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WOMEN EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMMING OUTCOME EVALUATION REPORT

“Gender equality is a precondition and accelerator for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, UNDP is committed to promoting and mainstreaming gender equality and women’s empowerment in all that it does.”

UNDP GENDER EQUALITY STRATEGY 2018-2021

Hala Ghosheh
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Abbreviations

Abbreviation	
CPD	Country Program Document
GE	Gender Equality
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women Empowerment
JNCW	Jordanian National Commission for Women
JNSW	Jordanian National Strategy for Women
JWEEP	Jordanian Women Economic Empowerment Plan
JONAP	Jordanian National Action Plan on Resolution 1325
HOA	Heart of Amman
PVE	Preventing violent extremism
SWM	Solid Waste Management
RLC	Range land cooperatives

I. Executive Summary

A. Background

Jordanian women are highly educated with commendable enrolment and completion rates at both school and university levels. However, women's low economic and political participation continues to affect Jordan's performance in international gender related indices and ranking. This ironic phenomena among the highly educated yet economically inactive women is attributed to multiple variables including legislative, social, and structural barriers.

Globally, UNDP recognises that addressing gender inequalities and structural barriers are essential to realising the SDGs and 'not leaving anyone behind'. As proposed, Signatory Solution 6 focuses on adopting strategies that promote transformational change through removing structural barriers to gender equality and advance women empowerment. This outcome evaluation commissioned by UNDP-Jordan CO aimed at assessing the GEWE approach, within selected interventions, to understand the progress towards results and extract lessons learned from individual projects to inform current and future GEWE programming.

B. Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation design was formulated after a meeting with UNDP team and an initial review of the project documents. The evaluation approach, matrix and tools were designed and presented as part of the inception report. During the data collection phase, more project documents were reviewed, interviews were conducted, and the partners questionnaire was circulated. The data analysis process commenced with the data collection process which became more iterative and responsive to emerging information. Finally, the analysis was revisited upon completion of data gathering and drafting of the report started.

The evaluation adopted feminist principles that emphasize ***reflection, participation and inclusiveness within an empowerment and social justice agenda***. Accordingly, the semi structured interviews and group interviews held, encouraged reflection, probed extensively while focusing on structural and systemic inequalities. The information analysis process recognised and attributed the findings to the personal experiences, perspectives and interpretation of the participants and the evaluator within the evaluation circumstances. For quality assurance however, the information was cross checked from multiple sources, including implementing partners, UNDP staff, and participants as well as project reports. The process of triangulation not only validated the findings but also reflected multiple voices and interpretations if, they existed. Moreover, the guiding questions for the semi structured interviews, as well the partners questionnaire were shared with the UNDP Jordan team overseeing the evaluation for feedback, input, and verification.

More than 68 persons were interviewed (58 female and 10 male) either individually and or in groups. The participants in the evaluation represented different stakeholders including government partners, UN agencies, donors, local implementing partners, strategic partners, and project participants.

Twelve partners also responded to a questionnaire that sought their opinion of UNDP Jordan CO role and standing in GEWE programming. The questionnaire was disseminated to partners participating in the Country Program Development process. They were administered by UNDP staff and analysed by the evaluator. The low response to the questionnaire does influence the overall findings but the confirmation of some of the findings during the interviews substantiated them.

Nine visits to different GE interventions were conducted during the evaluation period. The visits included field trips to sights in Mafraq, Northern Shouneh, Middle and Southern Badia areas, Kerak and Amman. An online discussion with partners in Irbid also took place.

The evaluation assessed the gender interventions of selected projects in terms of their relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. Due to some limitations, the evaluation did not fully investigate the financial efficiency of projects and since some interventions were completed, the evaluation reflected on the overall achievement of outcomes as opposed to working towards them. Due to logistical complications in coordinating the evaluation process not all the original projects in the Terms of Reference of the evaluation were included. The decision to reduce the number of projects covered by the evaluation was made by UNDP -Jordan CO.

Human rights and the level of inclusion of persons of disabilities were cross – cutting themes of the evaluation. Criteria to help assess the integration of the two themes focused on the: level of participation, non-discrimination and accountability measures taken into account within the projects so as to ensure that ‘no one is left behind’ and that ‘no harm’ is done. The cross-cutting themes were reviewed as part of the programmes’ effectiveness.

The analysis of the gathered information was at two stages. First stage was the project level analysis that categorised findings to the four criteria of evaluation (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability). The analysis took into account the different viewpoints from participants to ensure the validity and reliability of the information provided especially on “disputable or concerning” processes, barriers and achievement issues. Perceptions and personal experiences were not subject to validation with other stakeholders as they represented the voices of the interviewees themselves. The second analysis stage, focused on synthesising the findings from all the projects to respond to the questions listed in the evaluation matrix while using the findings from the projects as evidence.

Recognizing the position of power the evaluator has during interviews, it was imperative that the interviewees understand their rights to freely consent to participate in the evaluation. All interviewees were assured that their input and comments were confidential, with no disclosures of source. Interviewees, especially in the field, were also asked to report any disturbance that they felt during the interview to UNDP staff, as a measure to report any misconduct.

The outcome evaluation recommendations are intended primarily for UNDP Jordan CO management, staff and GE team and are useful as well for the implementing partners, government and other stakeholders.

C. Key findings

Relevance: UNDP Jordan CO gender interventions are relevant and well aligned with national priorities, UNDP GE strategy, and women needs and interests. The expression of GEWE within results framework varies. Some interventions fell short from having specific GEWE outcomes at higher levels but did have some results at output and indicator levels. In all cases, the activities and outputs stipulated were appropriate to achieving the specified gender related results and indicators. At a community level, the project interventions were perceived as relevant especially as they enhanced women's access to knowledge, economic opportunities and deepening women solidarity and social cohesion, intentionally in some projects or unintentionally in others.

Effectiveness: with the exception of gender targeted projects, the interventions within projects are not fully integrated and appear to be standalone activities to address gender inequalities. Interventions are not well contextualized within the projects and the potential to capitalize on gender activities are frequently overlooked.

The absence of a gender analysis for projects suggests that interventions are introduced without consideration for intersectional factors, contextual specificities and strong understanding of gender situation and power structures. As a result, GEWE approaches are less effective, and gender related risks are overlooked especially that the voices of diverse groups of women are not always evident in decision making contexts.

Staff commitment to gender equality has enabled UNDP Jordan to overcome some of the gender neutrality narrative and approach within some of projects. The findings of the evaluation suggest that the interventions more frequently focus on the quantitative aspects of project indicators especially in reaching out to women and engaging women. While UNDP-Jordan CO seeks to phase out from the "number focus" approach, the interventions have contributed to some extent to increasing the level of women economic participation, empowerment and engaging in public spheres.

UNDP-Jordan CO work on gender mainstreaming within institutions and policies have paved the way for change but has not effectively transformed policy approaches or institutionalized processes. Such activities require longer term interventions that embody stronger GEWE programming approaches.

Efficiency: interventions of short time periods are less likely to be transformative in approach. Addressing structural barriers requires time. Financial efficiency was difficult to assess for the non GEN 3 projects especially that the project budgets, which were shared, were not clearly marked for GE activities or results.

UNDP-Jordan CO calculated expenditure on gender equality with regards to the gender marking of the project itself. UNDP Jordan CO reports that an estimated 17% of the total country office budget was spent on GEN 3 projects, while 78% of the total country office budget was reported for GEN 2 projects. The overall estimates of UNDP Jordan CO expenditures are encouraging. Nonetheless, a deeper review of the GEN 2 projects is necessary to help define the actual expenditure on GEWE interventions. The classification within UNDP gender marking scheme can be misleading as the bulk of expenditure is not directly related to GEWE activities e.g. PVE projects.

The findings also indicate that the cost benefit value of some of the income generating projects, that eventually hire only a few women, is questionable. Thousands of Jordanian Dinars are spent on establishing income generating activities for cooperatives, including women cooperatives. However, during the evaluation it was noted that only a few women are actually working in these interventions and the cost of generating a job may be much higher than its value especially that in most cases, with the exception of the SWM and WEE projects, the jobs generated were seasonal and short termed. That noted, the income generated for cooperatives from these projects as well as others are distributed to the members which helps scale the benefit but only marginally.

UNDP Jordan CO overall management of the projects was reflective of their approach to be more responsive to emerging and changing situations. The team has demonstrated through their knowledge, skills and networking a commitment to support women, especially cooperative leadership, to overcome barriers and achieve the project results.

Sustainability: exist strategies to sustain activities are not always clear and frequently, they were developed during the course of the intervention as opposed to being conceptualized with the communities, particularly women, at the design stage. Some of reviewed interventions were short termed and as a result their potential and expectation to continue were modest.

UNDP Jordan office GE interventions, although frequently disrupted, had longer-term impact on participants. Women, who participated in UNDP interventions reported increased self-confidence and better ability to make decisions.

Projects that have developed exist strategies have had to adapt them and revise them to respond to emerging situations, whether positive or negative. While this demonstrates the responsiveness and flexibility of UNDP Jordan CO, it also emphasizes the importance of including community members, especially women, and stakeholders to promote ownership as well as explore appropriate and responsive solutions.

D. Conclusion

UNDP's Jordan CO commitment to GEWE is modestly translated into its programming and interventions, and the space to enhance GEWE programming is considerable. The gender markers of projects are anchored in the level of gender mainstreaming but should not withhold projects from advancing their GEWE activities.

The potential to adopt more coherent strategies to reduce structural barriers that can lead to realising the SDG goals and "leaving no one behind" are considerable especially in generating sustainable livelihood opportunities for the most vulnerable of women, and in promoting GEWE in the environment and climate change as well as the governance sectors.

Not having a guiding gender equality results framework for the core areas and within the Country Programming Document (CPD), makes it difficult to report on UNDP contribution to advance gender equality at all levels: sectoral and national. The UNDP Jordan CO GE policy provides a framework for UNDP programming. However, it also falls short from defining particular outcomes, qualitative and quantitative indicators for measuring achievements and strengthening accountability mechanism.

That said, there is enough evidence to suggest that projects have moderately contributed to increasing economic empowerment of women, introducing gender mainstreaming to local partners, integrating gender equality within policies, challenging stereotypes about women's abilities and capacities, and facilitating women's engagement in decision making processes.

UNDP-Jordan CO role in realising GEWE is discrete even though it can be more proactive and leading in its own core areas of work. As a catalyst for change, UNDP can share knowledge and information from its own projects that relate to GEWE, support women groups, pilot innovative, scalable, and sustainable transformational solutions to remove structural barriers. UNDP needs to also strengthen its internal competencies and programmatic procedures to ensure that its GEWE programs are gradually adopting feminist principles of operation and leading the way for transformative change from the conceptualization and design stages.

E. Lessons learned, reflections and observations

Information provided during the evaluation highlighted a few strategic lessons that should be considered in future programming:

- Integrating gender equality perspective in the design phase of the project promotes more transformative interventions especially if it is informed by a gender analysis that highlights the structural barriers and power relations which impede the realisation of social justice.
- Groups of women and men have differentiated outlooks and solutions to identified problems. Engaging and consulting with the different groups of women and men during all phases of project implementation increases ownership, alignment of interventions with community needs and generates more effective and efficient solutions.
- Gender equality should be systematically integrated into all aspects of theory of change, results framework, implementation strategy, risk analysis and monitoring and evaluation plans of all the projects. Otherwise, GE interventions are more likely to be standalone activities that earn the project the gender marking but does not necessarily capitalize on its potential to challenge gender inequalities and discrimination.
- The more the projects adopt a holistic approach to gender equality, the more likely they are to realize change in the gender situation and power relations.
- Project staff have a pivotal role in promoting GE and capitalizing on achievements of project interventions through providing flexible and responsive solutions that facilitate the active participation of women, promote positive messaging of gender equality and using their local knowledge to reduce resistance and tackle barriers.
- Short- termed gender equality interventions are less likely to be sustainable and to have transformative impact. Gender related transformative change is complex and requires longer durations with intense focus on systemic and structural changes.
- Cost benefit of activities should be calculated at two levels, the monetary level, and the social level. The monetary level helps to assess the cost benefit of the activity in terms of efficiency while the social level examines the value that an intervention has on the target group, in this case women, and gender relations.

- Having a Gender and Feminist Monitoring and Evaluation Learning Plan from the outset of projects, helps facilitate outcome measurements and strengthen the project accountability levels to GE.
- Introducing gender equality tools to support integration and advancement of GE within interventions are more effective if the level of accountability to their achievement is held at a managerial level.

F. Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Develop an internal road map to increase GEN 3 and GEN 2 programming through:

- Defining strategic gender equality results framework for core areas of work in line with the country program and gender equality policy. Having strategic GEWE outcomes, outputs and indicators can guide programs and project staff in conceptualizing the GEWE interventions and eventually, help develop more gender responsive programs that leads to transformative change. Furthermore, this can facilitate reporting that aggregates results of smaller interventions and activities to a more strategic level especially, if it is reflected and incorporated in the CPD.
- Incorporate more GE related indicators within the CPD and strengthen the monitoring and reporting mechanism to reflect more gender equality and feminist approaches. In the medium and long term this will facilitate having fully fledged feminist evaluation approaches that rely on stakeholder inputs and leadership.
- Develop a more elaborated guiding note to support the Gender Marking process. The note needs to be more elaborate, clear and should deconstruct the loaded terminologies, such as “adequately intergraded, or “significant” that can be misinterpreted.
- Ensure that GEN 1 and GEN 2 projects allocate gender specialists, fully or partially, to support advancing their projects GEWE work. Gender marking of projects should be more flexible and can change during the course of implementation. Accordingly, opportunities may arise to optimize on realisation of GEWE goals.

Responsibility of Management, GE specialist and Monitoring and Evaluation team

Recommendation 2: Strengthen GEWE interventions across sectors through:

- Mandating all projects, regardless of their prospective Gender Marking, to undertake a gender analysis that is relevant, focused, and specific to the project and intervention that is planned. The analysis needs to be grounded with feminist principles that reflect voices of diverse groups and analyse gender relations, access to resources and power, gender situation and perceptions of women, men, girls, and boys of the project idea. Findings and recommendations of the gender analysis should inform the project design, implementation approach, solutions and in developing the projects MEAL plans.
- Ensuring that any proposed project includes at least one output (not indicator) that bridges a gender specific gap, barrier and or situation change and that is aligned

with UNDP GEWE core area focus on gender and national priorities and commitments.

- Mandating GEWE considerations in monitoring and reporting plans as well as risk analysis.
- Encouraging projects to focus more on measuring qualitative aspects of gender equality and on reflecting and amplifying diverse groups of women voices in their project management and implementation.
- Adopt more gender responsive budgeting that will allow track the expenditure on GE interventions more accurately.
- Promoting innovative approaches to engage men and boys in gender equality discussions.
- Developing clear strategies to account for the diversity of circumstances (intersectional factors), inclusivity of groups and local knowledge and experience in project implementation and reporting.
- Encouraging longer term interventions that allow for more transformative change.

Responsibility of Management, GE specialist and project review committees

Recommendation 3: Establish and forge partnership with strategic local partners working on GEWE in Jordan:

1. Building on the defined GEWE results framework within core areas, establish a memorandum of understanding with JNCW to collaborate and cooperate on issues of interest and relevance.
2. Establish a repository of gender related studies and documents developed or supported by UNDP for both internal and external use by partners. This includes studies, gender analysis, position papers etc...
3. Develop a database of women led partners that UNDP works with and host frequent reflection and consultations sessions on UNDP GEWE implementation approaches.

Responsibility of GE specialist with department leads

Recommendation 4: Develop a capacity enhancement plan for staff at all levels to promote GEWE and deepen their knowledge through:

1. Annually, provide a series of multilevel trainings for staff on GEWE programming. Training courses should be hands on and discuss practical guidance for strengthening GEWE programming.
2. Host quarterly informal knowledge sharing sessions on thematic issues chosen by staff members themselves. Sessions could be held as round table discussions but need to be based on real examples from UNDP projects and experiences.
3. Strengthen the gender equality focal point role and ensure the reflection of responsibility in their terms of reference and annual goals.

Responsibility of GE specialist with Human resources and management

Recommendation 5: Re-positioning UNDP's role as a catalyst for change in GEWE work through:

1. Reviewing and updating the UNDP Jordan CO Gender Equality Strategy to define a theory of change and GEWE framework for the core areas of work. The strategy should present a results framework that aggregates results of interventions to more strategic outcomes. It should as well define potential areas of work for GEN 3 programs
2. Engaging more in national activities relating to GEWE programming with respect to UNDP core areas of interest.
3. Sharing more of UNDP Jordan CO work on GEWE through social media and meetings. This includes strong presentation of experiences of GEWE programming and of documents produced by UNDP.
4. Capacitating women organisations, especially in remote areas, to negotiate their interests and needs with officials and policy makers while amplifying their voice to shape the local GEWE discourse and actions.
5. Defining UNDP niche among UN agencies to ensure coordination, cooperation and collaboration to advocate for GEWE while ensuring complementarity of work as opposed to duplication of it i.e. delivering as one to support Jordan achieve its commitment to SDGs and international commitments.

Responsibility of GE specialist with Communication and public relations and respective departments

II. Background

A. Evaluation Purpose

The outcome evaluation was commissioned by UNDP – Jordan to capture the “***lessons learned/best practices and provide information on the nature, extent and where possible the potential impact and sustainability of the implemented women empowerment programs***”. The evaluation, was designed to assist UNDP- Jordan Country Office (UNDP- Jordan CO) better understand the:

- extent to which the planned outcome and the related outputs have been, are being achieved, or likely to be achieved by end of the projects.
- the casual linkages by which outputs contribute to the achievements of the specified outcome.
- evidence- base data demonstrating UNDPs contribution to the outcome, including case studies as a tool to explain results.
- strategic values and comparative advantage of UNDP in contributing to the outcome, including strategies partnerships and linkages.
- factors that facilitate and /or hinder the progress in achieving outcome, including external/internal portfolio contexts such a weakness in design, modus operandi, human/financial resources, etc.;
- gaps and lessons learned and primary areas of focus to be added or strengthened for new programme cycle; mapping and identifying potential partners including public, private, and civil society organisations.

In light of the nature of the interventions proposed for the evaluation, the evaluation questions were deconstructed as part of the inception report to facilitate the reporting on the evaluation criteria.

B. Evaluation background

The Women Empowerment Programme outcome evaluation was commissioned as part of the Country Programme Monitoring and Evaluation Workplan. The evaluation, covering a wide range of interventions, focused on identifying factors that facilitate and or hinder progress in achieving the outcomes, weaknesses in design, management, implementation, human resources skills and resources. It also reviewed the approach used to address gender equality in the different interventions and accordingly will provide insights to UNDP Gender Equality and Women Empowerment (GEWE) programme direction and mainstreaming methodologies.

Anchored by the three priority areas for UNDP Jordan, a) inclusive participation and cohesion, b) resilient communities, livelihoods and environment and c) enabling and institutional framework for the realisation of the 2030 agenda, the Jordan UNDP gender equality strategy aim at strengthening GEWE programming through:

- Advocating for gender equality and women’s empowerment,
- Strengthening the role of women from different social groups in development by advancing their economic, social, and political rights,

- Eradicating violence, discrimination and exclusion based on gender,
- Enhancing UNDP Jordan's work on women empowerment and agency including gender mainstreaming beyond numbers through contributing to the transformation of gender and power relations in societies.

C. Evaluation audience

The primary audience for the evaluation report are the UNDP Jordan CO management, staff, and GE team. The report findings are also useful for: the government and implementing partners.

D. Scope of the Evaluation

The outcome evaluation parameters were defined by the women empowerment outcomes alluded to in the gender equality strategy:

Outcome 1: UNDP – Jordan CO programme commitments to gender equality and women empowerment in projects is reflected in the design, implementation, and monitoring approach of the projects.

Outcome 2: UNDP programmes and projects address gender concerns and actively eliminate barriers, and discriminatory practices toward women realization of their rights and accessibility to both basic services as well as development opportunities.

Although connected, the two outcomes are at two levels. The first outcome reviewed the individual projects considering the evaluation criteria. The second level is an aggregation of the findings to assess the overall relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the interventions at the programme level. This approach helps extract lessons learned from individual interventions, as well as provide insights to guide the strategic direction, design, and implementation modality of GEWE programming and approach.

Working from a gender relational perspective and relying on feminist principles that encourage **reflection, participation, inclusiveness** of diverse voices, as well as promote learning and knowledge sharing within an empowerment and social justice agenda. Interviews were more conversational in nature but were guided by listed questions for each group as per the Evaluation matrix (Annex 1).

Considering the nature of the evaluation the feminist way of thinking was sought to be appropriate to enable a more responsive evaluation process that is not only reflective but captures voices of different groups in an approach that promotes participation, empowerment and ownership while generating more outcomes that were realised by the participants. Indeed, the approach was most valuable especially as some projects fell short from specifying GE outcomes and indicators yet the participants presented additional results that enriched and informed the evaluation process.

E. List of projects evaluated

The evaluation reviewed the following interventions¹:

Table 1: List of projects

Title of Intervention	Start – End Date	Comments
Mainstreaming Rio Convention provision into National Sectoral Policies (RIO)	May 2015 May 2019	
Restoration of Sustainable Livelihoods and natural resources management in the Badia Communities		Addressed with the RIO project framework as it is a component of RIO but has a different donor
Preventing violent extremism and building resilience of Livelihoods in Jordan through humanitarian development peace nexus and human security approaches	September 2019- March 2020	Focused on Livelihoods component only and the two projects were linked together in the evaluation.
Linking human security and prevention of violent extremism is promoted among Jordanian communities	September 2020 – March 2021	
Women's Empowerment in the North of Jordan with focus on the Solid Waste Sector	January 2020 – December 2023	
Improving Solid Waste Management and Income Creation in Host Communities	March 2015 October 2019	
Gender Justice to increase women economic participation and income in Jordan (Access to Justice)	October 2020 – September 2021	
Asila	June 2019 May 2021	Private sector funding
Takatof	May 2020 November 2020	

The evaluator visited more than 9 project locations as part of the evaluation. All visits were arranged by UNDP staff and implementing partners. The field visits were to the following areas: a) Mafraq (SWM project: processing sight and packaging sight which is managed by women cooperative), b) Norther Shouneh (WEE: sorting sight managed by women cooperative), c) Middle and southern Badia (Rio and Badia Project: 3 women cooperatives in 3 different locations), d) Kerak (Asila, beneficiary and implementing partner) and e) Amman: (Habib project, Participating private sector company and implementing partner).

¹ Reference will be made to interventions more than projects as some of the initiatives reviewed are not fully fledged projects but rather interventions.

F. Methodology

The evaluation design was formulated after a meeting with UNDP team and an initial review of the project documents. The evaluation approach, matrix and tools were designed and presented as part of the inception report. During the data collection phase, more project documents were reviewed, interviews were conducted and the partners questionnaire was circulated. The data analysis process commenced with the data collection process which became more iterative and responsive to emerging information. Finally, the analysis was revisited upon completion of data gathering and drafting of the report started.

In addition to the desk review of all relevant documents including the made available reports and material produced by the interventions, the evaluation relied on qualitative methods to collect information from multiple stakeholders including UNDP staff members, management representatives, implementing and strategic partners and participants.

Qualitative tools allow for more exchanges and deeper understanding of the extent of which the projects are realizing or working towards their outcomes. They also provide an opportunity for exchange of knowledge, reflection, and learning. In total, 68 individuals were interviewed either individually or in groups, as per table 1. A detailed list of interviewees is provided in annex 2 and a list of documents consulted)

Table 2: Overview of interviews

Type of interview	Participants	Disaggregation by Sex – total
Individual or up to 2 people	4 with strategic partners 10 with implementing partners 8 UNDP staff members	10 males 20 females
Group (3 and above)	5 interviews with participants	38 females

The evaluator visited more than 9 project locations as part of the evaluation. All visits were arranged by UNDP staff and implementing partners. The field visits were to the following locations:

- a) **Mafrag** (SWM project: processing sight and packaging sight which is managed by women cooperative),
- b) **Northern Shouneh** (WEE: sorting sight managed by women cooperative),
- c) **Middle and southern Badia** (Rio and Badia Project: 3 women cooperatives in 3 different locations), Kerak (Asila, beneficiary and implementing partner) and
- d) **Amman** (HoA: vocational training activities, private sector company and implementing partners). Additionally, an online discussion with implementing partners in Irbid took place (Access to Justice).

A partner's questionnaire was shared by UNDP Jordan CO during the consultation process for the new CPD and three were conducted by the evaluator during interviews with partners. The questionnaire aimed to capture stakeholder's viewpoint and insights about UNDP-Jordan GEWE programming and role. In total 12 respondents (breakdown presented in Figure 1) completed the questionnaire (Annex 3).

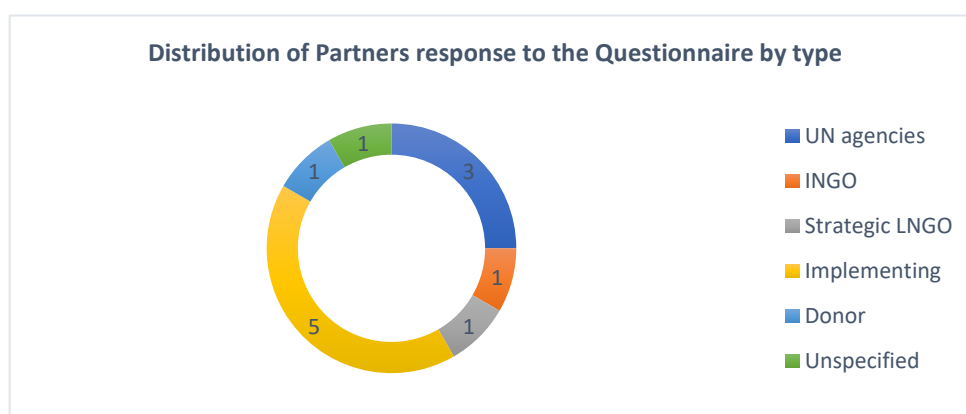


Figure 1: Distribution of Partners response to the questionnaire by type

The evaluation sought to collect testimonies and stories of change that can provide additional insights about project and modalities of work. These personal experiences and perspectives are well aligned with the feminist principles that the evaluation followed. Personal experience and viewpoints were not subject to triangulation considering they represent voices of different stakeholders.

The evaluation does not quantify the level of achievement within projects as the data was not made available by all the projects and project reports varied in format and content.

G. Analysis an interpretation of data

In line with OECD criteria, the evaluation aimed to measure the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the projects and GEWE programme, as per the evaluation matrix presented in Annex 1. Within each of the of the evaluation criteria subcategories were defined to guide the evaluation process:

- **RELEVANCE:** The evaluation assessed the relevance of project at three different levels: relevant to the context, relevant to needs of target group, particularly women and girls, and relevance of activities to the outcomes.
- **EFFECTIVENESS:** the evaluation assessed the extent of which the intervention has achieved or will achieve the intended outcomes. It will aggregate the achievements from activity, output to outcome level.
- **EFFICIENCY:** the evaluation briefly reviewed the extent of which the delivery of initiatives are/were delivered in an economic and timely manner.
- **SUSTAINABILITY:** the evaluation reviewed how the project will be sustained and what mechanism were introduced in its design to ensure that.

The analysis of information gathered took place at two stages. Stage one focused on project level while stage two synthesised the findings at an overarching level.

Stage one: focused on assessing the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of projects and programme qualitatively with respect to:

- Gender dynamics and power relations.

- Addressing priorities and meeting the needs of women and other specified target groups.
- Capturing how the projects affected women's roles – and responsibilities.
- Understanding the change on accessibility to services, knowledge, and resources that the projects/programs introduced.
- Understanding how women's access to decision making has been affected (if it has).
- Capturing the voices of women in the programme and determining whether there have been any unexpected (positive or negative) changes from the projects.
- Understanding the intersectional needs for women and the extent of which projects were responsive to them.

Stage two of the analysis aimed at categorising and synthesising the findings from the projects to respond to the questions listed in the Evaluation Matrix presented in Annex 1. The overarching findings included references to individual projects as examples.

Human rights and the level of inclusion of persons of disabilities were cross – cutting themes of the evaluation. Criteria to help assess the level of consideration of these two themes emphasised the level of participation, non-discrimination and accountability measures taken within projects to ensure that 'no one is left behind' and that 'no harm is done'. The cross-cutting themes were reviewed as part of the overall effectiveness of the projects.

H. Reliability and validity of Data

The information gathered was mostly from interviews with different actors. This facilitated cross referencing of the information presented about activities, processes, barriers and achievements. The shared reports (from some projects) also helped verify information. That noted and recognising that both the participants and the evaluator's personal experiences, perspectives and outlooks influence the interpretation of data; the findings presented are contingent to what was made available during the evaluation process and to the circumstances surrounding the interventions.

Altogether however, the level of accuracy of data was satisfactory with respect to the GE interventions themselves as they were confirmed and frequently explained by the involved actors (i.e.: participants, UNDP staff and implementing partners) especially on issues of concern. This strengthened the interpretation and helped ensure the validity of the findings.

The response to the partners questionnaire was relatively low but again, the validation from interviews confirmed some of the findings and explained the responses even though the low response posed a limitation.

I. Ethical Considerations

The COVID pandemic circumstances impacted the timeframe of the evaluation, the majority of the interviews were conducted online. As a result, and to help govern the relation between the participants and evaluator from an ethical point of view, the evaluator explained the purpose of the evaluation, the criteria for the evaluation and requested

permission to record the interviews with clear indication that the participants' contributions were confidential and that they have the right to: a) stop the recording at any point and time, b) refuse to answer questions and b) strike out statements that they would rather not be quoted. In group interviews, participants were asked not to share sensitive information that may have any negative implications on themselves or others. Participants were also given the opportunities to ask the evaluator questions and to engage in discussions that helped clarify viewpoints and perceptions. In total, 3 interviewees requested not to quote aspects of interviews and two enquired about the follow up steps. One beneficiary was uncomfortable with the online setting of the interview and her wishes to conclude the meeting was immediate.

J. Evaluation Limitations

- The interventions under review ranged from fully fledged gender equality projects to interventions and activities within projects. At times, contextualizing the activity and understanding how the project approached gender equality in general was difficult to assess especially with missing information in reports.

While validation of data was possible with multiple sources of information, some data was still difficult to verify as perspectives different. In such cases, the evaluator focused on the portraying both views.

- Not all the projects collaborated and cooperated during the timeframe of the evaluation and as such, the initial project list to be included was reduced by UNDP.
- Not all the project documents and reports were available and when they were, their reporting on gender equality varied in format, consistency, and intensity.

Some of the lacking information was completed through the interviews, however, in some cases the data that was made available was still limited.

- Assessing financial efficiency was difficult as not all budgets were provided and when they were they were not reflective of the level of gender related expenditure.

The limitation was more difficult to overcome and the evaluator relied on the Gender Seal reporting of expenditure on GEWE programming.

- Six of the interventions are already completed and assessing whether activities and outputs are on track to achieve their results was impractical, however, the evaluation in that case, considered the achievements against the outcomes.

Assessing against outcomes was rather challenging as most non GEN 3 projects fell short from having GE results. As such, and working with feminist principles, some of the implementing partners and project participants mapped out results that were not necessarily captured in project results framework but are relevant to UNDP Jordan CO GE policy.

- It was challenging to meet some partners involved in the implementation of the project due to the COVID 19 interruptions.

The majority of meetings were held online but the field visits helped the evaluator contextualise programs. Unfortunately, one of beneficiaries interviewed online was uncomfortable and having noted her level of nervousness, the evaluator asked her whether she is comfortable to continue, taking into account that her decision will have no implications on her and she preferred not to. The interview was concluded immediately.

III. Country and Programming Context

A. Gender Equality in Jordan

1. Situation overview

The regional political situation especially the Syrian war has severely disrupted Jordan's economic growth and progress. The onset of the COVID 19 pandemic has further distraught efforts to introduce political and economic reform. Jordan's budget deficit is widening and is estimated to have reached 93.2% of GDP (2020). Government emergency response to emerging health, social protection and economic needs generated fiscal pressure especially as the anticipated long-term impact of COVID is still unfolding. Already, there are reports that indicate an increase in unemployment, rising poverty rates, higher food insecurity and a deepening in gender inequalities.

Women's care work increased considerably during the COVID pandemic. Curfews, lockdowns, and school closures led to increased burden on women, especially working mothers. Rapid assessments show that women became more at risk of depression as they were confined to their home. Their vulnerability to experience situations of violence against them intensified especially that they had limited access to support and services. Women were more likely to leave their work, if they were working, and they reported higher risk of food insecurity and access to services.

Women's agency and realization of rights is hampered by patriarch paradigm which shapes gender roles, relations, and power dynamics in Jordan. However, efforts to advance gender equality and empower women continue despite the resistance and complexities in generating transformational change. Jordanian women's educational and health conditions improved significantly over the years, while the pace of change in women's economic and political participation and empowerment is much slower. Indeed, both economic and political empowerment of women require a more transformative approach that deconstructs the patriarch paradigm and balances power relations, distribution of resources and endorses principles of social justice that support women exercise their agency, and realize their rights in public and private spheres.

The dichotomy between private and public sphere deprives women from accessing and managing local natural resources and assets. Only 18% of single land owners are women and approximately 27% of women have accounts in formal financial institutions. 12.1% of women with banking accounts have borrowed money².

Jordan's scores on the Global Gender Gap Index in "Education Attainment" and "Health and Survival" are 0.991 and 0.957 for 2021 (Parity equals to 1) while in "Political empowerment" Jordan scored 0.066 and in economic participation and opportunity women it scored 0.538. Although there is an improvement in scoring since 2006, it remains low. The gap in situation of gender equality in Jordan has led to an overall ranking of 133/156 in the index (that is a score of 0.638).

Women's control over natural resources, such as water, land, and energy, are confined to managing household consumption. Access to technology and information is also restricted.

² The National Financial Inclusion Strategy 2018-2020, Central Bank of Jordan with Support from GIZ

The digital divide remains evident between women and men despite of the increased reliance on technology during the COVID pandemic.

Jordanian women rate of participation in the labour force is estimated at 15.6% and their share of informal sector is estimated at 30%. Cost and quality of transportation (reliability and safety), lack of support care services (for children and elderly) and unfriendly working environments, unequal wages, and imbalanced division of care work discourage women from working. The barriers to women's economic participation continue to endorse the patriarchal paradigm which views women in their reproductive care giving role while men, are considered the breadwinners.

Women's engagement in electoral processes remain low and in the 2022 municipal election there was an evident decline in the number of women candidates running. Only 17% of the total number of candidates for municipal election were women (2022) compared to the 28.8% of total candidates in 2017 municipal election³. The decline in number of candidates is against expectations and would be worth investigating more. Albeit, the social perceptions, reliance on tribal and familial backing, limited access to resources, inadequate social networks and unwelcoming environments discourage women from engaging in public activities especially in elections. Incidents of smearing and harassment of women in public positions have also deterred women from public engagement. The quota system for both the parliament and municipalities guarantees some representation for women but women voices and roles are still undermined by the patriarchal mindset and practices.

Jordan introduced a series of legislative changes to enhance gender equality and remove discriminatory articles that impede women from realising and enjoying their rights as citizens. The amendment to the constitution is the most recent change. The modification sets the framework for equality in duties and responsibilities for Jordanian women and men. Other amendments included changes to the Penal Code, Personal Status Law, and Labour law.

Parliamentary arguments about the amendments relating to women rights demonstrate the entrenched resistance to gender equality. It is not uncommon that parliamentarians' arguments lead to adjourning the sessions, of even escalating arguments to fist fights as was the case in the proposed constitutional change.

There is considerable number of women and human rights NGOs in Jordan and while they engage in multiple activities to reduce gender inequalities and enhance women empowerment, only a few have sustainable services that are not project based. Governance structure of many NGOs are weak and relies on the leadership and vision of an individual or the founding members. Succession plans are limited, and continuation of staff is dependent on financial resources.

The Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW) is the designated national machinery to advance the discussion and policy on women empowerment and gender equality. In 2015, the establishment of the Inter- Ministerial Committee For Women Empowerment (IMC) and the recent adoption of the Gender Mainstreaming Policy⁴ for government institutions, reinforces the government commitment to address gender inequalities and fulfil its obligations to international, regional and local commitments.

Jordanian women have overcome multiple barriers to realize their rights but unfortunately, there continues to be systematic and structural inequalities that require transformational change at social, economic, political, and legal levels. Addressing the imbalance of power

³ Women's Political Participation in Jordan: Barriers, Opportunities, and Gender Sensitivity of Select Political Institution, OECD 2018

⁴ <https://women.io/ar/node/8021>(Arabid version)

relations and distribution of resources are at the core of realizing gender equality, women rights, SDG commitments and most of all, leaving no one behind.

2. National Priorities

Government of Jordan is signatory to CEDAW, Resolution 1325 and is committed to the Beijing Platform of Action, the Sustainable Development Goals of 2030 among other international conventions that endorse human rights, women rights, gender equality and women empowerment. Recently, the government adopted the Jordanian National Strategy for Women (JNSW) 2020-2025⁵. The strategy was developed JNCW in partnership with local stakeholders and actors and was preceded by strategies that prioritized women economic empowerment, political participation, access to services and engagement in environmental activities.

The JNSW aims for “***A free of all forms of gender based violence and discrimination in which women and girls realize their full human rights and have equal opportunities to achieve inclusive and sustainable development***”. JNSW has incorporated the **National Women Economic Empowerment Plan⁶ (JWEEP)**, and builds on the **Gender Mainstreaming Policy** that was adopted by the Inter-ministerial Committee for Women Empowerment 2020 and the **Jordanian National Action Plan on Security Council resolution 1325 (JONAP)⁷**.

The 2020- 2025 JNSW results framework outlines four areas of work:

- a) ***Women and girls are able to exercise their rights and freely lead and participate in society*** through ensuring that: equal opportunities for women to participate and lead in public life while encouraging economic autonomy; access to justice, rights , security and humanitarian services increases for women and girls; and that gender equality is embedded within the family whereby vulnerable members are able to access basic social needs;
- b) ***Women and girls enjoy a life free of all forms of violence*** through adopting effective prevention and responses to gender based violence whether in private, public and or digital spaces;
- c) ***Positive gender norms roles and attitudes support gender equality and women empowerment*** through emending positive messaging in formal and informal learning, the media, religious discourse, and communities.
- d) ***Institutions are executing and sustaining, policies, structures and services that support GEWE in alignment with Jordan’s national and international commitments*** through: having effective accountability framework and capacities to develop and implement policies, legislation, services and budgets that support GEWE.

National strategies such as the Jordan Vision 2025, Government Executive plan have committed to increasing women’s labour force participation. Through the JWEEP, the government committed to raising the rate of female labour participation to 24% by 2025.

⁵ <https://women.jo/en/node/8051>

⁶ <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/379131574445136942-0280022019/Jordan-WEEAP-Jan-19-2019-en>

⁷ <https://jordan.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2017/12/jordanian-national-action-plan>

While the commitment was already ambitious, the onset of the COVID 19 pandemic and the long-term economic implications it bares, may jeopardise the progress.

The Royal Committee to modernize Jordan's political system recommendations for women empowerment and gender equality endorsed the JNSW priorities and additional focus on the importance of addressing gender inequalities and barriers to women in the: 1) Institutional and procedural mechanisms and policies, 2) legislative framework, 3) economic environment, 4) social environment and mind set.

B. UNDP – Jordan Gender Equality Approach

1. Country Program Focus

UNDP – Jordan Country Program for 2018-2022 has three priority areas that are interconnected and related:

- a) **Inclusive participation and social cohesion** that focuses on adopting resilience-based solutions, for local and green economic development, while generating job opportunities and sustainable livelihoods particularly for vulnerable women and youth.
- b) **Resilient communities, livelihoods and environment** through climate change and disaster risk reduction, biodiversity conservation and land management and delivery and reporting on international conventions.
- c) **Enabling an institutional framework for the realisation of the 2030 Agenda** through, integration of SDGs into national planning and institutional set up; setting up building blocks for SDG acceleration and advancing women and youth empowerment and participation.

The three areas of work are directly related to gender equality and women rights and promoting GEWE was recognised as a structural root solution in the theory of change solution pathway for Jordan. More specifically “solution pathways” that directly address GEWE are:

- Transparent gender sensitive hiring mechanism,
- Women and youth participation in political processes, and
- Women participation in the labour market.

Other solution pathways can also encompass gender equality interventions through either mainstreaming a gender perspective, addressing gender inequalities and or introducing targeted interventions.

The CPD had only a few gender related indicator to report on but recognised the importance of sex disaggregated reporting. The specific GE/ indicators are:

- Number of women/youth candidates in local and national elections (baseline 20%, target 30%)
- Number of additional females/males benefiting from strengthened livelihoods (baseline 19,000 target 42,000 @ least 30% women)

- Number of gender sensitive Local Economic Development plans adopted (baseline 3, target 6)
- Number of sector specific/ gender responsive interventions addressing energy efficient, climate risk and or disaster risk (base 1, target 6).

All the indicators are focused on measuring numbers as opposed to the changes that the programming interventions will have. Including more qualitative indicators will help guide projects in the different core areas to move toward more transformative GE approaches that focus on quality of change beyond the numbers.

2. Gender Equality UNDP Jordan CO

UNDP – Jordan Office has been awarded the Gender Equality Silver Seal in recognition of the invested effort and progress that was achieved in advancing the commitment to gender equality. Multiple measures were introduced to guide the office in mainstreaming gender equality and advancing women empowerment. A Gender Equality Strategy was developed in lieu of the CPD and extended from 2019-2021. A GE specialist was hired to support and anchor UNDP's GEWE work. A gender focal point network representing all UNDP Jordan departments is established. A Gender equality induction course and more advanced courses are offered to staff regardless of their tenure. Tools and guidance notes were developed to support staff in their efforts to mainstream gender and to design women empowerment programming. This included working on a gender analysis guidance note, revising concept note templates to highlight gender equality actions, promoting gender equality in recruitment and procurement procedures and introducing gender equality results in the senior management annual goals.

The GE strategy focuses on both internal measures and processes to promote gender equality. In addition, it highlights strategic and practical gender equality aspects that are aligned with the country priorities. The strategy notes that ***“promoting women’s economic, social and political participation as well as improving their access to justice, basic services, and employment would result in a more productive economy, reduced poverty and inequalities, and more peaceful and resilient societies”***. The strategy promotes a two-pronged approach. The gender mainstreaming approach, to address inequalities and barriers that impede women empowerment systematically within all projects; and the targeted approach that focus on addressing systemic gender gaps and inequalities.

Within UNDP core areas of focus and in accordance with **leaving no one behind and signature solution 6**, the GE strategy suggest that by enhancing women’s political participation, addressing barriers to women’s economic participation and empowerment, promoting positive gender equality messaging and working towards structural transformation of laws, policies and institutional mechanisms; UNDP would remove structural barriers to gender equality and contribute to women’s realization of rights as citizens.

IV. Findings

The findings section is divided into two parts. Part one synthesises the findings from all the projects and interventions reviewed while part two presents findings with respect to UNDP Jordan Co GEWE approach. Although the findings from partners questions are presented in part two of the findings section, some references are also included in part one and are presented as confirmation of the findings.

Individual project evaluations are presented in Annex 4. All the findings are presented with respect to the criteria of the evaluation: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. In this section however, the presentation of the findings are aligned with the questions presented in the evaluation matrix.

Part One: Synthesis of Findings

A. Relevance

a) To what extent is the Jordan UNDP country office GEWE programming relevant to country priorities?

The UNDP GEWE priorities are well aligned with the Jordanian government and the Jordanian National Strategy for Women 2021-2025 (JNSW). Increasing women's economic and political participation through enhancing capacities, increasing opportunities and challenging gender perceptions, norms and dynamics contribute to having **"A society free of all forms of gender based violence and discrimination in which women and girls realize their full human rights and have equal opportunities to achieve inclusive and sustainable development"**⁸. Positive messaging that works towards structural transformation of laws, policies and institutional mechanisms, is also supporting women and girls exercise their rights in a social, legislative, institutional, political and economic environment that promotes positive gender norms and roles. JNCW has defined **"Positive gender norms, roles and attitudes support gender equality and women empowerment"** as an outcome for the 2021-2025 strategy.

Linkages to national priorities and JNSW should be more evident in project documents. GEWE interventions, whether as projects or components of, would be strengthened through a stronger link within the project to a national GEWE commitment. As table 2 demonstrates, UNDP GEWE interventions are relevant to the JNSW 2021 – 2025 outcomes and outputs.

⁸ JNSW 2021-2025 Ultimate Goal/Impact.

Table 3: Linkage between UNDP GEWE work and national commitments

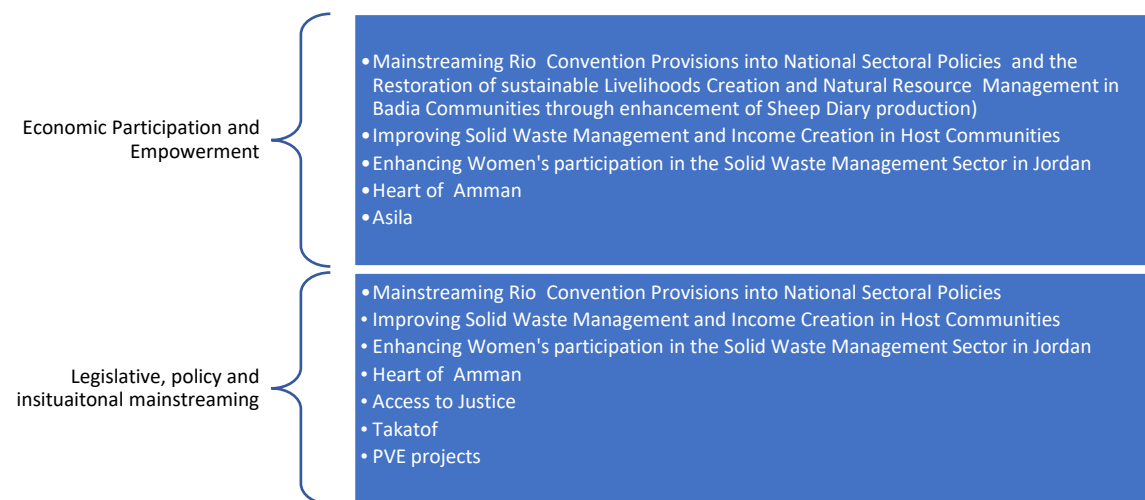
JNSW Outcomes	JNSW Outputs	UNDP: Relevance and examples
Women and girls are able to exercise their rights and freely lead and participate in society	More women & girls have equal opportunities to participate and lead in public life and labor market & have economic autonomy	Relevant to a high extent: as most projects address either women participation in decision making processes, public life or economic participation and empowerment of women e.g. Solid waste management, WEE, HoA, Rio and Asila
	More women and girls are able to access justice, rights, security and recovery and humanitarian services	Relevant Projects that work on social cohesion and preventing violent extremism e.g. Access to justice, HoA, PVE (Habibi)
	Gender equality is embedded within the family & vulnerable members are able to access basic social needs	No apparent linkage
Women and girls enjoy a life free of all forms of violence	Effective prevention and response to gender based violence in private, public & digital space	No apparent linkage
Positive gender norms, roles and attitudes support gender equality and women empowerment	Positive gender norms and roles are embedded within formal and informal learning, the media, religious discourse, and communities	Relevant Awareness sessions and working with local CBOs and NGOs on supporting women realize their right e.g. SWM, WEE, HoA and PVE
Institutions are executing and sustaining, policies, structures and services that support GEWE in alignment with Jordan's national and international commitments	Formal Institutions have effective accountability frameworks & the capacity to develop and implement policies, legislation, services, and budgets that support GEWE	Relevant Working with local counterparts on gender sensitizing policies, strategies and mainstreaming with in the organisations e.g. WEE, PVE and Rio

b) To what extent are the results framework of the GEWE projects under review aligned with the UNDP Jordan GE policy?

Projects do not necessarily have clear gender equality outcomes that can be associated with the overall UNDP Jordan GE policy objectives. With the exception of women empowerment projects, the results framework of projects are inconsistent in incorporating gender equality results even though some of them have quantitative indicators, mainly to measure participation or benefit, and activities that challenge barriers and bridge gender gaps. As

Figure 2 demonstrates, significant number of projects are contributing in broad terms to economic participation and empowerment and to legislative, policy and institutional mainstreaming. Nonetheless, the emphasis, scope and scale of the GE interventions varies significantly with a clear difference in approach. In the SWM and WEE (GEN 2 and GEN 3), women participation featured prominently in the project design, however in the Rio and Badia projects, the women engagement in economic participation was supplemental as opposed to targeted. Similarly, the PVE projects phased progressively to mainstream gender indicators and analysis.

Figure 2: Alignment of evaluation projects and interventions with GE policy outcomes



UNDP staff confirmed that while gender equality and women empowerment are core to their work, often, they are overlooked in project design and results framework but are frequently emphasized during implementation of activities. Project rational and backgrounds do not necessarily reflect on gender power relations and inequalities with respect to the project idea. Accordingly, when designing the project gender issues are overlooked and usually subsumed to activities that reach out to vulnerable groups in general.

Gender related discussions and activities tend to emerge as part of an implementation process or as a response to “leaving no one behind”, or sometimes as a measure for “ticking the box”. Th nature of project indicators tend to also emphasis UNDP focus on outreach to women as opposed to removing the structural barriers that impede GEWE. Most indicators measure number or percentage of women benefiting from activities. Qualitative indicators to measure change in status, role in decision making and access to resources were in the minority. UNDP staff recognize the gap in their approach. Several interviewees suggested that more can be done to advance GEWE work. One in particular noted that ***“I know we can do more in our project on GEWE, and we have done some good activities, but they are not contextualized and definitely we have not capitalized on them.”***

Partners perceptions of UNDP GEWE approach indicates that while the larger number of respondents thought UNDP focuses on quantitative aspects of GEWE and promotes GEWE across all sectors, a number also indicated that their gender considerations during implementation is below expectations and or is only to a certain extent (Figure 3).

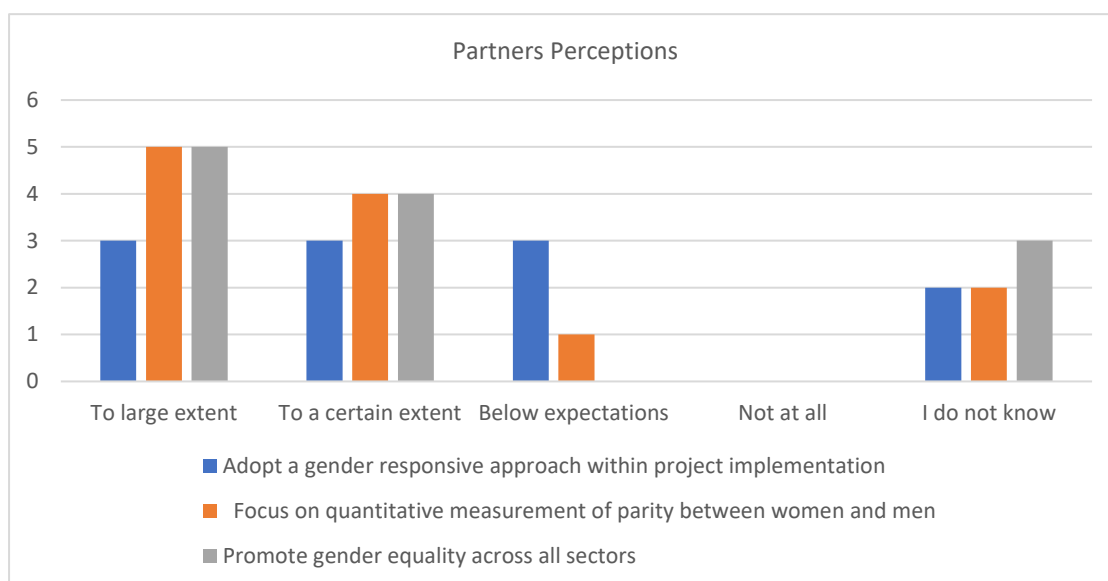


Figure 3: Partners survey results on perception of UNDP GEWE programs

a) *To what extent are the project results framework relevant to the needs of women and girls?*

GEWE interventions are relevant to women needs and help bridge the gaps by providing opportunities for women to engage in public and economic activities. The skills and knowledge women accumulate helps them strengthen their self-confidence. Group solidarity is also important for many women, but it is understated in UNDP projects. The WEE, SWM and the vocational training course within HOA program, build a strong friendship that motivated women to continue. Nurturing the power of the group needs more attention as women gain insights and learn from each other to challenge power dynamics within their households and their communities. One woman indicated ***“I was too shy to talk to men before. I used to hide when men visited the cooperative. But when I saw some of my friends interact with them, I realized that I can do it. They helped me a lot as well. Now I walk back and forth to the cooperative not fearing the street walk and my interaction with men.”***

Consultation processes to engage women and hear their voices need to be structured in order to use their outcomes as accountability framework for UNDP work. There are hardly any references to the type and scope of discussions held to inform the project design or implementation. It is difficult to determine, in different projects, whose voices were accounted for in the design and how did the project ensure

Girls are not targeted in any of the activities and as such, the degree of relevance to their needs is unrelated.

inclusivity of the diverse groups of women and men.

During implementation, project response to the need of women varied and was subject to the implementing team. An interviewee noted ***“We advised UNDP that this set up was not workable, but they did not respond to us. We did lose participants many of whom were women”***. Another participants said ***“We had a good relation with UNDP team. They listened to us and tried to adjust to what we said works in the community.”***

b) To what extent are the activities defined in GE interventions relevant to project results framework?

With the exception of the SWM, the WEE, and the access to justice, other interventions had insufficient, if any, gender related context in the background analyses of the project documents. The project design and results framework fell short from presenting a coherent intervention for GEWE which led to lost opportunities that could have been more responsive to gender needs. The strength of any gender analysis is its relevance to the context and its contribution to the project design and theory of change. Quite frequently, gender analysis present the power dynamics and situation, needs and interests of the diverse groups of women and men that highlight entry points for the project and inform the results frameworks, theory of change of strategic actions that can lead to transformational change. The Rio project for example, added on activities to address gender inequalities and engage women after the project design and after recognising gender gaps. The Asila initiative replicates a Unilever’s model for women economic participation, however as a result of not conducting a gender analysis, the project at the beginning led women to compete with other as opposed to collaborate. After allowing women to choose their own products to sell, not only did the relation change but also women’s own businesses improved.

Implemented project activities are aligned within the logical framework and results matrix, however, since the outcomes do not consistently define the gender barriers or inequalities to be addressed, the actual activity is not always contextualized well. Contextualizing the activities of non-GEN 3 projects to the broader results framework and expected outcomes is challenging especially as projects’ gender analysis, if it existed, does not always deconstruct the structural barriers that impede GEWE. Projects are inclined to have outputs and indicators that quantify the participation, and benefit of women. For example, projects report the number or percentage of women attending a training or benefiting from income generating projects but fall short from assessing qualitative issues of satisfaction and knowledge gained. Projects also fall short from indicating and capturing the level of gender responsiveness of their approaches to facilities women’s engagement and or participation.

The relevance and interconnectedness of GEWE project activities to each other is not always evident and as such activities seem to operate in silos. For example, in the WEE project, how can the project capitalize on strengthening the governance of women organisations in SWM to help shape SWM action plans at local and national levels. On another level, the nature of trainings that women received in the Badia intervention with the cooperatives, was gender neutral and did not cater the training or introduce new trainings that can bridge the differences between women and men led cooperatives.

B. Effectiveness

a) *How effective are the planned activities, respective outputs in achieving project GEWE outcomes?*

The varying range of how gender equality interventions are presented in the different projects reflect the alignment of activities with outputs and outcomes. Interventions that were reviewed were not projects, some were activities relating to gender outputs and outcomes that are neutral but target women as part of the larger vulnerable group category. Consequently, targets for reaching women and respective indicators were set and outputs and outcomes realised.

Within RIO, PVE, HOA reviewed income generating activities were listed under the ***“increased sustainable livelihood opportunities”***. They all reached out to women and engaged women as part of their target groups. There was no significant alteration to the program approach to enhance the overall GEWE but accommodations were undertaken to facilitate women’s engagement in activities. These acts of responsiveness are under reported but are acknowledged by both participants and staff as having instrumental impact on women’s ability to engage. For example, having childcare during trainings as part of HOA activities, or linking the women led cooperatives, who were notable weaker than men led cooperatives, with other UNDP projects to enhance their ability to develop and compete in issued RFPs.

The situation of the Asila and WEE projects are slightly different. As GEN 3 projects, they have specific outcomes to advance gender equality and bridge gender gaps. In both cases, it was evident that while the Asila project modality was less appropriate at the initial start, the flexibility and adaptability of project management to change the approach, optimized the results of the intervention on women’s livelihoods and agency. Women reported increased earning from the project, although not officially measured by the project, and reported changes in their role at home and publicly. Women’s ability to access resources enhanced their capacity to engage in decision making at household level and in managing their business. Training that woman took were reportedly beneficial to them. One interviewee said ***“the training on time management helped me realize how I am less conscious of the importance of time”***.

Within the WEE project, the progress against all the outcomes is on track and while there is room to capitalize on emerging opportunities that can endorse more transformative change, the project activities are well aligned with their respective outputs and outcomes. The horizontal linkages and relations between outputs and outcomes need further examining to ensure the coherency of approach and the interconnectedness of progress at different levels.

Institutional and policy level mainstreaming efforts vary in context. While some have committed within outcomes to gender sensitize policies and strategies, others did not. Nonetheless, the gender analysis, consultations, and trainings to enhance capacity of partners to address gender issues more systematically, have led to policy commitments that otherwise would not have materialized. For example, the Rio Road Map for Gender Mainstreaming, outlined the program and sectoral approach to tackling gender

mainstreaming more consistently. Within the LHSPVE project, commissioning a gender consultation on mainstreaming gender within community policing strategy shows a commitment to engage women and to address gender inequalities in the process. Similarly, designing a tool to support municipalities develop gender responsive action plans have long term impact in bridging gender gaps and inequalities.

b) What were the factors that enabled achievement and or progress towards outcomes?

Management and staff commitment to GEWE had a significant role in enhancing GEWE interventions in projects. Staff flexibility, adaptability and responsiveness to women needs and demands, helped them adjust project activities to ensure the effective achievement of results. In both the RIO and PVE projects, the commitment to gender equality is modest, on paper, and is contextualized as part of reaching out to vulnerable groups. Nonetheless, the change was evident in the implementation approach that encouraged more activities in GEWE and emphasized women's participation in project activities. The LHSPVE project demonstrated how GEWE evolved across the previous PVE projects. In the LHSPVE results framework, women were targeted, acknowledged as an actor in PVE and as a change agent. Rio has a similar story. The project results framework does not reflect any gender related results, but in the implementation additional activities were added bridge the design gap.

The activities that were introduced were meeting a community needs and were introduced in approaches that were appropriate and befitting to the context. Despite not having an evident gender analysis for all the projects, the knowledge of the staff of different communities has informed implementation approaches to make them more acceptable and endorsed by others.

c) What were the factors that hindered achievements of projects towards progress?

Projects fall short from designing coherent, innovative, and transformative GEWE interventions that remove structural barriers to realizing gender equality and justice. The extent of responsiveness to women voices, needs and priorities changes based on circumstances and conditions. Analysis of intersectional factors that influence women's conditions are frequently absent from project rationales, problem definition and context analysis. Women are not a homogenous groups and assumptions about women's need to be questioned and assessed in their own context. Not having an intersectional approach undermines ownership and interest of many and leads to lack of interest. Moreover, GEWE are consistently faced with community resistance, especially if they are transformative in approach and nature. Men may challenge activities that disrupt the existing power structure and threaten their situations and safety.

Partners' ownership of activities relating to advancing GEWE is not always strong and quite frequently it is responsive to UNDP interest. As such, progress on activities relating to gender is usually "a box ticking" practice. This is evident in that mainstreaming efforts and level of integration of GE in policies and strategies varies and is inconsistent across partners work. It has been reported that some of the partners' work was gender responsive and

aware because of UNDP's persistence, but their work on other issues was simply gender blind.

d) Were there unintended positive and or negative outcomes? What were they and who did they impact?

The unintended outcomes of GEWE interventions are not always reported or even identified by UNDP and partners. Participants from across the projects reported outcomes that were unintentional and some were more positive than others. Women engaged in livelihoods reported relying on their children, especially girls for coping with household chores and younger child care. Others reported involving their sons in their work as a way of helping them reach out to suppliers, to avoid interaction with men, and also to help their sons secure additional income. In the Access to Justice intervention, women who were alerted to the potential consequences of taking up loans were deterred from doing so after hearing the stories of others. Through the Takatof intervention, some voluntary interventions were highlighted and that led to expanding the network of individuals leading them. The session on elderly highlighted the gap in services for the elderly, an issue that was less spoken off before, but fell short from distinguishing the issues for elderly women and elderly men.

Unintentional positive outcome to the community had negative consequence on the women cooperative at the sorting facilities. The awareness sessions that the project held on waste and recycling led to increased interest in waste collection and trading. As a result, households disposed of less waste to sell it directly and earn money. This had direct impact on the amounts of waste women collected and got paid for. Hence, the working women income declined as they had less waste to collect and weight. Although the women are pleased to see community behaviour change, they recognise that this has negatively impacted them. The head of cooperative is trying to develop a new business model, whereby the cooperative will buy waste from households so as to sell it in bulk. This will reduce the cost of transportation on households. Again, this will reap income for the cooperative but will impact the collector's income.

Spotlight

Girls are impacted by UNDP programs both positively and negatively. Positively, through observing women from their community take part in public and economic activities and hence unleash their aspirations. Negatively, as they assume more home chores due to the absence of their mothers, girls caregiving roles expand. One beneficiary noted that her daughter takes responsibility for her brothers until she returns from work. Another noted "after they have lunch, she has chores at home to finish until I get back. Otherwise, I can not cope. I try to let my sons help too but the girl is my backbone. Without her I can not cope."

e) *To what extent did the project adopt a human rights-based approach in the design and approach?*

Human rights approach of participation, non-discrimination and enhanced transparency and accountability need strengthening. Having community consultations with diverse groups of community members are more associated with designing the project but are not as frequent or as structured during the implementation. This was evident in the partners response to the questionnaire, whereby consultations during implementation were rated as “to some extent”, so was the level of “people centredness” and “flexibility to respond to needs of women and girls” (figure 4).

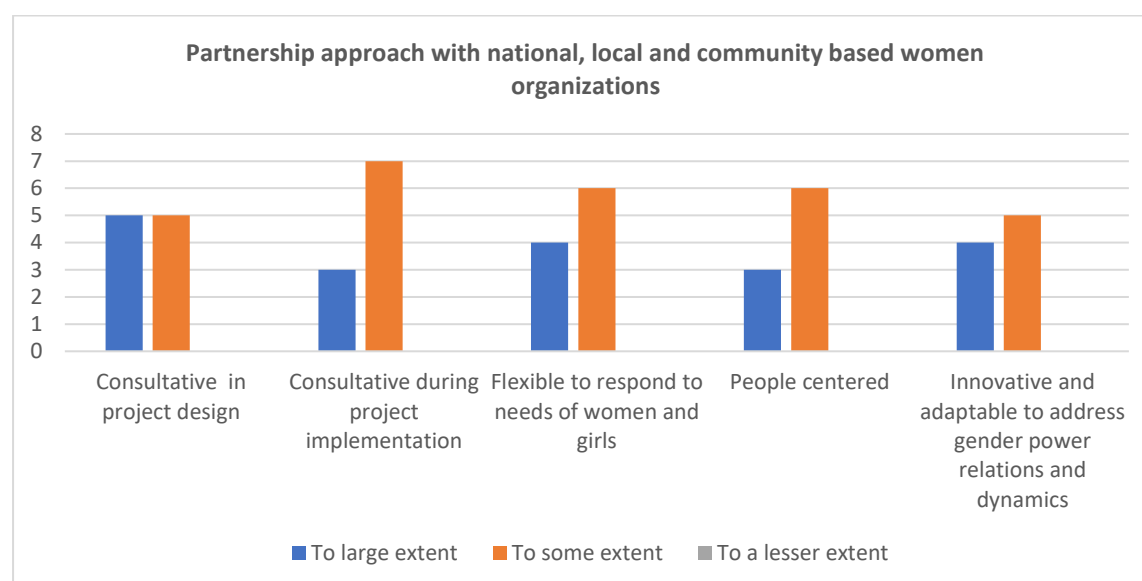


Figure 4: Partnership approach with national, local and community based women organizations as reported by partners.

Inclusivity and encouraging engagement of persons with disability and more vulnerable groups such refugees is well pronounced in some projects but not in all. The HOA and PVE projects have committed to reach out and engage person with disability especially in employment trainings. Similarly, in the women cooperatives working as part of the RIO project were encouraged to hire women with disabilities. In other projects as well, women with disabilities participated in the local cooperative activities of SWM and WEE projects.

Projects have assigned groups of participants, but the process of selection prioritizes vulnerable groups under the principle of leaving no one behind. In fact, in two cases, the projects involved women who were not within the project target group but as a result of their heightened vulnerabilities and living circumstances. Social cohesion among community members including different nationalities and ethnicities was evident in projects such as HOA (Habibi) and SWM.

f) *To what extent did the projects adopt a gender equality approach?*

With the exception of the WEE project, none of the projects adopted a gender equality approach. Projects had interventions and activities targeting women but as an approach they fell short from considering power structures, gender dynamics and differentiated

interaction including benefit, use and impact between women and men and among women and men. Partners also reported that there is space to improve the level of adaptability and flexibility to address power dynamics and relations in innovative ways (Figure 4).

Intersectional factors have been overlooked by the different projects and as such the level of responsiveness to needs of diverse groups of women and men, or even recognising them were lacking. Having a strong gender analysis inform the project design, regardless of their level of technicality, ensures the representation of voices of diverse groups of women and men, girls, and boys with respect to the areas of intervention and community. Women, men, girls, and boys perceive problems and community needs differently as they are impacted by them differently and hence, their solutions tend to differ and frequently, result in more effective program planning and implementation.

Food for thought – The uncalculated value of social change

Women who engaged in vocational and livelihood opportunities offered by the projects have alluded to how they personally went through a transformation. Reporting increased self confidence, power to make decisions and to even discuss decisions at home confirm that financial investment in empowering women have a hidden value that often goes unmeasured and unreported. Efforts to maximize financial and management efficiency for project effectiveness are always welcomed especially if the lead to scaling of qualitative transformative change.

Partners indicated that UNDP mainstreams gender to a large extent in their projects (shown in figure 4). However, Interviews with strategic partners indicated that UNDP Jordan CO approach to engaging women is inconsistent across sectors and within projects. A strategic local partners said “ ***It is not clear how UNDP addresses gender mainstreaming in its projects. Sometimes, you hear of their projects, and it is intensely working with women, and in others you feel the activities are just there to tick boxes. Women just end up as numbers on paper.***” Another local partner felt that UNDP approach to GEWE is sometimes not effective “***they can not push us into adopting gender equality as an approach. We are independent and need to protect everyone’s right .***”

C. Efficiency

g) To what extent were the interventions implemented in a timely manner?

Six of the projects that were reviewed were completed. Some received a no cost extension because of the COVID 19 pandemic. The ongoing projects have also been delayed and while the activities are on track, it is expected that the projects will pick up the momentum of implementation now that COVID restrictions are lifted.

The time duration for implementation for some of the interventions was underestimated. The delays on the Access to Justice project, for example, led to the incompleteness of certain activities and to a rushed delivery of activities. Similarly, the Takatof project was delivered in 6 months and while the timing was sufficient to deliver activities, the intensity and speed of delivery planned led to sometimes accepting themes and issues that were not fully

researched nor examined for their gender responsiveness. The focus became on ensuring women representation as speakers with little reflection on the situation of diverse groups women and men in each theme.

Transformational projects require more time for implementation and as such some of the projects fall short from following through on emerging issues that impede change and progress towards GEWE. In the Rio projects, women cooperatives struggle with marketing their products as a result of weak marketing strategies, that were further exacerbated by COVID situation. The investment value is not much less as the number of workers it supports declined.

h) To what extent were financial transactions with partners and beneficiaries timely ?

The level of efficiency with this respect varied from one project to the other. At least two partners reported delays in transfer of their payments which impacted the delivery of stipends, incentives and reimbursements for participants. The delay in payment demotivates participants especially women who are struggling and need to prioritize their expenditure. One interviewee said ***“we came here because we need to make money, cost of transport makes a difference to us and sometimes it is difficult to find the money for it.”*** Ensuring the regularity of transport payment (stipend/incentive) for participants, improves the efficiency of progress as it helps retention rate and fulfilment of commitments.

In the WEE project, UNDP had paid the registration fee for women to join the cooperative. Nonetheless, no agreement was made to secure the sustainability of the fee. Some women, withdrew as members and the cooperatives, in line with the law, gave them the registration fee of 500 JD. UNDP and the cooperative are collaborating to identify a solution that will protect the capital from being unrightfully claimed.

i) To what extent is the project expenditure justified / rationalized with respect to the project?

It was difficult to assess the details of financial efficiency on the entire project operation as not all projects shared their financial statements nor do the financial statements reflect an activity based breakdown. The UNDP-Jordan CO mid-term evaluation indicated that UNDP financial performance efficiency, calculated on expenditure rate, shows good performance and strong management ability to adapt to emerging circumstances.

A generic review of the selected projects from a gender perspective shows that with the exception of dedicated GEWE projects, the gender activities constituted a small proportion of the projects and accordingly their budgets. Even in the Badia Dairy value chain intervention, there was only two women cooperatives out of the total of 10. A quick calculation of cost indicates that women proportion of the budget is lower than that of others. Women attendance in workshops was less than men. By simply dividing the total cost of the Badia project on the 10 cooperatives, women's share is approximately 10% of the total budget. While this is not accurate it demonstrates the disproportion in allocation of budget for women and men cooperatives. To calculate more accurately, gender responsive and targeted activities, including calculation of distribution of use and benefit, should be analysed.

The situation is similar with other projects such as the Rio project and the HOA, PVE as well as the SWM project in Mafraq. Within the Access for Justice activities, there was little allocation for supporting partners reach out to women, and yet some activities were not implemented due to unsuccessful assumptions in the project design.

Understanding the cost value of the intervention is also important. For example, the high cost involved in establishing an income generating activity for a cooperative may only result in employing 2-4 persons. The cost of creating the job opportunity may well be inefficient from a financial viewpoint especially if it is not sustainable and operates at a small scale. The long term sustainability of projects can enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the investment even if it is expensive. Social benefits and transformative changes that may offset the high costs involved should also be measured.

The scale of some of the GEWE interventions are inefficient for their cost. Asila is approximately 30,000 JD and only benefited 25 women. Access to Justice work shows cost efficiency at a different level. The partner reported referring 30 cases of women in a month to respective service providers as a result of the UNDP training and collaboration. They received little financial support.

Food for thought – Gender responsive budgeting

The proportion of the UNDP Jordan office expenditure of GEN 3 was estimated at 17% of the total office budget. While this reflects the office commitment to increasing gender programming, it continues to be modest especially that 78% was reported for GEN 2 projects. GEN 2 projects GEWE is sometimes ambiguous. The classification within UNDP gender marking scheme can be misleading as the bulk of expenditure is not directly related to GEWE e.g. PVE projects. Adopting gender responsive budgeting may provide more accurate data on GEWE expenditures.

D. Sustainability

a) To what extent will the project activities continue after the project finishes?

Considering most projects have been completed, it was notable that there were no clear grounded and realistic exit strategies for UNDP Jordan CO with respect to sustaining the gender related interventions.

Institutional, legislative and policy level activities, have longer term impact by default. Ensuring that gender equality is tackled in government strategies and policies paves the way for institutionalized action and provides a reference point for advocating for gender equality in the longer term. Institutional capacity building on mainstreaming gender emphasize the importance of addressing gender equality consistently, even if the partner's buy-in is weaker. As one interviewee said “ **Yes, Jordan is committed on paper to gender equality, but the reality is when it comes to action, there is little interest. Government organisations and partners sometimes go along with us because they know we are**

interested.” Another noted, **“it feels that every time we want to work on gender equality with our partners we have to start from scratch.”** Another responded to the lack of partner collaboration on gender and said **“*simply our interest in enhancing the judicial system gender responsiveness was not shared.*”**

b) To what extent will the change introduced be kept after the project finishes?

Individuals and participants confirm that the knowledge, skills, and experiences they shared will continue to influence their behaviour, outlook, and aspiration. The sustainability of change in individual lives whether in behaviour or aspirational, is evident from all the projects and even if the actual activity has failed to continue with the same momentum and scale. Women cooperatives are challenged to sustain the income generating projects they started and with the exception of the SWM and WEE projects, it was clear that the projects were halted for different reasons. On cooperative established green house farming with support from UNDP/ RIO project. The project was disrupted by the breakdown of the water pump, COVID 19 and the winds that tore the plastic covers. Although the intention is to revive the project, the number of women working in it directly range from 2 to 6 only. Similarly, the dairy production projects only benefited a smaller group now. Individual projects like in Asila and the prospects from Habibi vocational training are equally challenging. As reported by one beneficiary **“*some of the women who started working, stopped. It is not easy to continue unless you learn to stand on your feet after every blow you get.*”**

Women tend to prefer group initiatives as they are less risky but sustaining them requires more investment not only in training but also coaching them to have increase their marketing approaches. UNDP-Jordan CO plans to establish a sales point for cooperative production. This will provide a stable outlet for many cooperatives, but the question of standardizing the quality of the production continues to linger. Action to ensure quality assurance is essential for sustainability and growth of business.

c) What are the factors that enhance/undermine the sustainability of the project (in its design and during implementation)?

Increasing ownership of the project by local partners and participants as well as enhancing their capacities to manage, advance and maintain the initiated intervention increased the potential of the sustainability of the project. With less knowledge, skills and networking intervention are at risk of not continuing especially if the level of interest and priority for them is not driven locally. The relevance, effectiveness to realise change through the interventions leads to community buy in and will to sustain at least the learning from it. Nonetheless, failing to plan for sustainability from the outset and design of the projects, will likely reduce its feasibility to continue. Even if introduced at a later stage, projects who recognise the different scenarios for a more sustainable interventions are likely to adjust their implementation approach to achieve higher ownership and leadership by the local partner and communities on the project activity. The process of implementation becomes as important as realising the results, if not more important.

The exist strategy of the WEE project is more evident than in other projects. Having the municipalities onboard and collaborating with the women cooperatives generates a more stable scenario for sustainability of activities. That noted, the women cooperative needs to be more involved in the negotiation of agreements with the municipalities and in forging new business plans for expansion and sustainability. The increased interest of the community in recycling material will have longer term impact on the cooperative. Efforts to capacitate the women cooperative and municipality to analyse the market and advance their business thinking and value chain are essential for the sustainability of the project.

The SWM project exist strategy was ambitious. The compost facility did not achieve a breakeven scenario to sustain its work. A new donor engaged in the project, based on the request of the government partner. While UNDP -Jordan CO sits on the project committee, it is clear that the intentions and outlook for the project are changing. The new donor has made strategic changes that bettered the working situation for women, in terms of raising salaries and providing additional equipment that reduce their physical efforts, albeit, they marginalized the women cooperative. Moreover, the shift to a cash for work scenario for women, in order to scale the benefit and reach out to more women, has direct implication on the facility itself and the livelihoods of women who have been working at the facility since its start. This shift is likely to impact the business as not only women need to be trained every time there is rotation of employees, but also the unintended social impact and transformational change that women themselves reported will be less evident. Currently employed women, and after years of work, have engaged in financial commitments that now they will bare the impact of if they lose their jobs.

Spotlight – Access to Justice

Even though the project was short with limited financial investment, the project succeeded in bringing attention to the “Gharimat” situation in Irbid, a matter that the local partner was not aware of before and are now interested in continuing. As one staff said “we became known as providers of counsel and advise for the “Gharimat” and they continue to come. We will not close doors, even if personally to help them with information”.

Part Two: Gender Equality and Women Empowerment Approach

This section of the report analyses UNDP approach to GEWE.

a) GEWE focus and areas of work

Partners suggested that UNDP should continue to advance its work in all the three sectors of work: a) livelihoods, b) environment and climate change as well as c) governance to a lesser extent, as shown in figure 5. Partners also thought that UNDP should aim to **“Strengthen the role of women from different social groups in development by advancing their economic, social and political rights”** and also to **“Enhance the engagement of men and boys in the change process”**.

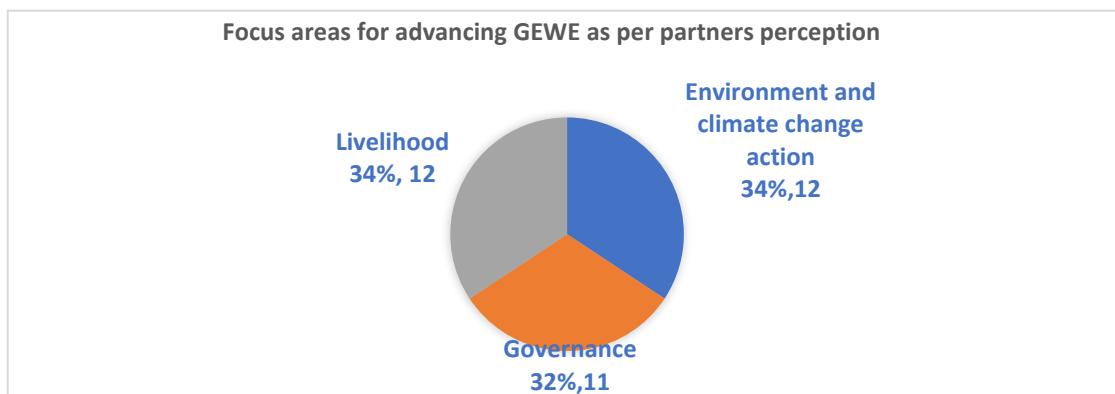


Figure 5: Focus areas for advancing GEWE programming

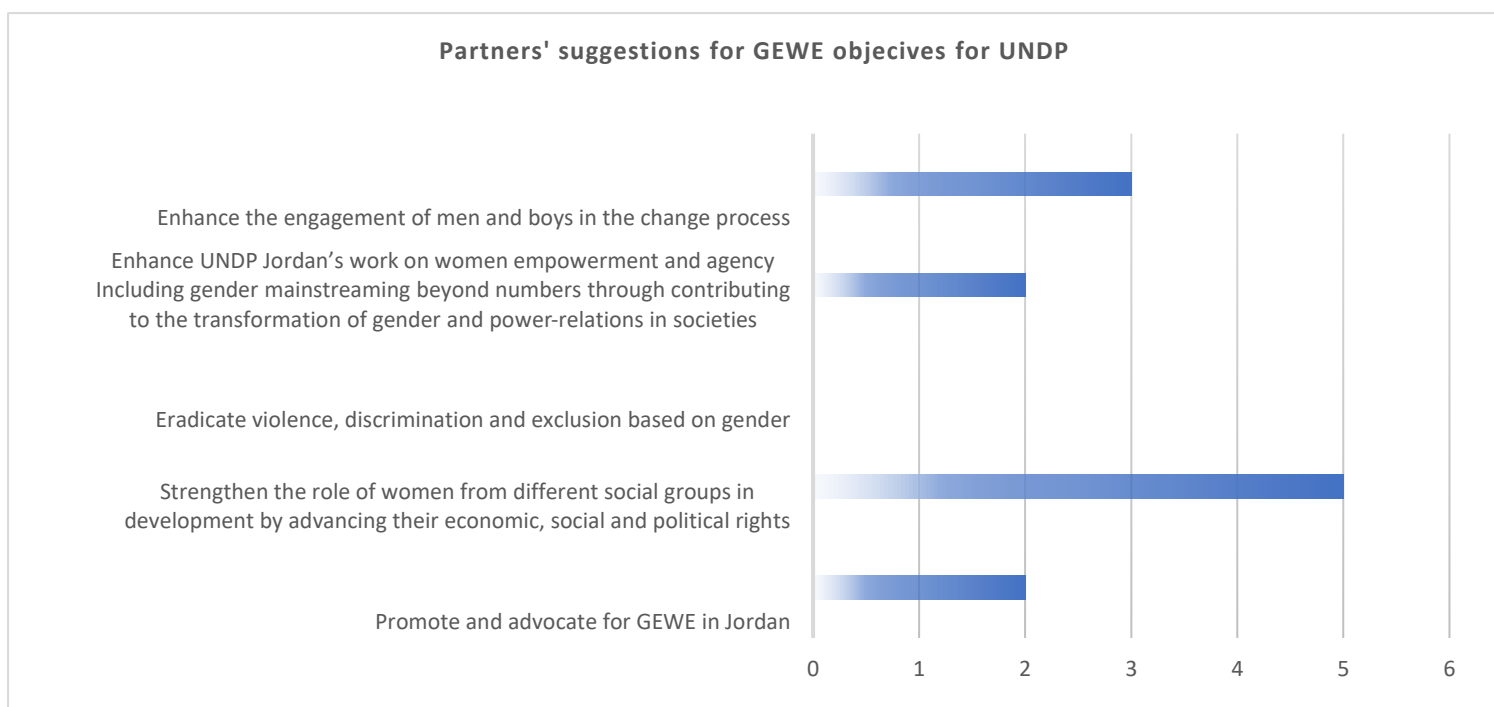


Figure 6: Partner's suggestions for GEWE objectives for UNDP

b) Commitment and Action to further advance GEWE

UNDP Jordan CO has demonstrated its commitment to GEWE not only through achieving the Silver Gender Seal but also recruiting a dedicated Gender Specialist and aspiring for the Golden Seal. It is also evident in that the partners consider UNDP has having a proactive and leading role in advancing GEWE role (figure 8), albeit a number of partners are not familiar with UNDP programming (Figure 7).

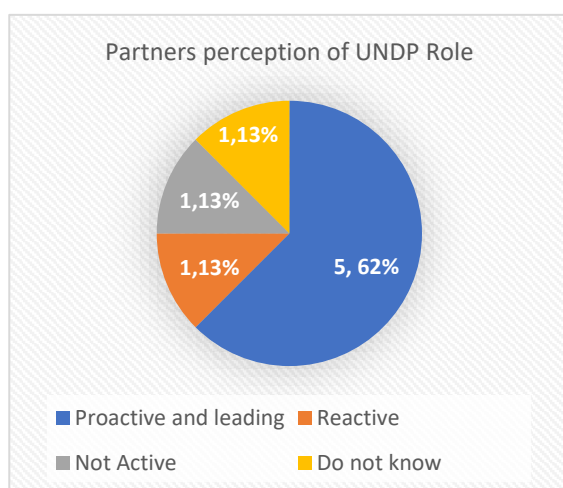


Figure 8: Partners' perception of UNDP role in GEWE

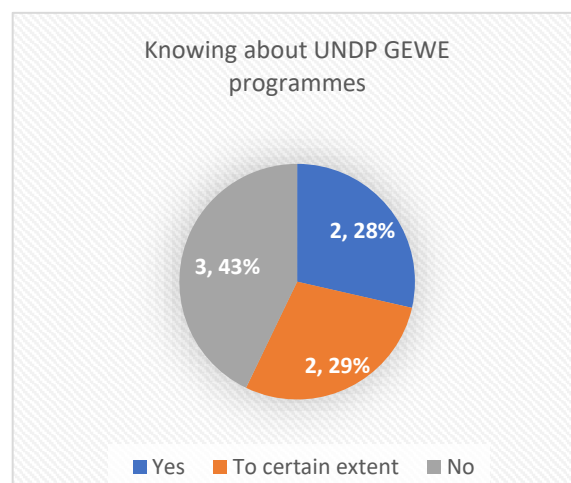


Figure 7: Partners knowledge of UNDP GEWE programming

Although UNDP Jordan GEWE strategy suggests that gender mainstreaming is a cross cutting theme for all projects, the actual translation of this strategy and commitment to action within projects is yet to be realized. Projects tend to add targeted interventions to meet the basic requirements for gender integration. While this is being challenged now as UNDP Jordan CO introduced tools to assist program staff integrate GEWE, the tool itself should be contextualized and more systematic in integrating GEWE perspective in all its dimensions. Hence, confirming a separation of women targeted and gender mainstreaming activities from the core project concept. Ideally, the concept note template should encourages staff to tackle gender issues in each of its sections through a question that pertains to GEWE, otherwise, projects will continue to add gender aspects simply to earn the GEN marking required. Women will also be targeted as beneficiaries as opposed to active actors. For example in the template and in the Situation Analysis section, there is hardly any reference to what is the gender situation across the document and even the gender component relates to the marker as opposed to defining gender inequalities and barriers that should be addressed.

The Project Quality Assurance assessment tool has more relevant gender assessment criteria to consider, however, to strengthen it, some guidelines are needed in clarifying the definitions of suggested criteria. For instance, it indicates that indicators should be “gender sensitive”, but what does that actually imply?

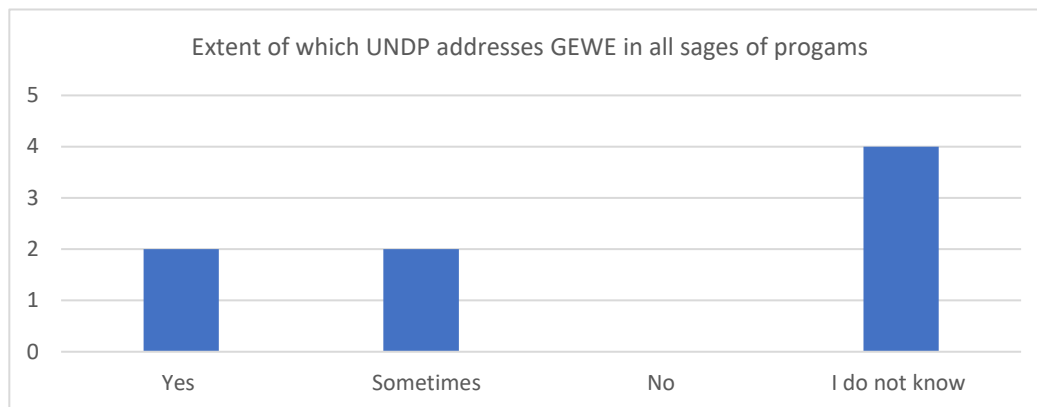


Figure 9: Partners view point about UNDPs gender mainstreaming within all stages of programming

c) UNDP Jordan CO GEWE Competencies

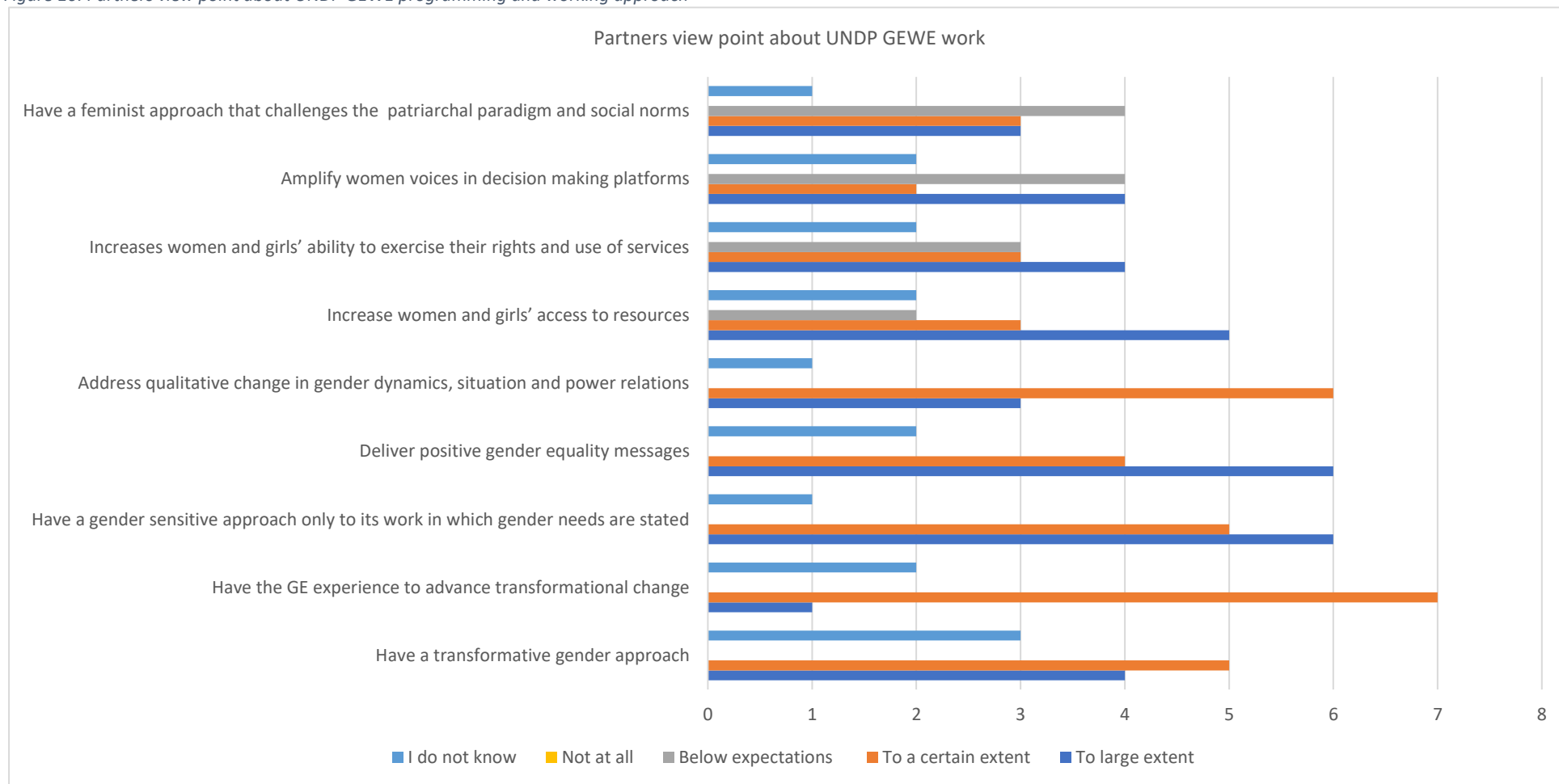
The GE induction training that UNDP Jordan CO offers helps reinforce staff’s understanding of the institutional commitments and the principles of feminist approach. While this is a beneficial introduction to all, the practical tools of how to mainstream gender equality in all project stages are essential. Staff knowledge and competencies need to be enhanced to support the integration of GEWE and to advance principles of Feminism in programming.

When asked partners indicated that UNDP although demonstrating the commitment to GEWE, they also recognised that there is a space for improvement (figure 10). Partners thought that UNDP’s commitment to the feminist approach is below expectations and so is amplifying women voices in decision making platforms. Partners indicated that UNDP internal competencies need further development especially in working with gender mainstreaming and embracing the feminist approach. Partners thought that the GE experience to advance transformational change within UNDP is there but only to a certain extent, similarly UNDP is only addressing qualitative change in gender dynamics’ and power relations to a certain extent as well. A number of partners indicated that they do not know about GEWE work, which suggests that the communication and visibility of interventions is limited.

Food for thought

Groups of women and men perceive the problems and circumnutates around them differently because of the social, economic, political and cultural experiences they individually have. By conducting a gender analysis that captures the diverse voices and perspectives, including solutions for the problem, projects will recognize the barriers that continue to nurture discriminatory practices unequal power distribution and imbalance in access to resources.

Figure 10: Partners view point about UNDP GEWE programming and working approach



d) GEWE in operational activities

UNDP Jordan – CO has taken measures to ensure that recruitment procedures and procurement of services promote gender equality principles. However, promoting equal opportunities for competing on provision of services is a challenge. Women own less businesses than men, and sometimes their qualifications, proposals and bids are not as competitive as that of men. This does not deter the process for being gender aware, but it suggests that conditions for fair competition may not be realistic for the time being.

Operationally, budget expenditures of GEWE is tracked through project gender markers and not activities.

e) GEWE reporting

There is a discrepancy in GEWE reporting for projects. While this can be attributed partially to the lack of reflection of GEWE in the results framework, it is also reflective of a tendency to only quantify reporting on gender. Numbers are an easier option for reporting, but they fall short from telling the story of the project, whether positive or negative.

It was evident from the reports of some projects that there was an absence of systematic and consistent reflection and reporting on GEWE interventions. Substantial and significant information that could represent the work of the project more accurately and methodologically were lacking. Consequently, lessons learned and the knowledge and experience of the project on GEWE is undermined.

There was a clear difference in how GEWE activities, interventions, progress or lack of it is being presented in project and intervention reports. SWM and WEE donor project reporting emphasize gender aspects and as such they address issues more analytically. Other projects, present the numbers with little analysis, reflection on the process, experience, and contribution to realizing GEWE.

f) GEWE in risk analysis

With the exception of the Global Affairs Canada projects,, GEWE are not well considered in risk analysis of projects, when indeed, power structures, gender dynamics and social norms all impact engagement of women, men, girls and boys and can undermine any project intervention. Each project embodies its own gender related risks that need to be analysed and studied for mitigation solutions, which can lead to a change of implementation approach.

g) GEWE partnerships and collaboration

UNDP Jordan CO partnership with local women organisations and strategic actors is limited. UNDP's role within GEWE is hardly evident among women organisations. It was noted by an interviewee ***“UNWOMEN are the prime leaders on GEWE issues, but UN agencies have a***

pivotal role to play in advancing GEWE agenda across sectors and with the government. UNDP can lead on this and should lead on this. The question is do they want to lead?". JNCW noted, **"this year we were invited to attend their country program consultation process. This is the first year we attend since many years. Hopefully, it is the beginning of our partnership with them."**

Within the UN family, UNDP participation in the gender coordination group is well appreciated and perceived positively. However, the clarity of roles and overlapping of mandates with respect to promoting GEWE does generate sensitivities. UNDP has a generic mandate and while it can be involved in all developmental aspects, it is more strategic to define its niche in contributing to GEWE. According to partners that involves focusing more on vulnerable communities and poverty-stricken areas and leading on Environmental and climate change issues. Governance is cross cutting but has multiple actors involved as well.

h) GEWE visibility and communication

UNDP Jordan CO communication about GEWE activities and programmes are discrete. As an interviewee noted **"we understand that there is a division of roles in the UN system, but UNDP does not highlight its work on GEWE and until recently, we hardly new about their work. I believe now they are opening up more, as they should."** In their response to the questionnaire, partners did also indicated that they were not familiar with UNDP GEWE projects. However, within the Gender Seal assememnt it was evident that the communniciation plan integrates a gender perspective but perhaps more visisbility and sharing of knoweldg is needed.

V. Conclusions

UNDP's Jordan CO commitment to GEWE is modestly translated into its programming and interventions, and the space to enhance GEWE programming is considerable. Results framework and logical models fall short from capturing their contribution to GEWE, but all the reviewed interventions are relevant to achieving the national and UNDP GEWE priorities.

The gender markers of projects are anchored in the level of gender mainstreaming but should not withhold projects from advancing in GEWE. Even within the gender marking guidelines, aspects of consistency, significance and adequately integrating are misleading and can inappropriately classify projects. UNDP Jordan CO approach to tackling GEWE in projects has considerable potential to improve. The possibilities of adopting more coherent strategies to reduce structural barriers that can lead to realising the SDG goals by leaving no one behind are considerable especially in: generating sustainable livelihoods for the most vulnerable of women, in promoting GEWE within environment and climate change, and governance.

The scale of some of GEWE interventions are rather small to make a significant contribution and unfortunately plans for scaling modalities of work are not evident. Therefore, the potential to aggregate results is challenging since the indicators also vary. Not having a guiding gender equality results framework for the core areas and the office, makes it difficult to report on UNDP contribution to advancing gender quality at both sectoral and national

levels. That said, there is enough evidence to suggest that projects have moderately contributed to increasing economic empowerment of women, introducing gender mainstreaming to local partners, integrating gender equality within policies, challenging stereotypes about women's abilities and capacities, and facilitating women's engaged in decision making process.

Some of the women targeted interventions, with the exception of projects funded by Global Affairs Canada, are short termed and overlook the complexities of transformational change. Frequently, they adopt gender neutral implementation approaches and undermine the need to have more gender responsive and targeted activities to bridge the gender gaps and inequalities that women and women led organisations have.

Gender equality outcomes that relate to reducing structural barriers through challenging power relations, enhancing access to resources and amplifying women voices are not found except in the WEE project. Processes to address GEWE should be informed by the Gender analysis of the project and need to be clearly reflected in the higher levels of the results framework. Reaching out to women, and including an output or an indicator for gender mainstreaming and women participation is insufficient to ensure that the projects are tackling gender inequalities strategically.

Emphasis on active engagement of women not only in activities but design and implementation of the projects should be strengthened. Forging strategic partnership with women organizations will help inform the project design and theory of change.

UNDP-Jordan CO role in realising GEWE is discrete even though it can be more proactive and leading in its own core areas of work and in being a catalyst through sharing knowledge and information from its own projects that relate to GEWE. UNDP needs to also strengthen its internal competencies and procedures to ensure that its GEWE programs are gradually adopting feminist principles of operation and leading the way for transformative change.

Food for thought:

Gender Equality results are not about including women or gender related terminologies in the statements. They need to reflect the change in:

- the level of access, use and benefit from all resources and services,*
- representation and participation of diverse groups of women, men, girls and boys in private and public decision making processes,*
- the level of exercising and realization equal rights.*

Even though Gender equality results are more complex to address the guide towards a more transformational and sustainable change.

VI. Lessons learned, reflections and observations

- Information provided during the evaluation highlighted a few strategic lessons that should be considered in future programming, the lessons learned from individual projects are listed in the annexed individual project reviews:
- Integrating gender equality perspective in the design phase of the project promotes more transformative interventions especially if it is informed by a gender analysis that highlights the structural barriers and power relations that impede the realisation of social justice.
- Groups of women and men have differentiated outlooks and solutions to identified problems. Engaging and consulting with the different groups women and men during all phases of project implementation generates more ownership of projects, aligns project interventions with community needs and generates more effective and efficient solutions.
- Gender equality should be systematically integrated into all aspects of theory of change, results framework, implementation strategy, risk analysis and monitoring and evaluation plans of all projects. Otherwise, GE interventions are more likely to be standalone activities that earn the project the gender marking but does not necessarily capitalize on its potential to challenge gender inequalities and discrimination
- The more projects adopt a holistic approach to gender equality, the more likely they are to realize change in the gender situation and power relations.
- Project staff have a pivotal role in promoting GE and capitalizing on achievements of project interventions through providing flexible and responsive solutions that facilitate the active participation of women, promote positive messaging of gender equality and using their local knowledge to reduce resistance and tackle barriers.
- Short termed gender equality interventions are less likely to be sustainable and to have transformative impact. Gender related transformative change requires longer implementation persons that focus on systemic and structural changes.
- Cost benefit of activities should be calculated at two levels, monetary level to assess the cost benefit of the activity in terms of efficiency as well the social value that an intervention has on the target group, in this case women, and gender relations.
- Having a Gender and Feminist Monitoring and Evaluation Learning Plan from the outset of projects, helps facilitate outcomes measurements and strengthen the project accountability levels to GE.
- Introducing gender equality tools to support integration and advancement of GE within interventions are more effective and if the level of accountability to their implementation is high and at managerial level.

VII. Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Develop an internal road map to increase GEN 3 and GEN 2 programming through:

- Defining strategic gender equality results framework for core areas of work in line with the country program and gender equality policy. Having strategic GEWE outcomes, outputs and indicators can guide programs and project staff in conceptualizing the GEWE interventions and eventually, help develop more gender responsive programs that leads to transformative change. Furthermore, this can facilitate reporting that aggregates results of smaller interventions and activities to a more strategic level especially, if it is reflected and incorporated in the CPD.
- Incorporate more GE related indicators within the CPD and strengthen the monitoring and reporting mechanism to reflect more gender equality and feminist approaches. In the medium and long term this will facilitate having fully fledged feminist evaluation approaches that rely on stakeholder inputs and leadership.
- Develop a more elaborated guiding note to support the Gender Marking process. The note needs to be more elaborate, clear and should deconstruct the loaded terminologies, such as “adequately intergraded, or “significant” that can be misinterpreted.
- Ensure that GEN 1 and GEN 2 projects allocate gender specialists, fully or partially, to support advancing their projects GEWE work. Gender marking of projects should be more flexible and can change during the course of implementation. Accordingly, opportunities may arise to optimize on realisation of GEWE goals.

Responsibility of Management, GE specialist and Monitoring and Evaluation team

Recommendation 2: Strengthen GEWE interventions across sectors through:

- Mandating all projects, regardless of their prospective Gender Marking, to undertake a gender analysis that is relevant, focused, and specific to the project and intervention that is planned. The analysis needs to be grounded with feminist principles that reflect voices of diverse groups and analyse gender relations, access to resources and power, gender situation and perceptions of women, men, girls, and boys of the project idea. Findings and recommendations of the gender analysis should inform the project design, implementation approach, solutions and in developing the projects MEAL plans.
- Ensuring that any proposed project includes at least one output (not indicator) that bridges a gender specific gap, barrier and or situation change and that is aligned with UNDP GEWE core area focus on gender and national priorities and commitments.
- Mandating GEWE considerations in monitoring and reporting plans as well as risk analysis.

- Encouraging projects to focus more on measuring qualitative aspects of gender equality and on reflecting and amplifying diverse groups of women voices in their project management and implementation.
- Adopt more gender responsive budgeting that will allow track the expenditure on GE interventions more accurately.
- Promoting innovative approaches to engage men and boys in gender equality discussions.
- Developing clear strategies to account for the diversity of circumstances (intersectional factors), inclusivity of groups and local knowledge and experience in project implementation and reporting.
- Encouraging longer term interventions that allow for more transformative change.

Responsibility of Management, GE specialist and project review committees

Recommendation 3: Establish and forge partnership with strategic local partners working on GEWE in Jordan :

4. Building on the defined GEWE results framework within core areas, establish a memorandum of understanding with JNCW to collaborate and cooperate on issues of interest and relevance.
5. Establish a repository of gender related studies and documents developed or supported by UNDP for both internal and external use by partners. This includes studies, gender analysis, position papers etc..
6. Develop a database of women led partners that UNDP works with and host frequent reflection and consultations sessions on UNDP GEWE implementation approaches.

Responsibility of GE specialist with department leads

Recommendation 4: Develop a capacity enhancement plan for staff at all levels to promote GEWE and deepen their knowledge through:

4. Annually, provide a series of multilevel trainings for staff on GEWE programming. Training courses should be hands on and discuss practical guidance for strengthening GEWE programming.
5. Host quarterly informal knowledge sharing sessions on thematic issues chosen by staff members themselves. Sessions could be held as round table discussions but need to be based on real examples from UNDP projects and experiences.
6. Strengthen the gender equality focal point role and ensure the reflection of responsibility in their terms of reference and annual goals.

Responsibility of GE specialist with Human resources and management

Recommendation 5: Re-positioning UNDP's role as a catalyst for change in GEWE work through:

6. Reviewing and updating the UNDP Jordan CO Gender Equality Strategy to define a theory of change and GEWE framework for the core areas of work. The strategy should present a results framework that aggregates results of interventions to more strategic outcomes. It should as well define potential areas of work for GEN 3 programs
7. Engaging more in national activities relating to GEWE programming with respect to UNDP core areas of interest.
8. Sharing more of UNDP Jordan CO work on GEWE through social media and meetings. This includes strong presentation of experiences of GEWE programming and of documents produced by UNDP.
9. Capacitating women organisations, especially in remote areas, to negotiate their interests and needs with officials and policy makers while amplifying their voice to shape the local GEWE discourse and actions.
10. Defining UNDP niche among UN agencies to ensure coordination, cooperation and collaboration to advocate for GEWE while ensuring complementarity of work as opposed to duplication of it i.e. delivering as one to support Jordan achieve its commitment to SDGs and international commitments..

Responsibility of GE specialist with Communication and public relations and respective departments

ANNEX 1: Evaluation Matrix

Evaluation matrix

Questions	Purpose	Source	Tools
Criteria : Relevance			
Main Question : <i>How relevant is the project to the context and needs of the target group, particularly women and girls?</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the project goal aligned with a national policy, strategy, or plan? Define which ones. Is it aligned to , UNDP CP and Gender equality outcomes? How ? To what extent are the project's outcomes relevant to women rights and gender equality issues identified in the project gender analysis (if there is one), description or problem statement? To what extent is the project relevant to beneficiaries', particularly women need? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine the alignment of the project with national gender priorities and with beneficiaries' needs 	Secondary Data: UNDP documents, national documents Interviews with partners	Desk review of documents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews with: government partners Funding agencies Other UN agencies National partners Including NGOs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How did the project rationale, including gender analysis inform the project design? How were beneficiaries needs identified? How were community, particularly women voices reflected in the design of the project? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand how the project meets target group, particularly women needs Determine how the project engaged target group, particularly women in its design 	UNDP staff Partners Project participants	Interviews with : UNDP staff Project partners: government and non government organisations Group interviews – particularly Women beneficiaries

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are the project activities appropriate for the local context? How would you change the project to make it more relevant to the outcomes? 	Determine whether the assumptions in the logical framework are valid and have a causal effect.	Secondary Data Partners Project participants	UNDP documents : annual reports, evaluations, publications Interviews with: Project partners Project participants (group interviews) Project field visits
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Questions	Purpose	Source	Tools
Criteria : Effectiveness			
Main Question: <i>To what extent is the project achieving/ or has achieved the intended change reflected in its outcomes?</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent has the project achieved or progressed towards the specified outcomes – assessing each outcome with the respective outputs and activities separately? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine how the project is achieving its intended outcomes. Identify areas of improvement to ensure that the logic of the project design is more relevant 	Secondary Data: UNDP documents Interviews with partners Project participants	Desk review of UNDP documents including but not limited to project reports, reviews and or stories <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews with: government partners Funding agencies Other UN agencies National partners Including NGOs Project field visits (if possible)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What were factors that enabled achievements/progress towards achievement of the project's outcomes? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand aspects that enhanced project achievement of its goals. 	Secondary data UNDP staff	Desk review of project documents Interviews with :

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What were factors that hindered achievements of the project's outcomes? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine whether the factors that helped the project achieve its goals were circumstantial or planned for Determine whether the factors that hindered project realization of its outcomes are circumstantial or could have been avoided 	Partners Project participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNDP staff Project partners: government and non government organisations Group interviews – particularly Women beneficiaries
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did the project result in unintended positive or negative outcomes? What were these outcomes? And who did they impact ? 	Understand the full scope of project outcomes	UNDP staff Partners Project participants	Desk review of project documents Interviews with : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNDP staff Group interviews – particularly Women beneficiaries
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent did the project adopt a human rights-based approach in its design and approach? To what extent did the project adopt a gender equality approach? 	Determine the extent of which the human rights approach and gender equality are being considered in projects	Secondary data UNDP staff Project partners	Desk review of project document Interviews with UNDP staff and partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What can make the project more effective and how? 	Identify lessons learned and good practices that need to be further developed	Secondary data Partners and UNDP staff Project participants	Desk review of project documents Interviews with UNDP project staff, partners' project staff and Project participants

Questions	Purpose	Source	Tools
Criteria: Efficiency			
Main question: <i>To what extent is the project delivering its activities in an economic and timely manner?</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent is the project delivering its activities in an economic and timely manner? • To what extent is the relationship between inputs and outputs timely? • To what extent is the project expenditure justified/rationalized with respect to project? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine whether the projects are cost effective • Identify progress in light of time – taking into consideration COVID contingency 	Secondary Data: UNDP documents UNDP staff Interviews with partners	Desk review of UNDP documents including but not limited to project reports, and budgets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with: • Funding agencies • UNDP staff • Partners staff if involved financially
Questions	Purpose	Source	Tools
Criteria: Sustainability			
Main Question: <i>To what extent will the project continue after its completion?</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the project activities continue after the project finishes? • Will the change introduced be maintained after the project finishes? • What are the factors that enhanced sustainability of the project (in its design? implementation) • What are the factors that hinder and decrease the sustainability potential of the project? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine whether the projects activities, outcomes will continue after project closure • Understand the design factors of the projects that were planned to strengthen sustainability • Understand the design factors of the projects that hindered the sustainability of the project 	Secondary Data: UNDP documents UNDP staff Interviews with partners Project participants	Desk review of UNDP documents including but not limited to project reports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with: • UNDP staff • Partners • Project participants

Annex 2: List of interviews and documents consulted

	List of interviewed Partners
1	Tahfeez Community Based Organisation
2	Centre of Strategic Studies/ University of Jordan
3	Khaldiyyeh Women Cooperative
4	Women Cooperative – WEE project
5	Badi Women Cooperative Society
6	Areen Women Cooperative
7	Al Jawhara Charity
8	Business Development Centre
9	Habibi Valtiberina Association
11	Abu Allanda – Safe Techno plastic industries
12	Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation – Gender Unit
13	Global affairs Canada
14	UNWOMEN
15	Independent Election Commission
16	Kerak Castle Centre for consultation and training
17	UNDP staff for respective projects and representatives from management, as well as operations and GE specialist.

List of shared project related documents

Name of Project	Project Document /Proposal	Annual Reports / Reports	Budget information / expenditure	Other documents
Asila	Summary of project			PPT and press release
Badia	Proposal	4 reports	Included in reports	Badia Restoration Program community action plan (February 2013)
Heart of Amman	Project document			Info graph End line assessment
Linking Human Security and Preventing violent extremism in Jordan	Project document	Final project report		
Preventing violent extremism and building resilience of livelihoods in Jordan through humanitarian development peace nexus and human security approaches	Project document	Final project report		
Rio Convention project	Project document	End of project report		Road map for GE and Gender audit Evaluation report
Rule of Law (Access to Justice)	Project document			
WEE – SWM	Project document	Progress report and End of project report		LM and PMF
Takatof				List of episodes

Country Program Document 2018-2022				
UNDP Jordan GE policy 2019 – 2021				
UNDP Jordan Gender Seal report and 2018-2019 round bench marking Matrix				
UNDP Jordan Mid Term Evaluation Report, April 2021				
GE tools: concept note, quality assurance form, GE training PPT				

ANNEX 3: Partners' questionnaire

Women Empowerment Program: Outcome Evaluation

PARTNERS QUESTIONNAIRE

UNDP – Jordan office is undertaking an outcome evaluation of the Women Empowerment Program. The results of the evaluation will help UNDP – Jordan office strategize to enhance its gender equality and women empowerment **(GEWE)** programs and improve approach in gender responsive policy and positioning. UNDP – Jordan team values the voices and opinions of their partners and stakeholders and are engaging with multiple actors at local and national level to devise an effective, relevant, appropriate, and sustainable gender equality and women empowerment approach. Through this questionnaire we hope to better understand how UNDP – Jordan Gender Equality and Women Empowerment work is perceived.

We very much welcome your opinion and viewpoint and appreciate you taking 10 minutes of your time to respond to this questionnaire.

- 1. In your opinion, which one of the following best describes UNDP Jordan role in advancing GEWE in Jordan :**
 - a. Proactive and leading
 - b. Reactive
 - c. Not active

- 2. Are you aware of UNDP – Jordan GEWE program:**
 - a. Yes
 - b. To certain extent
 - c. No

- 3. To what extent do you think UNDP is mainstreaming a gender equality and women rights approach in its programs:**
 - a. Large extent
 - b. Some extent
 - c. Limited extent
 - d. Not at all

- 4. In your opinion, which of the following objectives should UNDP- Jordan focus on (please mark 3):**
 - a. Promote and advocate for gender equality and women's empowerment in Jordan
 - b. Strengthen the role of women from different social groups in development by advancing their economic, social, and political rights
 - c. Eradicate violence, discrimination and exclusion based on gender
 - d. Enhance UNDP Jordan's work on women empowerment and agency Including gender mainstreaming beyond numbers through contributing to the transformation of gender and power-relations in societies
 - e. Enhance the engagement of men and boys in the change process
 - f. Others _____

5. On a scale of 1 – 5 (1 being least and 5 being most), to what extent should UNDP Jordan focus on promoting gender equality in:

	Less				More
	1	2	3	4	5
Environment and climate change action					
Governance					
Livelihood					

6. In your opinion, does UNDP – Jordan address gender equality in all its programmatic stages (i.e. preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation):

- Yes
- Sometimes
- No
- I do not know

7. In your opinion, to what extent does UNDP- Jordan office

	To large extent	To a certain extent	Below expectations	Not at all	I do not know
a. Have a transformative gender approach					
b. Promote gender equality across all sectors					
c. Adopt a gender responsive approach within project implementation					
d. Have the GE experience to advance transformational change					
e. Have a gender sensitive approach only to its work in which gender needs are stated					
f. Deliver positive gender equality messages					
g. Focus on quantitative measurement of parity between women and men					
h. Address qualitative change in gender dynamics, situation, and power relations					
i. Increase women and girls' access to resources					
j. Increases women and girls' ability to exercise their rights and use of services					
k. Amplify women voices in decision making platforms					
l. Have a feminist approach to addressing development challenges that challenge the patriarchal paradigm and social norms					

8. To what extent is UNDP – Jordan’s partnership approach with national, local and community based women organizations:

	To large extent	To some extent	To a lesser extent
a. Consultative in project design			
b. Consultative during project implementation			
c. Flexible to respond to needs of women and girls			
d. People centered			
e. Innovative and adaptable to address gender power relations and dynamics			

Thank you for taking the time to respond to the questionnaire and should you wish to add any additional comments please feel free to do so.

ANNEX 4: Individual Project Evaluations

The projects included in the evaluation were reviewed from a gender perspective and with respect to their gender mainstreaming approach and targeted activities to women. Accordingly, issues of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability as well as lessons learned, reflections and observations were on gender issues only.

A. Mainstreaming Rio Convention Provision into National Sectoral Policies

Starting date: May 2015

Ending date: May 2019

Total budget: 2,072,480 US \$

The Rio project aimed at ***“mainstreaming Rio Convention provision into key national sectoral policies and / or legislation in Jordan”***. Gender considerations were less evident in the formulation of the project results framework and outputs. The project was designed technically and without attention to women’s role and gender equality. In fact, the environmental and social review of criteria in the project document stated that ***“the project was not likely to significantly impact gender equality and women’s empowerment.”*** The document also noted that the project will adopt an ***“adaptive collaborative management approach that strengthens the inclusion of traditionally marginalized stakeholders such as local women and indigenous tribes in planning and decision-making. Any impact to these social actors are intended to be positive, in a way that demonstrates that their socio-economic priorities can be met through new and innovative approaches for sustainable natural resource management”***. This acknowledgment provided the project team with the opportunity to tackle gender issues during the implementation of the project. Although “add-ons” the introduced activities strengthened the gender dimension of the project through:

- A) Conducting a Gender Stakeholder Analysis that examined ***“the status quo of gender mainstreaming at four interlinked level: policies, institutional capacities, program and accountability and reporting. The framework for this analysis considered the process of implementing gender mainstreaming starting from the wider perspective of policies on the a national level, and cascading down to implementation and reporting at the organisation level.”***⁹
- B) Developing a ***“Roadmap to Gender Mainstreaming into the National Environment management System”*** which aimed at providing the project with ***“practical guidance on how to address gender inequalities related to the environment management system in Jordan at national level”***.
- C) Held a gender mainstreaming training for government stakeholders and actors.
- D) Reaching out to women through the enhancement of the sheep dairy production.

⁹ Gender analysis Results, Mainstreaming Rio Conventions into National Sectoral Policies, Rawan Ababaneh 2018.

E) Women cooperatives were also invited to attend conferences.

The project, and because of the team observation during debriefings for requests for proposals, noted that women led cooperatives had less capacities and access to resources compared to men led cooperatives. Consequently, and to bridge the gaps in abilities while maintaining the integrity of the competitiveness of the process, UNDP – Jordan CO connected interested women led cooperatives to another UNDP project to support them develop project proposals that can be submitted to compete fairly in requests for proposals. Eventually, two women led cooperatives got awarded funding in a competitive process because of the quality and idea of their project. A third women led cooperative applied but failed in the process.

The livelihood part of the project aimed at ***“enhancing the livelihoods of livestock herders through value chain for developing dairy products”***. This was to be achieved through developing capacity plans for cooperatives and to enhance the selected cooperatives abilities to produce high quality dairy products. The project engaged two women led cooperative and 8 men led cooperatives. They were all selected after a mapping exercise of the Badia Rangelands and a review of their dairy production of dairy.

In addition to trainings, the cooperatives also received equipment and where needed received support for renovation. UNDP-Jordan CO also offered mentoring sessions and platforms for sharing information. The cooperatives were also involved in visits to shops that sell dairy as an opportunity to gain experience and to network with potential clients.

Through the project trainings on production, UNDP-Jordan CO focused on standardizing the quality of production to develop a brand name under which all cooperatives produce. Unfortunately, differences continued, and the quality of branding was not maintained.

The livelihood project was inclusive of women but not as a primary target group. Number of women attending the different trainings was proportionally much lower than that of men. In the marketing training offered only 6 out of 26 participants were women, similarly only 28 of the 89 participations were women. This stark difference demonstrates that while the project engaged women, they were not targeted per se and that was evident from their first progress report, which was the only one to report on gender, and it noted that ***“Gender contribution is being considered mainly for the milk processing works. Women’s membership is weak in most of the RLC. However, there are two pure women cooperatives among the targeted communities (Badia Women RLC, Areen Women RLC), they are most active and successful.”***¹⁰

a) Relevance

The Rio project has multiple components which are relevant to gender equality and women empowerment. Nonetheless, the project design and result framework fall short from reflecting the gender gaps and inequalities. The awareness and commitment of the staff to gender equality, and the flexibility within the project helped aligning the project with the UNDP GE policy objectives on livelihoods and mainstreaming. The actions that were undertaken by the team strengthened the project’s alignment and contribution to the

¹⁰ Establishing a Value – Chain Marketing System for Sheep Dairy Products in the Jordan Badia, First progress Report August 2017 P.9

national priorities to improve the economic participation of women and to mainstream gender at policy and institutional levels.

Through developing the Road Map, the project succeeded in not only bringing attention to importance of gender mainstreaming but is developing a framework for action that complemented and bridged the original gap and gender neutrality of the design.

“ the project that one of the women cooperatives submitted was impressive, innovative and reflective of how women interact with climate change. The project that was submitted aimed at reviving and planting a local shrub that is important to the community and to grazing. The approach that was proposed is reflective of the coherency of the idea and comprehensiveness of the approach. It is impressive .”

The livelihood component and enhancing the women led RLC capacities were appropriate tactics to increase the project commitment to gender equality. In fact, the Terminal Evaluation of the project, May 2019, stated ***“The project has paid close attention to gender equality and women’s***

empowerment. This is evident in its selection of women candidates for training and ensuring that women candidates were put forward for training and other project activities. While this may not work out at an ideal fifty – fifty gender ratio in every aspect of the project activity, it is certainly higher than if the project had not actively promoted women’s participation.” (P57).

The choice of the dairy product value chain to the Badia was appropriate as well. One beneficiary noted ***“this is a produce we are familiar with and we know. We are herders and this type of product is not only important to us, but it also help us benefit small herders who face many challenges in selling their products. The choice of the project is not only appropriate but also relevant.”***

b) Effectiveness

Cooperatives have benefited from a range of trainings to help enhance their dairy production and business planning. Technically, the training on standardising production and enhancing the quality of the produce had most impact on women cooperatives, the most memorable training was the one hosted in Dana which focused on sharing experiences and exchanging knowledge. Financial trainings and managing the business had less evident results. Women were unclear about their profit margins and cost of production.

Implications of COVID 19 on the two women cooperatives cannot be ignored. The curfews and lockdown disturbed their marketing plans and reduced their production. More notable, the climate impact and changing patterns of rain has influenced the production of dairy as grazing land is declining. The seasonality of the production of dairy, that is already subject to natural conditions, makes the intervention itself less reliable for a stable and sustainable income generating project. Nonetheless, one cooperative reported that they registered approximately 5000 JD in profit one year. Of that 1200 were deducted for tax and the rest was distributed to the members of the cooperatives (around 30 women).

Marketing and connectivity to markets was considered the most challenging barrier to the women cooperative. Although UNDP -Jordan CO had planned to establish a marketing centre, plans for that were changed after securing a larger commitment to do that in the coming years. Women cooperatives indicated that they needed larger more stable markets

to sell to. Within their communities' women produce dairy products at home and as such the demand for them is lower. Restrictions on women's mobility and access to social network of retail shops has also impeded their progress and ability to connect. In one case, it was reported that ***"we had someone approach us to buy our products, the problem was that he wanted to remove our name as producers and label it with his. It is not fair, and this can jeopardise our work"***. Another noted ***"I connected with a shop to sell the products but shortly they started to negotiate more and eventually, he tried to reduce the price to an amount that was not even covering the cost of production"***.

The flexibility within the project and willingness of the donor to adjust the activity in order to use the funding more effectively helped expand the outreach to four more cooperatives in the Badia. Even though none were women cooperatives, the actual decision to re-allocate the budget intended to buying vehicles to benefiting more cooperatives, was more beneficial to a larger group of people. The vehicles were intended for transfer of products, but since the produced amounts were small, there was no need for them.

Activities within each intervention were well aligned to achieving the outputs and outcomes of the projects. The women led RLC initiatives emerged from local needs to revive medicinal plants, nurture soil degradation, and promote good practices in environmental preservation. In addition to raising awareness of environmental situation, the women were trained to manage greenhouse farming as well as packaging and marketing. Besides becoming a source of income for the cooperative, the cooperative introduced farming practices that interested other members of society and in two more communities as well.

The second project that was funded revived a native shrub that was of immense importance of the community. The shrub is important for people in the Badia as it is known to burn longer and animals graze on it. The seedling nursey helped revive the shrub but regrettably, the cooperative plan to encourage tourists to buy and plant the shrub in Wadi rum and around Disi area, fell short because of the management change in Aseza.

As part of its activities, the Badia project also supported women to shear sheep. Although this is known as a male dominated job, the project supported interested women in advancing their skills in this practice. Breaking stereotypes and norms among Bedouins is a challenging task but is one that not only paves the road for questioning the division of roles but sheds light on women's capacities and abilities to assume roles that they were considered incapable of. The impact of such an intervention is under reported and not effectively measured.

d) Efficiency

Rio convention project, in general, did not incorporate gender equality goals and objectives in its design. However, after managerial decisions to undertake some gender related activities, the project succeeded in bringing attention to the importance of gender equality. Opportunities that were missed to enhance gender mainstreaming and women empowerment in all the project activities undermine the cost efficiency and effectiveness of work.

Badia dairy product component: Approximately, 80% of the budget of the 777,000 US\$ was disbursed by its completion. The remaining 20% were allocated for the permanent exhibit that was postponed. Of this amount the allocation for the women cooperative was roughly

the same as all the others. In fact, the proportion of the financial costs of women in the training was less than that of the others simply due to the fact that there were fewer women. However, women led cooperatives had less access to resources to meet their different needs than that of men led cooperative. Women cooperatives would have benefited from additional training that could have supported them challenge social barriers and increase accessibility to information and resources.

Although the project timeframe extended over a few years, the reported achievements and work was conditioned by the seasonality of dairy production. The level of efficiency of the project is uncertain

“We try to buy from smaller suppliers of milk, this helps us get good prices but ensures that they are benefiting too, especially that they are from our community” Women cooperative

since the production remained to be modest compared to the investment. The number of beneficiaries from the women led cooperatives remain relatively low although they also benefit small sheep herders.

c) Sustainability

The added-on gender activities within the projects and the gender mainstreaming training both encouraged learning and enhancing capacities of different actors. Nonetheless, the extent of which the gender issues continued on the agenda of partners is doubtful. As was noted ***“locally gender equality and women empowerment are not seen as a priority for action and as such, gender equality is frequently considered a donor agenda, until GE is seen as a priority,”*** advancement will remain modest.

The sustainability of the income generating projects were undermined by not only economic challenges that resulted from the pandemic but also by the ability of the women cooperatives to overcome marketing and outreach challenges. In the case of the dairy products, the seasonality of production and impact of climate change raise the risk for success. Plans to establish the permanent outlet for

products, which were postponed, and branding the production under one name were steps towards a strong exit strategy. Nonetheless, complexities in ensuring standard quality of production risked jeopardizing the plan altogether especially as it was noted that ***“not all the cooperatives applied the standard procedures for producing yogurt and cheese, of course this had implication on others. The best solution was to maintain the cooperative name on the brand. Albeit it all influenced each***

“If I were to redesign the project, I will not buy multiple plastic houses as I did, I would buy one glass green house. It is more expensive but with the climate in our area and the winds that blow, we can not keep the plastic houses out, they were damaged and we lose productions. This comes with knowledge that now we have”. Women Interviewee

other”. Plans for a quality assurance unit, or even a body that test the production to grant it the brand name, would ensure a more standard production that will shift the small production in each production to a larger value chain that is more sustainable.

d) Lessons learned, reflections and observations

Recognizing that the project fell short from incorporating GEWE in the design phase does not necessarily imply that the project cannot address gender issues. The flexibility to adapt and include additional gender related activities, in this case, succeeded in highlighting the relevance of addressing gender inequalities, accounting for women voices, and reaching out to women.

Observations from actors in the project suggested that women community voices had innovative proposals that reflected their interest and need. This space to express their viewpoints and solutions to existing environmental problems, encouraged the women and strengthened not only their self-confidence but also their self-efficacy. Women working in the cooperatives reported changes in women agency at home and within their community. One reported ***“I feel much stronger now. I used to be shy and had little opinion at home. Now, I am listened to, and my children look up to me. My involvement in this project has changed my life. People tell me that the money I make is little, I say it is better than nothing. Just by coming here [meaning to the cooperative] I am learning.”*** The UNDP project team’s ability to adapt and adhere to rising circumstances was decisive in strengthening the outcomes of the rather small scaled initiative.

*“cooperative members do not like to take risks, us women get scared. I do not want to take major risks but we need to start thinking differently about moving forward with the business. The cooperative capital is not touched, because members do not want to lose the money. This does not work. I fight in some meetings to push for decisions. Sometimes it works and others it does not. Men take more risk and this is why they expand their work”.
Women cooperative*

The power structure and familial relation within communities can influence the project direction significantly. Unfortunately, little measures can be taken to avoid any repercussions on the project, and in one case, one family endured the implications of family feud on cooperative, simply to avoid imprisonment of their sister.

e) Conclusion

Even though the project’s original design did not reflect any commitment to GEWE, the implementation of the project succeeded in introducing a few significant activities to emphasise the importance and relevance of GEWE in this sector. That noted, the activities remained as add-on and were not interlinked or sustained. Women’s engagement was still approached with gender neutrality and the gender mainstreaming training and road map influence on the project was not evident or reported on.

Structural issues of managing business, marketing as well as governing and analysing business risks were tackled as if they are the same for both women and men. Regrettably, women have compounded challenges with social restrictions on their movement, interaction, and ability to negotiation. Due to patriarch paradigm women’s knowledge, and skills in managing and leading cooperatives require further development and sometimes, more assurances. Networking events were highlighted as most beneficial for women, as one stated ***“I realized that I am not on my own and there are others who struggle like us. You cannot imagine how talking to other women can generate internal motivation and perseverance”.***

The absence of a modality to scale up the dairy value chain production and without an exit plan, the initial projects are at higher risk of changing course and de-sizing even more. Already, the initiatives are relatively small in size and their inability to produce at a larger scale undermines the cost-efficiency of the project and its effectiveness. High investments in equipment benefit only a few members of the society and the value added, if not maintained, is insignificant. Nonetheless, challenging the social norms of supporting women's economic empowerment has longer term significance and effectiveness in advancing women agency and economic empowerment. This was evident in the reflections of all interviewed actors but was not well measured nor reflected in the project results, reporting and lessons learned. The potential to build on what was considered gains in women empowerment could have modelled and furthered the principles of leaving no one behind and actively engaging women as change agents in development, and more specifically, environment activities.

B. Prevention of Violent Extremism (Heart of Amman, Takatof)

UNDP -Jordan Co Prevention of Violent Extremism (PVE) programs have been ongoing since 2015 and have adopted a human security approach. The progression in the approach of addressing gender considerations is also evident in the project documents as well. The earlier versions tackled gender issues with more reserve than for example in the "Linking Human Security and Preventing Violent Extremism in Jordan Project" (March 2020 – September 2021). In that project document the narrative introduced women not as victims only but as having a role in deepening extremism and or in preventing it. As a result, targeting women became more relevant in the project activities and in implementation approaches.

Engaging women in community consultations, trainings, awareness raising efforts and even targeting women police and women for livelihood initiatives, all strengthened the gender aspect of the program. However, the results framework of all the projects are modest in committing to bridging gaps and or in addressing women rights issues. At an output level women are subsumed in vulnerable groups categories or as part of inclusivity strategy even though at times, women were directly targeted.

The Heart of Amman initiative emerged from the Livelihood component of the consecutive PVE projects. The initiative, which became a flagship program for UNDP, has multiple activities that focus on increasing the economic opportunities for vulnerable communities, of whom women are a part. The Heart of Amman Project evolved to include sub-projects such as "Takatof" and the "Enhancing self-reliance and inclusion prospect for displaced affected communities" (Vulnerable Iraqi and Host Communities) in addition to having employment initiatives implemented through third parties. This assessment tackled the livelihood aspect of the PVE projects in addition to Takatof. It did not engage on other activities and how they engaged women except from a reporting viewpoint.

i. Heart of Amman

The Heart of Amman programme was launched in 2019 as part of the "Preventive Violent Extremism and Building Resilience of livelihoods in Jordan through Humanitarian

development Peace nexus and Human Security approaches”. It aims to **“Increase socio-economic self-reliance and livelihoods and strengthen the engagement of all community actors of downtown Amman, including Jordanians and Syrian refugees”**. In the development of their activities. “The program falls under the PVE components relating to enhancing economic resilience of vulnerable communities at risk to violence extremism.” The Sustainable livelihoods activities included:

1. Supporting vulnerable communities through socio-economic integration, this activity delivers soft skill training for participants in 66 days. After which, the participants can choose one of two streams: a) they can join an on-the-job training opportunity in an industry or a company or b) engage in entrepreneurial activities after pitching in a proposal for a start-up. This activity targeted vulnerable groups including women, refugees, and persons with disability.
2. Vocational Training for vulnerable groups, including women, persons with disability and Iraqi refugees. This training also has an on-the-job training opportunity, but placements are conditioned by regulations and working permissions that the government sets. Different training course were offered by an intermediary organisation for the groups. Participants had to apply, and they were screened and interviewed.

a) Relevance

Within the framework of resolution 1325, Jordan developed a national action plan to enhance women in promoting peace and security while promoting social cohesion. UNDP-Jordan CO work on preventing violent extremism falls within the framework of national action and priorities. The two strategies of promoting women as active participants in preventing extremism and improving their livelihood situations are both relevant.

The contextual analysis of the projects falls short from providing strategic and practical insights to inform activities. Results remain gender neutral even though they can be more specific and relevant to gender inequalities. Women’s voices are not always captured in the consultation process, and this influenced the level of responsiveness to their needs. One interviewee said **“I had friends that wanted to register but could not after they heard the course design. Basically, they have children and could not accommodate, the intensity and timing.”**

Women participants thought it was appropriate, and even incentivising, to have an on-the-job training following the courses, whether soft skills or vocational, they took. In one case a participant indicated **“I was attending the training with an end goal in my mind. I need to work, and this was a golden opportunity. I am not well educated and getting a job, even if for a short time, was a breakthrough. I am Syrian, and finding work is not easy. Now, I am hoping to impress so I can stay in my job.”** Another participant noted **“We are not allowed to work in Jordan, so I wanted to learn a new skill, get some training and perhaps work from home here and when I get to my immigration cleared, I will have a skill to use for a living”** Iraqi women refugee.

b) Effectiveness

There was general satisfaction with the structure, format, and opportunities that the livelihood interventions offered. Courses that were offered by Business Development Centre, were well received by companies and participants and resulted in more effective relations and long term working arrangements. The onset of COVID did influence the project implementation and companies' willingness to hire. Participants expectations are frequently more aspirational than what companies offer and as a result some did not accept the offers. For women, families refused certain placements because of social norms and stereotypes. More realistic expectations need to develop not only for employment opportunities but also within entrepreneurial activities. More guidance was needed to support individuals pitch realistic financial studies that would be considered.

Participation of women is sought at all levels of the program and while this increases the representation and outreach it does not

necessarily imply that women voices were considered nor that the project challenged gender stereotypes, gaps, and the imbalance of power structure. While parity and quantitative measures are important, the approach to addressing gender inequalities is reserved. Maintaining gender neutral

"I will miss the spirit of the group, and I hope we will keep in touch. The memories we have made with some of the ladies are unforgettable. We go downtown together, started exploring things together. It is great and honestly it is something I did not dare do before."
An Iraqi participant from Habibi project

approach undermines the differentiated needs for women and men, whether in livelihoods or in public engagement. The project has had unintentional positive impacts but the potential to challenge gender discriminatory dynamics and to support women overcome barriers could have been optimized.

Women participants indicated that a strong component of the program that motivated them to continue was simply having a women support group from the training. One participant indicated ***"I was going to quit several times, but the ladies motivated me, they also stood by me. This comradeship is something you do not find easily, especially for us as non-Jordanians"***. The importance of meeting others and engaging with others, from different nationalities, helped women gain more self confidence and courage to challenge their own circumstances. The dynamics of the groups, at least in the Habibi vocational training, for women had significant impact on them and on strengthening social cohesion among different community members.

As more women take on employment or start engaging in entrepreneurial activities, their families get affected as well. On the one hand, their families benefit from additional income from women's work as one said ***"I am now seen as an income earner, my children look at me differently."*** On the other hand, the families, especially girls, may end up having more care responsibilities as one noted ***"I work long hours. This the job. I am the head of the household. I am not there when the children go home, but eldest girl helps around the house. She cleans and heats food for her brothers. Her brothers help when they can but they are younger than her. I can not do no much anymore and she knows it. It is either that or we have no income."*** Sometimes women and their families resort to coping mechanism that result in reinforcing gender roles and or present higher risks on the most vulnerable members, sessions to help families cope may increase the effectiveness of the

projects as a whole, and reduce the likelihood of having negative coping mechanism and unintended results.

c) Efficiency

Due to the onset of COVID and the defence law restrictions the training programs were disrupted and extended over longer periods of time than anticipated. Although women expressed their liking of the trainings, they hinted that at times, the lengthy commitments becomes more challenging as they juggle home responsibilities and unpaid care work.

The timeframe for the projects themselves are realistic in normal circumstances but are a bit tight with COVID. The restrictions on movement, outreach all impacted job placements, training, and accessibility to training facilities. From a financial point of view, the estimated cost was considered reasonable however, the delays in processing payments and transfers from UNDP Jordan CO had implications on participants. With delayed stipends some of the participants had to borrow money to continue to attend. This off course ends up with a rather unwelcomed situation for a few of them.

d) Sustainability

Enhancing capacities of women through either learning new skills or matching them with an employment or an entrepreneurial opportunity, is the key to sustainability. Although women's confidence and outlook changed based on their own account, the coaching and support mechanism that the women benefited from will be much lower and hence, their motivation is likely to decline. While it is difficult to structure such support after the project is completed, it is necessary to perhaps have a few group discussion about future steps, challenges they are likely to encounter and how and where they can get additional support from. This does not only apply to women who receive vocational training for entrepreneurs' activities but also for women who become employed.

e) Lessons learned, reflections and observation

Addressing gender equality within the project design has helped structure the overall direction for engaging women and being more responsive. It also raised the level of accountability to gender issues and to women empowerment.

Although the programmatic approach recognises the importance of being responsive to gender equality, the potential to adopt more transformational strategies that challenge power relations are not fully explored across all activities. The gender neutral narrative, which assumes that women and men conditions, opportunities to access and control their surroundings undermines the restrictive barriers that deepen inequalities at different levels. For example, there is little reference to how women engage in other project activities beyond attendance. Barriers to persons with disabilities, who are a target group are not explored.

Some of the introduced vocational training courses offered new non typical courses for women to participate in. This in itself encouraged some women to join especially that it presented “non traditional” work.

Adopting a comprehensive approach in working with companies, who are hosting course graduates, on diversity and gender issues generates a more supportive enabling environment for women.

f) Conclusion

The projects are relevant to enhancing women’s economic empowerment but less so in advancing women’s leadership and public roles. The activities and outputs that were implemented are well aligned to achieve the intended gender related outputs, however, there is more potential to maximise impact through challenging structural barriers.

ii. Takatof

Project start date: May 2020

Project end date : November 2020

Takatof is a UNDP funded project that was time sensitive and responsive to the COVID -19 pandemic. The project purpose emerged from a need to reinforce political stability through highlighting social cohesion. It aimed to show how Jordanians stood “together/takatof” during the pandemic through sharing experiences, reflections and on the ground voluntary initiatives that nurtured the spirit of collaboration, social cohesion, and cooperation. The project through 18 webinars was to discuss strategic topics that can inform the way forward in advancing the knowledge, solutions and actions tackling COVID 19 long term impact.

The project was designed jointly between UNDP-CO Jordan and the Centre for Strategic Studies, University of Jordan, after UNDP-CO Jordan approached them. Together, they determined the activities and explored the structure of the project. The Centre For Strategic studies implemented the project. Already, the centre has a strong outreach through the University Radio to the university students.

The webinar themes were selected jointly with UNDP – Jordan country office and included a diversity of issues tackled health, industry, agriculture, gender, elderly, and persons with disability. Each webinar had at least 4 speakers, at least one of whom was a women (out of 79 speakers around 30 were women), and they included a subject expert (either local or international), official, and a community based voluntary initiative. Subtitles were added to the pre-recorded webinars.

a) Relevance

The project was a time sensitive initiative that aimed at emphasizing the role of social cohesion, which is in line with UNDP-Jordan CO objectives. Bringing attention to the cooperation and collaboration within communities while endorsing the role of women is part of the UNDP – Jordan office “positive messaging” approach as well. As part of the guidelines, the intervention sought to include women in each seminar and that insured inclusivity. Nonetheless, the extent of which the initiative was relevant to gender needs and women priorities, is uncertain. The session on the impact of the pandemic on women, particularly Gender Based Violence, was relevant to the emerging vulnerabilities and risk women faced as a result of curfews, lockdowns and mobility restrictions; but other sessions fell short from drawing attention to the differing situations, conditions and experiences that women and men have.

b) Effectiveness

By design, the intervention was short and was the first online intervention. The agreed-on sessions were delivered and each focused on a thematic issue that brought on policy level discussion and community solutions. Eventually, 6 position papers were developed to capture the experiences and lessons learned. Although, the understanding of the purpose and use of the papers varied with the partner, they were primarily used as internal documents.

The structure of the sessions helped highlight the social cohesion among communities but fell short from featuring the gender inequalities that were deepened by the pandemic. Although there was constant emphasis on representation of women and gender issues, the overall approach sought to address issues ***“from a human perspective without distinguishing men and women, as the pandemic impacted everyone” (interviewee)***. The gender-neutral approach to the themes, led to lost opportunities of bringing attention to the differentiated impact of the pandemic on women and men lives.

The online webinars on the Elderly and Women were considered most impactful by the project staff. They brought attention to vulnerabilities that were discreet and highlighted the systemic and structural institutional and social gaps for these groups. As one of the interviewees noted: ***“hearing about how one lady managed to mobilize volunteers to help the elderly in their community was simply impressive. It just made me think that such a group was simply forgotten at that time, she had started care for older people long before the pandemic.”***

Due to the short timeframe of the project, sessions were designed quickly and led the organisers to resort to prominent speakers who are well known in their fields but whose voices are continuously heard. The potential to optimize on hearing new voices was frequently compromised for the sake of adhering to the project timeframe.

The gender related webinar was impactful in presenting community solutions that provided women with

necessary support to reduce their vulnerabilities and take action, but it was one within the 18 webinars. Albeit, the evidence for demonstrating the impact of the session was not available since the project monitoring and evaluation system was basic and short termed.

The purpose for subtitling was debatable. Not only was it time consuming to subtitle the webinars but it also meant that they were pre-recorded. Having live webinars may have

sparked more interaction with audience and perhaps shed light to additional issues, initiatives and inequalities that were under the radar. At this point, audiences' interaction was simply on the recipient side as opposed to nurturing a two way communication model.

c) Efficiency

As per partners' perspective the financial allocation for the project was sufficient for producing the webinar. The cost-effectiveness of subtitling was hardly measured and while this may be contributing to increased access to information, the timeliness and audience of the webinars may have justified limiting the subtitling to English speakers only as opposed to having English subtitles to all the Arabic speakers.

d) Sustainability

Broadcasting and hosting the webinars on UNDP-Jordan CO website facilitates higher accessibility to people. Nonetheless, considering the time-sensitivity of the project to that period, the interest and outreach are somewhat limited. The position papers were not circulated, and their influence is limited. Some selected initiatives however, managed to establish a network of contacts that may support them in the future.

This was a relatively short intervention and the expectations to sustain it are limited.

e) Lessons learned, reflections and observations

The review of the project and based on the reflection of the project team it was apparent that:

- the flexibility and speed in designing and launching the project enabled it to attend to the issues of concern at the most appropriate timing.
- having resources available and selecting a well-established partner with an outreach ability, all contributed to the project achievements.
- Emphasizing women's participation and the integration of gender equality perspective led to having satisfactory representation of women voices but more was needed in terms of structuring the reflection and tackling of gender inequalities, gaps and or even success stories.
- Establishing an understanding among partners about expectations from the activities needed more discussion and clarification. Even on a gender perspective, more guidance from UNDP - Jordan CO would have been useful.
- Announcements of the project were limited and as such the outreach was lower than what it could have been.
- Shifting to more mainstream media outlets would have generated more interaction with a larger group of people even though it was more expensive.
- Having live broadcasts of the webinars would have generated more interaction with the public and shed light on concerns, gender inequalities and gaps.

- Considering additional activities that could have emphasized the webinar message and concluded the outcome, could have endorsed the importance of social cohesiveness. For example, having infographics, animated videos etc.

f) Conclusion

The project focused more on the quantitative aspect of women representation as speakers and while some attention was directed to gender inequalities and violations of women's right, it could have been easily enhanced by introducing guiding principles to each session to address gender issues more directly. The relevance of the project to addressing women empowerment and gender equality as outlined in UNDP – Jordan CO gender policy is modest and is less so for national priorities. The time-sensitivity of the project suggests that its sustainability is less considerable than the significance of its impact. Having raised awareness of voluntary initiatives and demonstrating the social cohesion among community members in action, led to encouraging people more and acknowledged as well as appreciated those who took action. This was the purpose of the initiative and although it was met, it could have been more innovative and effective to optimize the discussion about gender equality and women empowerment.

C. Asila

a) Background

Project start date: June 2019

Project end date: May 2021

Budget: \$143,968

Asila, presents a modality of cooperation with the Private Sector, in this case Unilever. The project aimed at empowering Jordanian women and refugees in rural areas to establish home-based and micro business through Unilever in kind support, training schemes to sell their products and financial grants. The project operated in collaboration with two local consultants who oversaw the implementation of the trainings, followed the progress of participating women, and engaged with community members and leaders as needed.

A total of 23 participants were trained on financial literacy, accounting, marketing, and legal frameworks to establish home-based businesses. Of the trained women 6 received individual grants to help them establish their businesses and two registered and licensed their business.

b) Relevance

The project objectives are well aligned with national priorities, UNDP-Jordan country program and GE policy objectives to increase women's economic participation and empowerment especially for vulnerable women. Activities within

"A participant was able to survive on the income from her small business after her sister fraudulently took her money. Her independence demonstrated the importance of self-reliance and control over resources."

Implementing partner

the project were consistent with the project design and with women needs to increase their income and establish a more sustainable livelihood. The training subjects delivered to women at the start of the project are relevant and fundamental to realizing the project outcomes.

The modality of work that Unilever introduced required more adaptation to the context of remote areas in Jordan. ***“The idea is good but since we are a small community selling the same products, at the beginning competition defeated the purpose, it should have been designed differently and with consideration to our society”*** (Participant).

c) Effectiveness

The project modality which prioritized Unilever interests to engage women in selling predetermined products generated more competition among the women than collaboration. Women sold products at cheaper prices, sometimes at a loss, to report their targets. While initially, the project activities appeared to undermine the realization of development goals and prioritized business goals, the adaptability and flexibility demonstrated by UNDP and Unilever to adhere to the feedback from women, realigned the project activities to achieve results. Women were offered the choice of products to sell and as such the competition reduced and distribution of market share settled to some extent.

Increasing women’s income helped improve familial living conditions especially during the difficult times of COVID. Reported stories indicate that women’s position and role in their household have improved. Some women also involved their older sons and daughters in selling products to manage their workload and adhere to client demands. This helped generate more income and encouraged the youth to participate, an unexpected positive result of the project.

Although women reported that the 10 day trainings they received were useful and helpful for their business, it was evident that additional training to support women enhance their self-confidence and negotiation skills would have enhanced the project outcomes. Additionally, conducting a needs assessment to inform the project design and to help reach an agreement that satisfies Unilever and UNDP – Jordan CO.

Even though the project was disrupted because of the COVID pandemic, women who established small kiosks were able to provide the communities with commodities and having a source of income helped women cope better especially in financial management. Women’s ability to sell commodities during curfews, especially since some areas, markets were further out, helped them gain more confidence and power.

“I have learnt to negotiate, plan financially and above all, I started to stock products as needed by my clients. I sometimes buy by bulk and then sell by kilo. I asked my brother to bring me rice and when we opened it to package it, it was bad. I sent him back with it. Before I never dared to do that.”
Participant

Transparency of criteria in selecting project beneficiaries for the grants was unclear to the participants and while the space to engage women more actively, the voice of women appeared to be marginalized at certain points.

d) Efficiency

The timing of the intervention effected its flow, however the duration was considered sufficient to implement the activities but could have benefited from being longer to coach women in their businesses. This would have helped ensure that project activities take their due course. The financial support of the project to the women was considered sufficient to help them start up their activities.

e) Sustainability

The project modality relies on the sustainability of established businesses and the continuation of retail selling by interested women. As an approach, the design relies on the collaboration and leadership of Unilever. The scale of the project as a pilot is small and the replication of it may be challenging especially as the market size remains limited.

f) Lessons learned, reflections and observations

- Unilever's working approach differs than that of UNDP-Jordan CO. UNDP has more of a developmental and empowering approach whereas Unilever is interested in

"No one used to ask me anything at home, now, I am more involved. He consultants me more, he also wants to know how much profit I make [laughed]. You know, I installed the windows of the house and am furnishing it. I am gaining more power". A participant

expanding their market share. Negotiation about the modality and its application as well as the role of the participants should be more comprehensive and thorough.

- The modality is built on competitiveness to sell more as supposed to collaboration among women to increase sales, this is particularly challenging in a

small environment with limited number of clients.

- Engaging women more and being flexible to their needs led to more effective implementation approaches. Indeed, having women pitch their business with a business plan, generated higher commitment and ownership by the women to their ideations.

g) Conclusion

Although the project focus is relevant to national, UNDP and local priorities, its scale and length of operation raise doubts about its replicability or expansion in remote area. Participating women indicated that the project activities inspired their desire to engage in income generating activities. Knowledge and resources continue to be barriers for women to establish a small business. The scalability of the project is difficult especially in less crowded environments. Structured group modalities of retail sales may be a more efficient and effective to explore in remote areas.

The partnership with private sector helped establish direct links between women and suppliers, however, more effort is needed to support the private sector in adopting successful business models that promote women empowerment and development. The contrast in expectations, interest and approaches between private sector, UNDP Jordan CO can undermine the effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the initiative.

D. Access to Justice

Project starting date: September 2019

Project end date: September 2020

Budget : US\$300,000

a) Background

The project had a delayed start which considerably reduced the timeframe for implementation. The 12 month project was reduced to 4 months implementation and accordingly, project activities were forfeited. What was actually implemented was not even included in the main project design. Stakeholders and partners off the project were not fully on board, even though the project addressed what at that time was a priority, the interest and desire to collaborate was difficult to secure in the project framework.

Within the four months of implementation the project succeeded in collaborating with local CBOs to create local hubs that can provide basic legal advice for the “Gharimat” but more importantly to refer them to specialised services. A study was conducted on the situation of the “Gharimat”. Training for CBO personnel on legal issues were also delivered and in Irbid an open day was held. The open day succeeded in reaching out to more than 500 “Gharimat” women and kick started the project activities. A data base was developed for the use of the CBOs but unfortunately, to the date of review, it was not used.

b) Relevance

The project, which aimed to ***“strengthen women’s access to justice while increasing women’s foot-print as entrepreneurs by developing their legal and financial knowledge and their ability to use financial on-line tools to access microfinance opportunities”***, is relevant to the overarching national and UNDP – GE policy goals. Women access to justice is impeded by multiple barriers and working with judicial system to promote gender justice especially for the “Gharimat” ¹¹.

Although the design of the project activities would have contributed to achieving the project goals, the assumptions made within the design were doubtful. The initial project was to be hosted under a livelihood project, which was neither compatible nor financially feasible to accept. The project partners, in this case, Ministry of Justice were not on board with the project activities and approach. Their collaboration was difficult to secure even though the activities would have enhanced gender justice. The project was not as relevant to the partners as initially perceived. Moreover, there were some assumptions made that reflected the inadequacy of the contextual diagnosis. Relying on already confidential information as a source for identifying participants was ill-advised. Falling short from engaging the Judicial institute for training judges prolonged the process to the extent that

¹¹ Women who can not pay back their loans and debts and who were at risk of being legally pursued. In some situations, formal lending agencies took action against women, which led to social uproar. Nevertheless, many women were still faced with the reality of their debts.

the training was not delivered. While reasons for the delays can be attributed to the pandemic and online operation, there was also clear lack of perceived priority for the activities.

At a community level, the CBO recognised the importance of the activity and its relevance but gave it less of a priority over other community needs since the scope and scale of the problem touches only a group of the community. Nonetheless, it was recognised that this group of women were particularly vulnerable and had no services. This initiative was of importance to the participants and while they would have appreciated financial support, it was reported that they appreciated and recognised the importance of the legal and financial knowledge they gained. In fact, some expressed their regret that they did not have this information before they were trapped in debt.

c) Effectiveness

The project expected output to “**enhance equitable access to a gender responsive judicial process and gender inclusive financial system for women in Amman and Irbid**” had a number of indicators that were not achieved however, two indicators were partially achieved the first related to “**legal and financial counselling hubs mapping and gap analysis**” and “**coordination/referral mechanism established to support better process flow and enhancing capacities of partners counselling hubs**” was partially achieved as per interviews. In Irbid alone, 30 women were referred to services because of the 4 months activities.

The implemented activities were completed within a tight timeframe and as a result, some activities were difficult to measure. That noted, in Irbid in particular, the interest of the CBO partner elevated the impact of the project and demonstrated how the

“Women are very hesitant to talk, we need to assure them all the time that there are no cameras and that their stories will not be shared. Some of the stories that the women are heartbreaking. Many women are pressured into taking loans by their male relatives: husband, and sons, who eventually leave them to pay the debt. What is disturbing is that many women are unaware of the consequences of taking the loans.” Implementing partner

suggested hub, in the original design, could evolve. The training to the CBO staff was effective in that it enhanced their knowledge of legal issues and helped prepare them to interface with the women seeking their counsel. The open day for the Gharimat succeeded in bringing attention to their issues, which were underestimated even by the CBOs. By generating a safe space for the Gharimat, some of whom had legal charges against them, the project supported them through the council they received and through referring to other organisations. Women were also encouraged to join other activities, not related to the project, so as to support them tackle the psychological stress they endure. The supplementary activities provided to women helped them cope better with their situations and even though such activities were not part of the project, they helped enhance the effectiveness of it. In fact, it was repeatedly noted that the women emphasised the importance of having support groups, as was noted “**they used the focus group discussion we hosted as venting out sessions. Our services were less important sometimes,**” (Implementing partner) This unexpected outcome provided women emotional support that

encouraged them to visit more and to join other activities. Women also became the voice of the project to their peers: ***“We had referrals from the women themselves as they told others about the information we provided and our activities, we did not expect that but that was helpful.”***

The project fell short from reporting on its indicators simply because the activities were not implemented. The indicators were also derived from SDG goal 5 indicators, and that seemed ambitious for the scale and scope of the project.

UNDP-Jordan mapping of NGO helped find partners who had strong outreach with the community and knowledge of delivering council and referrals. Limitations of the project offered only training to the organisations and used computers. The choice of CBOs was pivotal to implementing the pilot and to evaluating the modality of work.

Furthermore, the data base that was developed though the project was not used even though it was shared with partners. The partners’ have little incentive to use the new system especially as they had their own mechanisms of work.

The stress generated on CBO staff, delivering council to the Gharimat, impacted them negatively. Attention to how the staff can be supported is vital to reduce the adverse impact that can evolve. Staff noted that ***“as much as women need to vent out, we also hear distressing stories that impact us. We need to learn how to manage situations.”***

d) Efficiency

The project timeframe was too tight for implementing all its activities. Even the alternative activities implemented were not fully realized. Financially, expenditure on some interventions was of no value to the project. The data base developed was not used at all when indeed such money could have reaped better results if spent on activities with the CBOs or even to advance their capacities. A good proportion of the budget was spent on activities that failed to enhance the project impact.

From a managerial viewpoint, the length for hiring consultants and even staff in projects of 12 month duration should be expediated or pre-calculated in the timeframe of the project. With some turn over and late recruiting of new staff, in addition to the onset of the pandemic, the project was considerably underperforming.

e) Sustainability

The project original design invested in enhancing the judicial system and capacity to deal with women’s access to justice. However, with the changes to the project, the sustainability of it relies on the implementing CBOs, who already suffer from the scarcity of resources. The fact that the project was not funded for second phase as was planned led to loss of investment in what could have been an interesting modality for enhancing women’s knowledge of financial transportation and empowering them to assume more agency in financial matters.

f) Lessons learned, reflections and observations

A contextual and gender analysis are important to undertake before designing the project for it to be more relevant, effective, and efficient.

The project should be informed by stronger consultations with stakeholders. Implementing partners need to be on board during the design phase of the project to avoid withdrawal as was the case in this project. An MOU can establish more formalities on commitment, otherwise, the implementation of the project may be hampered.

Recruiting consultants for assignments should be planned for within the project framework. Procedures take time and as such, the achievement of results and task was affected.

Working with vulnerable groups that are at risk, requires additional considerations. More trainings are needed for persons delivering the counselling to provide safe spaces for women to come to. The working team need to learn how to cope with the stress that they encounter is listening to distressing stories that women share.

Venting out and sharing stories was one of the most effective tools to help raise awareness of issue and to generate an unthreatening mode of support for women.

g) Conclusion

The design was not well informed by the reality of context and situation. Accordingly, the implementation of the original design was not viable nor realistic. The partner commitment was not effectively secured and assumptions about implementation crumbled. This led to redesigning the project and adjusting it to ensure the fulfilment of particular aspects of it, mainly the establishment of pilot hubs. Even then the hubs sustainability relied mostly on their host CBOs, who had little support to maintain them.

The relevance of the project was perceived differently by people but the activities that were implemented were effective to a certain extent. Unfortunately, the time frame of the project and complexities in delivering part of the project activities had led it to be less efficient. Factors that reduced the effectiveness of the project can be attributed to delays in project launch, weak gender and situation analysis, inadequate discussions with partners to establish their commitment and clarify their roles.

This intervention is closer to an activity that initiated awareness of the “Gharimat” situation and the significance of local CBOs role in delivering safe space to engage them in dialogue and support them. Regrettably, the scope and scale remain limited despite meeting the need of an otherwise at risk group. Potential for advancing, replicating the modality of operation can expand the outreach and help engage more women.

E. Improving Solid Waste Management and Income Creation in Host Communities

Project start date: March 2015

Project end date: October 2019

Project budget: CN\$ 19,882,672

a) Background

The project focused on solid waste management in the northern region of Jordan and had multiple components including infrastructure rehabilitation as well as a livelihoods and community engagement. Gender consideration were cross cutting and evident in the livelihoods and community engagement components. In fact, the economic opportunities identified women as a target group. Other outcomes included indicators to measure women's engagement and participation at different consultations, trainings, and activities. To summarize:

- More than 80 women working at the Norther Shouneh Municipality were trained on managing solid waste,
- Approximately 60 women were trained on green points management
- Approximately 45 women were involved in setting up and launching the compost packaging facility in Khalideyeh
- More than 15 women participated in the youth groups,
- More than 442 women participate in community sessions.

b) Relevance

Solid waste management issues are not at the heart of Jordanian women priorities. Nonetheless, engagement of women in decision making processes and improving women's livelihoods are. The project presents an interesting model of how gender considerations should be tackled in a coherent approach. The proposed activities to engage women in solid waste management, recycling and sorting as well as packaging compost was not appealing nor of interest to women. Nonetheless, the fact that the northern governorates registered almost double the waste production due to the surge in population (as a result of the Syrian Refugee influx), posed a potential opportunity especially for the economically vulnerable groups. The change in perception about the appropriateness of engaging in this sector and as a community demonstrates the need for informed action and intensive awareness raising to support community, particularly women groups to break the cycle of their comfort zones. As one interviewed said ***"of course when they told me to start working on collecting waste, I refused the idea. Not only me everyone else around me as well. This is simply thought of and shameful. But, after I heard about the initiative and started recognising how much litter we have. I decided to join for a short time. I never thought I would say this, but honestly, this is much better than learning how to sew or cook. This is an opportunity that***

has lots of potential and at the same time we are helping our community. Some of the most fierce opponents to me working now want me to find them work with us.” Another noted “when we joined everyone dismissed the idea, when they saw us making money out of “garbage” they started seeing the value of it. Now some houses refuse to give us garbage they sell it to their own benefit. Yes, we are losing money but it shows how people change their minds.”

c) Effectiveness

Having a coherent model to addressing solid waste management with community participation and engagement while also mainstreaming gender helped optimize on project activities to realise the outcomes and outputs. Testimonies by women indicate that their work with UNDP-Jordan Office had significant impact on themselves, their families, and communities. On the one hand, women’s work was more accepted when in some cases women indicated that they were not allowed to work. On the other hand, the solidarity and support women gained from working side by side supported them cope with their own challenges. One interviewee said *“I am not from Jordan, and I came to Mafraq to live with my husband, no family no support. I did not go out of my home until I joined here. Now I walk back and forth to work, they all know me and most important, I feel I have a family at the facility. I will not trade this for anything.”*. Another noted *“I am responsible for my home. I provide for my children. At the beginning, it was difficult to manage my work at home and my work, but the support I got her and the spirit of all the women simply motivated me. It became my venting space and I make money. Two in one... a great deal”*.

Conditions of work and safety were both matters of importance to attend to in the types of jobs generated. Women were subjected to carrying packages of compost, or they had laborious work in sorting waste. In both cases they were trained on safety measures, nonetheless, the nature of jobs and initial pay reinforce the low status of jobs that women tend to engage in, in general. That noted, women themselves acknowledge that these jobs are better than none and that they have all the facilities to ensure their safety and comfort. Women indicated that the “transformational” change that they felt in their households and with their children and neighbours, off sets the type of work they do.

Decision making processes and power relations have evolved differently as women’s access to resources and group support strengthened their agency. One interviewee said *“My family used to make fun of what I am doing, now when they saw the money I am making, and how I am making decisions about spending it, their views have changed. Sure it is not considered the best job, but at least it is a job that pays my loans.”*

Listening to women and collaborating with women supported them to take more ownership of the projects and to enhance their own capacities. Both in Shouneh and Khalideyeh women appreciate how their voices were acknowledge and heard. In Khalideyeh however, and since the project with UNDP has ended, the women noted that *“With UNDP management, we had a voice as a CBO, now with the new management of the project, we only rent the premise. We are not consulted, they do not care for our opinion.”*

Community consultations had significant impact on peoples view of the project and their level of ownership. Women indicated that with the new suggested modality of operation, that encourages rotation of workers to expand out reach and benefit a larger pool of women had left the women in a state of frustration. In fact one indicated that ***“I really do not know how development agencies think. They believe that giving someone a salary for three months will alleviate their problems. Sure if you are talking about large amounts of money, but when you are talking about 360 JDs a month, you will only alleviate them from the loans they carry. They end up paying their rent, long due grocery debts, etc. After the three months they will have little to build from and will end up where they started. Here with these women, you not only build their skills, but we managed to retrieve entire families from poverty. The regularity of income has made the difference. The question of cash for work is temporary solution but not a long term strategy for development. This project should not be a platform for cash for work. You know how many women got involved in financial commitments because of their income, now they need to find alternatives to funding. We will push them back to poverty, but we will also push back on this approach”***. The fact that the women are negotiating and standing up for their believes is perhaps reflective of their ownership of the project and determination to register their voice, even if it is marginalized by the new donors.

d) Efficiency

The project extended over a few years and that enabled it to work more intensely with community members, local women organisations, youth through participatory approaches that focused on the process of the project as opposed to only the results. From a cost perspective, the original incentives paid for women in the compost facility was rather low and more money was needed to rehabilitate the working conditions. Women themselves indicated that ***“At UNDP times we used to earn 150JD now we earn 360 JD. Some facilities were not well prepared, and the location was not as comfortable as it is now.”*** The situation was less so in the Shouneh facility. The space took into account women needs and arranged a more comfortable atmosphere.

e) Sustainability

The project exit strategy especially for the compost facility fell short. The compost facility was less self sufficient and as a result the government partner opted to introducing a new donor for the facility. UNDP was invited to join the project committee to ensure continuity but as it is evolving the overall direction of the new donor is changing. The recycling facility in Shouneh had better prospects as it was already managed under the umbrella of the municipality and its continuation was more secured.

Even though UNDP – Jordan CO collaborated and coordinated with the new donor to ensure a smooth transition and phase out more gradually, the new working approach has off set the local women CBO and the women working in the facility, and while the project will continue to operate the terms are less convenient for the CBO and the women, who may be replaced by a cash for work approach. Indeed, the rotation of women workers in the compost facility may also jeopardies the productivity level as new women have to be trained every three months.

f) Lessons learned, reflection and observation

The participatory approach to engage community members and women themselves facilitated the achievement of the results and to paving the way for more transformational changes not only at home, for women who started to work, but also at a community level. Women's viewpoints and opinions in solid waste management became more evident as a result of the trainings and of engaging in process that led to income generating.

Having an exist strategy is critical to ensure that established projects and facilities, in this case the compost facility, can continue operation. Albeit, when it is not possible or missing, then engaging the partner in defining transitional scenarios or even negotiation with new partners is essential. Having a "seat on the table" is a confirmation of their ownership, leadership and eventually the long term commitment to the project. The CBO is keen to maintain the project and ensure its sustainability.

Engaging municipal partners is one approach to strengthen sustainability of the project. More notable, establishing the linkages between women and municipalities to collaborate in implementing projects not only ensures increased accessibility to decision making for the women but also aligns with the municipal goals to increase women and community empowerment initiatives.

g) Conclusion

Although the sector of operation is not a relevant priority for women, the process and approach to engage women and promote women empowerment are well in line with national and UNDP country office priorities. Supporting women gain more public voice in the municipalities and solid waste management challenges social norms and advances women interests and needs. Similarly, providing employee and entrepreneurial opportunities for women, increases their engagement in economic activities and improves their financial situation, independency, and agency.

The project falls short from capturing the changes in power dynamics between women and men whether at home or at community level. Attention to group power and women solidarity was also weak. Although unintentional but the project strengthened social cohesiveness and interaction between women who otherwise may not have communicated before. The nature and type of jobs created for women continue to be of lesser value. This reinforces job segregation and the association of the "low paying low value " jobs to women.

F. Enhancing Women's Participation in the Solid Waste Management Sector in Jordan

Project Start Date : March 2020

Project End Date: March 2023

a) Background

The project is a GEN 3 project that aims to Improve the quality of life and livelihoods for women in the North of Jordan with a focus on Solid Waste Management (SWM). Gender considerations and women issues are systematically reflected in the results framework. Each of the three outcomes focuses on an aspect relating to advancing gender equality. The first relates to participation and representation, the second promotes women's economic participation through SWM and the last component relates to advancing gender equality discourse in policies and national institutions.

The project was launched as part of the "Improving Solid Waste Management and Income Creation in Host Communities", and is now advanced through phase 2. The project is implemented in partnership with the local municipalities and councils in Northern Shouneh and although its progress was impacted by the onset of COVID, it was flexible enough to adapt and introduce activities that befit the emerging circumstances.

b) Relevance

The project is well aligned with national and UNDP Jordan- CO gender equality priorities of engaging women in public sphere as well as increase women's economic empowerment. The outcomes and outputs all contribute to increasing women's opportunity to engage in decision making processes and to earn a living. They also tackle institutional and structural changes through working with municipalities and local communities on mainstreaming gender and deepening discussion with women organisations on issues relating to SWM.

At the community level, restrictions on women still limit their ability to participate in decision making processes and or engage in economic activities. Even when women's work is accepted, it is for more care associated jobs than SWM. Initially, the community had considerable reservation about women working in collection, sorting, and recycling. One interviewee noted ***"Some women registered to join the project but when they learnt about the nature of work they dropped out. Now they regret it and want to join. Of course, this was after they saw that we earned money from it."*** Another noted ***"The community did not accept at the beginning, they called us names an ridicule dour efforts, until now some still do that but those are much less now. People are accepting it."*** Another noted ***"I had to convince my husband, he was fine eventually but my children did to want me to go out and work. Till now they want me to stay at home. I need a break from them so I am going to continue."*** One indicated that even though ***"our families benefit but they have to ruin it for you."*** Building on that another lady said ***"every time I bought something for the house,***

my brother will say did you pay for it from the “garbage money””. At the beginning I used to get upset. He was demeaning me. Afterwards though he stopped. I guess he saw the money was reasonable.”

The community itself, as the women reported, are realizing that the “waste is of value” and they started to sell their waste instead of throwing it. One interviewee said ***“It is becoming a business in our community. People want to sell us waste under the impression of why should you benefit and I do not. Others are starting to collect the waste from our points of collection. We are losing waste and this makes it harder for us to collect and increase our bounce”.***

The focus on SWM in the project areas was considered as an appropriate area of work, simply because there is considerable waste produced and the capacity to dispose of it was of concern from the municipality. This was not only relevant to the area but it also generated interest and an income generating opportunity for the community.

c) Effectiveness

The project activities are on track despite the delays of COVID. In fact some of the targets were still being met as a result of realigning some activities to respond to the emerging needs and to generate income by developing initiatives that were relevant to COVID. This flexibility and ability to adapt to the circumstances has deepened community trust in the project.

Through their participation in the project working women in the recycling facility reported increased self confidence, determination, and agency. Women reported changing relations within their families and community. They are assuming more decision making roles and by controlling their income, are gaining more clout with the family. As one interviewee noted ***“I used to express my opinion but no one took it into account, now I speak and they listen especially if I am to pay for it.”*** Another interviewee said ***“I give my children their allowance, they perceive me differently now.”***

The awareness session of the project along with their experience of seeing women collect waste encouraged them to start collecting waste as an income generating activity. As women reported, at the beginning household used to give us good amounts of waste, now they collected and sell to middle persons or directly to companies. To accommodate the unexpected change in community behaviour the women cooperative, overseeing the sorting facility work, started to buy waste from individuals. One field worker said ***“we used to collect way more waste than now. Some households simply tell us that they will not give it to us now as they will sell it to others.”*** Another noted, ***“we used to see scavengers fill loads of trucks back and forth transporting garbage, now they come and hardly fill in one load.”*** This unexpected change in the society can be considered positive in terms of reducing waste and increasing livelihoods to a larger group of households, although needs validation, and it can be considered negative as the women bonus at the end of the months is calculated based the amounts they collect. Women who work in the sorting facility receive a daily rate which implies that they are not as affected as the women in the communities.

The comradeship between the women working with the cooperative is evident not only among the field group but also among women in the field and the sorting facility. Despite the disagreements and tensions at the beginning of the work, the women managed to

overcome the differences. Women indicated that the trainings helped build their capacity to challenge the community, improve their relations and to overcome the barriers that society sets for them. One interviewee said ***“women are not encouraged to work in the field, they should be working at home. This project broke this image and made us believe in ourselves, capacities, and role.”*** Another said ***“I have changed completely. I never used to go out of the house. Now, I can not stay there. During the curfews we struggled.”***

Women have been trained on safety measures and the implementation approach took that into account. Women work in groups and teams in the communities to avoid any risks on themselves. The women related stories that exposed their vulnerability for example, at the beginning of their work an interviewee noted ***“I recall we were three and we knocked the door to ask for the lady of the house, instead we had a young man opening the door and basically told us that he does not know where she is, he just came out of prison yesterday. You can imagine the panic we were in. I stood frozen, but my two friends said thank you and pulled me away.”*** Another also said, ***“We were getting to the main door of the house and suddenly heard voices screaming thieves, we were frozen in our place and told them to calm down but eventually they kicked us out”.***

Health issues for the women are also of concern. The cooperative took up health insurances as women are at risk of injury when handling sharp waste. Several women reported minor injuries but admitted that the risk was high on them. Safety clothing was issued to them, but still the women reported incidents that could have ended badly.

The project has also completed a number of studies to better understand gender issues within the respective communities. The Knowledge Attitude and Perception survey undertaken by the project, provides a strong baseline for measuring change not only in terms of roles and responsibilities of women but also in relation to decision making processes and power relations within the households. Generating knowledge and developing tools on gender issues in SWM is very much needed and should be circulate for the benefit of others.

Including more CBOs in the project also has strategic outlook to generating more power among women as a group to challenge situations and ensure that their voices are accounted for in decision making processes. Activities to enhance the capacity of the 10 participating CBOs and cooperatives, should focus on not only income generating opportunities but also on building capacities to engage more actively in public domain and to develop a business sense. Women cooperatives take less risk in investment. The head of the cooperative noted ***“members are not willing to invest so as to expand the business or explore new ideas. This holds us back, they need to learn that we need to spend sometimes to gain. We can not rely on UNDP and or the municipality all the time.”***

d) Efficiency

The project is still ongoing and while the progress reports show that progress toward results is on track, the areas of concern for project efficiency are at local managerial level. On the one hand, the agreement between the local women cooperative and municipality is reaching an end. The agreement needs to be revisited and perhaps engaging the women in the discussion may help improve their status in negotiation. On the other hand, the fact that UNDP had covered the initial registration fee, on behalf of the women, for the cooperative

should be secured to the benefit to the benefit of the cooperative and not the individuals. Unfortunately, and as was reported, women decided to withdraw from the cooperative and received the 500 JD in return. UNDP needs to identify a legal framework for protecting the capital for the cooperative, otherwise, all the members are entitled to the amount.

From a time perspective, the complexity of working on transformational change requires time and three years may be insufficient.

e) Sustainability

Building an exist strategy for the project should have already started. The agreement between the municipality and women organisation should be negotiated for a longer period than 1 year. This will establish more trust and ownership.

f) Lessons learned, reflections and observations

- Economic opportunities is not sufficient to assume transformational change. Other factors such as engagement in public activities, building self confidence and efficacy all contribute to achieving the desired results.
- Although the project does offer new working opportunities for women and they report positive impact on themselves, the type and nature of job reiterates the notion that women assume less valued jobs with lower pay.
- Having women role models will encourage them to engage more actively.
- The risks that women endure when undertaking the work, requires a stricter protocol to ensure that no harm come to any of the women.
- Engaging other CBOs in the project will further endorse women's voices but require additional support to network together and build the governing and financial capacities as well.
- The women have multiple stories and testimonies to share, documenting them may reap insights to adopting more responsive strategies.

g) Conclusion

The project addresses gender inequalities and gaps across all the project activities. It is also well aligned with national priorities including that of UNDP. However, the project has had unintended impact on the community, both positive and negative, and that trickled as well to women working the sorting facilities. The ability of the cooperative to adapt and innovate requires more investment as the project continues to unfold. Having identified the new women organisations and cooperatives paves the way for advancing collaborative principles that allow women to generate more power and space for their voices. Working with municipalities and institutions along with the community will help set the grounds for more responsive gender programming that encourages women to realize their rights, participation in public including economic life. Already, women are reporting the growth in their self confidence, decision making power and abilities but most of all growing exposure and accessibility to resources.

As the project unfolds, the exist strategy to ensure the sustainability of commitment to gender equality and women empowered are critical, this relies on enhancing the capacities

of women organisation to plan, manage and innovate for women. Cooperatives and their members need more support with respect to understanding market approaches, business investment and undertaking calculated risks. UNDP as well should secure the capital, that it paid on behalf of women, to reduce withdrawals and maintain the capital. This will also have implication on expanding membership and ensuring a “fair deal for all”.

Knowledge generated by the project should be widely disseminated for the benefit of all, particularly as there is a dearth of information about gender issues in SWM sector. This includes, sharing with other municipalities the developed tools on gender responsive municipal action plans.