term and sustainable change and hereby achieve the programme's overall objectives.

The following data collection tools were used: review of additional documents gathered during the inception phase; key informant interviews, focus groups with beneficiaries of the programme, online survey with a sample of programme beneficiaries of CfW opportunities. *Annexes 4 and 5* include list and question guide for the survey, in-depth interviews and FGDs.

The tools and questions for gender-sensitive data collection have been developed, including the development of gender-specific indicators and sub-questions. Through the assessment, different groups including females, persons with disabilities PwDs, and male beneficiaries were encouraged to participate through culturally appropriate means.

### **4.2 Sampling**

This sampling method was efficient to provide a representative sample of the target beneficiaries to generalize the findings, taking into consideration the competency level and the distribution of beneficiaries in the different sectors.

A stratified random sampling method was used to identify informants for quantitative and qualitative data collection.<sup>8</sup> Stratified sampling was conducted through division of target beneficiaries receiving cash for work support into smaller sub-groups based on competency level and subdivided based on the targeted economic sectors in the programme. The larger population, based on which the sample has been built on, were the programme's 3,590 beneficiaries from the Gaza strip. With a confidence level of 90 and a 5% margin of error the recommended sample size is 350. The total sample size was 335 survey respondents (41% women and 59% men), in addition to 80 participants in the FGDs (40% women and 40% men) (unskilled workers, skilled workers, and skilled graduates). In tandem the sample is argued to be

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<sup>8</sup> Stratified random sampling involves the random selection of data from an entire population, so each possible sample is equally likely to occur, and will allow the research team to obtain a sample population that best represents the groups subject to this research.

representative of the total population due to the following listed reasons, where the evaluation team has also taken the possible hidden factors at a confidence level of 90 into account:

- The survey sample (335 respondents) have been followed up by FGDs (80 participants randomly selected from the survey sample) to capture any possible skewness in the data.
- The survey was selected to cover all diverse geographical areas in the Gaza strip, the different competency levels of beneficiaries taking into consideration the distribution of the beneficiaries in the different economic sectors. The same is true for the FGDs.
- All of the survey sample's sub-groups are selected based on its percent representation in the total population of the survey sample (table 2).
- The survey sample mirrors the population sub-group's gender balance (table 2).
- **The FGDs** represent each of the population subgroups and can therefore capture details within each (please see table 3 and 4).

Also, one FGD was conducted with the unselected applicants (11 participants, M:7. F:4) within the programme (please see table 2). However, further investigation of this particular group was beyond the scope of the evaluation, why they are not a part of the defined population group either. Hence, there were not allocated resources to ensure a representative sample of this group and the information provided are therefore not able to be generalized to the wider population.

*Table 2: Strata and competency levels of the beneficiaries*

Competency level	Population group	Sample size (% of strata)
Unskilled workers	791 (M: 474; W: 317)	55 (M: 43; W: 12) – 7%
Skilled workers	1165 (M: 915; W: 250)	92 (M: 60; W: 32) – 8%
Skilled graduates	1634 (M: 646; W: 988)	188 (M: 93; W: 95) – 12%
Sector		
Health	1106 (M:700; W:406)	143 (M: 103; W: 40) – 13%
Education	610 (M:195; W:415)	64 (M:11; W: 53) – 10%
Public	854 (M:507; W: 347)	90 (M:60; W: 30) – 11%
Private	1020 (M:633; W: 387)	38 (M:22; W: 16) – 4%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>3,590 (M: 2,035; W: 1555)</b>	<b>335 (M: 196; W: 139) – 9% (M: 10%; F: 9%)</b>

*Table 3: Gender distribution over the competency levels in the FGDs*

		Competency level				Total
		Unskilled worker	Skilled worker	Skilled graduate	Professional skilled graduate	
Gender	Male	13	7	13	7	40
	Female	3	10	21	6	40
Total		16	17	34	13	80

*Table 4: Strata of FGDs*

Strata FGDs 80 (F: 40; M: 40), (F: 50%; M: 50%)		
Strata: Sector	Total beneficiaries	Sample size
Health	24 (M:18; F:6)	30% (M: 75%; F: 25%)
Education	26 (M:3; F:23)	32% (M: 12%; F: 88%)
Public	22 (M:15; F:7)	28% (M: 68%; F: 32%)
Private	8 (M:4; F:4)	10% (M: 50%; F: 50%)
Professional skilled graduates <sup>9</sup>	48 (M: 27; W: 21)	13 (M: 7; W: 6)
Unselected applicants	N/A	11 (M:7; W:4)

### 4.3 Data collection

Data from beneficiaries was collected using a mixed method approach to validate the information collected. In addition to the in-depth review of the initial documentation, the following tools were used: review of additional documents gathered during the field phase, surveys, key informant interviews, and FGDs. The tools and approaches are presented below:

1. Systematic documents analysis: the evaluation team conducted an in-depth document analysis with focus on key evaluation questions, including programme documents, results framework, financial documents, donors' and other UNDP partners' reports, and agreements. The document analysis was used to identify information gaps and support the preparation of the tools of the evaluation, i.e. specific questions for the key informant interviews focus groups and e-surveys.
2. In depth interviews with Key Informants (KIs): Key informant interviews were carried out with UNDP team, implementing partners and the programme stakeholders from the relevant ministries, as well as key sectorial actors. 18 KIs were conducted, of which 16 were conducted face-to-face and three KIs were conducted online using Zoom. Semi-structured interview questions were developed for the different types of partners and stakeholders to answer the key questions and evaluation specific questions (Annex 4).
3. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs): The Evaluation Team conducted a total of 9 FGDs with participation of 80 (M: 50%; F: 50%) beneficiaries from the different identified target groups in the programme. The following FGDs were conducted:
  - Two FDG with the unskilled workers
  - Four FGDs with the skilled graduates within different economic sectors: health, public, education, and private sector.
  - One FGD with the professional skilled gradates working at the IPs
  - One FGD with the skilled graduates working at the municipalities/3x6 approach
  - One FGD with unselected applicants for the programme.
4. Survey: The Evaluation Team conducted a survey over the phone for a random sample of beneficiaries who were targeted by the programme activities.

### 4.4 Data analysis

Data analysis activities adopted an approach that facilitated continuous feedback in order to build findings from the field level, as well as provide accurate reflections on UNDP's programme implementation and

<sup>9</sup> This group of 48 beneficiaries are included in the original population (3590) to work at the IPs and support the programme implementation.

management. The Evaluation Team analysed secondary data findings during the inception phase, to compliment primary data from the primary sources, including survey, KIIs, FGDs and consolidate the results to feed in the final evaluation report. The qualitative data through KIIs and FGDs was extracted, coded and market for analysis purpose. Quantitative data was treated and processed using SPSS software and form cross tabulation across socioeconomic information to compare findings and build actionable recommendations.

The analysis was conducted according to the requirements of the ToR and UNEG/OECD norms and standards. The findings were the subject of in-depth discussion with UNDP team, to ensure that they were robust and accurate to answer the specific evaluation questions. All questions were appropriately developed with the aim of answering the evaluation questions according to the predefined measurable indicators in the evaluation matrix. The revised evaluation questions listed in Annex 3 provides the information generated and analysed as a result of the evaluation process. After concluding the field work, the Research Team developed findings presentation for UNDP for discussion and feedback. The presentation allowed the Evaluation Team to identify further issues of inquiries and accordingly update the findings and recommendations.

#### **4.5 Performance standards and Ethical Consideration**

GCT conducted the evaluation taking into consideration the evaluation quality based on the OECD-DAC criteria identified in the evaluation, ensuring that quality standards were applied in the different phases of the evaluation process. GCT has ensured that the final report was developed in line with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Quality Checklist for Evaluation Reports.

Data collection was conducted according to UNEG guidelines taking into consideration the measures to assure and protect the rights of informants to provide information comfortably and make participants aware of the scope and limits of confidentiality. The evaluation was implemented with highest level of confidentiality and integrity, ensuring that all actors, partners and stakeholders, as well as the beneficiaries, were fully involved and consulted during the evaluation process, and had the opportunity to actively contribute to the process. Data analysis of the collected information was conducted to answer the evaluation questions. The team conducted cross checking of the information gathered from different sources using different data collection tools to ensure the triangulation of findings. Finally, the evaluation team aimed to the extent possible to provide clear, solid, and actionable recommendations.

#### **4.6 Major limitations**

The evaluation has some limitations of the methodology, which has possible impact on the level of generalization for the results identified through the analysis:

- The labour market and employment components and terminologies were not clear. It became clear that respondents during the data collection had different understandings of the terminologies and the components, which was a constraint in terms of collecting comparable information from various respondents. The evaluation team considered this through clarification of the labour market and job creation terms to build a common understanding among the respondents and facilitate data analysis phase.
- Despite the use of convenience sampling, there were limitations related to the number of responses received to the surveys. The consultant, however, made sure that available telephone interviews were fully employed and to make sure that key stakeholders and beneficiaries were reached, and the targeted sample size was covered in the survey. The Evaluation Team also addressed these limitations by conducting additional FGDs with the beneficiaries. There was also limitation to provide a

representative sample for the unselected applicants due to time and budget constraints, the evaluation team was not able to conduct a statistically significant, random sample using only FGDs, as this requires survey sample.

- Despite the fact that the information was accessible, and it was easy assessment of the CfW and job creation interventions in the programme, it was challenging to conduct a thorough evaluation for the '3x6 approach'. This approach is in its pilot-testing phase, and the findings in relation to this component is still limited. Hence it is difficult to generalize relevant findings and build concrete recommendations at this early stage. However, the Evaluation Team reviewed the progress and identified the main findings to draw clear image of this component.
- There were certain limitations in the data collection due to COVID 19 epidemic, and the evaluation responded to this to offer alternative options through conducting some interviews virtually.

## 5. Key findings

This section will present the findings of each evaluation criteria by answering the evaluation questions under each criterion.

### 5.1 Relevance

This section will assess to what extent the programme outputs and outcomes are consistent with national/local policies and priorities, including the SDGs and UNDP Strategy. Further it will assess the programme's ability to meet the actual needs of the beneficiaries through its recovery approach.

*The evaluation found that the programme is highly relevant to the needs of the Gazans, both women and men, by providing them with opportunities for short-term jobs which ensure that vulnerable families have access to basic services. The relevance of the programme was confirmed by its alignment with UNDP's Strategy (2018-2022) and its contribution to both the national priorities, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), in particular Goals 1, 5, and 8.*

The high relevance of the programme is confirmed also with its response to the current devastating effects of unemployment among thousands of Gazans, which exceeded 48% according to the recent national statistics<sup>10</sup>. The programme is also implemented through applying mixed approach based on responding to the needs of stabilization and resilience of the cash for work interventions and skills and business development for the target beneficiaries.

The majority of stakeholders (85%) reported strong endorsement of the programme interventions as the programme responds directly to the worsening poverty and high unemployment rates in the Gaza strip. As there has been a gap in the human resources in the health and education sector due to the ongoing political division between Gaza and West Bank. In addition, there are other ramifications related to other social challenges where many governmental employees, including teachers, health staff, and others, have been paid partially for years.

Programme documents confirm that the design of the programme is well related to the UNDAF (2018-2022) strategic priority 3 'Supporting sustainable and inclusive economic development'<sup>11</sup> as well as with the UNDP Strategic Plan at Eradicating poverty, achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, and support national plans, needs and priorities in line with the SDGs<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> PCBS (June 2020) Labour Force Survey

<sup>11</sup> UNDAF for the State of Palestine 2018-2022

<sup>12</sup> UNDP Strategic Plan (2018-2021)

The programme was consistent and contributed to achieve multiple SDGs: SDG 1 'No poverty,' SDG 5 'Gender equality,' SDG 8 'Decent work' and SDG 10 'Reducing inequalities.' Furthermore, the programme is aligned with two of the ten national priorities 'Economic independence' and 'Resilient Communities' to enhance community resilience through immediately job creation and the long term competitive and independent economy<sup>13</sup>.

### ***Relevance of recovery approach to meet actual needs***

*The programme's approach for recovery is consistent in linking the emergency employment with support to people to stabilize livelihoods and capacity building of local human resources and business development. However, the programme needs to further upgrade its interventions in relation with labour market components, including access to finance, market bases economic initiatives, and enhance private sector participation.*

The programme was initially designed for a period of three years (2015-2018), and the programme implementation and strategies were endorsed by UNDP strategy under the inclusive economic empowerment component to provide cash for work opportunities. Following the division between Gaza and West Bank, the programme was revised and updated in 2016 consolidating the approved changes with support from SDC to target new sectors (health and education). Path to Economic Recovery Programme was designed on 2018 with support from SURGE mission and through a participatory approach. Several consultation discussions and meetings were conducted with the main actors and players in the Gaza Strip. In addition to the donors meeting, which was chaired by UNSCO, SDC and UNDP and the design of the program was presented and validated during these meetings. The programme was also upgraded to assist the Internally Displaced Peoples (IDPs) after the war on Gaza in 2015 with fund from the IsDB.

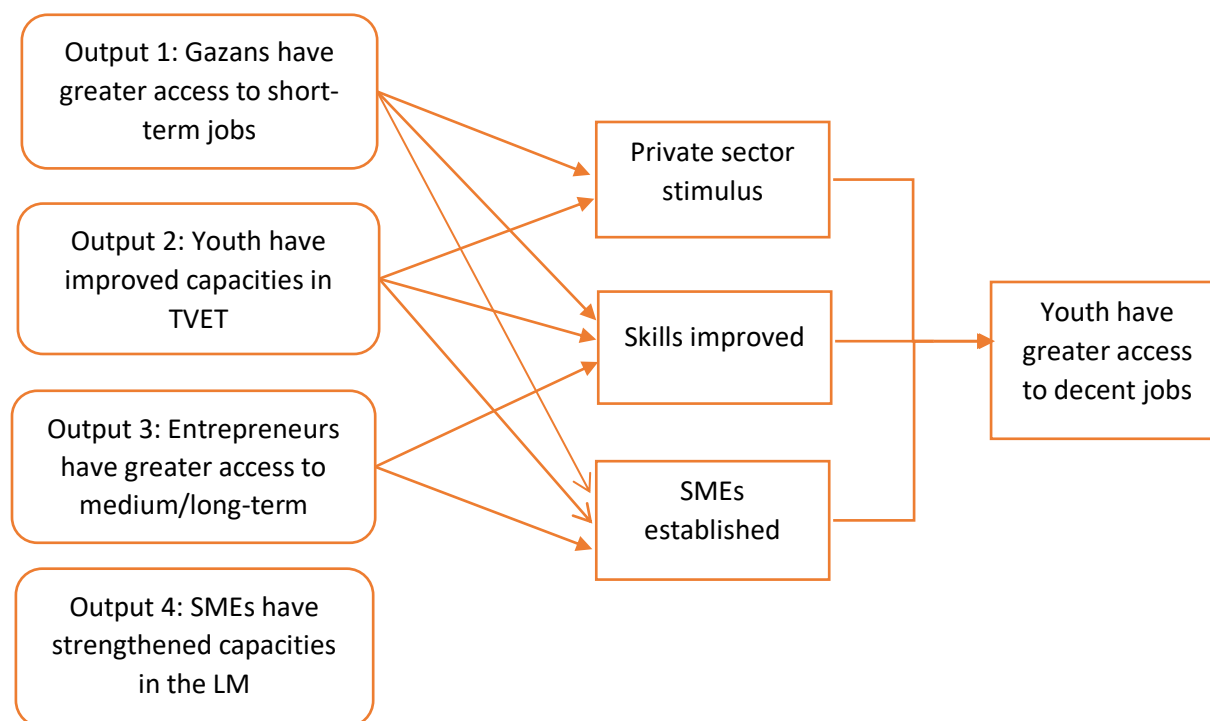
Review of programme documents confirmed that most of the indicators are quantitative and expressed in numbers with few qualitative indicators. The formulation of qualitative indicators would reflect the quality of programme results, to compliment the quantitative data, and provide a more comprehensive framework for monitoring and evaluation of project results. This was clear during the inception phase, as the Evaluation Team had to develop additional qualitative indicators in line with the objectives of the programme in cooperation with UNDP's RBM Team, with the aim to have an adequate framework for the evaluation.

### **Programme's Theory of Change**

The evaluation also reviewed the extent to which the programme has followed UNDP's theory of change, as illustrated through the diagram below.

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<sup>13</sup> National Policy Agenda 2017-2022



The programme objectives are consistent with the programme’s approach to link the activities of the programme with the four outputs, and then to the achievement of the main goal for decent employment. However, the approach requires further development that involves the following: Linking output 1 with the other outputs so that the CfW beneficiaries are involved and able to benefit from the TVET capacity development in output 2. Furthermore, the labour market component such as access to finance, career guidance and market system should be integrated in the approach to enhance greater access to decent jobs.

## 5.2 Coherence:

This section will assess to what extent is the programme intervention coherent with UNDP and other actors’ intervention in the socio- economic recovery.

*The evaluation found that the programme interventions address the synergies and interlinkages with other UNDP programmes on keeping people out of poverty, increased community resilience, and women empowerment. The programme coherence with other donors and CfW providers is high at coordination levels. However, limited level of complementarity was found on the sectorial level in relation to planning, design and sharing of information among the different actors. If there were a better level of sectorial coordination in terms of planning, design and sharing of information among the different actors, the impact of the CfW interventions could potentially be enhanced. This by informing actors providing CfW services about lessons learned from previous interventions, the needs of beneficiaries, as well as other CfW service providers’ interventions and target areas. This would make sure that implemented interventions applied best practices responding to the needs of the beneficiaries, avoided duplication of efforts and potentially covered a larger geographical area.*



The focus of the evaluation in terms of coherence was to measure if and how UNDP's programme managed or combined with other CfW interventions in the Gaza Strip. UNDP is a member of the Cash for Work Coordination mechanism facilitated by UNSCO. Through the platform UNDP is sharing information with other UN Agencies, including UNRWA and UN Women, regarding related initiatives. The aim is to ensure complementary interventions among the different actors. Moreover, from the beginning of the programme, UNDP has been coordinating with UNRWA on cfw interventions, including beneficiary selection criteria, wage rates and monitoring progress to ensure no duplication of beneficiaries between UNDP's and UNRWA's interventions as well as coherent approaches. Besides UNRWA, The World Bank/NDC also confirmed high level of coordination with UNDP's programme in sharing information to verify the list of beneficiaries before final approval to avoid duplication and ensure a wider coverage of communities and target groups.

However, a broader and more comprehensive sectorial coordination is required in terms of identification of priorities of target groups, priority sectors of interventions, and agree on operational decision such as duration of employment period and daily rates for the beneficiaries.

The programme is adding significant value towards economic development compared to the other programmes by the adoption of a new approach which includes not only provision of cash for work opportunities, but also economic recovery through linking short- and long-term employment. However, the evaluation found limited evidence of complementariness<sup>14</sup> between the programme and the other interventions in same context. This remains a major challenge for all JCP interventions implemented in an emergency context such as the Gaza Strip. The different actors at the sectorial level focus on meeting the urgent needs of the community rather than to coordinate activities with other providers. UNRWA team confirmed a high level of coordination with UNDP's programme, for instance through sharing of information to verify the lists of beneficiaries. However, they indicated limitation and challenges to further improve the level of coordination, because UNRWA's programme is a continuous intervention with high number of beneficiaries compared with other programmes in Palestine, including UNDP's.

According to the KIIs with the main actors of the programme, there is a good degree of coordination between the donors of the programme. This coordination needs to be enhanced at the sectorial level for future implementation of similar interventions to ensure that the interventions complement each other instead of focusing on too similar activities with overlapping beneficiaries.

The actors also reported that the CWG mandate is to offer a technical platform to promote a collaborative approach in the support to vulnerable populations across relevant sectors, promoting strategic planning, and leading information sharing and mutual learning among members. The platform is still under development and the coordination level among the members still needs to be further enhanced through a more active role of the CWG under the social protection cluster.

### 5.3 Effectiveness

This section will assess to what extent progress toward intended results (outputs or outcomes) has been achieved. The section will be divided into four subsections: actual results for beneficiaries, the effectiveness of the programme's approach and management to achieve results, current achievements under the 3x6 approach, and finally a summary of the identified greatest and fewest achievements.

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<sup>14</sup> Complementariness is understood as the ability to be linked and/or combined with other interventions within the same development challenge in such a way that the two different interventions are able to enhance or contribute to the result of each other.



### 5.3.1 Actual results for beneficiaries

*The programme was effective to empower the beneficiaries (both women and men) in the Gaza Strip and support their access to decent jobs, through providing more than 3,590 short term job opportunities (a total of 353,019 working days) and enhance Gazans to face the deteriorating socioeconomic conditions and sense of hopelessness.*

About 58% of the beneficiaries (M: 62%; F: 38%), strongly confirmed that the programme addressed their urgent and met actual needs and priorities, while about 34% (M: 49%; F: 51%) reported that the programme was relevant to their needs and priorities to some extent. When asked about capacity and skills development, 92% of the beneficiaries (M: 58%; F: 42%) reported that they are better prepared for the labour market after participating in the programme. Furthermore, about 39% (M: 74%; F: 26%) strongly agree and 30% (M: 56%; F: 44%) agree that the programme was effective, and they feel or expect to help them to find other job opportunities in the future. Results show that men are more optimistic to find job opportunities in the future than women, which is related to the cultural issues and structure of the labour market in Gaza strip.

The majority of the beneficiaries (67%, M: 68%; F: 32%) strongly agree and (30%, M: 64%; F: 36%) agree that the job placement in the host organization matched their knowledge, skills and abilities, and they therefore have positive personal feeling that they were able to add a value at the workplace.

The skilled graduates in the FGDs also confirmed these findings; they feel better qualified for the labour market and assess they have improved their skills. They also added that, as a result of the programme, felt able to refresh and update their knowledge in the field of study after graduation. This decreased the fear of being completely left out of the market.

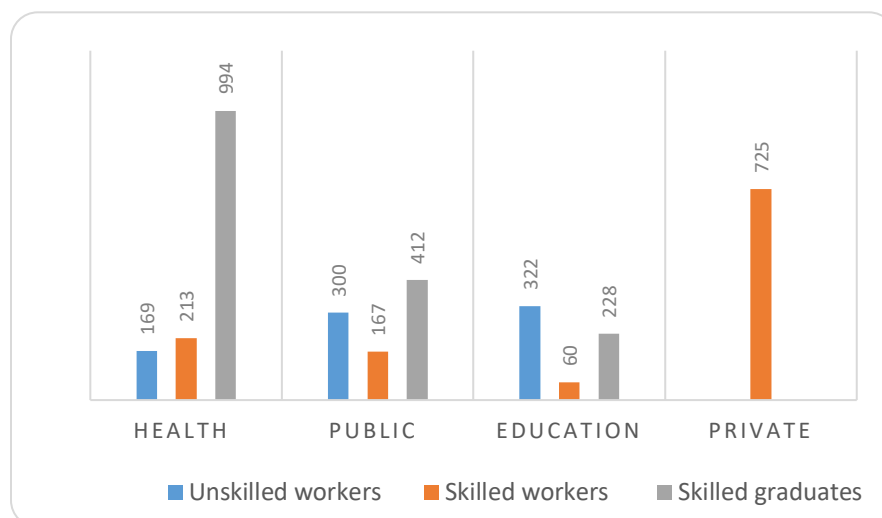
*While the programme was successful to create job opportunities for the beneficiaries in the public and private sectors, the evaluation found little awareness among beneficiaries about the existence of the other outputs in the programme regarding vocational training, and microfinance and business development.*

About 73% (M: 62%; F: 38%) of the respondents in the survey reported that the duration of the contract was not enough. This was common feedback from the target beneficiaries during the FGDs; The job opportunity was here recommended to be at least 6 months. According to the FGDs findings, the beneficiaries who receive a job opportunity for 2 months period described that as unfair (40 – 66 working days) compared with the other beneficiaries who receive 6 to 9 months job opportunities. They further indicated that if they receive job opportunity for 2 months, they will be excluded from the MoL database for at least 2 years waiting for the next opportunity. They also reported that the short duration of this opportunity was not enough for them to bring about remarkable change on their socioeconomic conditions. Most of the implementing partners also confirmed this finding during the interviews.

*The programme was effective in promoting the coordination between the implementing partners and stakeholders to fill the several gaps in the public and private sectors with support from UNDP, through utilizing a quality database for MoL on the unemployed beneficiaries. This approach supported both strengthening the capacity of partners and enhance matching between the qualification and skills of the beneficiaries and the needs at the host organizations.*

One main challenge among donors to implement CfW interventions is to develop a high-quality database, which includes updated and verified data for the unemployed beneficiaries. The programme was, therefore, effective in facilitating coordination between the general directorate of employment at the MoL, the partners and stakeholders were able to obtain updated lists of potential candidates, which could

be invited quickly for personal interviews according to the requirement of the public and private sectors. High level of coordination was achieved between UNDP, IPs and stakeholders during the programme to face challenges and gaps in the public sector, particularly during COVID 19 pandemic.



*Figure 1: Distribution of programme beneficiaries in the target sectors*

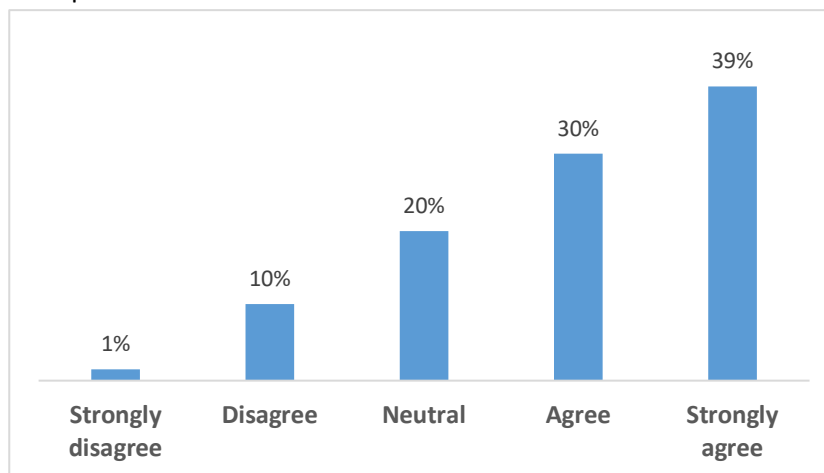
The programme was effective in supporting the stakeholders from both the public and private sectors to sustain their operations (Figure 1). Where all stakeholders expressed high satisfaction with the programmes ability to respond quickly and in alignment with their needs, and they also confirmed that the programme has supported them to fill out several gaps within the target sectors in their organization:

- Health sector: The MoH Team reported that the programme was crucial to cover the needs at the MoH during real crisis with shortage of budgets by recruiting needed human resources. This particularly following the declaration of State of Emergency at the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Gaza Strip in March 2020, where the healthcare situation seriously warned of a catastrophic deterioration. According to the GCDG, the programme responded to the urgent needs at the MoH during the epidemic time. The needed staff including doctors, nurses, lab technicians, drivers, and hygiene workers were distributed within the MoH facilities covering the health clinics and hospitals delivering regular health services and the new established quarantine centres.
- Education sector: The programme contributed to cover the needs at the MoE by providing skilled graduates to support the education process. As students are facing numerous challenges to have quality education due to lockdowns imposed by COVID 19, both at home and in school, the additional human resources added enabled MoE to better address these challenges. The additional human resources provided by the programme helped the MoE to identify and implement alternative ways of working and learning following the COVID 19 pandemic. The graduates helped the schools to adopt a new learning approach using a mix of both in-person and online learning methods. The programme also supported the MoE to apply new safety measures and hygiene practices through the recruitment of needed human resources from pools of relevant skilled workers, both male and females, who work at the schools during the COVID 19 epidemic.
- Public sector: The programme was effective when it comes to the support to the public sector (i.e. agriculture, public works, housing, municipalities and land authority). Here the programme ensured continuous provision of essential services to the local communities by providing needed additional human resources, which could fill in the urgent gaps in services within these sectors. According to the Ministry of Public Works and Housing, the recruited workers supported the Ministry in different public

work projects, which are related to the basic rehabilitation activities of roads and public services. The head of the GIS departments at the Municipality of Gaza and Khan Younis confirmed that the skilled graduates, who were selected to support the development of the GIS at the local municipalities, have conducted a major role to complete the database and update the system. They proved to be highly qualified and committed to complete the assigned tasks during the programme. Private Sector: From a labour market perspective has blockade and restriction of movements for more than 20 years of siege and closure on Gaza made it difficult for the private sector enterprises to sustain business operations. This has resulted in reduced income and increased poverty rates. Moreover, in current environment of instability, enterprises are likely to delay investments, purchases of goods and hiring of workers. The programme therefore provided short-term job opportunities for a group of 728 skilled graduates and workers (25% females) for a period of 2 months within the private sector. According to the PFI team, the support was important for their needs. It, furthermore, enhanced the resilience of the targeted facilities, which are facing serious challenges due to the blockade, restrictions on movement and access to natural resources and markets in addition to the recurrent destructive wars. The skilled graduates were able to provide specific support within the private sector such as financial management, and technicians who were able to support the production lines and processing. However, the capacity of the private sector is still limited and its ability to absorb more workers is challenging in the current situation in Gaza.

60% of the beneficiaries (63% males and 37% females) reported that they have positive attitude towards finding more long-term job opportunities as a result of the programme (Figure 2). This was also validated during the FGDs, where the respondents provided mixed perception regarding long term employment such as:

- Very high unemployment rates among unskilled workers as they have limited opportunities in the private sector. The demands in the private sector are more to employ skilled workers or skilled graduates with high competencies.
- Limited opportunities in the public sector to expand its services and, hereby, needed number of employees due to the current financial crisis that face the local authority, in addition to the division between Gaza and West Bank so that the ministries in the Gaza Strip do not have the financial resources to expand the services for the community.
- The private sector is considered main employer and has important role in any economic recovery process. However, the sector is facing critical challenges to continue its operations and business sustainability, which lead to contraction and shortages of the main operations and production lines in the private sector companies.



*Figure 2: The beneficiaries' attitude towards finding long term job opportunities.*

The majority of beneficiaries (87% of which 40% females and 60% males) confirmed that the programme helped them to acquire knowledge and skills. They also reported that the programme provided them with important chances to be exposed to practical work experience. Skilled graduates reported that this job opportunity was essential for them to practice and work in the field of study and for now covering knowledge gap following the years of unemployment, which they fear will leave them out of the labour market.

On the other hand, the FGDs with unselected applicants revealed that this group is facing serious challenges in terms of job opportunities at both the short- and long-term. Overall, the following issues as unemployed was raised by them:

- Social isolation and difficulties to integrate in the community.
- Lack of self-esteem and confidence to actively participate in the social life.
- Skilled graduates from specific fields such as doctors, nurses and engineers feel they are at risk to have many difficulties to find jobs in the future as they will not be the preference for the employers after years of unemployment.
- The impact of unemployment on women headed households is high as they are notable to cover the basic needs of their families.

### 5.3.2 Effectiveness of the programme's approach and management to achieve results

- ***UNDP's approach to create short- and long-term employment***

The approach UNDP adopted a comprehensive approach to enhance employment of Gaza women and men (Section 5.2), so they have better access to decent productive jobs now and in the future. This through the integration of the following tracks:

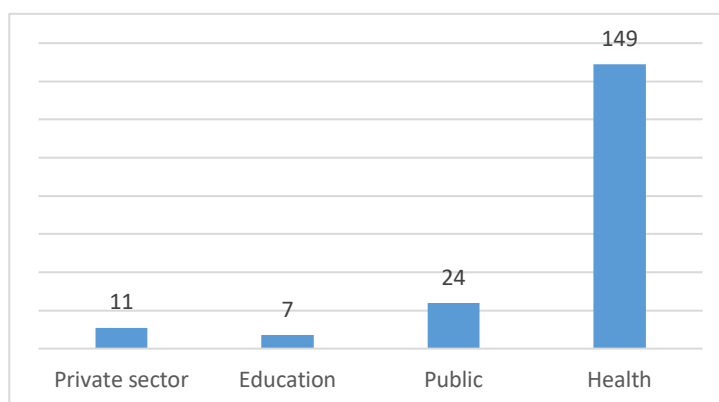
- Short-term job creation (Track A): Focusing on emergency to help beneficiaries to rebuild their lives and stabilize livelihoods on the short term.
- Medium-term employment (Track B): Through community driven programmes this track focusing on improving the capacity of the beneficiaries and developing businesses, including access to finance.
- Long-term employment (Track C): Focusing on sustainable employment through promotion of enabling environment, labour market mechanisms, and private sector recovery.

Compared to other traditional CfW projects in the Gaza Strip, the evaluation found that the programme was effective to respond to the urgent needs of Gazans (Track A). UNDP's approach to create job opportunities for Gazans, taking into consideration their competency level and the demands of the target sectors, was effective to link track A with track B. The practical exposure of youth to the labour market through the short-term job opportunity at the host organization has improved the *capacity of youth*. The programme achieved remarkable progress to link track A and B through the capacity development of the following target groups:

- Unskilled workers' engagement in the labour-intensive interventions to support the private and public sectors' work.
- Skilled graduates' engagement in developmental projects at the host organization (e.g. develop the GIS at the municipalities, designing projects, database development, etc.).
- Skilled workers' and graduates' placement at private sector companies.

*Regarding the programme approach to link short term with medium- and long-term employment through targeting different competency levels of the beneficiaries and provision of job creation support using the four programme outputs. In terms of the objective of employing people at different competency levels the programme has been successful to date. However, when focusing on the linking between short term with medium to long term employment, the programme could be strengthening.*

The programme has contributed to providing job opportunities for a considerable number of young women and men. To date, the programme succeeded in the creation of long-term job opportunities for a total of 140 beneficiaries (about 5.5%). The highest number of job opportunities created were in the health sector at the MoH, which is also influenced by the fact that this is a growing sector despite the current financial crisis in Gaza. A low number of jobs were created in the private sector, which is related to the current economic crisis facing this sector due to the siege and blockade on Gaza (Figure 3). Hence, the programme supported stabilization of the private sector through provision of job opportunities at private sector companies. These companies were otherwise in the risk of closing due to the current economic challenges, and the additional human resources provided enabled them to continue their operations. Creation of more job opportunities on the long term in the private sector requires further interventions and support, in addition to improving the current conditions.



*Figure 3: Number of long-term jobs created as a result of the programme*

The programme contributed to create some long-term job opportunities for the beneficiaries in the public sector, particularly for the beneficiaries with high performance, who seized this opportunity to add value to the host organization during the job creation period. Therefore, they were able to successfully pass the interviews for the jobs which were announced after completion their employment period. It is worth mentioning it is too early in this evaluation to track the number of beneficiaries who obtained long-term employment as it is related to the impact of the programme and should be assessed at a later stage.

- **Programme management & partnership approach**

UNDP approach in the implementation of this programme was based on selecting local partners to manage the selection and placement of the beneficiaries ensuring matching between the competencies of the selected beneficiaries and demands in the private and public sectors. The selected IPs coordinated closely with the MoL to obtain a list of unemployed Gazans using the labour market information system at the MoL, according to the demand of the public or private sector. The selection process was finalized by conducting a personal interview for each candidate with representation from: the intended host organization, MoL, and one or several subject matter expert(s).

The evaluation found that the IPs have been fully involved in the implementation of the programme activities in close coordination and support from the UNDP team, and they confirmed that they felt included in the implementation of the programme activities. Moreover, all IPs reported a high level of support on daily basis from the UNDP team to overcome any challenges that they faced during the implementation process. However, no evidence in the programme documents or confirmation from the IPs' management were found regarding the involvement of IPs in planning and design phase of the programme. Decision-making process, corrective actions, or modification of interventions were made only as a response to the specific needs and challenges facing individual IP. Effective planning and programme management requires joint meetings among the IPs headed by UNDP to discuss programme progress and common challenges during the implementation of the programme interventions.

All IPs and stakeholders reported that this partnership approach is effective to select qualified beneficiaries according to the needs in the target sector. This approach will help capacity development of the beneficiaries during the employment period. The majority of IPs and stakeholders (more than 75%) also confirmed that they have actively participated in the implementation of programme interventions<sup>15</sup>. However, this participation was only done at implementation level, and there has so far been a limited involvement of the IPs at policy or planning levels.

The evaluation found that target beneficiaries of Output 1 of the programme have limited awareness and knowledge on the programme in relation to outputs 2, 3, and 4. In addition, the majority of IPs (5 out of 7 IPs) reported that they are unaware of the other programme interventions regarding micro grants, business development, and 3x6 approach.

All IPs and the majority of stakeholders (85%) also confirmed that their active participation in the programme was effective and supported the programme to achieve its results. Moreover, all stakeholders reported that the selection of the beneficiaries have been conducted to fill the gaps and cover human resource need at their organization, and they were fully involved in the process to select the best candidates following the personal interviews. This participatory approach of the programme has influenced positively the beneficiaries' ability to address the actual and urgent needs of the host organisations.

According to the interviews, the majority of stakeholders reported high level of coordination and support from the IPs in regard to the selection and placement of the beneficiaries, as well as in the facilitation of the whole process with the different stakeholders. However, the MoL Team raised concerns regarding the previous experience of the IPs in relation to job creation and their capacity to link short term with medium- and long-term employment.

Regarding the coordination with the other main actors in the field of job creation and CfW, JCP at UNRWA and World Bank/NDC reported that they coordinated with UNDP and MoL to review and verify the lists of beneficiaries before final approval to avoid duplication and ensure that the programmes cover wider communities and target groups. According to the respondents, this level of coordination is based on the internal policy and strategy of the actors. This coordination mechanism needs to be improved and systemised at national level in close coordination with the MoL

UNDP's team and the majority of IPs reported that the MoL's database was very useful to develop the shortlisted candidates, which was then used to facilitate high quality selection of the beneficiaries for the programme according to the demands of the public and private sector. MoL staff reported also that they

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<sup>15</sup>Active participation is defined as being involved in the design and implementation of the programme interventions.

are currently working on updating the database to reflect changes in the labour market and provide detailed information on the unemployed which include full description of the current status of the applicants, their economic conditions and qualification level. However, MoL has limited human resources to complete the process at high quality to meet the demands and specifications of JCP actors. Which means that the update is expected to take a long time and will not be completed before more human resources has been provided to support the process.

The majority of stakeholders from the targeted sectors (about 85%) reported positive attitude towards employing the beneficiaries after the end of the interventions. They also confirmed that the job opportunity was very important for the beneficiaries to improve their capacity and integrate in the workplace. They also support UNDP's approach, selection process and placement of the beneficiaries in the host organization that match the competencies of the beneficiaries and the demands of the employees.

### 5.3.3 Current achievements under the 3x6 approach

*The 3x6 approach is still in the pilot phase; therefore, the programme was less effective when it comes to the creation and development of small businesses. Little results were achieved to date by the businesses in terms of job creation and sustainability, and further assessment of the approach should be conducted after the end of the pilot.*

The 3x6 approach was introduced to be pilot tested in the programme under the SDC funded component. As also presented in section 2 – Description of the programme, the model is based on linking short-term temporary employment to skills building and business development. Skilled graduates were invited to join this new pioneering approach (3X6 UNDP approach), and they were motivated to build their own teams and brainstorm together to formulate new business ideas. Each participant encouraged to save part of his/her income from their short-term employment, as a small – but necessary - personal investment, aiming at increasing the ownership of their future business. During their employment period, the selected skilled graduates received business principles trainings with support from technical coordinators, to work on creating pioneering ideas for their micro projects. By supporting the beneficiaries to build up their own businesses in this way, the approach aims at supporting livelihood stabilization with a longer-term vision of building resilience, market development, capacity development, local economic recovery, and inclusive economic growth.

The approach was pilot tested at the local municipalities in the Gaza Strip in 2019, where groups of engineers (both males and females) received advanced training in GIS. The selected participants have been then provided with short-term employment at the local municipalities to work on the development and upgrading of the database at the municipalities by using GIS. According to the findings from the FGDs with this target group, they reported that this was an important opportunity for them for professional capacity building and upgrading of their knowledge in a new field relevant to the needs of the local municipalities. Two of the participants even received short-term contracts from the municipality to complete the assignment following their high performance during the programme.

A group of participants also used the short-term employment as an opportunity for idea shaping in terms of making the next choice regarding the establishment of their businesses. UNDP selected three of the ideas (11 beneficiaries, including 8 women and 3 men) for funding (an average of 4000 US\$ per group of entrepreneurs) by multiplying their savings. Analysis of UNDP's progress and achievement regarding the selected businesses and the implementation of this approach in the Gaza Strip is provided in table 5.

*Table 5: Analysis of 3X6 approach*



Phase	Steps	Guiding principles	UNDP achievement
1. Inclusion	1. Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Voluntary Participation</li> <li>Community Driven</li> <li>Rapid Income Generation</li> <li>Stimulation local economy</li> <li>Social cohesion</li> </ul>	Inclusion was fully achieved through engaging the beneficiaries in rapid income through short-term employment.
	2. Income generation		
2. Ownership	3. Savings Step	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investment of savings</li> <li>Analysing opportunities</li> <li>Making choices</li> <li>Joint venturing and risk sharing</li> <li>Participants as actors in development</li> </ul>	As a result of the programme, the beneficiaries saved part of the income, to become start-up business. Filtering of the best business plans by UNDP and multiply by saving for funding.
	4. Joint ventures		
3. Sustainability	5. Investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make informed investment choices</li> <li>Develop market systems</li> <li>Create sustainable jobs</li> </ul>	Establishment of small business. This phase faced context challenges to support the established businesses, related to facilitate market system expansion leading to sustainable business.
	6. Accessing markets		

The evaluation of this approach in terms of lessons learned revealed the following:

- Provision of advanced training was effective for developing the skills of the beneficiaries and facilitate their integration at the workplace. However, this component requires further review and development according to the capacity assessment of the entrepreneurs and type of project idea.
- The idea of the approach that the entrepreneurs with business ideas save part of their salary during the employment period. However, some participants during the FGDs reported that they faced difficulties saving up money due to the relatively low daily rate, to make balance between saving money to benefit from the 3x6 opportunity and cover their basic needs. Furthermore, the employment period of 2-6 months is short for the beneficiaries to start saving and benefit from the programme.
- New established businesses are facing many challenges related to the amount of grants needed, facilitation of the business integration and enhance competition within the market.
- The long-term sustainability of the businesses will depend on the extent to which there will be additional support provided in the future. This could be in the form of mentoring and coaching services as essential component in the business development phase. In addition to provide advice and connections for marketing their products.

#### 5.3.4 Programme's greatest and fewest achievements

According to the findings of the meetings with the UNDP team, IPs, stakeholders, and the beneficiaries, the programme's greatest achievements include:

- The programme created short-term decent job opportunities for the beneficiaries in the Gaza Strip and hereby stabilized livelihoods and increased their quality of life at least on the short term.
- The programme supported the targeted beneficiaries to reach a more stable level on the short term by providing them the possibility to cover their basic needs.



- The programme approach is based on matching between the skills of beneficiaries and the demands of the host organizations. Applying this approach instead of blindly distribute human resources available to the host organisation enable the host organisation to use the additional resources in a way that addressed their current urgent needs, and in the meantime will provide the beneficiaries with the opportunity to apply their knowledge and practice in an appropriate supportive environment leading to improved skills through work place learning, and leading to better employability in the future at the host organization or others after successful search for other opportunities.
- The programme has strong influence to encourage participation of women, particularly poor and low educated women from marginalized areas to earn income and build self-confidence at both household and community levels.
- The programme created job opportunities for the beneficiaries in the private sector, which faces serious economic challenges following years of siege and blockade in the Gaza Strip. In addition, the programme has been able to support and mitigate these serious economic challenges for the private sector through the creation of short-term jobs.
- The programme succeeded to support local municipalities and enabled them to continue their basic service provision to the local communities. This enhanced the stability and provision of such services to the local communities.
- The programme managed well to respond to the urgent needs after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic through the support to the health system. The health system faced significant problems in terms of service delivery and the programme managed to fill critical gaps with additional human resources, which led to significant positive effect on the stability of the health system and availability of main health services.

The programme fewest achievements are:

- The short period of employment for some beneficiaries in the private sector - only for a 2–3-month period – limited the programme’s ability to enhance the beneficiaries' skills and improve their livelihood on the short term. It moreover limited the opportunities for the host organization to benefit the best way possible from the additional resources provided. The majority of IPs and stakeholders here reported that 2-3 months of employment is very short for the temporary employee to integrate at the workplace, build experience and positively contribute to the needs of the host organisation.
- The programme did not conduct enough dissemination and outreach activities to improve the image of CfW interventions among stakeholders, and the evaluation found limited dissemination of UNDP recovery approach both in the community and among the IPs and stakeholders.
- Some beneficiaries in the FGDs reported that they face challenges to integrate at the host organization particularly at the early stages of the employment period. The beneficiaries expect more support to facilitate cooperation and communication with the fixed term staff at the host organization during the job creation period.

#### 5.4 Efficiency

The assessment of efficiency will look at the extent to which the various activities of the programme transformed the available resources into the intended results, in terms of quantity, quality, and timeliness and comparing alternative approaches to achieving the same outputs more efficiently. It will also look at the extent to which monitoring, knowledge management have been integrated in programme implementation in an efficiently way.

*The programme was efficient to adopt the HACT framework for transferring cash to the implementing partners. In addition to conducting capacity assessment for the IPs to support a closer alignment of development aid with national priorities and strengthen national capacities for management and*

*accountability towards gradual shifting to national systems. However, through the interviews with the IPs, the evaluation found challenges regarding the coordination between the different IPs as well as the awareness of each other's roles and interventions across the outputs.*

UNDP has selected its local implementing partners (7 partners) according to clear and well-defined selection criteria to support the implementation of the programme interventions and coordinate with the relevant stakeholders during the selection and placement of the selected beneficiaries at the host organizations. Table 6 provides a presentation of all included IPs, their sector of operation, target groups, as well as what output they are involved in achieving and with what donors.

*Table 6: List of IPs and their role in the programme*

#	Implementing partner	Sector/s	Target group	Involvement	Donor
1.	Gaza Culture and Development Group (GCDG)	• Health sector	• Unskilled worker • Skilled worker • Skilled graduates	Output 1	Japan, Norway
2.	Palestinian fund of Employment & Social Protection for Workers (PFESP)	• Public sector • Municipalities	• Unskilled worker • Skilled worker • Skilled graduates	Output 1, 2	Japan, Norway
3.	Cooperative Agriculture Association of Beit Hanoun (CAAB)	• Education • Municipalities • Public sector	• Unskilled worker • Skilled worker • Skilled graduates	Output 1	Japan, Norway
4.	Democracy and Workers Rights Centre Society (DWRC)	• Public sector	• Skilled graduated (only female)	Output 1	Japan, Norway
5.	The Society of Women Graduates (SWG)	• Education sector	• Unskilled workers (only females)	Output 1	Japan, Norway
6.	Job Creation Programme JCP	• Private sector • Health sector • Municipalities/GIS	• Skilled Graduates	Outputs 1, 2, 3, and 4	SDC
7.	Palestinian Federation of Industries (PFI)	• Private sector	• Skilled worker • Skilled graduates	Outputs 1, 2, 3, and 4	SDC

Three donors of the programme are contributing to different competency levels of the beneficiaries in the programme outputs, based on the donor strategy and mission in Palestine. UNDP recruited two teams to lead the programme components. One team for SDC and the other team to lead the implementation of Japan and Norway fund. The evaluation found low level of coordination among the two teams during the implementation of the programme outputs. Particularly, regarding coordination with the IPs and stakeholders, and synergy between the four programme outputs.

As provided in table 1, five of the selected IPs are involved in Output 1, and the other two IPs are working across all programme outputs. Hence, the majority of the IPs are only involved in activities under Output 1, and not engaged in activities under the other outputs, which focus on linking short-term and medium-to long-term employment. This indicates limited integration between the programme outputs. The IPs also reported themselves that they are not aware of the selection, mandate and role of the other IPs, which would otherwise build a common and holistic understanding of the programme between the partners and stakeholders as well as enhance and facilitate a more coherent implementation process.

*The programme was efficient to implement the various activities according to the plan, though the implementation took in some cases longer time than expected in view of the delay caused either by identification of stakeholders' needs, selection process of the beneficiaries, and COVID 19 lockdown in the Gaza Strip.*

UNDP programme was quick and responsive to fill the human resources gap at the public and private sectors. In particular, during the outbreak of COVID-19, the programme made important changes on the targeted sectors to meet the urgent needs of additional staff during the pandemic at the MoH and the municipalities. The total number of beneficiaries in the health sector was increased from 125 to 336, and in the municipalities from 303 to 327 beneficiaries, while decreasing the number of beneficiaries in other sectors which were reduced its operations due to the lockdown. The reallocation process was conducted efficiently as the programme adapted quickly to the change in demand due to the new context and without requiring any additional financial resources. This because the change of the interventions was based on redistribution of the beneficiaries between sectors, and budget re-allocation (from output 2 to 1) which was discussed and approved by the donor.

*In regard to the programme progress towards achievements of results to date, based on the analysis of the programme framework and progress reports, the evaluation found that the programme was efficient to use the available budget to create job opportunities for about a larger group of beneficiaries (3,590 beneficiaries) with a total of 353,019 working days. However, according to the findings of the survey and stakeholders, the evaluation found low level of satisfaction from both the beneficiaries and the stakeholders regarding the 2-3 months' employment period. Therefore, the programme should review the duration period which require additional financial resources or reduce the number of beneficiaries using the available budget.*

The progress of the programme at the time of evaluation was 74% of its planned activities through providing CfW opportunities for women and men that match their knowledge and skills in the Gaza Strip (Table 7).

Table 7: Progress of the programme based on the number of beneficiaries

	Unskilled workers	Skilled workers	Skilled graduates	Professional Skilled Graduates	Total
Completed	566	990	1059	-	2615
In-progress	225	175	527	48	975
	<b>791</b>	<b>1165</b>	<b>1586</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>3590</b>

Percent of planned budget actually spent on activities relative to results achieved at the time of the evaluation was about 80% of the programme total budget, which is aligned with the planned budget allocation.

The evaluation found unbalanced distribution of funding over the programmes' outputs, where 75% of funding (excluding programme management) is devoted to output 1 and 25% to cover the other activities under the other three outputs. This remains a significant challenge for the programme to use the available financial resources to link short term employment through CfW opportunities. To achieve this balance between the growing needs to provide more CfW and create medium to long term opportunities for Gazans. Therefore, more resources and budget should be allocated to cover the interventions related to medium- and longer-term employment under the other three outputs.

The programme team has developed and applied efficient mechanism in coordination with the IPs to match the needed specialities of human resources identified by the stakeholders from the private and public sectors with the skills of the beneficiaries, through developing clear selection criteria of the beneficiaries. However, about 67% of the beneficiaries from the survey reported that they were not aware of the criteria and selection mechanism in advance, so that they would have enough time to prepare themselves for the personal interview.

The programme was efficient to develop and implement a reasonable scale for the daily rate of the beneficiaries, taking into consideration the competency levels of the beneficiaries, the minimum daily wages in Palestine, and the average consumption of essential needs. The scale took into consideration the competency level of some specific occupations at the MoH and the municipalities such as doctors, nurse, and engineers, who have higher daily rate compared with the other occupations from the same sector. The daily rates of the beneficiaries were also reviewed by UNDP programme team. Accordingly, the daily rates were updated, increased, and implemented in the second phase of the Norwegian fund. The aim was to ensure that the salaries were able to cover the basic needs of the beneficiaries. However, besides these efforts the daily rate is still below the poverty line in Palestine<sup>16</sup>, particularly for the unskilled workers in the programme (Table 8).

*Table 8: Daily rate of the beneficiaries according to the competency level*

<b>Beneficiaries</b>	Professional Skilled Graduates	skilled Graduates/ Medical staff	Skilled Graduates/ Municipalities	Skilled Graduates	Skilled Workers	Unskilled Workers
<b>Daily Rate (\$)</b>	From 20.00 to 24.00	24.00	32.00	From 15.00 to 16.80	From 15.20 to 16.00	15.20

There are some challenges in the management structure at the IPs in relation to the implementation of the programme activities. The professional skilled graduates indicated that management structure of the team under the relevant IPs needs to be reviewed to hire a Project Coordinator, who is expected to facilitate communication with the IP higher management, and support stabilization and sustainability of the staff IPs for future CfW interventions.

The programme was efficient to use the financial resources that were distributed over the programme interventions, where the operational cost was about 8%, which is assessed to be reasonable.

During the implementation of the UNDP 3x6 approach in the pilot phase, small grants were provided to three start-up businesses with innovation and creativity, and a cost sharing scheme was applied from the start-ups' side. However, the businesses were not able to achieve the targeted job creation and they still face many challenges to sustain their operations. The businesses should therefore be supported further through the provision of mentoring and coaching services after the creation of the business. Business and financial plans require more review and analysis to decide on needed technical or financial support, in particular during the first 3 -6 month of start-up.

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<sup>16</sup> The poverty by national standards for Palestine, is 1,450 NIS (\$420) per month for a family of two adults and three children (2020).

*The current allocation of M&E activities and allocation of resources are not covering the whole programme. The M&E activities are mainly conducted for output 1 and only at monitoring level to follow up the implementation of the planned activities, while there is limited evidence of M&E reporting for the other programme outputs.*

The programme team includes a M&E assistant who is conducting the M&E activities and report to the Head of Programme. The evaluation found certain challenges regarding the M&E system and activities which include:

- M&E assistants is conducting M&E activities on output 1 of the programme, no evidence was found for M&E activities being implemented for the other three outputs.
- The current results of the M&E system in the programme are mainly related to track the progress of the programme and provide corrective actions during the implementation of the programme activities.
- The M&E assistant is conducting regular field visits to the IPs and the beneficiaries at the host organizations to monitor the progress and implementation of the programme activities and is using several tools for monitoring and evaluation of programme. However, these interventions and tools are oriented towards the implementation of CfW activities and are not focusing on the overall programme level (i.e. assessment of all four outputs and their linkage to the corporate outcome and output).
- UNDP has available internal resources in terms of the RBM Team, which should be utilized better in the project to assess progress and results with no additional cost for the project. This also includes updating the M&E plan to cover all programme interventions and provide additional human resources – if necessary – to ensure efficient functioning of the M&E activities.

## 5.5 Impact

This section provides assessment of the likely impact and positive and negative consequences, direct and indirect, as well as intended and unintended of the programme activities on the short term, taking into consideration the influence of external factors as well as the linkages between the programme outputs.

*Programme interventions resulted in improvement of quality of life of the beneficiaries, particularly women on the short term. The programme has not only provided short-term employment and improved the immediate economic conditions of the beneficiaries, but it also influenced their personal and their families' lives positively - for both women and men - in terms of having respected role in the society, increased networking, self-esteem, and self-confidence.*

Data collection and analysis under this evaluation criteria took into consideration the fact that the beneficiaries are answering based on their current situation, where they are still included or just finished their participation in the programme. Hence, the data received was assessed according to this. This means that when the beneficiaries report significant positive impact of the programme on their quality of life, they are referring to their current life and not possibly future life situation. Moreover, this evaluation assesses the likely influence on a longer term by taking into account the possible influence by a various external factor, as for instance: duration of unemployment, number of unexpected larger expenses at household level, and the continuity of the current financial crisis in the Gaza Strip.

The data also represents that the programme had a significant influence on the beneficiaries' quality of life at this period of time. About 94% (M: 56%; F: 44%) of the beneficiaries reported that the programme has significant positive impact on their lives.

The programme has also positive impact to improve the family's life of the beneficiaries, as about 69% (M: 57%; F: 43%) of the respondents strongly agree that their quality of life changed to the better as a result of the programme (Figure 4).

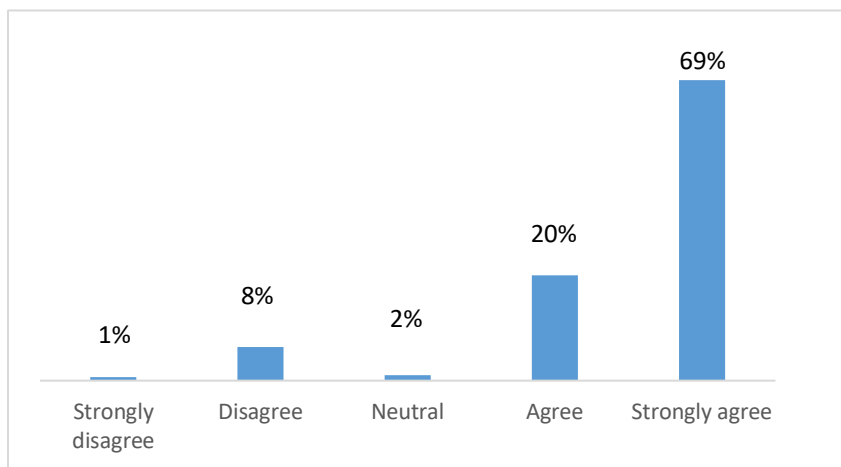


Figure 4: Impact of the programme on the life of beneficiaries.

Moreover, the majority of the respondents in the FGDs confirmed that the programme has significant positive effect on their families, and improved household dynamics and social relations at a community level. The beneficiaries reported that they were able to establish good network at the host organization as well as the clients of the organization, which improved self-confidence and gave them a sense of hope for better future.

*The evaluation found also that the programme has not only changed the quality of life of the beneficiaries, but also contributed to a positive change in many aspects of their life beyond the cash assistance, including expanded social networks and active community participation.*

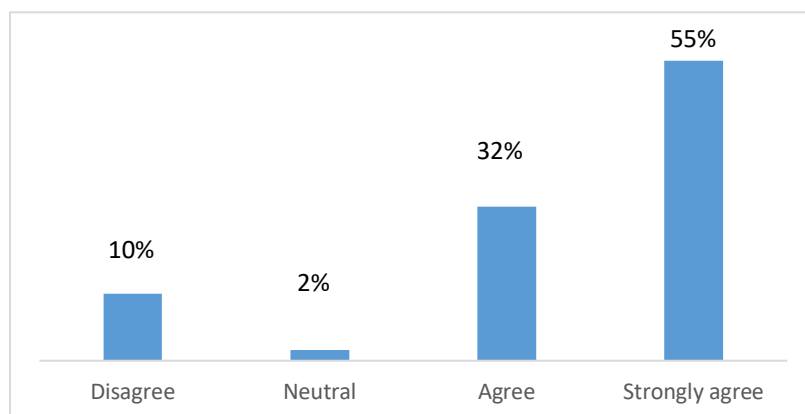


Figure 5: Impact of the programme on the life of beneficiaries beyond cash assistance.

The findings of the survey revealed that 55% (M: 65%; F: 35%) of the respondents from the survey strongly agree that the programme resulted in major positive changes in their life in addition to the cash assistance (Figure 5). These findings were also validated during the FGDs with the beneficiaries, these positive changes include:

- They have strong relations with the society and has a better status in the community.
- Women expressed that they became more self-confident and have good role in their community. They feel that they are in a better position to contribute to decision-making in the family, while the income gained helped them to become more independent.
- There are enhanced intra household preferences and family dynamics in relation to household resource allocation decisions.
- Beneficiaries increase their private expenditure to cover other basic needs such as health and education, which is leading to improved life conditions.
- They have increased self-esteem, confidence and become more independent.
- The beneficiaries feel more integrated in the society, have better social networks and more active in the social life and more productive persons. Others reported that they felt able to build a good network with the staff and client at the host organization during the employment period.

Some respondents during the FGDs also confirmed these findings, indicating that the employment period allocated to vulnerable households particularly were not sufficient to enable full recovery of livelihoods and bring about remarkable change due to the many financial challenges facing these households. These findings are in line with the survey results that 10% (M: 68%; F: 32%) of the respondent reported that the programme had no impact beyond the cash assistance (figure 5). Therefore, increasing the duration of the employment would considerably increase the impact of the project.

## 5.6 Sustainability

Taking into consideration that the programme is still ongoing, the assessment of sustainability will look at the extent to which the benefits of the programme are likely to continue after assistance has ended. It will also look at the areas of the programme that are likely to be sustained and those that still needs future support. It will discuss the conditions for sustainability of UNDPs future CfW interventions.

*The factors influencing sustainability of the programme is different from one component to another across the four programme outputs. The programme under output 1 supported the selected IPs to acquire institutional structure and capacity that will allow them to achieve sustainability in the implementation of CfW interventions in the short-term.*

*The basic programme interventions were found to have possibility of sustainability. Particularly if the commitment of stakeholder, including local government, continues. This increase the likelihood of sustaining the momentum that has been generated. However, there are challenges related to the capacity of the IPs to individually lead CfW interventions linked to their mandates, internal programmes, and strategic objectives to increases the likelihood of project sustainability*

*Though the CfW and job creation activities in the programme contributed to improve many aspects of beneficiaries' life. However, availability of funds and financial resources will remain major challenges for sustainability after the end of the programme.*

The programme achieved different results with the different IPs, as they have different capacity levels for job creation and enhancing employability. About 70% of the IPs (five out of seven IPs) confirmed improved capacity and willingness to lead and deliver job creation programmes after completion of the UNDP programme. The evaluation found that the programme contributed to developing the capacity of the IPs' staff in various areas related to job creation and enhancing employability of the target beneficiaries. The programme further enhanced the skills of the participants for long-term employment through the integration of apprenticeship/ internship and business development support, both of which are well



recognised and tested approaches to enhance work-based learning and enhance employment opportunities. Even more than traditional CfW interventions.

The likelihood of sustainability is high from the IPs perspective, as there has been good level of engagement of the IPs in the design and implementation of the programme activities. In addition, to the focus of the programme on integrating job creation and enhancing employability into the strategic programmes of the IPs. All IPs confirmed high level of ownership and commitment towards the programme strategy. They also reported that they are in better fundraising position to receive support and implement interventions from various donors and international organizations as a result of the programme. Hence, also able to mitigate the risk of the lack of financial resources.

The UNDP approach to enhance the IP staff capacity enhances the sustainability of the programme, through supporting recruitment of a team composed of 4-5 field officers (professional skilled graduates) to follow the implementation of the programme interventions at each IP. A good sign of sustainability was here confirmed by improving the capacity of the professional IPs skilled graduates, where the findings of the FGDs with the professional skilled graduates revealed that the programme provided them the opportunity to build their capacity in the field of job creation and enhancing employability that is considered a good basis for short-term sustainability of the IPs.

*The IPs achieved good progress to support matching of the beneficiaries in a suitable workplace. However, according to the finding of the FGDs with the target beneficiaries, the evaluation found limited progress and support from the IPs to the beneficiaries in relation to follow up and enhance integration of female and inclusion of PwDs, in addition to ensure functioning feedback and compliant mechanism during the job placement component of the programme.*

All stakeholders from both the public and private sector confirmed in the in-depth semi-structured interviews that the programme filled many important gaps in their organizations. They, therefore, expressed willingness and commitment to support the long-term objectives of the programme by hosting more beneficiaries in the future and provide the needed financial resources as well as infrastructure during the job employment. This will support the long-term objectives of the programme. Sustainability was also evident at the stakeholders' level through endorsement of the programme to transform the approach of implementing traditional CfW interventions towards skills development for long-term job creation, which can be considered an important factor for stakeholders' future contribution to enhance employability of the beneficiaries in the Gaza strip. The programme also made good contribution to innovative approaches such as using the information system at the MoL for selecting the beneficiaries according to the needs of the public and private sectors, which would contribute to durable results and more likely to be sustainable.

## **5.7 Cross-cutting issues**

The section will assess to what extent gender equity and the empowerment of women have been addressed in the design, implementation, and monitoring of the programme. It will also assess how the programme considered the inclusion of the marginalized groups, especially PwDs, in the programme activities, and also how the environmental issues have been addressed in the programme interventions.

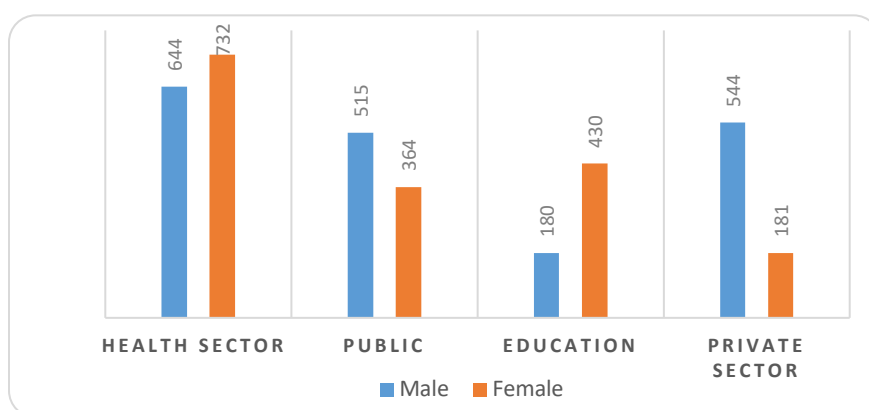
### **1. Gender equality**

*Substantial progress was made by the programme towards gender equality and integration of women in the labour market. Women and girls expressed high satisfaction with the job opportunities and the significant positive impact on their socioeconomic conditions.*



The evaluation found several success factors on how the programme interventions impacted social cohesion and gender protection in the community. The programme targeted both women and men in the different economic sectors in the Gaza Strip. The evaluation found that the programme successfully encouraged the participation of women, which resulted in an achieved gender balance of about 48% females out of the total targeted beneficiaries (Figure 6). Women were also well represented in all economic sectors in the programme, with a higher participation in the health and education sectors. The programme was efficient to create job opportunities for women in the private sector despite the limited capacity of the sector, and the traditional concerns of employing women in the private companies and industries.

The gender distribution of males/females in the programme is to large extent in accordance with the national statistics, and the women are represented in the programme at an acceptable level<sup>17</sup>. The challenges remain in the private sector, where the programme placed the fewest women, which mirrors the general low participation of women within this sector. Mainly due to local traditions and norms. Therefore, the programme needs to provide more efforts to encourage the private sector to hire more women and hereby break stereotypes and lack of gender equality within this sector.



*Figure 6: Female to male distribution of beneficiaries in the target sectors*

When looking at the women empowerment from the female beneficiaries' own perspective, women participating in the FGDs indicated that the job opportunity influenced their life at both personal and community levels. They felt empowered through the earning of their own salary and interaction with others at work, which enabled them to overcome traditional family structures at home. They additionally reported a more influential role in the decision-making in the household and receiving a more respected position inside the family combined with an increased ability to influence others in the community. This was in particular the case in the expanded large families. Women have emphasized one crucial point which is: improved personal strength to face gender-based violence despite there was no pressure or resistance by men towards women maintaining control of the cash earned during the programme. The majority of female respondent (about 90%) from the survey reported that they have not been exposed to any kind of pressure or violence to spend the money they received during the programme in an undesirable way. These finding came in agreement with the finding from the FGDs. In addition, women who received the job opportunities indicated that the programme helped them to become independent and to have increased self-esteem and self-confidence.

<sup>17</sup> PCBS report, March 2021

Though the programme achieved the above positive results when it comes to women empowerment, the female beneficiaries still faced some gender-specific issues throughout their participation in the programme, which hindered especially the gender equality contribution of the programme so far:

- Male domination within the private sector: Limited infrastructure to facilitate decent women integration in the private sector such as workplace and privacy issues. This is mainly influenced by the fact that the sector, particularly in small and medium size companies, is traditionally structured and oriented to host male workers.
- Limitation of the gender equality: The evaluation found other limitations on gender equality related to sick and emergency leave issues. A woman participating in the focus group reported that she had only three days maternity leave following a Caesarea operation at the hospital, and she decided to return to work to avoid losing more working days from her contract. The contracting process and employment conditions need to be reviewed and improved to be compatible with the women rights.
- Increased workload on women: The workload on women beneficiaries was high compared to men, this is related to the traditional division of gender roles in the society as men in general do not provide assistance to women at home.
- Lack of awareness among men about the importance of women's work: Women suffered from pressure practiced by men, especially their husbands, which in some cases lead them to leave and lose the work opportunity.

## **2. Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities**

*Limited progress was achieved regarding the inclusion of PwDs in the programme; the evaluation found that the total number of PwDs targeted in the programme was 48 (about 1% of the target beneficiaries).*

The PwDs included as beneficiaries was skilled workers or graduates, while no unskilled workers with disabilities were included as a beneficiary (Figure 7). This percentage is still far below the percentage approved in the Labour Law and ILO. The law states that each workplace should employ a minimum of 5% PwDs.<sup>18</sup> Desk review findings of the lists of unemployed Gazans and in-depth interview with the MoL staff revealed that inclusion of PwDs was not a factor when developing the shortlists, therefore, very few number of PwDs received employment opportunities during the programme. Access and communication barriers are major factors that prevent persons with disabilities to equally access and benefit from cash transfers. Furthermore, no coordination with relevant organizations was conducted to enhance participation of unemployed PwDs in the MoH database.

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<sup>18</sup> Labour Law No. (7) of 2000

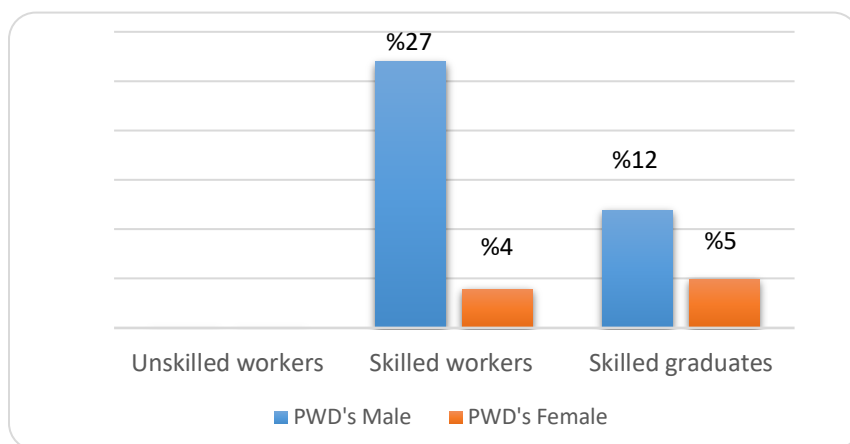


Figure 7: Distribution of the PwDs in the programme according to the competency level

### 3. Environmental issues

*The evaluation found that the programme took into consideration environmental issues as a cross-cutting issue, and the environmental impacts are well addressed in the programme interventions.*

In practice, environmental protection is often regarded as a secondary consideration in the emergency contexts. However, the programme facilitated ownership of beneficiaries for business and skills development over the traditional 'cash for work' humanitarian response approach. The programme extended its interventions to engage the beneficiaries in work that address the environmental issues. This was reflected in the programme support which was provided to the local municipalities and the Ministry of Public Work and involved activities such as:

- Sterilization and disinfection of public utilities periodically, particularly during COVID19 epidemic, and collection and treatment of hazardous medical waste from medical institutions.
- Improve the environmental situation related to the basic services of the local municipalities (cleaning streets and agriculture tree care and seeding).
- The beneficiaries at the municipalities were involved in raising the level of environmental awareness of the local community in addition to inspection and health control through design and implementation of awareness campaigns in the community.
- The beneficiaries at the MoH and MoE provided support for the general maintenance and cleaning of public facilities, including hygiene and sterilization during COVID 19.
- Employing the technology through the GIS to facilitate provision of WASH as well as health, hygiene, and basic services for the community, particularly in the marginalized areas.

## 6. Conclusions

The programme is well designed to address some of the extreme difficulties faced by the population in Gaza, namely, extreme poverty and unemployment. Furthermore, the programme was successful in the mobilization of all stakeholders, including relevant ministries, municipalities, and private sector actors to support the implementation of the programme in line with national priorities and SDGs. This was also proven during the programme flexibility to respond to the needs of the public sector during the COVID-19 epidemic. The programme was effective to empower Gazans, both women and men, in the Gaza Strip

and support their access to decent jobs through the provision of short-term job opportunities. This has resulted in improved quality of life for the Gazans participating in the programme and decreased the sense of hopelessness. The programme further mitigated the deteriorating socioeconomic conditions.

UNDP is considered a main partner in Palestine by the involved donors and stakeholders. This stems from UNDP long experience in implementing local development and economic recovery interventions, in addition to its capacity to transfer knowledge and experience to other partners and stakeholders and ensure their endorsement and ownership.

Coherence between the programme with other similar interventions is relatively high at the coordination level, also influenced by UNDP's continuous coordination with main actors such as UNRWA and the World Bank/ NDC as well as active membership of the Cash for Work Coordination mechanism. However, limited level of complementariness was found at the strategic level regarding planning, designing, and sharing of information between the main actors and donors.

Though the programme was able to adapt to the local context to link short term employment with the economic development, UNDP recovery approach for decent jobs requires further integration between the four programme outputs to achieve more effective transition from short term to long term employment.

The likely sustainability of the programme was confirmed through involving local IPs in the implementation of the programme intervention to acquire institutional structure and capacity that will allow them to implement CfW interventions on their own also after the end of the programme. However, financial resource allocation remains a major challenge for the sustainability of the results achieved so far in the programme, to ensure likely sustainability. Therefore, future programmes need to further focus to enhance synergy between outputs towards medium to long term and sustainable jobs for the beneficiaries.

In this programme, UNDP played a significant operational role in promoting gender equality and inclusion of PwDs. However, more actions are required by UNDP team to respond to the needs of women and PW DS, both during the design and implementation of the programme interventions.

The weakness of the programme has been the limited synergies between the different outputs, to improve UNDP response to face the challenges of recovery, resilience, and long-term economic development in the Gaza Strip. The M&E system focused too much on process monitoring and not at output/outcome monitoring, and emphasis was given to quantitative indicators to assess the programme achievements with little attention to qualitative indicators.

## **7. Lessons learned**

- The majority of stakeholders reported that they invested time and resource to build the capacity of the beneficiaries, so that the beneficiaries are ready to actively support the host organization during the employment period. They expect further support from the programme for those beneficiaries particularly with high performance such as the GIS beneficiaries at the municipalities, and other skilled technicians and experts in specific fields.
- The beneficiaries faced difficulties to manage their emergency or sick leave, as they decided to come to work to avoid losing more working days from the contract. This needs further response or more clarification from the programme team.
- UNDP's ability to link short-term employment with economic development was functioning well despite the economic crisis and working in an unstable and fragile context in the Gaza Strip.

- Payment to the beneficiaries: The beneficiaries reported that there was a delay to receive payment and they experienced a few times to wait about 2 weeks before receiving their payment. The Programme Team and IPs confirmed they have to review and finalize the lists of beneficiaries, as well as review the attendance sheets to estimate the number working days. Which took them long time and therefore influenced when the beneficiaries could receive their payment
- Most of the time, beneficiaries did not receive the full salary due to things out of their control like holiday deduction (e.g., Eid), corona lockdowns, etc.
- Placement of the beneficiaries in the private sector resulted in high motivation of the private sector to benefit from the services of the benefactress in the companies. The skilled graduates were able to provide specific support within the private sector such as financial management, and technicians who were able to support the production lines and processing. However, the capacity of the private sector is still limited and its ability to absorb more workers is challenging in the current situation in Gaza.

## 8. Recommendations

*Recommendation 1: Improve the programme results framework to cover the qualitative indicators in the programme.*

The indicators in the programme documents are mainly quantitative. Including qualitative indicators in the programme at the output level will be important as a way to focus on the quality of results. This will also enable a more holistic assessment of the actual achievements of the programme and enable the identification of necessary adjustments to maximize impact.

*Recommendation 2: Enhance high level of coordination and relationship among main actors in the field of cash for work and job creation interventions to ensure stronger coherence. Hence, not only coordination at the basic level as for instance cross-checking beneficiary lists, but more importantly on a strategic level to fulfil the objective of the CWG, which is to promote a collaborative approach for vulnerable populations across relevant sectors, promoting strategic planning, and leading information sharing and mutual learning among members.*

Cash for work and job creation programmes have significant impact to support recovery and resilience of communities. Hence, all key actors and donors with endorsement from the government need to have their role and responsibilities clearly identified. Also, the cash working groups' role and responsibilities under the protection cluster need to be enhanced as a main coordination body for all CfW main actors.

*Recommendation 3: Apply a participatory approach through engaging the beneficiaries in the design of future programmes, in particular identification of their needs and priorities, to enhance their role during the implementation of the programme interventions.*

The programme has successfully involved all stakeholders and partners in the implementation of the programme interventions and ensured their commitments to the programme. Based on this success it is therefore recommended to additionally enhance the active participation of the beneficiaries in both the design and implementation phases. This is to ensure their voice is heard and they are able to present potential constraints or recommendations so that the programme is better responding to their needs and priorities.

*Recommendation 4: Job opportunities need to be a minimum of 6 months*

The employment period of 2-3 month is too short for the skilled graduate to integrate well at the workplace and provide remarkable added value to the organization. It furthermore hinders the positive impact on the beneficiaries' life, particularly for the unskilled workers who obtained job opportunities for about 2 months.

*Recommendation 5: Integrate performance appraisal mechanism for the beneficiaries during the employment period*

The programme management team conducts regular field visits and monitoring activities to the beneficiaries at the host organization. UNDP may review the integration of performance evaluation of the beneficiaries during the job placement period, to enhance competitiveness for quality performance and assess the performance of the beneficiaries for future job opportunities.

*Recommendation 6: Conduct community awareness campaign to disseminate the programme intervention and UNDP recovery approach*

UNDP and implementing partners to conduct awareness sessions among the beneficiaries to disseminate the programme interventions and UNDP's approach to enhance access and participation in the programme in all its components. Awareness sessions to be done before the program starts with continuous follow up from the IPs staff. The campaign should also focus on promoting women's participation in the labour market for the households before the program and a continuous following up from the IPs with them to avoid conflicts and problems that may lead women to lose the job opportunity.

*Recommendation 7: Maximize sustainability of the programme through reviewing the roles and responsibilities and improve the capacity of the implementing partners.*

The IPs have a key role in the implementation of the programme interventions; therefore, it is recommended to increase the likely sustainability through capacity development of the IPs, where the capacity building needs to be more related to address the programme strategy of linking short to medium- and long-term employment. In addition to build capacity to apply UNDP principles and guidelines on gender equality and inclusion of persons with disabilities within the IPs.

IP capacity building shall also include reviewing the structure of the professional skilled graduates' team to include a Project Coordinator, to fill the communication gap between the team and the IP higher management and enhance stability of its human resources, so that the IPs have the capacity to implement future CfW interventions in the future.

*Recommendation 8: Support the development of comprehensive recovery approach for employment that focuses on the labour market components, including private sector development and funding mechanism.*

Review and upgrade the programme's approach of linking short- to long-term employment by including all the components such as: innovation and entrepreneurship, mentoring and coaching of the programme, market system services and business development. The private sector could be further engaged and motivated to extend the employment period of the youth with high performance during the employment period through a cost share modality between the private company and the programme.

*Recommendation 9: Consider expanding the duration of monitoring and follow-up on activities after the establishment of the start-ups*

Through the pilot testing of the UNDP 3x6 approach, small grants were provided to three start-up businesses with innovation and creativity, and a cost sharing scheme was applied from the start-ups' side. However, the businesses were not able to achieve the targeted job creation and they still face many challenges to sustain their operations. The businesses should therefore be supported further through the provision of mentoring and coaching services after the creation of the business.

*Recommendation 10: To give priority to IPs that are able to complement UNDP's recovery approach with additional resources, and hereby contribute to ensuring success and sustainability of the programme towards medium- and long-term employment and business development.*

In order to achieve the programme's objectives and also increase the likelihood of sustainability, the IPs will need to actively contribute to the achievements. This can be attained through commitment of IP to follow up with beneficiaries on development of their established businesses after the end of the programme's interventions. This is an area where the partners should respond to the needs of the businesses using their own resources or from external funding. Other criteria for the selection of the partners are their ability to link the beneficiaries with micro grants organizations afterwards and, hereby, enable them to sustain their business.

*Recommendation 11: To enhance UNDP M&E role in the programme using the available resources to assess progress in terms of tracking progress against the programme objective and outcomes with no additional costs.*

UNDP has available internal resources in terms of the RBM Team, which should be utilized better in the project to assess progress and results with no additional cost for the project. This also includes updating the M&E plan to cover all programme interventions and provide additional human resources – if necessary – to ensure efficient functioning of the M&E activities.

*Recommendation 12: Strengthen gender equality aspects and inclusion of persons with disabilities in the different phases of the programme including the design and implementation of the planned interventions. Their needs and priorities will have to be addressed to achieve high integration in the workplace and enhance medium- and long-term employability.*

Gender equality to be achieved through identification of barriers facing women and girls towards high level of integration at the workplace. The main focus should be in relation to the available infrastructure and human resource development to create friendly work environment at the host organization between the beneficiaries and the fixed term staff, particularly in the private sector to facilitate integration of women during the employment period. This could be done through conducting capacity assessment of the host organizations to identify to what extent these organizations are mature enough to host women and PwDs and provide necessary support for them during the employment period.

The number of PwDs in the shortlist provided by the MoL and the final list of beneficiaries is very low compared with the national policy. Therefore, the programme needs to: Review access of PwDs to the MoL database, and work with the implementing partners and stakeholders to ensure that available resources and infrastructure are well established to facilitate inclusion of selected PwDs at the workplace.

## **9. Report annexes**

**Annex 1: List of references and documents reviewed**

**Annex 2: TOR for the evaluation**

**Annex 3: Evaluation matrix**

**Annex 4: Data collection tools**

**Annex 5: List of interviews and FGDs**

**Annex 6: List of IPs**

**Annex 7: Photos for FGDs and interviews**