



In partnership
with



Social and Gender Equality Assessment for the Project “Action for East Jerusalem Identity and Resilience” AJIR+

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1. Introduction

The context of gender equality in Palestine is deeply intertwined with the broader socio-political instability in the region, as highlighted by the significant deterioration in the West Bank since 7 October 2023. The escalating violence exacerbates the challenges faced by Palestinian women and girls, who already navigate a fragmented legal system and a society burdened by patriarchal norms and protracted Israeli occupation. These societal and legal challenges hinder the implementation of international standards like the Human rights International Treaties, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which Palestine adopted in 2014.

As settler-related incidents and military operations intensify in East Jerusalem and the West Bank, the risks to women and girls increase, particularly in terms of gender-based violence¹. This violence occurs both in the chaos of conflict and within the disrupted everyday life, where women's vulnerabilities are magnified due to their reduced access to critical services like healthcare, psycho-social support, economic empowerment, and legal aid. The existing socio-economic insecurities, such as high unemployment and restricted economic opportunities, particularly in zones like Gaza, are now paralleled in the East Jerusalem and West Bank by direct conflict impacts—increasing the burden on women, who are often on the front lines of coping with the humanitarian crises that follow.

International bodies and local NGOs are striving to address these gaps, focusing on empowering women and promoting gender equality as part of broader humanitarian efforts. These efforts are crucial not only for immediate support in response to the conflict but also as part of a long-term strategy to strengthen the societal fabric and improve governance in the Palestinian Territories. The need for a comprehensive approach that includes gender-sensitive responses to conflict and humanitarian crises is critical. These programs aim to mitigate the impacts of both the occupation and entrenched societal norms that disproportionately disadvantage women and girls, ensuring that the strides made towards gender equality are not reversed by ongoing conflict and instability.

Thus, the recent escalations highlight the urgent need for continued and enhanced international focus and support to ensure the safety and empowerment of women and girls in the Palestinian Territories, integrating these efforts into the broader objectives of creating a stable environment in the region.

This study has been prepared as part of the AJIR+ project, which aims to enhance the awareness and integration of gender needs among Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) submitting project proposals to the NDC. The primary objective is not to focus solely on gender-focused projects but to encourage CSOs to address gender issues within their proposals. The AJIR+ project, supported by AFD, includes a comprehensive log frame, financing plan, and a gender action plan developed during the design stage to ensure gender considerations are incorporated into all project facets.

The study's main goal is to come with recommendations improve the call for proposals for Pillar II of the AJIR+ project, making CSOs more cognizant of gender needs and gaps. This study serves as a foundational document to refine the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the upcoming call for proposals and guide the selection process, with a preference for projects that include a gender focus. The study also aligns with the gender action plan agreed upon with AFD, which commits to implementing strategies that promote gender

¹ UNRWA, [Situation Report #82 on the situation in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, 25 February 2024](#).

equality and empower women in East Jerusalem. This integrated approach aims to foster a more inclusive and equitable environment, addressing the specific challenges faced by women in the region.

2. Context Analysis

2.1 Context Analysis Palestine

The occupied Palestinian territory (OPT) is a complex environment in which Palestinian people are striving for statehood, peace, self-reliance, human security, and dignity. Palestine is considered to be a complicated context in which it struggles on different political, economic, and social levels. This is created mainly due to the Israeli occupation that turned Palestine into a fragile context than an independent empowered one. The occupation segregation policy imposed on the Palestinians by building the Apartheid Separation Wall had a severe impact on all levels of the Palestinian context and imposed huge restrictions on movement and mobility rights, social connection, and economic growth. In the last years, economy has declined, poverty has risen; opportunities for employment have diminished and Palestinian Authority (PA) capacities have deteriorated. The internal political division in Palestine together with a general lack of transparency in the political decision-making processes has left most Palestinians with little faith in their own authorities' capabilities in responding to the people's needs. These feelings of powerlessness and helplessness have been especially intensifying since the beginning of the October 2023 escalations, negatively affecting Palestinians all over the country. The lack of representation has left most Palestinians with few means to claim their rights and influence the decision-making processes that so deeply affect their lives and put their livelihoods at risk.

Despite progress achieved by women in the last decades, Palestine is still distancing women from participation in policymaking or economic development. Both the discriminatory legal framework and the attitudes of public institutions of the PA and society in general lack gender orientation to the important role of women in pushing forward development in Palestine. Youth who represents one third of the Palestinian population (30%) out of whom 23% between 18-29 years², are underrepresented in public decision-making spaces, with high unemployment rates, lack of opportunities or services that target them or incorporate them sufficiently in the design of their programs to respond to the youth potential needs and skills of the 21st century. Sustainable development goals (SDGs) clearly stress the importance of development efforts to make education more inclusive and accessible for all youth, including efforts by youth themselves as rooted in Goal 4 of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”.³

In local communities, women and youth have specific needs and constraints that hinder access to services in the political, economic, and legal arenas. There is still poor awareness on their rights in the communities and how to work for the fulfilment of those rights. The development of capacities of grassroots organizations of civil society is essential to contribute to women and youth progress in Palestine. There is an urgent need to upgrade the capacities of women and youth and boost their capacities to the maximum as an integral part of economic, political, and social development.

² Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), 2019.

³ The Sustainable Development Goals. <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda/>

2.2 Context Analysis of East Jerusalem

With special focus on East Jerusalem, which is the essential geographic scope of the project's interventions, estimated in 2020 at a count of 951,100 people face some of the highest poverty rates in Israel including East Jerusalem⁴. For the past few years, the economic situation in East Jerusalem has grown more troublesome, as 76% of Palestinian families and 83.4% of children from East Jerusalem were living under the poverty line⁵. The West Bank and Gaza Strip are no exception to the imposed political and socioeconomic challenges due to the conflict, with a poverty rate of 36%, and an unemployment rate of 24.1%.⁶ The unstable political situation and physical barriers exacerbated by physical violence related to the conflict, in addition to the construction of the separation wall and checkpoints, separating Palestinian cities and villages from each other, present a barrier that hinders economic development and prevents access to academic and professional opportunities, which in turn contribute to the rise of illiteracy and unemployment rates in Palestine.

For the past few years, the economic situation in East Jerusalem has grown more troublesome, with a jump in poverty rate from 66% in 2006 to 82% in 2011 and 78% in 2017⁷. This was in part due to the completion of the separation barrier in 2005 which has had many economic impacts.

The socioeconomic ramifications of the escalating tensions in Palestine since October 2023, the volatile political situation, and the ongoing Israeli bombardments targeting civilians in the Gaza Strip, as well as threats from settlers and Israeli soldiers in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, have also been profound, affecting Palestinians all over the country. Consequently, many individuals from East Jerusalem and the West Bank faced challenges in commuting to work or accessing educational opportunities. Additionally, many people reported experiencing systematic discrimination as well as the loss of jobs and learning opportunities as a result. As reported by The Guardian, almost 400,000 Palestinians have lost their jobs since October 2023, due to "restrictions imposed on Palestinians' access to the Israeli labor market and the closures of crossings from the West Bank into Israel and the settlements".⁸

According to the Trading Economics, the unemployment rate for Palestinians was 24.1 in the beginning of 2023.⁹ On top of that, nearly 400,000 individuals have recently become unemployed. Given the current challenging conditions, the labor market lacks the capacity it needs to provide a significant number of job opportunities for recent graduates, particularly for Palestinians seeking to make it into the Israeli labor market. This situation poses a significant risk of pushing the poverty rate for Palestinians to unprecedented levels in the coming years.

The labor force dynamics in Palestine further underscore the economic disparities. Women's participation in the labor force is conspicuously low. Women are particularly disadvantaged with only 17% participation in the labor market versus 68% for men.¹⁰ Such low participation rates indicate systemic challenges, potentially including cultural norms, lack of opportunities, or discriminatory practices.

And to add another level of complexity, East Jerusalem's economy is isolated from the West Bank due to the PA's incapability to operate in East Jerusalem. It is also separated from the Israeli economy, which results in and creates a difficult economic atmosphere that leads to uniquely complicated politics.¹¹ Similarly, the local context of Jerusalem governorate is marginalized in different means and aspects;

⁴ Jerusalem Institute for Policy Research. [Jerusalem: Facts and Trends 2022](#)

⁵ ACRI: [East Jerusalem Facts and Figures 2017](#).

⁶ UNCTAD. [Palestinian economy reels under COVID-19 impact](#), enduring poverty and unemployment.

⁷ Idem.

⁸ [The Guardian, "Almost 400,000 Palestinians Have Lost Jobs Due to War"](#)

⁹ [Trading Economics, Palestine Unemployment Rate](#).

¹⁰ [The World Bank, 2021 Palestinian Digital Economy Assessment](#)

¹¹ UNCTAD. [The Palestinian economy in East Jerusalem, 2013](#).

therefore, it is considered a vulnerable community in which it affects the individuals of the same context to have a convenient level and capability to stay resilient independently during unexpected challenges.

To foster resilient communities and combat inequality, the project strategically focuses on a series of transformative interventions. These interventions are specifically designed to enhance educational, cultural, and youth opportunities, thereby broadening the horizons and potential of young people. Additionally, the project places a strong emphasis on supporting vulnerable populations, with a special focus on improving women's access to essential services, ensuring they receive the necessary support to thrive in various aspects of daily life. Furthermore, the initiative is committed to strengthening civil society by building its capacity, which is crucial for sustaining these efforts and creating a robust foundation for ongoing development and empowerment in the community. This holistic approach not only addresses immediate needs but also lays down a pathway for long-term socio-economic stability and growth.

3. Legal Context Analysis

3.1 Legal Context in Palestine

The legal framework in Palestine reflects the region's diverse historical periods and political realities, incorporating laws from Ottoman, British, Jordanian, Egyptian, and Israeli influences. With the establishment of the Palestinian Authority and the election of the first Palestinian Legislative Council in 1996, significant efforts have been made to unify and amend existing laws to better serve the needs of the Palestinian people. Listing below some of the main laws and factors affecting the gender legal context in Palestine.

Criminal Law: The legal landscape varies significantly across the territories. In the West Bank (excluding East Jerusalem), the Jordanian Penal Code No. 16 of 1960 is applied, while the Gaza Strip follows the British Penal Code of 1936. East Jerusalem, however, is subject to Israeli criminal law.

Constitutional Framework: The absence of a unified Palestinian constitution has led to a reliance on several key documents for governance. These include the Palestinian Declaration of Independence, the Basic Law of Palestine, the Women's Rights Charter, and the National Strategic Plan to Combat Violence Against Women (2011-2019).

International Commitments: Palestine's ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) demonstrates its commitment to international standards on gender equality. However, the local implementation of such international treaties faces challenges due to socio-cultural norms and existing legal frameworks.

Legislation: The legislative process has been heavily influenced by the historical and ongoing political context, including the Israeli occupation. Notable legislative efforts focus on enhancing legal protections and ensuring that laws align with international human rights standards.

3.2 Legal Context in East Jerusalem

It is crucial to understand the legal framework within which the Israeli social welfare offices in East Jerusalem operate to combat and treat domestic violence. The Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare has established comprehensive guidelines to prevent and address family violence under Regulations 3.28, which define the forms of violence, principles for intervention, and target groups. Key legislations include:

Family Violence Prevention Law, 1991: This law addresses all forms of physical, sexual, and psychological violence. It permits protective orders and allows social workers to issue family reports and treatment recommendations. It includes provisions for removing the abuser from the home instead of the victim.

Penal Code Amendment No. 26, 1989: This law increases penalties for those who abuse minors and mandates professionals and the public to report suspected abuse.

Youth Treatment and Supervision Law, 1960: This law enables social workers to initiate juvenile court proceedings to protect minors at risk, allowing them to submit treatment recommendations to judges.

The Hague Convention (Return of Abducted Children), 1991 and Family Courts Law, 1995: These laws provide additional frameworks for protecting children and addressing family disputes.

Social welfare offices in East Jerusalem operate on three levels: prevention, treatment, and protection, often integrating these approaches. Prevention includes hotlines and educational workshops to prevent domestic violence. Treatment involves shelters, emergency centers, safe houses, and family violence prevention and treatment centers. These centers play a critical role in providing therapy and support to victims of domestic violence, helping them to rebuild their lives.

4. Methodology

Two principles were applied in performing the assessment: (i) Active participation of stakeholders and beneficiaries and seeking beneficiary views through structured and semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions; (ii) The assessment undertook sensitively, with respect, and with a sincere effort to understand how much difference (both positive and negative) project supported activities can make in the intended beneficiaries' lives, with an emphasis on women and other vulnerable groups. The assessment was developed and delivered as a joint learning exercise with the NDC colleagues.

The assessment used a participatory approach, built on qualitative methods (Semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions). This approach was informed by a desk review of the social context of the project, which includes a review of the legal and institutional context and a description of the initial state of the project area. The qualitative analysis serves to generate rich detail and insights into underlying issues and social risks associated with the project from the perspective of citizens, and vulnerable citizen groups in particular, thereby enabling the identification of measures to mitigate these social risks. The assessment took into consideration stakeholders' views on measures that could be taken by the project to mitigate social risks.

Specifically, assessment methodology includes the following:

Context Analysis: The Consultant conducted a context assessment and analysis to enhance the promotion of projects that prioritize gender equality and champion the rights and needs of women across all thematic areas, as well as support for People with Disabilities.

Comprehensive Literature Review:

- Conducted an exhaustive review of existing research, reports, policy documents, and previous project evaluations related to gender issues within the target area.
- Focused on identifying documented behaviors, stereotypes, relations, inequalities, and the social, political, and legal frameworks regarding gender.

Stakeholder Mapping and Analysis:

- The consultant has identified key stakeholders relevant to gender dynamics, mainly civil society organizations in east Jerusalem, community leaders, and beneficiaries of previous initiatives. Individual meetings with six women beneficiaries of psychosocial support and GBV services were conducted and facilitated by one of the CSOs in Jerusalem. Due to the sensitivity of the issues discussed, the consultant conducted individual meetings with the women instead of a focus group meeting.
- The consultant conducted two separate focus group meetings for men and women to discuss gender equality and social norms. Fourteen men and 26 women participated in the focus groups. Discussion included gender needs and gender related issues. The meetings provided insights into a spectrum of beliefs, from traditional to progressive, highlighting both challenges and potential avenues for advancing gender equality in the community.
- Using surveys, the consultant has mapped out existing CSOs in East Jerusalem and facilities dedicated to women with difficulties based on their influence, interest, and position on gender issues to tailor engagement strategies. A second survey was conducted to capture women situation in East Jerusalem. Over 150 women were surveyed in June 2024 on issues related to women's needs, social norms and gender equality.

In-depth Interviews:

The consultant has conducted in-depth interviews with a diverse range of stakeholders, including gender experts, community members, and representatives from women's and men's groups. For the interviews, the consultant has used semi-structured interview guides to explore perceptions, experiences, and insights into gender dynamics. Eleven interviews were conducted with key CSOs working with women and youth in East Jerusalem covering different sectors (health, Psychosocial support, education, legal, economic empowerment, GBV, people with disability) during May 2024.

Secondary Data Analysis:

The consultant has utilized existing surveys, census data, and reports to analyze gender disparities in education, employment, political participation, and access to healthcare and other resources.

5. Limitation of the Study

Geographical Limits: The study is confined to organizations and institutions within East Jerusalem, considering the socio-economic connections of East Jerusalem to the Palestinian Territories. This geographic limitation may not capture the broader dynamics and challenges faced by similar entities in other parts of the Palestinian territories or in different socio-political contexts that affect East Jerusalem.

Time Limits: The study covers a specific period which may not fully reflect long-term trends or the impact of significant recent events. The chosen timeframe, while suitable for capturing current data, may miss out on capturing the effects of new policies or changes that occur shortly after the study period.

Scope of Study: The study specifically examines the role of NGOs and civil society roles in gender-related issues. This focus might not fully address other critical factors influencing gender equity and women's empowerment, such as direct governmental IL/PAL actions, private sector initiatives, or informal community efforts.

Data Collection Constraints: There may be limitations related to the availability and reliability of data, especially in a context where NGOs might face restrictions on their operations and data gathering. Additionally, the sensitivity of gender issues might affect the openness of respondents and the accuracy of the information provided.

6. Gender Equality and Challenges faced by Women in East Jerusalem

6.1 Gender Inequality vs Social Norms

Studies on the Palestinian population in East Jerusalem has identified major social gaps between young men and women in East Jerusalem¹². Statistics show that 29% of the Palestinian women have received a higher education (bachelor's degree or above), compared to 17% of the Palestinian men in East Jerusalem. Even though women are more educated than men, it was found that 69% of them have never worked due to gender and cultural barrier, including a husband's perceived insecurity, gender stereotypes, and lack of support from their immediate environment when it comes to integrating family life and work. Other constraints include lack of job opportunities, political violence inflicted by occupation forces, movement restrictions and lack of services provided to Palestinian population in Jerusalem. Due to shortage of daycare centers, for example, children aged 0-3 remain at home with their mother rather than being placed in daycare.

Gaps in salaries were also identified between working men and women in East Jerusalem. The average salary among East Jerusalem women is very low, at NIS 3,000-5,000 per month, whereas average monthly salary of most men in East Jerusalem varies between NIS 4,000 and NIS 10,000. As such, we can observe dominance of the traditional family model in East Jerusalem, where men are viewed “as the primary breadwinner and source of safety and protection, while women are seen as dependent housewives and primary care-givers”¹³. Women and girls often provide the services necessary for the physical, mental and emotional well-being of children, older persons and persons with disabilities. It is estimated that one tenth to one third of the men in the Arab countries have ever participated in domestic work¹⁴.

The consultant has contacted a survey on gender equality issues addressed to women in East Jerusalem. Over 150 were surveyed on right to education, work, inheritance, decision making and reproductive rights. On the right to education, the survey showed that while a substantial majority (64.3%) believe in equal access to educational opportunities for both genders, a notable minority of respondents report an imbalance, especially in access to higher education. This suggests that although progress has been made toward educational equity, obstacles such as economic constraints, entrenched gender roles, and varying family expectations still hinder full equality. The disparity highlights the need for targeted interventions to support women's access to higher education and vocational training.

As for economic rights including work and professional development, the sectors of healthcare and education are seen as traditional but stable employment avenues for women. Key competencies identified

¹² Jerusalem Institute for Policy Research. “Mapping Human Capital among Young Men and Women from East Jerusalem”. 2022. Available at https://jerusalemstitute.org.il/en/publications/human_capital_east_jerusalem/

¹³ Empowering Women in Marginalized East Jerusalem. Juzoor. 2017. Available at: https://www.juzoor.org/cached_uploads/download/2022/10/01/final-research-report-empowering-women-in-marginalized-east-jerusalem-communities-1664616297.pdf

¹⁴ ESCWA. “Guidelines to Estimate the Economic Cost of Domestic Violence in the Arab Region”. 2019

for career advancement include professional skills, academic qualifications, and practical experience. Despite these recognized needs, a positive note is that a majority view education as a crucial enabler for women's participation in the broader job market, including the competitive Israeli labor market. However, the data also suggests that bridging education to actual employment opportunities remains a challenge, necessitating programs that enhance job readiness and market integration.

Regarding inheritance and economic rights, more than half of the respondents (52.6%) indicate that women do not receive their fair share of inheritance, with traditional religious laws often dictating the distribution. This significant finding points to a critical area for legal and social reforms aimed at ensuring equitable economic rights for women, which are essential for their financial independence and empowerment.

In the Palestinian culture, motherhood, childbearing, and rearing play a central role in defining femininity models and women's status in society. This prevailing social norms and culture intensify the deep-rooted gender roles, reinforce patriarchal structures in both private and public spaces, contribute to maintaining gender inequalities and gaps, and reinforce women's reproductive role preventing them from actively engaging in the public sphere¹⁵. Responses on decision making concerning marriage and reproduction rights highlight conservative views on marital and reproductive decisions. Although the majority support marrying at an older age, less than half believe women have the freedom to choose their life partners, and even fewer feel they have autonomy over reproductive decisions. The survey also showed that around 20% of women in Jerusalem do not have the ability to decide upon household issues by themselves due to strong patriarchal structure and general societal oppression – discrimination and prejudice – towards women acting as decision-makers. These results underscore the need for ongoing efforts to educate and advocate for women's rights in making personal and family choices.

As for household chores and gender roles, the traditional division of labor persists, with a large majority reporting that men rarely engage in household chores or childcare. This enduring stereotype points to a broader cultural resistance to gender parity in domestic settings and highlights an area where societal attitudes may benefit from progressive shifts through community education and dialogue.

6.2 Gender Equality vs Violence Against Women (GBV)

6.2.1 GBV in Palestine

Measuring the prevalence of domestic violence and violence against women in Palestine is challenging due to cultural sensitivities and underreporting. However, various reports provide insights. According to a 2019 survey by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), 57% of ever-married women experienced psychological violence from their husbands, 18% of women reported physical violence, 9% experienced sexual violence, and 41% faced economic violence. More than half of the women subjected to violence preferred not to report the abuse, highlighting the cultural stigma and fear associated with disclosure. The percentage of women seeking help from psychological, social, or legal services increased from 0.7% in 2011 to 1.4% in 2019. Awareness of available support services also rose, with 40% of women acknowledging their existence in 2019.

The incidence of violence against children within families decreased from 51% in 2011 to 44% in 2019. Children under 11 were most vulnerable, with about two-thirds seeking help from a parent. In 2018, Israeli

¹⁵ Palestinian Working Women Society for Development (PWWSD), 2020. In-depth Assessment of Women's Access to/ and Ownership of Land and Productive Resources in the occupied Palestinian territory

police reported 28,114 domestic violence cases, including 18,111 involving spousal violence, predominantly against women. The majority of the 35 women killed in Israel due to domestic violence in 2016 were from the Arab community, with separation, divorce, and disputes over custody and property being common motives.

Efforts to address violence against women in Palestine must navigate these complex legal and cultural landscapes, ensuring that reforms are sensitive to local contexts while upholding international human rights standards.

6.2.2 Violence Against Women in East Jerusalem¹⁶

The available data from official and non-governmental Palestinian institutions operating in Jerusalem are very scarce. The Palestinian Ministry of Social Development does not operate directly in the city of Jerusalem, which complicates gathering comprehensive data.

Official statistics in the Jerusalem Statistical Book speak generally about the Jerusalem governorate. Most non-governmental institutions in Jerusalem provide legal, social, and psychological services to abused women.

There is no accurate or close information that reflects the reality on the ground regarding the percentages or numbers of Jerusalemite women or children who were referred or went to offices of the Ministry of Social Development or to protection houses. Women holding Jerusalem IDs or whose children hold Israeli IDs prefer not to go to Palestinian Authority protection houses for fear of losing their rights and their children's rights. Only a few abused women are referred to safe houses of the Palestinian Ministry of Social Development in coordination with its offices or with the Women's Center for Legal and Social Counseling. These referrals usually concern abused women who do not hold Israeli IDs and whose presence is considered illegal under Israeli law.

According to data from the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics 2017, the lowest rate of exposure to domestic violence in the Jerusalem governorate compared to other Palestinian governorates was recorded, with 11% and 35% of women subjected to psychological violence. Among children in the Jerusalem governorate who were exposed to physical violence, the rates were 46% among males and 32% among females, with those who experienced severe physical violence under the age of 11 being 5.2% among males and 2.7% among females. The rates of exposure to psychological violence towards children were the highest, reaching 55% among male children and 50% among female children according to the Jerusalem Statistical Book 2017.

In 2019, 1,238 Jerusalemite families approached the social affairs offices on the background of domestic violence, involving approximately 3,181 individuals. Between September 2019 and September 2020, 350 women approached the social affairs offices due to domestic violence cases, and protection arrangements were made for 51 women in women's shelters due to the danger and threat to their lives.

It was also found that 65% of abused women were subjected to violence by their husbands, and 80% of them suffered violence for long periods ranging from one to ten years. Additionally, in 2018, 4,056 children

¹⁶ دور وفعالية مكاتب الشؤون الاجتماعية العاملة في القدس الشرقية في توفير الحماية للنساء والأطفال من العنف الأسري والدور المأمول من مؤسسات المجتمع المدني ACT, 2020, الفلسطينية العاملة في نفس المجال

were directed from various frameworks having been exposed to at least one type of violence by their guardians. In 2019, 4,448 children were directed¹⁷.

Statistics from the social affairs offices in East Jerusalem indicate that in 2018, 356 court orders were issued by the juvenile court for the protection and placement of minors in safe frameworks or under the supervision and responsibility of the social worker responsible for protecting them. In 2019, 533 court orders for the protection of minors were issued, and according to these decisions, 342 children were placed in internal institutions to protect them from abuse by their family caregivers."

6.3 Gender Equality vs Israeli Occupation Measures

i. Family Reunification Process

The Israeli occupation authorities in occupied Jerusalem continue to enforce discriminatory punitive measures against Palestinians, violating their human rights. These measures include house arrest imposed on minors, restrictions on freedom of movement, identity revocations, forced evictions, house demolitions, and the denial of family reunification requests. These actions disproportionately harm women, who bear the primary responsibility for family care.

Palestinian women holding Palestinian identity cards and married to holders of Jerusalem identity cards face several restrictions that hinder their ability to live normal lives. For instance, Palestinian women in Jerusalem are often prevented from living with their "blue ID" holding husbands. In the event of a divorce, women are not allowed to stay in occupied Jerusalem, risking the loss of child custody and the ability to live or visit the same city as their children. Entering occupied Jerusalem requires special permits, subject to the approval of the occupation authorities. Residency permits for Palestinian women must be renewed through applications submitted by their husbands; a process impossible in cases of divorce.

These discriminatory Israeli measures based on identity, determined by the occupation authorities, also contribute to domestic violence. The accumulated difficulties pose significant risks to women, compelling them to endure various forms of violence and refrain from reporting such incidents for fear of being expelled from Jerusalem or losing child custody upon divorce. This situation exacerbates women's dependence and control by their husbands.

According to 2021 statistics from the Women's Center for Legal Aid and Counseling, 70% of women seeking legal and social services in occupied Jerusalem hold different identity cards from their husbands. This disparity intensifies the impact of violence, as these women cannot enforce court decisions or leave their abusive husbands without losing child custody. Consequently, they are often forced to remain in violent situations.

Since the enactment of the "Citizenship Law" in 2003, over 40 family reunification requests for Palestinian families in Jerusalem have been rejected. This discriminatory law violates Article 9(1) of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and aims to prevent granting residency or citizenship to individuals from the occupied Palestinian territories married to Palestinian citizens with Jerusalem IDs or Israeli citizenship.¹⁸ This law prevents Palestinian women and men from living with their spouses in Jerusalem and within the Green Line areas.

¹⁷ <http://www.cbs.gov.il/he/pages/default.aspx>

¹⁸ www.aljazeera.com/features/2022/3/15/devastating-how-israel-is-pulling-palestinian-families-apart

For women with Jerusalem IDs who move to live with their Palestinian ID-holding husbands, there is a risk of having their Jerusalem ID revoked by the occupation authorities, stripping them of most rights, including social, health, and educational benefits. According to the Israeli Ministry of Interior, the number of pending family reunification requests was only five in 2014, seven in 2015, four in 2016, and four in 2017. However, there was a noticeable increase in pending requests, reaching 56 in 2018, 79 in 2019, and 574 in 2020.¹⁹

6.3.1. Impact of the Israeli Citizenship Law on Women²⁰

On March 10, 2022, Israel enacted a new Citizenship Law designed to reinforce apartheid policies by securing a Jewish demographic majority. This law, passed with a 45-15 vote in the Knesset, revives many of the provisions from the 2003 Citizenship Law, which had expired in July 2021. The previous law's expiration resulted from the ruling coalition's inability to secure the necessary majority for its renewal²¹.

The new Citizenship Law explicitly prohibits Palestinians in occupied Jerusalem or within the Green Line from applying for family reunification with spouses from the West Bank or Gaza unless the husband is over 35 years old and the wife is over 25. This restriction also applies to residents of Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, and Iran, which are classified as "enemy states" under the law²².

For women with Jerusalem IDs who marry, their family reunification applications submitted by their parents are halted, requiring a new application from the husband. Women with West Bank IDs cannot apply for reunification; only their Jerusalem ID or Israeli citizenship-holding husbands can do so, even if the women meet all required criteria. In cases of divorce, women must reapply for reunification through their Jerusalem ID-holding parents, if possible, and face the risk of additional obstacles due to their adult status²³.

The law aims to prevent the "gradual right of return" for Palestinian refugees and maintains that it is crucial for Israeli security and the preservation of its Jewish character. However, it has been widely criticized for its discriminatory nature and its severe impact on Palestinian families, forcing them to live apart or under constant uncertainty. The law affects thousands of Palestinian families, compelling them to obtain temporary residence permits that can be revoked on security grounds, thereby denying them social and health benefits, and restricting their freedom of movement and employment opportunities²⁴.

When Palestinian women seek family reunification under the Israeli Citizenship Law, the responsibility of application falls on the spouse with permanent residency or Israeli citizenship. In cases of domestic violence, women often refrain from reporting their abuse to the Israeli police. There are several reasons for this, including the perception of the Israeli police as part of the occupying force, which many Palestinians do not trust to protect their interests or safety.

In case of divorce, and without her husband's cooperation, a woman's family reunification application can fail. This would jeopardize her residency permit, possibly forcing her to return to the West Bank, separating her from her children. Even if she seeks to remain in Jerusalem through a humanitarian committee, this process can be prolonged, leaving her in a state of uncertainty and vulnerability.²⁵ The requirement for these

¹⁹ <http://www.miftah.org/arabic/Display.cfm?DocId=15610&CategoryId=19>

²⁰ Refer to Annex 2 for more details from the field interviews and reflection session analysis.

²¹ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/new-citizenship-law-advances-months-after-ban-on-palestinian-spouses-lapsed/>

²² <https://www.adalah.org/en/content/view/10576>

²³ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/3/11/israels-knesset-passes-law-barring-palestinian-spouses>

²⁴ <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2022/03/israeli-citizenship-law-blocks-palestinian-family-reunification>

²⁵ The Humanitarian Impact of the Ban on Family Reunification of Palestinian Women, Al-Quds University's Community Action Center (CAC), July 2023

women to rely on their spouse's cooperation in legal and bureaucratic processes perpetuates a cycle of dependency and enhances the risk of continued abuse.

6.3.2. Registration and Custodial Rights of Children

Under Israeli laws, the process for registering a child whose sole parent has permanent residency involves only the resident parent, effectively excluding the West Bank parent from the child's registration. If the resident parent passes away before the child's registration or in cases of divorce, custody and registration issues become complex. The child cannot be registered by the non-resident parent unless a humanitarian committee, which rarely grants approval, intervenes. The custody might have to be transferred to a first-degree relative of the deceased resident parent for registration to proceed.

In divorce situations, the Israeli Ministry of Interior mandates that the resident parent have exclusive custody for the child to be registered with the Israeli Population Registrar. This requirement complicates the living arrangements for the child, who may be unable to live with or visit the non-resident parent without jeopardizing their legal status. Additionally, there are age-related restrictions on registration; children under 14 may be considered for permanent residency, but those between 14 and 18 are only eligible for a stay permit. Anyone over 18 is generally ineligible for any form of civil status based on a parent's residency or citizenship, potentially leaving them without any legal status, especially in East Jerusalem.

Furthermore, if a resident parent dies without securing the child's registration, the non-resident parent cannot register the child without specific approval, which is difficult to obtain. This situation often forces the child into a precarious legal limbo, impacting their access to social services and education²⁶.

These issues reflect broader patterns of discrimination embedded in Israeli policies that affect Palestinian families, particularly women and children, compounding their vulnerability in a politically charged environment²⁷.

6.3.3. Mobility and Restriction on Movement

West Bank spouses who obtain a stay permit face stringent mobility restrictions in Israel. They are prohibited from driving any vehicle for the first three years.²⁸ Once this period elapses, they can initiate the license application process, which requires the involvement of both spouses and is limited to a specific vehicle, significantly restricting their driving freedom. This sharply contrasts with the more lenient driving privileges granted immediately to spouses from other nations under Israeli laws.

Additionally, these spouses are generally barred from flying out of Israeli airports unless under humanitarian circumstances, compelling them to travel via Jordan. This requirement not only adds significant time and cost to their travels but also often forces couples to either journey separately or face cumbersome travel logistics together. Moreover, leaving and returning to Israel without jeopardizing their civil status involves navigating a complex visa application process. This includes securing a re-entry visa and obtaining clearance from Israeli security to board a plane, often entailing unpredictable and lengthy processing times.

Furthermore, spouses with a stay permit but without temporary residency face additional mobility challenges at numerous West Bank checkpoints. They are frequently required to take long detours to reach

²⁶ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/7/19/five-ways-israeli-law-discriminates-against-palestinians>

²⁷ The Humanitarian Impact of the Ban on Family Reunification of Palestinian Women, Al-Quds University's Community Action Center (CAC), July 2023

²⁸ *ibid*

their homes in Jerusalem, further complicating their daily lives and exacerbating their sense of isolation and vulnerability. These restrictions collectively impose significant social and emotional strain, deepening the impact on their overall well-being.

ii. Access Restriction to Labor Market in East Jerusalem

Labor market participation of Palestinian women in East Jerusalem remains critically low due to systemic and socio-economic barriers, with their employment rate stagnating at around 12-13% over the past decade. This underrepresentation is linked to an underdeveloped educational system that limits their employment opportunities to sectors typically involving intense physical labor, perpetuating cycles of poverty and economic disadvantage²⁹.

Women are also predominantly found in sectors like agriculture and services, with declining presence in more productive sectors such as manufacturing. This sectoral segregation restricts their job opportunities and potential for economic advancement, further exacerbated by Israeli policies that degrade the local economy's productive capacities, crucial for sectors employing women.³⁰ Despite these deficiencies, studies show that most men and women in East Jerusalem have difficulties accessing the labor market controlled by Israel and are employed in low strata jobs, such as sales, cosmetology, housekeeping and healthcare for women whereas men work in construction, sales, housekeeping, and transportation³¹.

Additional challenges that hinder women's access to the job market include a lack of childcare services, which significantly impacts mothers needing to balance work and family responsibilities. The socio-political environment under Israeli control, characterized by movement restrictions and pervasive checkpoints, curtails women's mobility and access to employment outside their immediate communities. This contributes to higher unemployment rates among women compared to men and limits their economic empowerment³².

In 2021, while around 70% of both Palestinian and Jewish men were active in the labor market, the participation rate for Palestinian women in Jerusalem was significantly lower at only 26%, in stark contrast to 82% for Jewish women. This discrepancy highlights the profound socio-cultural and economic barriers that distinctly impact Palestinian women, influenced by both community-specific norms and broader systemic issues within the city, on one hand, and the Israeli racism and constraints on access to the job market exercised by Israeli employers on the other hand. These challenges underscore the urgent need for focused interventions to enhance employment access and equality for Arab women in Jerusalem, addressing the deep-rooted disparities that limit their economic participation.³³

In the focus group meeting conducted with women in East Jerusalem, participants expressed the need for business support programs to help them surmount the constraints such as accounting, branding, online marketing, and craft workshops. In terms of professional training, they agreed that the training workshops provided so far do not take them to the next level of technical and design skills, allowing them to create marketable, high-quality products and services. They enumerated some of the trainings that can help women in East Jerusalem to start up their own businesses such as creative jewelry, woodwork and furniture design,

²⁹ <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/palestinian-women-in-east-jerusalem-struggling-for-job-integration-499866>

³⁰ <https://al-shabaka.org/briefs/unlocking-the-labor-market-for-palestinian-women/>

³¹ Empowering Women in Marginalized East Jerusalem Communities – Juzoor 2017 :

https://www.juzoor.org/cached_uploads/download/2022/10/01/final-research-report-empowering-women-in-marginalized-east-jerusalem-communities-1664616297.pdf

³² <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/palestinian-women-in-east-jerusalem-struggling-for-job-integration-499866>

³³ <https://palvision.ps/publications/the-status-of-vocational-counseling-and-guidance-programs-in-east-jerusalem/>

recycling and readjustment of clothes, food processing and cooking and hair related trainings. Other managerial training could include accounting, art therapy, tourism and tour guides.

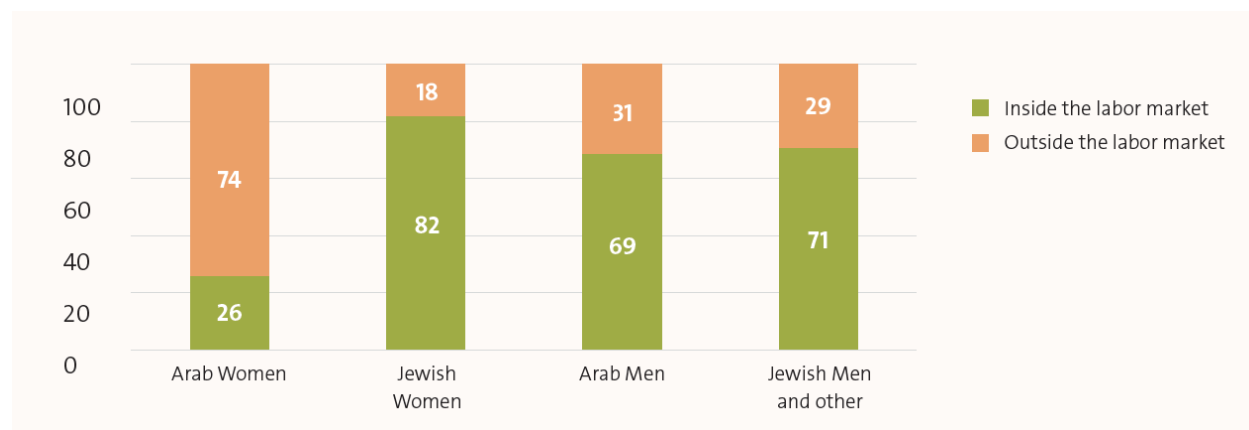


Figure 1: Distribution of Jerusalemites (25-64 years) according to gender and their integration into the labor market³⁴.

7. The Role of Civil Society in East Jerusalem in Promoting Gender Equality and Strengthening Resilience

The number of Palestinian CSOs in Jerusalem does not respond to the needs of the Palestinian population in East Jerusalem. Since 1967, over 100 Palestinian non-governmental organizations have been closed. The legal ground for this policy comes under Regulation 119 of the Defense (Emergency) Regulations, 1945 which is an adapted law from the era of the British mandate in Palestine.³⁵ Whereas about 23% of the total number of organizations in Israel estimated at 17965 are operating in Jerusalem and their annual budget ranges between 15 and 25 billion NIS in 2018³⁶, it is estimated that there are 172 Palestinian CSOs operating in East Jerusalem with much lesser budgets. The weakness of civil society in the Palestinian part of the city is due to the lack of budgets, the leadership crisis reflected in the absence of Palestinian national influence in Jerusalem, and the continuous process of social deterioration in East Jerusalem over recent decades making it difficult for CSOs to operate and provide services.

To overcome these constraints, CSOs work to strength the interconnections and mutual relationships among the various organizations, some of which are operating on a network level such as the networking relationship between al-Quds University and “Burj al-Laqlaq”, for example. These connections find expression in both joint initiatives and events, and through mutual support and funding. Furthermore, a large number of the CSOs are organized under umbrella organizations intended to safeguard them and promote their common interests (such as the network of Hemaya and the East Jerusalem Hospital Network (EJHN)).

It is worth noting that CSOs in East Jerusalem have developed an increasingly strong and quasi-independent identity that surmounted the Palestinian internal political divisions and paved the way for cooperation

³⁴ *ibid*

³⁵ *ibid*

³⁶ https://jerusalemstitute.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/PUB_civil-society-published_eng.pdf

among the different factions within the society. However, due to weak presence of the Palestinian Authority in East Jerusalem, Palestinians in East Jerusalem find themselves alienated from the political establishment in West Bank which may influence the work of the civil society in East Jerusalem especially when confronted by the gradual acceptance of the Palestinian population in the city, especially youth, of the support provided the Jerusalem municipality and other Israeli institutions. One of the Israeli research projects have cited the important role played by the local neighborhood committees, encouraged by the Jerusalem Municipality, in providing a platform for all the political and social streams and are functioning as effective local leadership for the Palestinians in Jerusalem as an alternative for the national Palestinian leadership. The research states that “in the last few years, these committees have been establishing a pragmatic dialogue with Israeli authorities with the goal of improving quality of life for the residents; these efforts are already beginning to bear fruit”³⁷. An example of the services provided by the Jerusalem municipality is the social services for Palestinian women. Led primarily by the social welfare offices in East Jerusalem, gender-related interventions focus on supporting victims of domestic violence.

7.1 Promoting Gender Equality

In East Jerusalem, CSOs/CSOs are integral to addressing gender-based issues and promoting women's empowerment, amidst the complex socio-political landscape. These organizations play a crucial role in advocating for women's rights and raising awareness about gender inequality. Through their efforts, they help to challenge and change the societal norms and legal frameworks that traditionally disadvantage women.

Education and training are fundamental areas where CSOs/CBOs make a significant impact. By providing workshops, vocational training, and educational programs, these organizations equip women with essential skills, boosting their employability and confidence. This empowerment is critical in a region where women's participation in the formal labor market remains notably low.

Economic empowerment is another vital focus. CSOs/CBOs facilitate microfinance, entrepreneurship training, and support for small and medium enterprises led by women, helping them to become economically independent and play more significant roles in their communities. These efforts not only improve individual lives but also contribute to broader economic stability.

Legal support and services provided by these organizations are crucial in a region where women may have limited access to the formal legal system or where the system may not fully protect their rights. CSOs/CBOs often assist women who face gender-based violence or discrimination, offering them legal advice and representation.

³⁷ Ibid

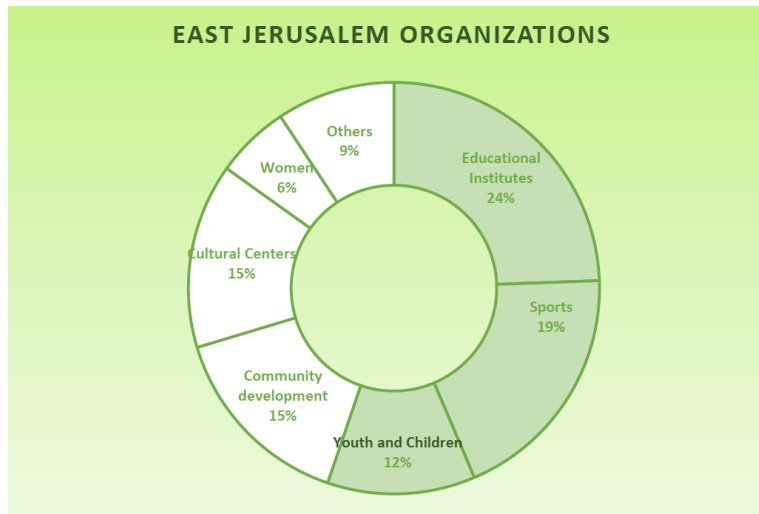


Figure 2: Show the distribution of Palestinian CSOs per sector in East Jerusalem³⁸

CSOs/CBOs play a pivotal role by forming networks that provide social support and a platform for women to exchange experiences and coping strategies for navigating personal and professional hurdles. These networks foster solidarity and collective action, which are especially vital in conservative environments where women's issues might be marginalized or ignored.

One notable example of such a network is Hedayeh, which translates to "Protection" in Arabic. Hedayeh is supported by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and led by the Palestinian Family Planning and Protection Association (PFPPA), along with nine other members including YWCA, Al Quds University, Women Studies Centre, Burj Al Laqlaq, Palestinian Red Crescent Society, Old City Youth Association, Women's Center for Legal Aid and Counseling, Juzoor for Health and Social Development, and Palestinian Counseling Center. This network's goal is to establish a referral system among the members to provide holistic and complementary services within their respective intervention fields.

Furthermore, the UNFPA aids in the creation of "safe spaces" within the clinics of the Palestinian Red Crescent Society, primarily in the Old City of Jerusalem and its surrounding areas. These spaces offer various support services to the most vulnerable communities. Additionally, the network has developed a manual that provides guidance and insights on family and societal issues for its members and other stakeholders. Although some network members have described these interventions as limited or tentative, the leading partners have expressed a strong sense of ownership and belief in the initiative's significance, underscoring its crucial role in addressing and supporting women's issues in the region.

7.2 Strengthening the Resilience of Palestinian Communities in East Jerusalem

A civil society organizations mapping has been conducted to provide a comprehensive overview of the existing CSOs in East Jerusalem. A survey was shared with a list of organizations working in East Jerusalem on a variety of themes and vulnerable groups (annex 4). The feedback received from surveyed and interviewed organizations highlights a unified commitment towards empowerment, inclusivity, and

³⁸ Factsheet, Squeezed out: the struggles of Palestinian civil society organizations in East Jerusalem – Jerusalem center for human rights - September 2023. Available at : file:///C:/Users/wb541161/Downloads/Factsheet_NGOs_in_Jerusalem.pdf

sustainable community development. This shared commitment reflects a strategic intention among these entities to promote social, economic, and cultural prosperity in their communities. These organizations work collaboratively to foster a resilient and empowered community in East Jerusalem, towards greater equality and justice.

Their concerted efforts focus on advocating for the comprehensive rights of Palestinian women, ensuring they enjoy full social, economic, legal, and political rights within an envisioned independent and democratic state of Palestine. This advocacy is rooted in promoting gender justice, equality, and adherence to the law.

In terms of community development, these entities strive to engage and raise awareness, aiming to cultivate an enlightened, creative, and practical society in Jerusalem that upholds human rights, gender equality, social justice, and a strong connection to their land.

Organizations like the Red Crescent Society in Jerusalem underscore the importance of providing high-quality humanitarian, healthcare, and social services to all, particularly to vulnerable and marginalized groups. They also support intellectual, cultural, and artistic endeavors among Palestinians to ensure a dignified life grounded in human rights principles, which includes empowering youth and women through educational initiatives and cultural activities.

Additionally, there is a significant emphasis on promoting environmentally friendly and sustainable practices within the community, enhancing both human and environmental well-being. This approach advocates for interconnected rights and services without discrimination.

To support vulnerable populations, comprehensive rehabilitation and inclusive educational opportunities are provided for children with disabilities, ensuring they have access to quality health services and can fully participate in society.

Moreover, these organizations offer psychological and social support across different community segments, creating nurturing environments that enhance overall well-being. They also focus on economic and social empowerment through educational, advisory, and vocational training initiatives designed to bolster economic independence and social equity. Seven different sectors were identified as CSOs main areas of intervention: (i) Job Creation and Community development through training and creation of job opportunities for youth; (ii) Child protection; Rehabilitation and Inclusive Education for Children with disabilities; (iii) Community support and services, including educational, therapeutic, cultural, sportive and artistic activities, scout and summer camps for youth and people with disabilities; (iv) Empowerment programs for youth and women, focusing on economic and social empowerment; (v) Education and guidance in the fields of natural sciences, technology, engineering, mathematics, and other educational and applied sciences; (vi) Professional and technical training directed towards leadership and innovation; (vii) Health, Wellness and Psychosocial support including sexual and reproductive health services and; (viii) Economic Development and Women Protection addressing gender-based violence through supportive services and education.

7.3 Challenges Facing Civil Society Organizations/Community Based Organizations in East Jerusalem

According to meetings conducted with heads and staff of some of the CSOs and CBOs in East Jerusalem, they stated that organizations in East Jerusalem face a range of challenges that significantly impact their ability to operate effectively, especially those working on gender issues and women's empowerment. These challenges stem from both socio-political dynamics and restrictions imposed by the Israeli occupation.

Financial Constraints and Funding Scrutiny: Palestinian NGOs in East Jerusalem often grapple with severe financial constraints. Funding is sporadic and heavily scrutinized by Israeli authorities, leading to delays and sometimes blocks in financial transactions. This financial instability makes it difficult for NGOs to maintain consistent operations and offer stable employment, undermining their capacity to undertake long-term planning and program implementation. Additionally, the funding they receive is often conditional, requiring NGOs to adhere to stringent donor stipulations that may not always align with the ground realities or the most pressing community needs.³⁹ This conditional nature of funding can restrict the scope of NGO activities, forcing them to tailor their programs to fit donor priorities rather than local needs.

Moreover, the vetting processes imposed by several donors are long and complicated, adding further delays to the disbursement of funds. These processes often involve rigorous checks intended to ensure that funds are not misused, but they can also act as barriers to timely financial support. The vetting often scrutinizes every aspect of the NGO's operations and affiliations, which can be particularly stringent in a politically sensitive environment like East Jerusalem. This meticulous scrutiny can discourage donors, especially international ones, from engaging with Palestinian NGOs, fearing potential political repercussions or accusations of supporting controversial causes. Consequently, these challenges compound the financial pressures on NGOs, severely affecting their operational effectiveness and their ability to serve the community effectively.

Operational and Legal Hurdles: The operational space for NGOs is increasingly shrinking due to a range of legal and administrative obstacles. Israeli policies frequently restrict the ability of these organizations to register legally, receive foreign aid, and operate without interference.⁴⁰ For instance, public activities often require approvals that are difficult to obtain, and organizations face the constant threat of being shut down or having their activities curtailed if they are perceived as politically sensitive.

Socio-political Barriers: The socio-political environment in East Jerusalem poses unique challenges. The separation barrier, checkpoints, and restricted movement policies significantly hinder the mobility of NGO staff and beneficiaries, limiting their ability to reach and assist the broader community.⁴¹ Furthermore, NGOs are restricted from officially interacting with the Palestinian population in the West Bank and Gaza, which can lead to the closure of organizations or bans on their activities under various allegations connected to security and terrorism. These restrictions also affect the ability of women to participate in programs, particularly those aimed at economic empowerment and rights awareness.

³⁹ Shrinking Spaces in Palestine: An Israeli Colonial Strategy to De-Politicize Palestinian Civil Society - BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights - August 2022

⁴⁰ Ibid

⁴¹ Squeezed out: the struggles of Palestinian civil society organizations in East Jerusalem – Jerusalem center for human rights - September 2023

Cultural and Social Resistance: NGOs promoting gender equality and women's rights often encounter cultural and social resistance within the Palestinian communities themselves. Conservative societal norms can make it difficult to address issues like domestic violence, women's employment, or reproductive rights openly and effectively.

Coordination Challenges: NGOs and civil society organizations in East Jerusalem also face significant coordination challenges. The absence of a strong and cohesive Palestinian leadership and strategic framework for civil society interventions has led to fragmented efforts across various initiatives. Without a central strategy or guidance, these organizations often operate in isolation, resulting in duplicated efforts and inefficient use of resources.⁴² This disjointed approach not only limits the effectiveness of individual programs but also hampers the ability to present a unified front in advocating for policy changes or negotiating with Israeli authorities. The lack of national adaptation of successful interventions further complicates the landscape, as organizations are unable to scale impactful solutions across different communities or adapt strategies that could address the unique challenges faced in East Jerusalem. Addressing these coordination issues is critical for enhancing the overall impact and sustainability of civil society efforts in the region.

High Cost of Living and Operational Expenses: In East Jerusalem, the cost of living and operational expenses is considerably higher than in other parts of the Palestinian territories. In 2022, Data compiled by the global consultancy ECA International ranked Jerusalem 15th on its list of most expensive cities in the world⁴³, and residents see no signs of relief any time soon. This elevated cost structure poses significant challenges for businesses and civil society organizations operating in the area. Rents, utilities, and general operational costs are substantially higher, which can strain the budgets of NGOs and limit their ability to hire and retain staff. This financial burden can force organizations to either downsize their operations or consider relocating aspects of their work to less expensive areas, such as the West Bank, where costs are more manageable.

This relocation or hiding of activities can impact the effectiveness and reach of NGOs, particularly those serving the specific needs of the East Jerusalem population. Moving operations to the West Bank might disconnect these organizations from the communities they serve in East Jerusalem, leading to reduced impact and a possible disconnect from the immediate needs and conditions of their target populations. Furthermore, the necessity to manage operations across different locations can introduce logistical challenges and additional costs, complicating project management and coordination.

8. Findings

The gender gaps and inequalities assessment identified the specific needs/barriers/constraints faced by the women with difficulties (discrimination, gender-based violence, economic and social vulnerability...), and other vulnerable groups living in East Jerusalem, highlighting their strengths and weaknesses. The following findings were identified as part of the gender gaps and inequalities assessment as expressed by the different stakeholders and should be addressed through Service bases Initiatives' supported under AJIR+.

Moreover, there is a lack of information regarding the percentage of GBV cases, Women with Disability and elderly, participation in labor force, civil participation ..etc. This information is essential to build an

⁴² Scoping Study on Operating Conditions of Civil Society in the Occupied Palestinian Territory- International Civil Society Centre-March 2022

⁴³ <https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/israel/society/1656946949-east-jerusalem-residents-struggle-with-soaring-cost-of-living>

evidence based approach for program design and implementation of intervention aimed at enhancing the services and promoting gender equality.

8.1 Findings related to Gender Equality and Women Rights in East Jerusalem

Education: The study shows that most women in East Jerusalem have access to education however it does not necessarily increase their labor force participation rates or guarantee equality in pay. Feedback from key informants also stated that this may change due to a recent trend in the community that resist women education and encourage traditional roles of women as housewives and children bearers. These discriminatory social norms favour early marriage and limit women's access to work and credit. In addition, programs implemented by CSOs that aim at empowering women and educating them about gender equality face significant challenges due to the conservative nature of some community segments and the overarching political tensions. Initiatives often encounter resistance from local groups who view them as culturally inappropriate, particularly when these programs challenge traditional gender roles or involve sensitive topics like sexuality.

Employment: For Palestinian women attempting to enter the Israeli labor market, social norms and language barriers present significant challenges, compounding the existing racial discrimination and gender biases. These socio-cultural hurdles make it difficult for Palestinian women to access employment opportunities and navigate workplace environments effectively. Additionally, the escalation following the October 7th events has intensified discrimination in the labor market⁴⁴, particularly affecting Palestinian youth and women. This has been exacerbated by increased workplace violence and social discrimination. The research also found that due to lack of affordable day care centers for children, women tend to stay at home for childrearing. Families with young children need affordable childcare if parents are to work. If childcare eats up one wage so that there is little or no financial gain in going out to work, parents (most often mothers) are less likely to seek a job. These factors collectively restrict job prospects for Palestinian men and women and deepen the economic disparities between Palestinians and Israelis in the city, solidifying a broader socio-economic gap.

Entrepreneurship and Start Ups: Research found that women in East Jerusalem are keen on starting their own business despite the fact that female entrepreneurs continue to be a minority in the country as a whole. Due to the tensed political situation in the city and limited access to labor market, women say they prefer to be self-employed. When asked why, they cited better work-life balance and/or economic necessity as the main motivation for starting a business.

Gender Based Violence: Gender inequalities are higher for women in East Jerusalem who are exposed to domestic violence by male family members. Research shows, for example, that over 40.3% of surveyed women perceive ongoing violence or derogatory attitudes towards them based on the gender of their children which highlights deep-seated gender biases and societal challenges. GBV is further exasperated for women who are engaged in the family reunification process. This process, coupled by the intricate Israeli-Palestinian political dynamics, subjects them to prolonged legal and social uncertainty, heightening their risk of psychological distress and diminished access to essential services like healthcare and legal support. The bureaucratic complexities and intersecting legal frameworks significantly delay reunification efforts, potentially stripping women of their residency rights, employment opportunities, and social benefits. The dependency inherent in the reunification process can also expose women to exploitation and abuse, as their legal status may become contingent on their male partners or family members. This

⁴⁴ <https://www.houstonpublicmedia.org/npr/2023/11/21/1213892449/palestinians-in-israel-cite-threats-firings-and-discrimination-after-oct-7/>

imbalance can perpetuate domestic abuse and restrict women's autonomy, making it difficult for them to seek help or escape harmful situations.

Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights: Women in East Jerusalem benefit from the sexual and reproductive health services provided by the Israeli comprehensive health Insurance. However, research shows that men are divided among themselves on women's autonomy in reproductive decisions, including family planning. While over half supported this right, there was significant hesitation and opposition from others, reflecting the need address this issue in future programs that include men and boys.

Cultural Sensitivity and Social Norms: In order to reduce the gap of gender inequalities, the research shows the importance of actively involving community members especially men and boys in the design and implementation of programs. Especially effective are those that engage men, local and religious leaders in gender equality initiatives, which help to slowly transform societal norms and increase program acceptance and impact. Issues related to women right to inheritance are culturally sensitive despite that are clearly regulated by the Sharia law. The research shows that women often do not receive their share of inheritance which highlights a significant issue regarding gender equality. The variation in how inheritance laws are applied or perceived is possibly influenced by family, cultural, or religious practices but also reflects a lack of clear understanding about inheritance rights and how these rights are enforced or respected.

8.2 Findings Related to CSOs Working on Gender Equality in East Jerusalem

Provision of Integrated and Comprehensive Services: Political instability and ongoing violations and restrictions imposed on Palestinian organizations in East Jerusalem pose significant obstacles to CBOs in their efforts to provide services to the most affected populations. Israel is rapidly marginalizing Arab parts of the city, leaving only a few institutions capable of providing protection and services and limited reach out to those in dire need. Research shows the importance of adopting a holistic approach to service delivery that encompasses health, legal support, education, and psychosocial care. This model is particularly advantageous in East Jerusalem where political instability and social stigmas create significant barriers for women seeking assistance. Despite the consensus on the benefits of integrated services for mitigating the embarrassment and stigma associated with accessing support—especially for sensitive issues like gender-based violence (GBV) and sexual and reproductive health rights—many organizations are unable to fully implement such comprehensive programs due to limited resources and political constraints. Research also shows that programs that target other vulnerable groups such as integrating people with disabilities in activities that target members in the community including youth are lacking.

Funding Instability and Operational Sustainability: The fluctuating geopolitical climate directly affects funding stability, with many organizations experiencing funding cuts or shifts in donor priorities due to political situation or global events like the COVID-19 pandemic. This volatility challenges the sustainability of programs and forces organizations to continuously adapt to changing financial landscapes, often at the cost of program continuity and employee retention. This has specially impact on leading the women and youth to a higher level of capacity building⁴⁵.

Infrastructure and Competitive Challenges: Organizations in East Jerusalem not only deal with infrastructural inadequacies but also face competition from Israeli institutions that generally have better funding and access to resources. This competition is stark in sectors like education, health, and psychosocial

⁴⁵ Young women explained that professional training would stop at beginners level due to funding constraints which is assessed by these women as having low impact on their empowerment.

support services, where Palestinian institutions often struggle to provide comparable quality due to resource constraints.

Limited Impact of Existing Networks: While many organizations strive to engage with and build networks to better serve their communities and to face the political and financial challenges, the impact of these networks, such as Hemaya, is weak and requires strengthening. Limitations in implementing activities collectively and coordination challenges, restrict these networks' ability to implement meaningful changes or advocate effectively on behalf of their communities.

9. Recommendations

To address the unique and challenging needs of women and youth in East Jerusalem, it is essential for community service organizations (CSOs) to develop strategic interventions aiming at strengthening their work on gender equalities and paving the way for long-term sustainability and social transformation. The research shows that increasing needs of the Palestinian communities in East Jerusalem and the shrinking budgets of the CSOs make it difficult to address to these needs. As such, the following recommendations can guide organizations, when applying for funding, to decide on the best interventions to address the key findings identified in section 6. Organizations are encouraged to submit proposals that integrate comprehensive services, engage the community effectively, and strengthen support networks through innovative approaches. These activities should create substantial impacts by addressing systemic barriers and the day-to-day challenges faced by East Jerusalem residents, especially women and youth and should focus on one or more of the following activities in order to address the gaps on gender equality in the community and improve their services.

9.1 Activities Addressing Gender Inequalities and Targeting Women and Youth

Skill Development Activities Using Vocational Training

- Implement short, targeted vocational training courses aligned with East Jerusalem's labor market demands in sectors including, technology, crafts making and service industries such as tourism and healthcare. Technical courses such as creative jewelry, woodwork and furniture design, recycling and readjustment of clothes, tour guides, languages..etc should not only develop the skills of youth and women but also take participants to the next level to improve these skills in line with industry advancements. CSOs can implement micro business support programs through local expertise to simulate real life experience.

Market Access Through Innovation and Entrepreneurship

- Implement programs that can include but not limited to design thinking, digital literacy, entrepreneurship and branding to equip women and youth with innovative skills for identifying and exploiting market opportunities. Workshops and seminars should be conducted to teach women and youth how to effectively utilize digital tools for business management, online marketing, and e-commerce, allowing them to access wider markets and manage their enterprises more efficiently.

Community Engagement and Enhanced Cultural Competence

- Develop public awareness programs on different initiative such as inheritance rights and wider integration of disabled people in the society in collaboration with community members to ensure cultural relevance and effective engagement.
- Engage community leaders as advocates to enhance the credibility of these initiatives and ensure they are well-received and sustainable.

Male Engagement

Proposed activities may include:

- Activities to increase community awareness on human rights and gender issues, promoting a gender-transformative approach through educational initiatives. This should involve engaging men and boys in discussions and activities that promote positive masculinities (ex. household chores), transform social norms, and advocate for family discipline.

Provide Legal Support and Policy Advocacy

- Implement targeted advocacy campaigns in the Palestinian communities to reduce gender-based violence and protect and empower GBV survivors through legal counseling and MHPSS services.
- Enhance legal aid services to address the challenges of navigating dual legal systems in East Jerusalem, focusing on issues such as family reunification, child protection, and GBV using innovative approaches such as the use of paid announcements on social media and e-services.

Psychosocial Support and Safe Spaces

- Increase the availability of psychosocial support through community centers and schools, providing services like counseling, group therapy, and crisis intervention.
- Develop safe spaces within neighborhoods, as part of CSOs networks, to provide a secure environment for vulnerable populations to receive various services, emphasizing confidentiality and support for GBV survivors.

Mobile and Outreach Initiatives:

- Programs should include activities and mobile units to serve the isolated and underserved communities such as Bedouin women and youth, overcoming the barriers posed by mobility restrictions and cultural constraints.

Using Innovative Approaches

- Online tools and applications should be developed to enhance outreach and provision of services, including the establishment of virtual services and hotlines to assist vulnerable women and GBV survivors.
- Implement outdoor activities.

9.2 Activities to Improve the CBOs' Capacities and Provision of Services

Organizations are also encouraged to incorporate activities in their project proposals that aim at promoting their capacities and enhancing the provision of services.

Professional Training and Organizational Capacity Building

Proposed activities may include:

- In-house training programs to enhance the skills of current staff, focusing on project management, gender-specific interventions, and emergency preparedness. These training programs should aim to

empower local staff and reduce dependency on external professionals restricted by movement limitations.

- Drafting of and/or update of operational manuals, policies and strategies where needed.
- Develop and enhance Grievance Mechanisms and Codes of Conducts in the CBOs.
- Improving the working environment through small renovations and civil works activities.

Funding Strategies and Operational Sustainability

Proposed activities may include:

- Develop capacities in advanced fundraising techniques, including the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in grant writing and digital platforms for crowdfunding to diversify funding sources, enhancing the financial resilience of organizations operating in the complex context of East Jerusalem

Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)

Proposed activities may include:

- Trainings to enhance the capacity of organizations to provide MHPSS and case management services specifically designed for GBV survivors and women at risk of GBV. Professional training sessions should be organized to equip staff with necessary skills for effective service delivery. Additionally, both individual and group MHPSS sessions should be made available to assist women in overcoming psychosocial challenges, supported by counseling, group therapy, and crisis intervention available through community centers and schools.

Strengthening Organizational Networks and Referral System

Proposed activities may include:

- Enhancement of the referral system within organizations to ensure seamless coordination and comprehensive support.
- Conduct capacity building training for network members on collective interventions.

Annexes

Annex 1: Semi-structured Interview – Organizations Representatives

Key Takeaways from Civil Society Organizations in East Jerusalem

The eleven interviews conducted with various organizations in East Jerusalem reveal critical insights into their operations, challenges, and strategic recommendations. These organizations span a wide range of sectors including child and women's welfare, disability support, youth empowerment, and more, offering a broad perspective on the needs and hurdles faced in this complex socio-political environment.

Organizational Overview

Most organizations are deeply committed to their communities, providing essential services that address specific local needs:

- **Child and Women's Welfare:** Services focus on empowerment, protection against violence, and support for victims of domestic abuse.
- **Youth and Disability Support:** Programs aim to empower through education, vocational training, and accessibility initiatives.
- **Cultural and Community Development:** Efforts to enhance community cohesion through cultural education and civic engagement are prevalent.

Challenges

Common challenges identified across these organizations include:

- **Funding Instability:** Nearly all organizations struggle with securing consistent funding, which affects their ability to plan long-term and sustain their initiatives.
- **Political and Administrative Barriers:** Movement restrictions, legal discrepancies, and the complexity of operating under Israeli and Palestinian authorities complicate daily operations and strategic planning.
- **Cultural and Social Stigma:** Issues such as gender-based violence and disabilities are often stigmatized, which hampers outreach and program effectiveness.
- **Resource Limitations:** Many organizations face a dearth of physical space and technical resources, limiting their capacity to serve their communities adequately.

Strategic Recommendations

From the insights gathered, several strategic recommendations can be formulated:

- **Enhanced Collaboration:** There's a pronounced need for increased collaboration both within sectors and across different service domains to pool resources and expertise.
- **Capacity Building:** Organizations benefit from external support in capacity building to enhance their operational efficiency and impact.
- **Awareness and Advocacy:** Continued efforts in awareness-raising and advocacy are essential to change societal attitudes and influence policy-making.

- **Service Expansion:** Expanding services to cover neglected areas and underserved populations, such as remote communities and marginalized groups, is critical for broader impact.

Below is the Semi-structured Interview questions that were directing the discussion with the different organizations representatives. Interviews were conducted during May 2024.

Organization Information:

- 1- Could you please give us a brief description of your organization (strategy, mission, vision, policies)?
- 2- Legal status (registration, Israeli/Palestinian license...etc),?
- 3- What is the main area of intervention and scope of work?

Area of Intervention:

- 4- Who is the target population (main category: women, youth, disabled, ...)?
- 5- What is the measure used to ensure equality in your program? Is it mainstreamed or based on list of priorities?
- 6- how the interventions benefit women and men differently.
- 7- What is the area covered by your interventions? Locality Area C, camps...etc
- 8- How do you secure funds for your interventions? Who are the main donors? Do you have shortage in fund?

Gaps and Needs

- 9- How do you identify needs for your affected population? (need assessment, surveys..etc)
- 10- What role played by women and men in designing the project?
- 11- how do you ensure that the intervention will help to foster greater gender equality and change social roles and relationships?
- 12- In your point of view what are the main gaps in your area of intervention/sector?
- 13- What are the main challenged faced in your area of interventions?
- 14- Are there any gender facilities for women in difficulties?
- 15- How to overcome? Recommendations?

Partnership and coordination mechanisms:

- 16- Do you have any partnership with local, UN, international organizations?
- 17- Are organization members or part of a coalition/ cluster...etc?
- 18- Do you have any relations with PA institutions or Palestinian municipalities?

Community cohesion:

- 19- To what extent your organization is involved with local communities (ensuring community cohesion)?
- 20- To what extent your organization has cross cutting issues with other sectors?
- 21- What is the level of engagement with men and community leaders?

Capacity Building:

- 1- How many technical/ administrative staff? By sex
- 2- Do you have administrative and financial procedures/ manual/ code of conduct/ compliant mechanism...etc in place?

- 3- Do you have career development plan for the staff?
- 4- Do you have adequate assets and equipment to implement your activities?
- 5- In your opinion what is needed to improve the capacity of your organization?

Accountability

- 1- How do you ensure quality of service provided by your organization? What mechanisms use to ensure accountability and transparency? monitoring mechanism (involving the gathering of disaggregated data) and evaluation can be used to monitor and evaluate the ways in which the project seeks to achieve the outcomes it set in relation to gender, any obstacles encountered and levers which could be deployed in order to rectify the project as a result (where applicable), and whether or not the project could be more ambitious in light of the issues at stake.

Summary of Interview with Spafford Center for Children

Interviewee: Shahd Suri – Director

Organizational Overview

- **Specialization:** The Spafford Center for Children specializes in addressing a wide range of learning and developmental challenges including learning difficulties, ADHD, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, hearing impairments, early childhood intervention, and mental disorders such as autism.
- **Empowerment Programs:** The center provides various empowerment programs including youth leadership, first aid training, vocational rehabilitation, and women's empowerment.
- **Cultural Activities:** It conducts cultural activities such as ballet, psychodrama, arts, computer labs, and summer camps to engage and support the community.
- **Medical Services:** Offers specialized medical services including intelligence quotient (IQ) assessments by a specialist doctor.
- **Target Population:** The center serves all community segments, including children, youth, women, and individuals with disabilities, focusing particularly on areas such as Silwan, Kufr Aqab, Shuafat Camp, Al-Eizariya, Abu Dis, and Bedouin communities.
- **Gender Equality:** Promotes gender equality as a cultural practice, providing gender-specific interventions focusing on children and involving both fathers and mothers. Facilitates father groups and workshops to raise awareness and support parents.
- **Funding:** Sources include registration fees, local and international donors, and support from affiliated entities like the American Colony.

Challenges

- **Funding:** Faces significant funding challenges due to global events such as COVID-19 and geopolitical conflicts.
- **Operational Constraints:** Movement restrictions in the Old City, cultural barriers, and lack of awareness and education pose significant operational challenges.
- **Needs Identification:** Identifies needs through questionnaires, field visits, and assessments in schools and communities. Engages both men and women in designing projects through polls, cultural activities, and focus groups.
- **Service Gaps:** Main gaps identified include emergency response, drug abuse prevention, youth activities, sexual harassment awareness, and activation of existing organizations.

Recommendations and Partnerships

- **Awareness Programs:** Enhancing awareness programs, integrating comprehensive services, and increasing cooperation between institutions.
- **Referral System:** Establishing a robust referral system and implementing comprehensive services for schools and community leaders.
- **Partnerships:** Collaborates with local, UN, and international organizations such as UNICEF, Italian Cooperation, GIZ, UNFPA, NDC, and the French Consulate. Active member of the National Committee for Early Childhood and Health and participates in the mental health psychosocial support cluster with OCHA.
- **Community Engagement:** Extensive involvement with local communities, ensuring community cohesion, and cross-sector collaboration. Engages with community leaders and men, supporting small projects, and collaborating with organizations like Juzoor, Bank of Palestine, and America House.
- **Staff and Training:** Staff comprises 30 members, predominantly part-time with 27 women and 3 men. Training policies include career development plans, educational support, and professional training facilitated by donors and partners.
- **Quality Assurance:** Ensures service quality through qualified teams, pre and post assessments, focus groups, and documentation of success stories. Uses monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to maintain accountability and transparency.

Summary of Interview with YWCA

Interviewee: May Amireh – Head of Vocational Training Center

Organizational Overview

- **Mission and Activities:** YWCA focuses on eco-empowerment for women and youth, providing training and market access through diplomas, short courses, and technical training.
- **Empowerment Initiatives:** The center is committed to supporting GBV survivors through activities like cooking, art therapy, and photography, and promotes women's rights awareness, mainstreaming gender equality in its strategies.
- **Target Population:** Services are aimed at women and youth aged 18-35, including people with disabilities, covering areas such as Jerusalem, Biddo, Qatanna, Ezariah, and the Bedouin community in Ezariah.
- **Educational Outreach:** Conducts campaigns and training against cyberbullying and ensures safe access to mental health services for women, including support for GBV survivors.

Challenges

- **Funding Issues:** YWCA faces challenges related to the lack of strategic project partnerships and reliance on short-term project funding, which affects sustainability.
- **Operational Challenges:** High capacity and space needs, competition with Israeli colleges, funding sustainability, stereotypes about vocational training, and inadequate psychosocial support services are significant challenges.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** While the center involves trainers and team members in project design, it lacks a formal requirement for consultation, and engages with local communities through its educational programs.

Recommendations and Partnerships

- **Capacity Building:** There is a need to enhance partnerships and coordination mechanisms to overcome challenges such as competition and stereotypes.
- **Network and Collaboration:** YWCA is part of the Hemaya network, providing psychosocial referrals and vocational training, and works closely with local, UN, and international organizations such as TVET league and YWCA Palestine cluster.
- **Community and Staff Engagement:** The center engages extensively with local communities and integrates cross-cutting issues with other sectors. Staff includes 22 members, with only 2 males, and quality is ensured through policies, audits, general assembly meetings, and board elections every few years.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Uses mechanisms to ensure accountability and transparency, focusing on continuously improving service delivery and stakeholder engagement.

Summary of Interview with The Palestinian Family Planning and Protection Association (PFPPA)

Interviewee: Amal Awad Alah – Director

Organizational Overview

- **Mission and Services:** PFPPA specializes in providing comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services, legal support, and youth-friendly centers, with centers in Ramallah, Bethlehem, Hebron, and previously in Gaza.
- **Community Engagement:** Implements a comprehensive sexual education program adapted to the Palestinian context, collaborates with UNFPA on gender and GBV prevention, and conducts community-based studies to decide on interventions.
- **Challenges in Service Delivery:** Struggles with social stigma particularly around sexual and reproductive health and GBV, limited service availability in areas like Qalandia and Kufr Aqab, and funding constraints affecting operations in Jerusalem.

Challenges

- **Access and Stigma:** Faces significant challenges due to social stigma, especially concerning sexual health and GBV, and additional challenges for women involved in family reunification processes.
- **Operational Barriers:** Economic empowerment for women is emphasized to help achieve independence and prevent returning to abusive situations, yet funding constraints and limited support for Jerusalem-based institutions remain prevalent.

Recommendations and Partnerships

- **Strategic Collaborations:** PFPPA is part of the Hemaya network aiming to provide a national referral system for women seeking protection from violence, emphasizing the need for enhanced cooperation between institutions.
- **Service Expansion and Quality Assurance:** Ensures service quality through internal controls, regular audits, and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, focusing on accountability and transparency.
- **Staff and Training:** Employs a significant number of women and provides career development plans and professional training supported by donors and partners, aiming to enhance service delivery and employee engagement.

Summary of Interview with Old City Youth Center

Interviewee: Samer Amro – Director

Organizational Overview

- **Mission and Services:** The Old City Youth Center provides a range of activities focused on the well-being and development of women and youth, including sports camps, psychological relief workshops, and various training programs.
- **Community Engagement:** Coordinates with NGOs like the Guidance Center to address violence against women and offers economic support courses. The center's programs encourage active participation and include activities like fitness and various workshops to address psychological needs.
- **Target Demographics and Locations:** Focuses on youth and women in the Old City of Jerusalem, arranging international exchange programs and offering specialized workshops to enhance skills and mental health.

Challenges

- **Operational and Structural Barriers:** Faces significant challenges including funding shortages, threats of closure due to building issues, and weak infrastructure which impact the center's ability to maintain and expand its programs.
- **Registration and Access Issues:** Palestinian members face registration challenges due to the center's location, affecting their ability to participate fully in the center's offerings.
- **Social and Political Constraints:** The youth and women suffer from a lack of institutional support and recognition, compounded by political and security instability that affects their daily lives and future prospects.

Recommendations and Partnerships

- **Expanding Support Networks:** The center's director emphasizes the need for broader support networks to enhance the protection and development opportunities for its beneficiaries.
- **Policy and Program Development:** Recommendations for future initiatives include creating more robust educational and employment programs to address the high needs of youth, particularly in navigating the challenges of higher education and employment in a complex socio-political landscape.
- **Engagement and Advocacy:** The center works to increase community engagement through workshops, storytelling, documentation, advocacy, and lobbying to enhance the social and economic status of its participants.

Summary of Interview with Women Studies Center

Interviewee: Ayda Essawi – Head of Projects

Organizational Overview

- **Mission and Services:** The Women Studies Center is committed to enhancing child rights, combating child marriage, and supporting women's political participation and economic empowerment in the Jerusalem governorate. The center actively partners with the Ministry of Education to conduct programs in schools aimed at self-empowerment and reducing child marriages.
- **Community Engagement and Activities:** Involves parents in various activities and provides counseling to families. Initiatives also focus on addressing political violence, providing psychological relief, and managing crises, especially concerning mothers of detainees and house demolitions.
- **Target Areas:** The center's activities span several regions including Qalandia, Kufr Aqab, Al-Ram, Biddu, and Beit Anan, with a specific focus on empowering women through business establishment support.

Challenges

- **Legal and Social Barriers:** Faces challenges due to legal discrepancies between Israeli and Palestinian laws, which impact the protection and options available to women. Social stigma and conservative opposition significantly hinder the center's activities, especially in conservative regions like Hebron.
- **Operational Difficulties:** Struggles with high dropout rates among girls due to barriers around Jerusalem, leading to early marriages. The center also notes a lack of awareness about networks like Hemayeh and the difficulties in navigating the political landscape in Jerusalem.
- **Funding and Staff Limitations:** Funding remains a significant issue, impacting the ability to activate networks and maintain sufficient staff levels to serve the community effectively.

Recommendations and Partnerships

- **Strategic Alliances:** Advocates for stronger collaborations and enhanced partnerships with local, national, and international organizations to bolster support mechanisms for women and families affected by various social and political issues.
- **Program Development and Expansion:** Recommends the development of comprehensive empowerment programs that cater to the needs of women across different societal sectors. This includes expanding awareness and support networks that can more effectively address the needs of women and children in crisis situations.

Summary of Interview with Community Action Center

Interviewees: Moneer Marjeieh (Advocacy Officer), Rima Rizek (Program Officer)

Organizational Overview

- **Mission and Services:** Established in 1999, the Community Action Center in East Jerusalem focuses on providing vital social services such as family reunification, national insurance assistance, and legal support for issues like house demolitions and punitive measures. The center operates under the affiliation of Al Quds University, emphasizing community service.
- **Target Beneficiaries:** Services are specifically designed for Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem, addressing their unique challenges under occupation. The center also engages in significant advocacy efforts, both locally and internationally.

Challenges

- **Operational Challenges:** The center contends with severe restrictions due to its location and the political situation, including different definitions of annexation and occupation that complicate its operations. Funding and donor requirements also pose persistent challenges.
- **Service Delivery Barriers:** The low profile needed to operate under Israeli oversight limits the center's visibility and effectiveness. There are also societal issues like divorce and violence, particularly noted in areas like Shufat Refugee Camp.

Recommendations and Partnerships

- **Advocacy and Community Engagement:** Suggests more robust advocacy campaigns and data processing for international social efforts to raise awareness and support for East Jerusalem residents. Partnerships with entities like the French consulate help in storytelling and raising awareness of violations against women and youth.
- **Strategic Growth and Support:** The center advocates for expanding its service coverage and increasing the number of beneficiaries with the support of sustainable partnerships. Engaging more in eco-social status activities and humanitarian delegations can also bolster their community impact.

Summary of Interview with UNFPA

Interviewees: Sana Asi Yasin (Program Analyst), Sahar Natsheh (Program Officer)

Organizational Overview

- **Mission and Focus:** UNFPA in Jerusalem is dedicated to combating violence and empowering women, enhancing their roles in the community through various interventions and support mechanisms. They focus on establishing safe spaces, supporting institutions that provide psychological support, and aiding in capacity analysis for better service delivery.
- **Services and Collaboration:** The organization collaborates with the Palestinian Red Crescent Society and other local entities to improve their capacity to serve women and youth effectively, particularly in areas affected by family reunification, drug abuse, and social violence.

Challenges

- **Service Accessibility:** One of the main challenges is the difficulty of obtaining services from municipal or Israeli institutions in Jerusalem, which underlines the importance of Palestinian institutions in bridging service gaps.
- **Operational Hurdles:** High operational and administrative costs, along with difficulty attracting skilled experts due to financial constraints and limited expertise availability, pose significant challenges. The political context further complicates integration and service benefits from West Bank institutions.

Recommendations and Partnerships

- **Network Coordination and Support:** UNFPA coordinates the Hemayeh Network, enhancing the referral system among member organizations and filling service gaps. They have also established Standard Operating Procedures to streamline processes within the network.
- **Strategic Expansion:** There is a strong emphasis on increasing support for Jerusalem institutions, both in terms of funding and operational capacity. UNFPA suggests expanding operations to reach more beneficiaries and securing solid support from donors for projects focused on Jerusalem's unique needs.

Summary of Interview with Al Multaqa

Interviewee: Mohammad Awar – Director

Organizational Overview

- **Mission and Activities:** Al Multaqa targets marginalized communities in areas like Silwan and Al-Issawiya, focusing on democratizing access to arts education, which was previously seen as elitist. The organization has established an arts school offering a variety of programs including music, dance (Dabke), drawing, English, and robotics.
- **Community Engagement and Growth:** Starting with 30 participants, the organization has grown to 300, showcasing a high demand for its services. They focus on empowerment through vocational skills, arts, and life skills training, especially for women and individuals with disabilities.

Challenges

- **Capacity and Funding:** Al Multaqa faces significant challenges including limited capacity to meet the high demand for services, biases in funding allocations, and difficulties in securing sustainable funding sources. Competition from Israeli NGOs and municipality-affiliated bodies adds to these challenges.
- **Recruitment and Geographical Barriers:** Recruiting team members from diverse neighborhoods is problematic due to geographic and political barriers, affecting the organization's ability to operate effectively across different areas.

Strategic Development and Recommendations

- **Partnerships and Community Involvement:** The organization partners with local, UN, and international organizations, actively engaging with the local community to ensure cohesion and effective cross-sector collaboration.
- **Recommendations:** Al Multaqa is advised to improve its capacity by securing additional funding, enhancing recruitment strategies, and addressing infrastructural gaps to better serve its community.

Summary of Interview with PalVision

Interviewee: Rami Naser Al Den – Director

Organizational Overview

- **Mission and Vision:** PalVision aims to empower and build resilience among Palestinian youth, targeting the most vulnerable and marginalized segments such as children, people with disabilities, women, and girls. The vision is to create a world where free, pioneering, and innovative Palestinian youth live in dignity.
- **Activities and Focus Areas:** The organization focuses on various interventions including economic development, education, cultural and heritage rights, local governance, and civic participation. The programs are designed to ensure equality and are community-driven, with over 64% of participants being female.

Challenges

- **Funding and Resources:** PalVision faces funding challenges due to shifting priorities towards economic empowerment and health sectors. Additionally, there's a lack of spaces and tools in rural areas, and difficulty in recruiting team members from different neighborhoods due to cultural issues and competition from Israeli NGOs.
- **Community and Gender Issues:** The organization strives to foster greater gender equality by involving both sexes in planning and implementation, addressing the specific needs of women in difficulties through targeted support.

Strategic Development and Recommendations

- **Community Engagement and Partnerships:** PalVision is highly involved with local communities to ensure cohesion, and is part of various coalitions and clusters. They maintain strong relationships with Palestinian Authority institutions and municipalities to enhance their reach and impact.
- **Recommendations for Improvement:** The organization is advised to improve its organizational capacity through better partnership and coordination mechanisms and by enhancing its recruitment strategies to overcome geographical and political barriers.

Summary of Interview with Arab Society for Persons with Disability

Interviewee: Ehsan Edkeidek – Director

Organizational Overview

- **Mission and Services:** The Arab Society for Persons with Disability (ASPD) targets both individuals with disabilities and the wider community to raise awareness and integrate disabled persons into society. The organization conducts activities in marginalized areas like El-Issawiya and focuses on offering psychosocial support, legal aid, and professional training in various fields including photography and e-marketing.
- **Partnerships:** ASPD collaborates with several local entities such as Yad Wahida in Essawiya, Princess Bassma, Helen Keller, and El Ri'ayah School to effectively reach its beneficiaries.

Challenges

- **Operational and Financial Challenges:** ASPD faces significant operational challenges including high rent and taxes, difficulty in competing with Israeli salaries, and high costs of outsourced services which affect their ability to recruit and retain specialized staff.

- **Social Stigma and Accessibility:** There is a critical need for community-wide awareness programs about disabilities. The organization works with businesses in Jerusalem to improve access for disabled persons to public spaces.

Strategic Development and Recommendations

- **Community Engagement and Awareness:** The organization aims to expand its outreach by integrating disabled individuals in cultural and social activities, and by enhancing accessibility in public venues. ASPD is also focused on addressing domestic violence against disabled women and girls, an issue compounded by societal norms that tend to isolate these individuals.
- **Expansion of Partnerships:** Recommended strategies include strengthening collaborations with cultural institutions like Al Hakawati Theatre and educational entities to broaden the impact and reach of their programs. The organization is also advised to enhance its visibility and advocacy through public announcements and educational initiatives in schools and universities.

Summary of Interview with Arab Society for Persons with Disability

Interviewee: Ehsan Edkeidek – Director

Organizational Overview

- **Mission and Services:** The Arab Society for Persons with Disability focuses on supporting vulnerable groups, particularly those with disabilities, in marginalized areas such as El-Issawiya, Jabel El Mukaber, Al Sawahra, and Anata. The organization expands its reach to include villages around northwest Jerusalem and Abu Dis and El Ezariyeh, providing psychosocial support through sports and music, legal support, and professional training.
- **Partnerships:** Collaborates with local institutions like Yad Wahida in Essawiya, Princess Bassma, Helen Keller, and El Ri'ayah School to reach its beneficiaries.

Challenges

- **Operational and Financial Challenges:** The organization struggles with high operational costs such as rent and taxes, competitive salary issues compared to the Israeli sector, and high costs of outsourced legal and financial services. These challenges hinder the recruitment of specialized staff and affect the overall operational efficiency.
- **Social Stigma and Accessibility:** There's a significant need for societal awareness about disabilities. Efforts are focused on encouraging businesses to provide better access for disabled people, who often prefer shopping in more accessible Israeli centers like Mamila.

Strategic Development and Recommendations

- **Community Integration:** ASPD works to integrate disabled individuals into societal activities and is involved in creating cultural and social events that include both disabled and non-disabled participants.
- **Addressing Domestic Violence:** The organization focuses on addressing domestic violence against disabled women and girls, a prevalent issue compounded by cultural norms that isolate these individuals.

- **Expansion of Partnerships:** ASPD seeks to expand its partnerships to include more cultural institutions and raise awareness by reaching out to larger communities through schools, universities, and public announcements.

Summary of Interview with Israel Social Services in Jerusalem

Interviewee: Ahlam Hijazi, Deputy General Director

Organizational Overview

- **Mission and Activities:** Israel Social Services in Jerusalem focuses on addressing a wide range of social issues including high dropout rates in schools, drug use, and prostitution among young girls. They run special programs for girls and young adults, integrating education, rights awareness, and gender identity issues, alongside various empowerment and housing initiatives for individuals aged 18-26.
- **Scope of Service:** The organization operates several social services offices across Jerusalem, offering a range of supports from psychological and legal assistance in shelters to guidance on educational and career paths post-high school.

Summary of Services Provided by Social Services in Jerusalem:

- **Safe Shelter for Victims:**
 - Shelters for abused women and their children, offering protection and treatment. Women from East Jerusalem are primarily accommodated in shelters for Arab women, with provisions for mixed or Jewish shelters if necessary. Shelters provide physical and psychological safety, temporary accommodation (3-6 months), and post-shelter support grants for independent living.
 - Community shelters for children at risk, providing temporary family-based care to ensure their protection and daily needs, often within the children's existing community to maintain their routine.
 - Safe shelters for girls and young women (ages 13-15) in immediate danger, offering housing, protection, and comprehensive care for up to three months, with possible extensions in special cases.
 - Emergency accommodation for young men and women (ages 18-25) in danger, providing temporary housing, primary assistance, meals, medical support, and rights advocacy for up to four months. These shelters cater to the specific needs of different genders, religions, and sexual orientations.
 - Emergency centers for children and parents in severe danger, offering short-term protection, family assessment, and therapeutic recommendations. These centers operate 24/7, with stays of up to three months, extendable with ministry approval.
 - Emergency foster families for children (newborn to 6 years, exceptionally up to 10 years), providing immediate protection and short-term intervention plans. Stays last up to three months, extendable with ministry approval.
- **Treatment and Rehabilitation Services:**
 - Transitional homes for abused women and their children, supporting independent living post-shelter. These homes, available to East Jerusalem residents, offer life skills training, legal assistance, vocational and educational programs, and child education support for 6 months to a year.

- Treatment programs for violent men, aiming to change abusive behaviors and promote non-violent relationships. Services are provided within the criminal justice system, both during and post-incarceration, and through the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare.
- Therapeutic homes for violent men, offering individualized and group treatments like anger management and parenting programs to foster non-violent behaviors and healthy family relationships.
- Family treatment and rehabilitation centers, offering comprehensive support to help families escape cycles of violence. These centers provide diagnosis, risk assessment, and tailored protection and treatment plans.
- A family violence prevention center in Beit Hanina, part of the family center services, offering a year-long treatment program for families, violent men, and abused women, extendable with ministry approval.

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Challenges

- **Societal Issues:** The organization faces challenges like increasing domestic violence, high divorce rates often related to substance abuse, and significant barriers to accessing services due to cultural and logistical issues.
- **Operational Challenges:** Navigating the bureaucratic complexities and the stigma associated with their services, especially around issues like early marriage and divorce. They also encounter difficulties in securing sufficient funding and resources to adequately serve all communities within Jerusalem.

Strategic Development and Recommendations

- **Enhancing Service Delivery:** Advocates for stronger cooperation among various entities to improve service effectiveness and reach. This includes expanding services to address the unique challenges of areas like Kafr Aqab and Shuafat refugee camp, which face overcrowding and infrastructure issues leading to increased crime and violence.
- **Community Engagement:** Focuses on building a robust community support network to provide peer-to-peer support among women and establish rehabilitation units for the disabled.
- **Program Expansion:** There's a push to increase the impact of their programs by securing health, employment, and identity rights for families in need, while also expanding and adapting their services to reach all affected communities effectively.

Annex 2: Interviews with Women Exposed to GBV, Social and Economic Hardships Due to the Family Reunification Process

During the interviews, the social and economic impact of the Family Unification Process on Palestinian women and their families in East Jerusalem was brought up by most CSOs working with women on gender equality. The implementation of the “Citizenship and Entry into Israel law” leads to family separation and has severe consequences on the social and economic living conditions of the indigenous population of the City especially women. More specifically, family separation caused by the measures applied by the Israeli authorities has direct impact on the conjugal life of the married couple, their children, social ties (i.e. feasts and funerals), and resulted in identity and economic crisis. The inherent nature of these measures is to permeate all facets of the lives of these families, intending to create such unbearable conditions that they are compelled to "voluntarily" depart from Jerusalem (B’Tselem 2004). The majority of the published⁴⁶ reports have dealt with the violation of the legal and human rights conditions of the Palestinian families in East Jerusalem, however, very few have analyzed the fractured lives that those women live and the social and economic impact on them. As such, the Consultant, with the support of one of the CBOs, has conducted a set of in person and virtual interviews with a selected number of women to discuss the matter and to identify the support they receive and needs. For the sake of the confidentiality and as per the participants’ request, all names have been changed. Different names were used to protect the identity of the participants. Interviewed women live in different neighborhoods in East Jerusalem including Silwan, Bab-Hutta (old city), Kufr Aqab, Issawiyeh and Ras El Amoud and were asked the following questions:

1. Could you tell us about yourself and your experience of family unification?
2. How did this process affect your family?
3. Did the process impact your economic situation? If yes, how?
4. Where do you refer to for support?

Women were allowed to speak freely about their experiences. In-depth testimonies were collected. Discussion involved mixed emotions of sorrow, anger, and running tears. All women expressed their fatigue as they all must run a household in the shadow of this law. “I feel unwell, physically and mentally. I break down”, says one of the women.

Analysis of the Discussion

In this section, we will analyse the impact of the Law on the lives of women and their families namely the family separation caused by the law and its impact on children, social ties, identity, and economic situation. Our analysis will be drawn from women testimonies collected in the field and supported by the existing literature. Family unification involves more than just obtaining legal status; it encompasses the crucial aspects of reuniting with the loved ones and rebuilding social networks. When residency permits are denied, it results in the separation of family members, leading to emotional distress and the loss of support networks in addition to gender violence. During field research, we have identified certain patterns in the lives of women that were severely impacted by the process of family unification. These patterns include children, identity, social ties and economic situation. For women holders of West Bank ID, they can not access Israeli services and some of them refer to Palestinian CBOs in the city for legal and psychosocial support such as Society of Saint Yves, Community Action Centre/ Al Quds University and WCLAC. This section was used to identify several findings that were listed above in section 9.

⁴⁶ Several human rights organizations have produced and published reports on family unification such as B’Tselem, St. Eve, Norwegian Refugee Council, Badil Resource Center, Adalah and the United Nations.

Children:

Women were aware of the difficulties imposed by this law on their children. They understand that children without legal status could only attend school unofficially, will not receive official grades, and will suffer to pursue higher education in either Palestinian or Israeli universities. They cannot sign papers because they are not considered by the law as the child's guardian: "What do you do when your child is ill and the hospital refused to receive him because of the 'temporary order' and their allegation of uncomplete documents?" said Ahlam. Then there is the fact that as a family they have not the right to fly abroad together or leave the city where they live together. Under this law, family holidays are not possible. This has a drastic impact on the children moral and psychological state of mind to the extent that some of them have expressed regret towards their parents for having them.

Identity:

The family unification process can challenge the notion of national identity among Palestinian women and their families. The Palestinian people have a collective national identity rooted in their history, struggle for self-determination, and aspirations for statehood. However, the prolonged separation and displacement experienced by families may result in a fragmented sense of national identity. Reunified family members may have different experiences and perspectives influenced by the places they resided during the separation, which can create tensions and a sense of being disconnected from a unified Palestinian national identity.

In addition to national identity, gender identity also plays a significant role in the family unification process and its impact on Palestinian women. The roles and expectations assigned to women within Palestinian society may evolve or change during the process. Women who took on more prominent roles and responsibilities in the absence of male family members may face challenges when reintegrating into a more traditional gender framework. This shift can create an internal conflict as women navigate their own evolving gender identities in the face of societal expectations and norms. "I had carried the sole responsibility of earning the family income and being the driver, as my husband lacked proper documentation" Said Aisha.

Moreover, the identity crisis resulting from family unification can have profound psychological and emotional effects on Palestinian women and their families. The process of adjusting to the presence of previously separated family members and redefining family roles and dynamics can generate feelings of confusion, anxiety, and even a sense of loss. The pressure to reconcile multiple identities and roles can contribute to stress and emotional strain within individuals and the family unit, especially when one of the couples is moving to a rural area or an isolated neighborhood that they are not accustomed to living in.

These challenges highlight the need for comprehensive support systems and interventions that address the multifaceted aspects of identity during the family unification process. By recognizing the complexities involved, appropriate measures can be taken to foster a sense of belonging, well-being, and self-empowerment for Palestinian women and their families as they navigate the process of unification.

Social ties:

The legislation harms ties between families and individuals in Jerusalem and the rest of the West Bank. It forces East Jerusalem residents who are married to West Bank residents to live separately from their spouses, preventing them from residing together without violating the law. Consequently, they are burdened with constant fear and unable to lead a normal life. In cases where couples choose to live together in the West Bank, the Israeli spouse will also be in breach of the law due to a military order that prohibits Israelis from entering the West Bank. Women said that they could not participate in important moments of their lives: "The most difficult moments in my life", said Ahlam, "were giving birth to my daughter without my husband's presence".

Economic Situation:

The absence of the spouse due to family unification restrictions often places the burden of financial support solely on the woman. This situation can lead to increased pressure and stress, as they may struggle to meet the needs of their children and maintain a decent standard of living.

The restrictions on family unification often prevent women from accessing the job market both in Jerusalem and in the West Bank due to mobility constraints. Tala, who was born in Abu Dis and married to a Jerusalemite, was not able to find a job to support her family during the long years of her husband's imprisonment due to the lack of documents that would allow her to move in and out of the city. Tala could not access the job market in the West Bank where job prospects are more abundant and better suited to her skills and qualifications because she had to prove to the Israeli authorities that her "Center of Life" is in Jerusalem. Her husband, who is from the West Bank, could not work either without having the Jerusalem residency card.

In the case of a woman from Jerusalem who previously lived outside the city with her husband but has divorced and wishes to return to Jerusalem, she will face a lack of residency rights. Consequently, she will be deprived of essential freedoms, including the right to movement and employment. Moreover, she will be unable to access crucial benefits such as health insurance and social security, leading to a loss of financial independence.

Gender Based Violence:

Domestic violence encompasses various forms of abuse inflicted by family members, notably husbands, brothers, or fathers, including physical and economic coercion, early marriage imposition, and hindrance of women's educational pursuits. In instances of divorce, women facing Jerusalem residency constraints risk losing custody of their children, especially if the children are holders of Jerusalem ID. This predicament further isolates mothers from their children, as non-residents of East Jerusalem require special permits for access, often granted arbitrarily by Israeli authorities. Such circumstances amplify the peril faced by women enduring diverse forms of abuse – physical, sexual, psychological – or rights deprivation. Fear of relocation due to lacking residency permits can deter women from reporting abuse, while the prospect of losing custody and residency exacerbates their vulnerability. These residency policies overlook gender dynamics, heightening women's susceptibility to domestic violence and fostering reliance on and control by their spouses. Moreover, instances of polygamy jeopardize a wife's citizenship rights and the associated civil, social, and economic entitlements.

Collected Testimonies:

Summary Interview #1

Afaf, born in 1975, married in 1993, holds Jerusalem ID while her husband has a West Bank ID. They initially lived in Al Ram and later moved to Kufr 'Aqab. Multiple attempts to apply for family unification were rejected. They faced challenges with finding suitable housing and lived in a dangerous area with poor public services. Afaf collected various documents to prove residence but faced excuses and missing requirements when submitting applications. Not being able to share family gatherings with her husband was the most painful aspect. After 18 years, her husband and eldest son obtained Jerusalem passports, but

her three younger children remain on a separate document appendix in her passport. They face high expenses despite living in an unsuitable and unsafe environment.

Summary Interview #2

Sawsan, from Hebron, married a Jerusalem resident in 1998. She applied for family unification in 2000 when she became pregnant but faced suspension and reopening of her case in 2002. After extensive deposition proceedings and payment of fees, her application was rejected by the General Intelligence. Sawsan sought legal assistance, paid substantial sums to multiple lawyers, and endured court hearings, but faced constant challenges. She was forced to leave Jerusalem and work in Al Ram due to the rejection. Sawsan experienced difficulties in visiting her family and faced suspicions from others. Despite efforts and expenses, her application for unification was ruled against, and she was denied a temporary Jerusalem ID. The true reason for the denial remains unknown.

Summary Interview #3

Sahar, originally from Ramallah, married a Jerusalem resident in 1997 and applied for family unification immediately. However, their application was denied due to her husband and his brothers being prisoners in Israeli prisons. As a result, Sahar became an illegal resident, confined to her house in Jerusalem for 20 years. She was unable to visit her family in Ramallah or have them visit her. Sahar experienced isolation, unable to go to the market, drive her children to school, or use public transportation due to fear of being stopped by Israeli soldiers and facing imprisonment or deportation. In 2007, she obtained a temporary permit that had to be renewed, but it was later discontinued due to her brothers' arrests. Sahar felt desperate and uncertain about what to do.

Summary Interview #4

Unification cases impose burdens on families and social relationships. Naima's husband had his residency revoked after being away for six years, leaving her alone in Saffah, Ramallah. Naima lived 18 years without her husband due to the lack of a Jerusalem ID. Naima's husband missed their child's birth because he lacked a Jerusalem ID. Families are divided, and women are confined within their own cities. Economic costs are substantial in the unification process. Naima has spent 70,000 NIS on legal fees over 18 years without obtaining a Jerusalem ID. The Israeli unification and residency systems discriminate against Palestinian women, causing trauma and family complications. Work permits are limited, and driving within Israeli territory is prohibited for entry permit holders. The denial of work rights and the high costs of the procedure have significant economic impacts and further marginalize vulnerable individuals.

Summary Interview #5

Aisha, from Silwan, carried the sole responsibility of earning the family income and being the driver, as her husband lacked proper documentation. Their children were afraid to go out with their father and expressed a desire to have papers like their mother instead. Aisha hesitated to have more children due to the burden of registration, as experienced with her first two children. Her husband had to smuggle himself in and out of the West Bank to visit his sick mother, risking his life in the process. The family faced repeated arrests by Israeli police for not carrying proper papers.

Summary Interview #6

I am Ahlam from Bab Hutta, (old city) Jerusalem, and my husband is from Barta'ah, Jenin governorate. We got married in 2008, and since then, I have submitted three unification applications for my husband, all of which were rejected due to security reasons related to his past as a freed prisoner. We moved to Kufor Aqab, but life there turned out to be expensive and challenging, with high rent and utility bills. The burden of responsibility falls on me as I navigate various government departments in Jerusalem for my children's applications, medical records, and hospital visits. The most difficult moments were giving birth to my daughter without my husband's presence and facing increased violence and harassment from Israeli settlers when my son fell ill and the Hospital refused to receive them due to uncomplete documents. I often feel lonely and helpless, unable to change our situation. My husband can occasionally visit Jerusalem on a limited-time visitor's permit during Ramadan, but we must rush home before it expires. Our living conditions in overcrowded and unpleasant Kufor Aqab add to the stifling feeling. However, we are compelled to live within Jerusalem's boundaries to maintain my ID. Recent discussions about Kufor Aqab's status have left us uncertain about our future actions.

Summary Interview #7

Tala, a courageous woman hailing from the village of Abu Dis in the West Bank. Tala's narrative unveils the harsh realities faced by countless women impacted by restrictions on family unification. With her marriage to a man from Jerusalem, Tala's dreams of a prosperous life were shattered when her husband was imprisoned. Unable to obtain the necessary documents for mobility, she found herself unable to secure employment in Jerusalem or access the job market in the more prosperous West Bank. Tala's determination and resilience highlight the pressing need for reform, as she and her husband languished in a cycle of restricted opportunities. Her story serves as a poignant reminder of the barriers women face, urging us to work towards a future where their skills and qualifications are valued and unhindered by bureaucratic constraints.

Annex 3: Civil Society Organization Mapping and Analysis

Overview:

The objective of this mapping is to provide a comprehensive overview of the existing Civil Society Organizations in East Jerusalem. It focuses on who is doing what and where, identifying the gaps and needs for the most affected population. It aims to highlight the main challenges encountered in this sector and provide set of recommendations. Mapping results will feed into the selection and assessment of grants as part of the project “Action for East Jerusalem Identity and Resilience” AJIR+ which aims to enhance the awareness and integration of gender needs among CSOs submitting project proposals to the NDC. Understand the operating CSOs in Jerusalem and challenges faced will assist in addressing the needs of the community and improving strategic interventions in preventing and responding to community issues.

Methodology

The survey was shared with 38 civil society organizations working in different fields in East Jerusalem and the surrounding areas (**annex 4**). Out of the 38 organizations, 19 CSOs have filled out the survey, 5 did not receive the survey due to email error and 14 did not respond. The following link provides access to the survey: <https://shorturl.at/iUnFe>.

The CSOs that filled out the survey are:

Women's Center - Shuafat Refugee Camp	Madaa Creative Center
Burj Al Luqluq Social Center Society	YWCA of Jerusalem
Palestine Red Crescent Society Jerusalem	AlThouri Silwan Women's Center
Women's Center for Legal Aid and Social Counseling	Sunflower Association for Human and Environmental Protection
Jerusalem Princess Basma Centre	Community Action Center
Spafford Children's Center	African Community Society - Jerusalem
Silwan Al Bustan Association	Teachers' Village Association
Al-Saraya Center for Community Services	Arab Association for Persons with Disabilities
AlNayzak Organization	Palestinian Family Planning and Protection Association
Emleson Society	

ANALYSIS OF THE SURVEY

The analysis that follows is based on the data received from 19 organizations. Questions in the survey have focused on the following:

- 1- **Profile of the organization:** contact information, address, year of establishment, number of staff segregated by sex, vision and mandate of the organizations.
- 2- **Organizational scope of work:** intervention implemented by organization, area of coverage, to whom services provided divided by target groups, number of beneficiaries received these services.
- 3- **Partnership:** do the organizations form/work in partnership with other CSOs in implementing interventions; are they member in Hemaya network and/or any other emergency committee.
- 4- **Needs and gaps identification:** mechanism to identify needs and gaps of the community.
- 5- **Challenges:** main challenged encounters in the implementation process.

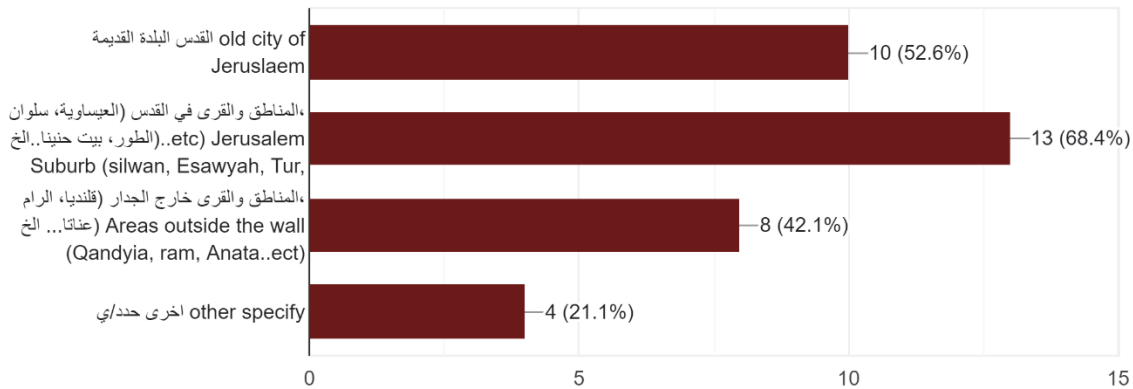
1- Organization profile:

All the surveyed organizations operating in Jerusalem are registered as non-profit organizations with the Israeli Ministry of Interior. Four organizations have been established for over 50 years: the YWCA of Jerusalem, the Palestine Red Crescent Society Jerusalem, the Jerusalem Princess Basma Centre, and the Palestinian Planning and Protection Association. Another four organizations have been operating for over 30 years: the Association for the Arab Society for Disabled, the Saray Centre for Community Services, the Women Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling, and the Community Action Centre. The remaining seven organizations were established between 10 and 15 years ago. This long-standing presence indicates that these organizations are deeply rooted in the community, understanding its needs, gaps, accepted norms, and appropriate interventions. This deep-rootedness is crucial for providing services that are appropriate, accepted, and valued by the community.

The number of employees in these institutions varies depending on their size. Larger institutions, such as the Women Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling, the Palestinian Planning and Protection Association, the YWCA, the Palestine Red Crescent Society Jerusalem, and the Jerusalem Princess Basma Centre, have branches in Jerusalem and the West Bank and employ a large number of staff. In contrast, smaller CBOs have fewer employees. The finding also indicates that the percentage of female employee is 59% compared to male 41%.

please name the area that the organization implement the interventions
ما هي المناطق التي يتم تغطيتها من قبل برامج المؤسسة؟

19 responses



The above chart shows the geographic focus and reach out of organizational interventions in East Jerusalem, where 52% of the organizations are working in the old city of Jerusalem, while 68% in the suburb areas , 42% are working in areas outside the separation wall such as Qalandiya , Anata, and Al Ram, Restriction of movement imposed by the Israeli authority especially in the Old City of Jerusalem hinder the effort of the CSOs to reach out the marginalized areas. The space for EJ organizations to operate will continue to shrink as Israel will persist in restricting civil and political rights there. For those women holding West Bank ID, who cannot access or seek services due to restricted movement, it is important CSOs in EJ to continue providing protection services within the community. Expanding the services and coordination

among CSOs through a systematic referral pathway to ensure ensures the availability and accessibility of services, particularly in marginalized areas is vital.

2- Organization Scope of work

The surveyed organizations identified their main objectives of their intervention are: community development, protecting marginalized groups, and providing high-quality services such as healthcare, education, economic empowerment, raising awareness, youth activities, and advocacy. The findings were as follows:

- 63% of the CBOs stated that the main sector was gender intervention with focus on empowering the most vulnerable women and girls.
- 47% working in youth sector and education sector equally.
- 26% works on the health sector.
- 21% works on democracy and human rights,
- 20% provide services for the people with disability.

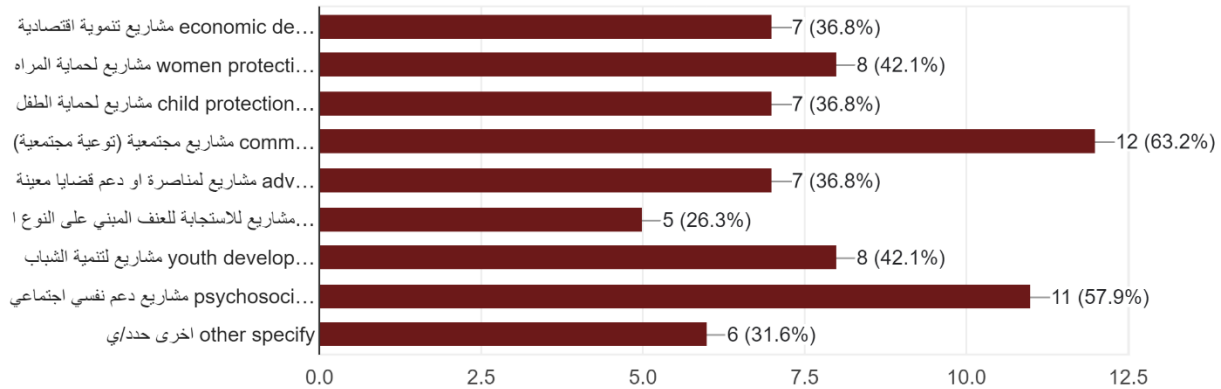
The results indicate that the CSOs operating in diverse sector and provide mutli-sectoral community especially for youth and women. The role of the CBOs in the community is critical, to ensure the provision of quality services that effectively meet the needs of the community, especially marginalized groups, thus, this role need to be enhanced through building the capacities of these institutions, equipe the service providers with training to enable them provide professional services for the special need people, services including Gender-Based Violence (GBV) services, services including Gender-Based Violence (GBV) services. In addition to enhance coordination mechanism and community participation in development and finally to advocate for sustainable funding sources and financial support to ensure the continuity of services The chart below illustrates that the primary areas of intervention for these organizations are awareness raising and community development, comprising 63% of their interventions. This alignment between the scope of work and the organizations' mandates and visions is evident.

The most prevalent service being provided across Palestine is Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS), accounting for 58% of services, followed by women and youth empowerment projects, each at 42%. These figures reflect the community's pressing need for such services, particularly considering the high vulnerability among youth and women.

On the other hand, the least implemented projects were in health services and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) activities, at 26%. Despite the significant need for GBV and child protection services, particularly exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, these services are underrepresented. This gap is further exacerbated by the lack of governmental protection services and the increasing rate of domestic violence, stemming from the deteriorating political situation and the loss of primary sources of household income. Despite the challenging circumstances faced by Palestinian Jerusalemite women and girls, including community and family violence and political oppression by Israeli occupation authorities, there remains an unmet need for services and protection. This has contributed to the rise in Gender-Based Violence (GBV), emphasizing women's reliance on family structure and reinforcing patriarchal norms.

interventions implemented by the organization currently and during the last two years

19 responses



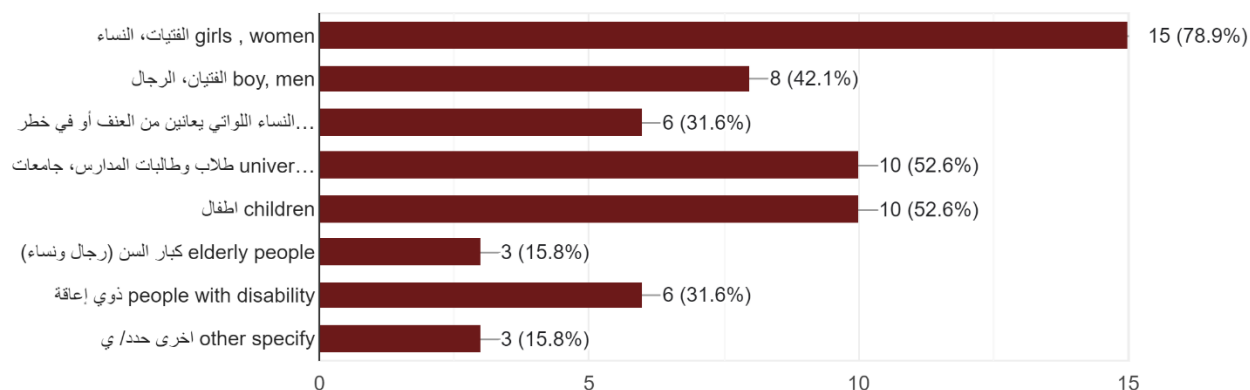
3- Needs and gaps identification

In terms of the targeted group, the above chart shows that vast majority of the organization have targeted women and girls at 79%, while children 23%, school and university students from both sex 53%. Elderly and disabled people are served by fewer interventions due to the fact that the elderly and people with disabilities require specialized services that are not available among service providers in many institutions. Capacity building and specialized training for service providers are essential to equip them with skills and adequate qualifications in treating and providing high quality services.

The mapping questionnaire includes a question about the mechanism for identifying the needs of beneficiary groups and the process of designing interventions in the institutions. 89% of the institutions indicated that needs are identified through the participation of beneficiary groups in the process of defining needs and gaps interventions, while, 68% mentioned that the institution conducts an assessment of the current situation of the community and identifies needs based on these assessments and studies. The least was 47% for the involvement of the community leaders in the designing process of the projects. This create less reliance on the local community in general, especially that community leaders are usually influenced by political and social factors mainly are males who are less supportive to the human rights, women's rights, and gender issues, as they consider these rights to be against social norms and religious. This led to some CBOs to carry out activities specifically for women and youth in a conservative manner to maintain good relations with the community and ensure the provision of socially acceptable services.

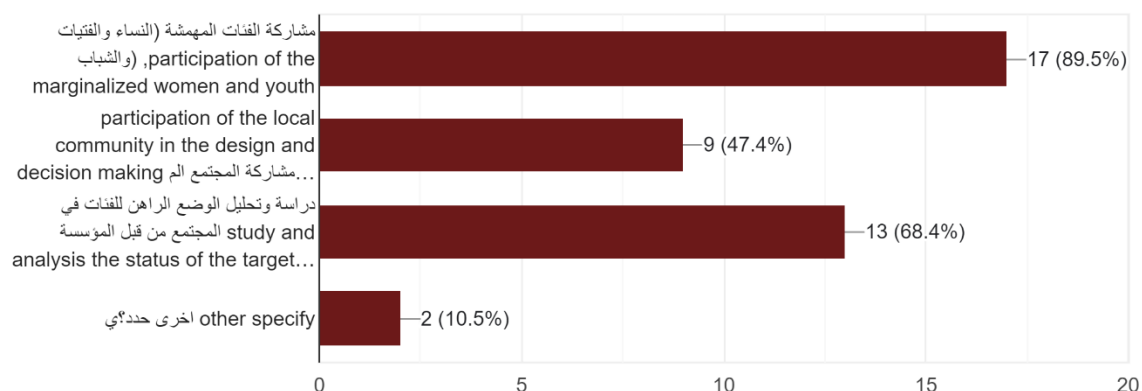
Specify the target groups ما هي الفئات المستهدفة في برامج المؤسسة المختلفة؟

19 responses



please specify how the organization identify the need of the targeted group الرجاء التوضيح كيف تتم عملية تحديد الاحتياجات الخاصة بالفئات المستهدفة

19 responses



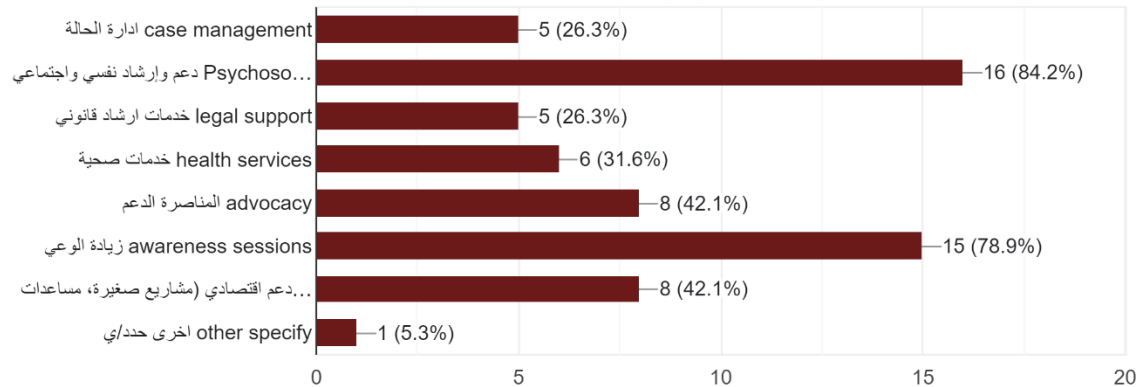
The above graph illustrates how organizations in East Jerusalem identify the needs of their target groups:

1. **Participation of the Marginalized:** A significant majority (89.5%, or 17 organizations) involve marginalized women and youth directly in their activities. This high percentage indicates a strong focus on ensuring that the programs are responsive to the actual needs of the most vulnerable populations, facilitating empowerment and inclusivity.
2. **Local Community Involvement:** About half of the organizations (47.4%, or 9 organizations) emphasize the participation of the local community in the design and decision-making processes. This level of involvement suggests a commitment to community-driven development, which can increase the relevance and acceptance of initiatives.

3. **Study and Analysis of Target Status:** More than two-thirds (68.4%, or 13 organizations) report that they conduct studies and analyses to understand the status of the target groups. This approach is crucial for tailoring services and interventions to the specific challenges and dynamics experienced by the community.
4. **Other Methods:** A small number (10.5%, or 2 organizations) mentioned other unspecified methods to identify the needs of their target groups. This category may include innovative or less common approaches that are tailored to specific organizational goals or community contexts.

Overall, the data reveals a strong emphasis on participatory approaches and data-driven strategies to ensure that services are effectively meeting the needs of target groups in East Jerusalem. Such methods are essential for the successful implementation of community and development programs, particularly in a complex socio-political landscape.

Please answer if the organization is implementing program for women and gender and what is specifically
 الرجاء الإجابة في حال تقوم المؤسسة بتنفيذ برامج للمرأة و/او الجندر - ما هي الخدمات التي تنفذها المؤسسة في هذا المجال؟ -
 19 responses



Partnership:

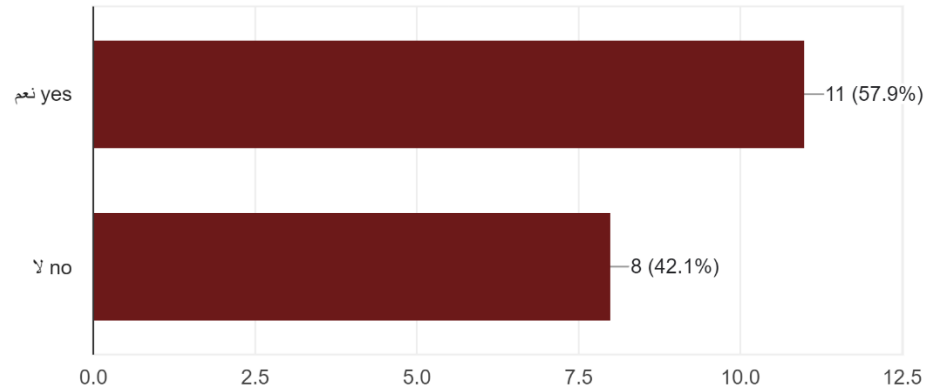
The context of Jerusalem, characterized by the absence of official authorities such as the Jerusalem Governor's Office and the Ministry of Jerusalem Affairs (MOJA), has created a gap in service provision. This absence weakens the response needed to protect marginalized groups and provide adequate services, integrating the needs of vulnerable populations.

The findings showed that 57% of organizations are members of various coordination mechanisms, while 42% are not engaged in these mechanisms, often because these bodies are designed to provide services that not all CBOs currently have the capacity to offer. However, large NGOs are coordinating with grassroots organizations to respond to community needs.

The Hemaya network, children protection group, and emergency working group in Jerusalem are unofficial bodies formed as alternative platforms to bridge the service gaps. Hemaya network members are working on institutionalizing coordination mechanisms through the development of a strategic plan and referral pathway to address GBV issues and support and protect women. The emergency working group in Jerusalem was primarily established during the COVID-19 pandemic to coordinate services in response to the high demand, setting priorities to support vulnerable groups in the community. However, these CBOs need more support and capacity building to better serve the community and those in need.

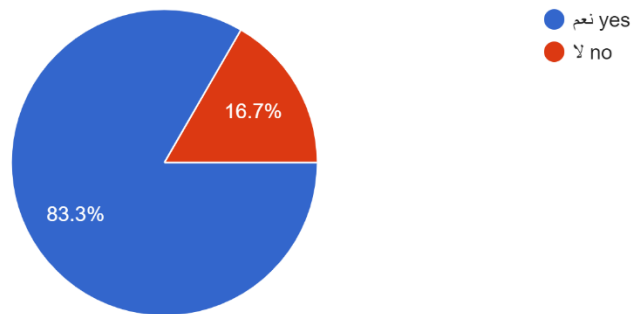
هل المؤسسة عضو في لجنة الطوارئ او شبكة حماية النساء في القدس؟ is the organization member in the emergency committee or Hemay network in Jerusalem

19 responses



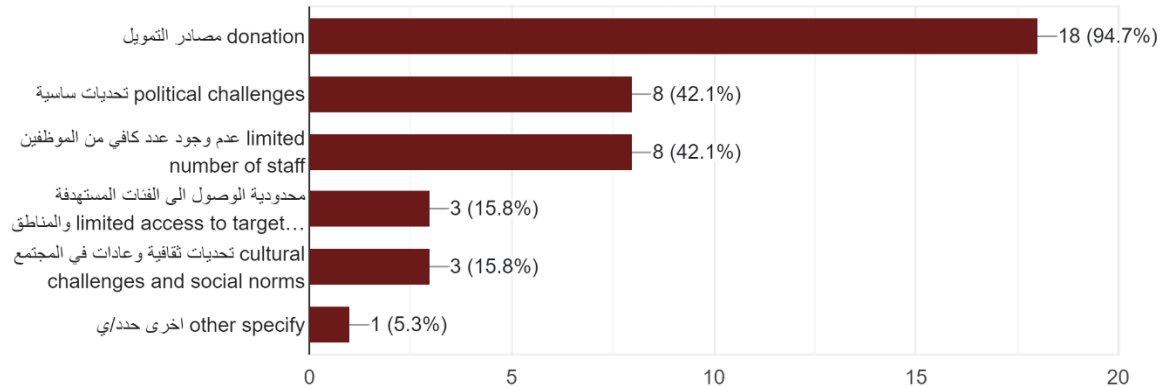
هل حصلت مؤسستك خلال العامين الماضيين على فرصة تمويل من قبل مانحين دوليين؟ did the organization received any fund from international donors

18 responses



هل بالإمكان تحديد أبرز التحديات والمعوقات التي تواجهها المؤسسة؟ Please specify the main challenges and obstacles the organization encounter?

19 responses



Main Challenges and Constraints Identified

The following challenges were identified by all responding organizations and can be categorized into five main categories:

- 95% of the surveyed organization identify that funding was the main challenge.
- 42% of the organizations mentioned that political challenge.
- 42% mentioned that limited number of staff is obstacles.
- 16% Limited access to beneficiaries
- 16% cultural challenges and social norms.

Despite 83% of the surveyed organizations reporting that they received funds from international donors, the funding was insufficient compared to the demand. Consequently, there is not enough funding and resources to implement programs, especially community development and long-term activities. The high reliance on donations as the main source of funding for these organizations has affected the continuation and sustainability of their response and service provision. This, in turn, has hindered the progress of the organizations and their ability to hire staff to implement activities.

Political instability and ongoing violations and restrictions imposed on Palestinian organizations in East Jerusalem pose significant obstacles to CBOs in their efforts to provide services to the most affected populations. Israel is rapidly marginalizing Arab parts of the city, leaving only a few institutions capable of providing protection and services and limited reach out to those in dire need. Additionally, the limited services provided by Israel, the expansion of settlements, house demolitions, the imposition of the Israeli education system, and restrictions on movement exacerbate the situation. The Israeli authorities' stringent restrictions on issuing licenses for new services or organizations in Jerusalem further contribute to the deterioration of the socioeconomic environment. This increases the demand for CBOs' intervention, yet they are operating with a low profile, short-staffed, and lack financial resources.

Recommendations

Community development and provision of protection services will remain the main concerns within a context of an already dire protection situation characterized by systemic human rights violations, including house demolitions and evictions, family separation, restrictions over building, and a discriminatory legal system leading to segregated communities, inferior services, and limited access to justice. The situation of EJ residents, particularly GBV survivors, disabled people and vulnerable youth unlikely to improve due to the Israeli policy and lack of access to vital services and protection mechanisms. The context will continue to be increasingly coercive and living conditions will remain increasingly difficult. Israeli political violence will continue to escalate and pressure to relocate out of EJ will increase.

CBOs are operating in a high-risk environment, coordination mechanism is not yet institutionalized, building of strong community and institutional networks is essential, however, it requires an ongoing and sustainable process or system to ensure provision of quality services among communities.

Annex 4: List of Surveyed CBOs

اسم المؤسسة	الشخص المسؤول	بريد الالكتروني
مؤسسة الاميرة بسمة	المديرة العامة: فيوليت مبارك مسؤولة الاتصال: جوليانا زنايد صايح	info@basma-centre.org
مؤسسة المرتقى للسيدات	مسؤول الاتصال: شيرين عويضة	mwo@mwo-ps.org
المركز الفلسطيني للإرشاد	مسؤولة العلاقات العامة ديما تادرس	dima.t@pcc-jer.org
جمعية تنظيم وحماية الأسرة الفلسطينية	مدير البرامج عيسى ربيضي	issa.r@pfppa.org
جمعية الهلال الأحمر الفلسطيني	سفيان بسيط محمود عليان	info@rcsh.org
جمعية شروق النسوية	المديرة العامة: فاطمة فرعون مسؤولة الاتصال: حنان ابو رومي	fatima.shrq@gmail.com
المركز النسوي مخيم شعفاط	سندس حمدان- المديرة جهاد ابو زنيد- رئيسة الهيئة الادارية	Pr_weshc@yahoo.com
مركز الدراسات النسوية	المديرة العامة: سامة عويضة مديرة فرع القدس: عايدة العيساوي	admin@wsc-pal.org aida@wsc-pal.org
مركز المرأة للإرشاد القانوني والاجتماعي	المديرة العامة: رندة سنيورة مسؤولة الارشاد والتمكين المقدسي: رائية سنجلوي	info@wclac.org raniasin@wclac.org
المركز النسوي الثوري سلوان	عبير زياد - المديرة ريما رزق- رئيسة الهيئة ادارية	aberrizeq@hotmail.com
جمعية البستان سلوان	رئيس مجلس الادارة: قتيبة عودة عضو مجلس الادارة: أماني عودة	Bustan1015@gmail.com

onehandessawia2014@hotmail.com	يوسف عبيد/ رئيس الهيئة الإدارية منسقة المشاريع: مرام دويك	جمعية يد واحدة من أجل العيسوية
info@siwar.org	رئيس الجمعية: وليد الأعرور المدير العام: محمود بيضون أمينة السر: عرين معاينة	جمعية سوار للتنمية المجتمعية
roseofjerusalem@yahoo.com	المدير العام: جمال الشاويش مسؤولة قسم الأيتام: عبيدة المظفر	جمعية زهرة القدس للمعاقين حركيا وذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة
admin@alsaraya-center.org	المديرة التنفيذية: نداء دويك منسقة برنامج التمكين النسوي: عيشة فيراوية	مركز السرايا لخدمة المجتمع
info@sunflower.ps fadwasmile60@hotmail.com	المديرة العامة: فدوى خضر مساعدة إدارية ربي شرف	مؤسسة عباد الشمس
info@burjalluqluq.org muntaser@burjalluqluq.org	المدير العام: منتصر ادكيدك منسق مشاريع الشباب: فرح أبو زنط	جمعية برج اللقلق المجتمعي
cac@cac.alquds.edu	المدير العام: منير نسيبة نائب المدير روان الدجاني	مركز العمل المجتمعي
info@jlac.ps	مدير فرع القدس: رامي صالح	مركز القدس لحقوق الانسان
sandrine@ywca-jerusalem.org	ساندرين عامر	جمعية الشابات المسيحية YWCA

council@ywca.ps		
info@emleson.org	المدير العام : دلال لافي – 0522931357 مديرة العلاقات العامة والمشاريع : حياة عموس ز غير 0527459390	جمعية سيدات أمليسون
info@muslim-woman.org	سماح جابر	جمعية الشابات المسلمات
Sabaya.anata@gmail.com	رئيس الهيئة الادارية : سوسن سلامة نائبة رئيس الهيئة الادارية ومسؤولة التواصل والتنسيق: هديل عليان	جمعية مركز صبايا عناتا الخيرية
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info@jlac.ps		مركز القدس للديمقراطية وحقوق الانسان

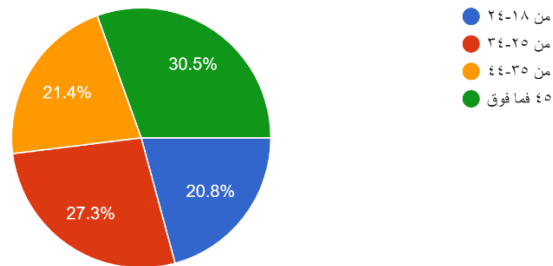
Annex 5 : Survey Analysis conducted with women from East Jerusalem on Gender equality related issues

Analysis of the Survey on Gender Equality related issues in East Jerusalem

Introduction: The responses from **154** women across East Jerusalem offer critical insights into the gender dynamics within this culturally and politically nuanced region. The survey explores several dimensions of gender equity, including education, employment, inheritance rights, and decision making, reflecting the complex interplay between traditional roles and modern realities.

العمر

154 responses



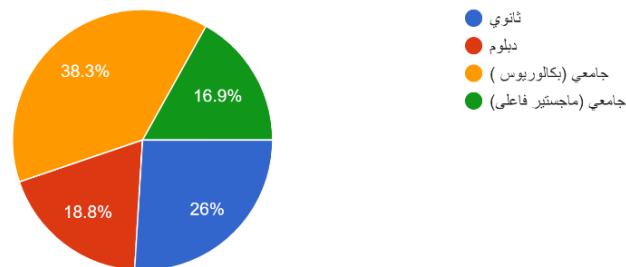
• **Age Distribution:** The pie chart shows the age distribution of the 154 women who participated in the survey. Here's the breakdown:

- **30.5%** are aged 31-40 years.
- **27.3%** are aged 21-30 years.
- **21.4%** are aged 41-50 years.
- **20.8%** are under 20 years old.

• **Analysis:**

- The largest age group represented in the survey is the 31-40 years range, comprising nearly a third of all respondents. This indicates a strong representation of women in their early to mid-career stages.
- The nearly equal representation of younger (under 20 years) and older (41-50 years) participants provides a broad perspective across different life stages.

مستوى التعليم
154 responses



Thanks for sharing another chart from the survey. This pie chart displays the educational level of the 154 women respondents:

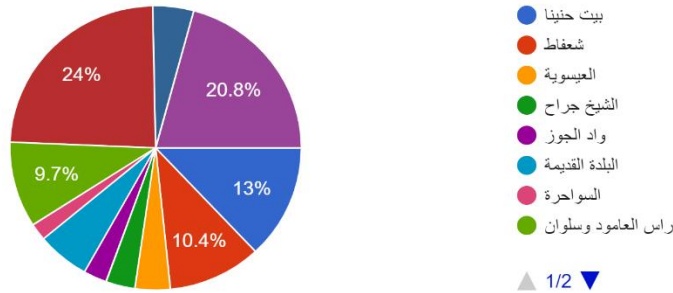
1. Educational Distribution:

- **38.3%** have a university degree.
- **26%** have a high school diploma.
- **18.8%** have a diploma (likely indicating some post-secondary education but not a full degree).
- **16.9%** have a master's degree or higher.

2. Analysis:

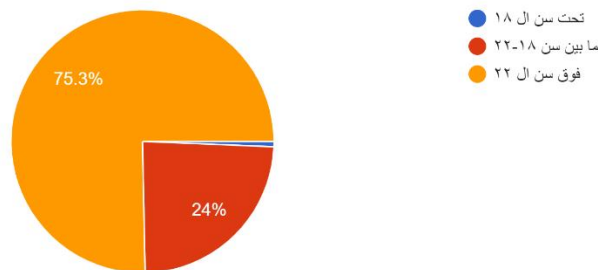
- A significant portion, over a third, of the respondents hold a university degree, suggesting a relatively high level of education among the participants.
- The presence of a sizable group with high school education as their highest qualification (26%) might indicate challenges or barriers to higher education access in the region.
- The distribution of advanced degrees (master's or higher) being at 16.9% is noteworthy, indicating a group of highly educated women who could be influential in various professional fields or community leadership roles.

مكان السكن
154 responses



The survey conducted for gender mapping in East Jerusalem highlights the diverse geographic representation of participants, with 154 women from various neighborhoods and villages across the region. This broad representation ensures that the insights and data gathered reflect a wide array of experiences and perspectives, essential for understanding the unique challenges and opportunities that women face in different parts of East Jerusalem. Such geographic diversity enriches the study, allowing for a more comprehensive analysis of gender issues and aiding in the development of targeted interventions to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the area.

برايك افضل عمر لزوج الفتاة هو
154 responses



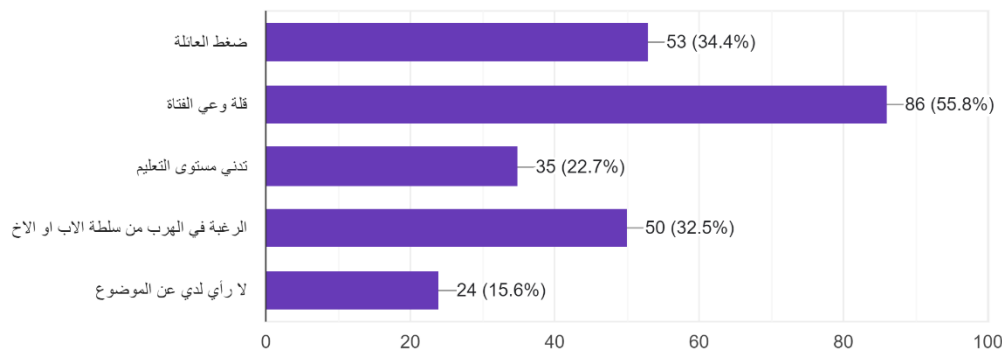
- **75.3%** of the surveyed women believe that the best age for marriage is **over 22 years old**. This majority view supports the idea of marriage at a more mature age, potentially after completing education or establishing a career.
- **24%** think the appropriate age for marriage is between **18-22 years old**, indicating a preference for relatively young marriages, but still within legal adulthood.

- A very small portion, visibly less than **1%**, believe that the best age for marriage is **under 18 years old**, which is below the typical legal threshold for marriage in many jurisdictions.

These insights are crucial as they reflect societal attitudes towards marriage and adulthood, suggesting a general trend towards favoring marriage at a more mature age. This can be associated with increased opportunities for women to pursue higher education and career development before marriage, which could have significant implications for gender equality and women's empowerment in the community. Such data is instrumental for developing policies and programs aimed at supporting women's rights and choices in marital decisions within East Jerusalem.

حسب رأيك، ما هي اسباب الزواج المبكر في القدس

154 responses



1. Reasons for Early Marriage:

- **Cultural or Social Pressure:** This reason likely reflects the traditional norms and societal expectations prevalent in some communities, where early marriage is seen as a normative practice.
- **Economic Factors:** Financial considerations, such as economic hardship or the desire for financial stability, may drive early marriage decisions.
- **Family Expectations:** Family influence and expectations play a significant role, where familial values or pressures may encourage early marriage.
- **Lack of Educational Opportunities:** Limited access to education and career opportunities can contribute to the perception that early marriage is a practical choice.

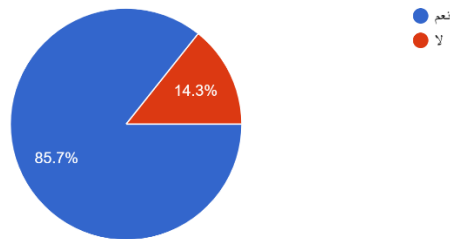
2. Analysis and Implications:

- **Cultural Norms:** The high percentage of respondents citing cultural or social pressures suggests that traditional beliefs and community norms significantly influence marriage decisions. This points to a need for interventions that address these cultural norms and promote alternative perspectives on marriage and women's roles.
- **Economic Considerations:** Economic factors are a significant driver for early marriage, highlighting the need for economic empowerment programs that provide financial

independence and opportunities for women, potentially reducing the economic pressures that lead to early marriage.

- **Family Influence:** The role of family expectations underscores the importance of family-based interventions and education programs that engage family members in discussions about the benefits of delayed marriage and the importance of education and personal development for women.
- **Educational Access:** Addressing the lack of educational opportunities is crucial. Enhancing access to education for girls and young women can empower them to make informed choices about their lives, including the timing of marriage.

من تجربتك الخاصة، هل مرت عليك حالة زواج تحت سن ال ١٨ ؟
154 responses

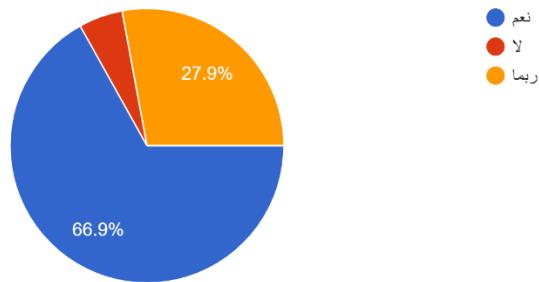


Survey Responses:

- **14.3%** of the respondents indicated that they have encountered cases of marriage under the age of 18.
- **85.7%** have not encountered such cases.

برايك حصول الفتاة على التعليم يساعدها في الحصول على عمل في القدس او دخول سوق العمل الاسرائيلي؟

154 responses



Survey Responses:

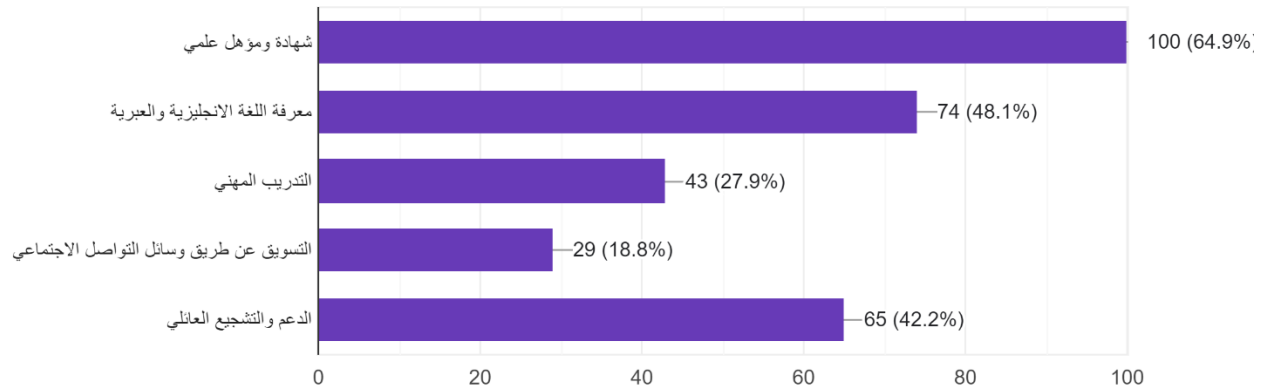
- **66.9%** of respondents believe that education does help women secure employment in Jerusalem or enter the Israeli labor market.
- **27.9%** do not believe that education alone is sufficient for these purposes.
- **5.2%** are unsure.

Analysis and Implications:

- The majority of respondents recognize the value of education in enhancing employment opportunities, indicating a general consensus on the importance of educational attainment for economic empowerment.
- The significant minority who disagree may be reflecting on barriers that still exist even for educated women, such as discrimination, lack of opportunities, or the specific demands of the local or Israeli job markets that education alone may not address.
- The responses could guide efforts to not only advocate for increased educational opportunities for women but also to ensure these opportunities are effectively linked to real employment prospects. This might include vocational training, internships, and job placement programs tailored to the specific context of Jerusalem and the broader Israeli job market.

برايك ما هي اهم الشروط التي يجب توفرها لدى الفتاة للحصول على عمل؟

154 responses



Important Conditions for Employment:

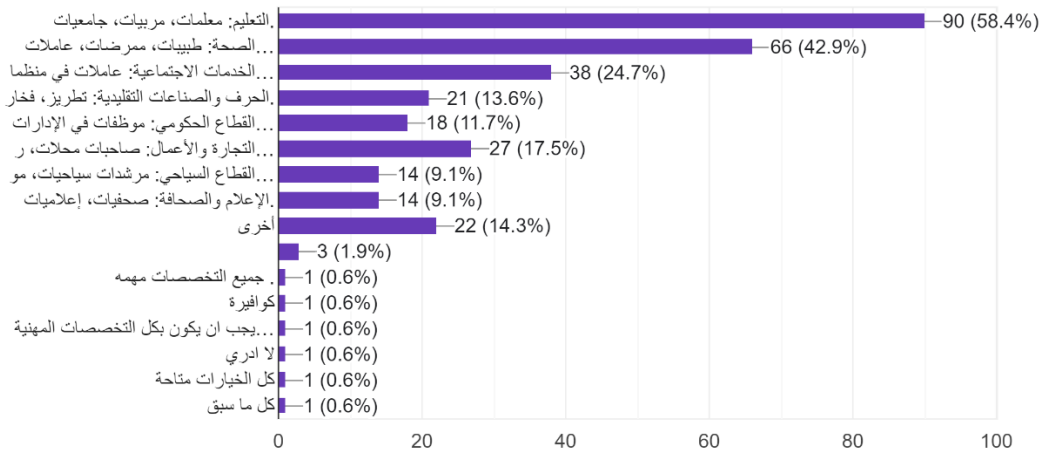
- **64.9%** believe that having professional skills is the most important condition.
- **48.1%** think that having a university degree is crucial.
- **42.2%** feel that having work experience is necessary.
- **27.9%** indicate that knowing a second language is important.
- **18.8%** consider personal connections to be a significant factor in securing a job.

Analysis and Implications:

- **Professional Skills:** The majority view professional skills as the key to employment, emphasizing the importance of job-specific training and qualifications. This suggests a focus on vocational training and professional development programs to enhance women's employability.
- **University Degree:** Almost half of the respondents highlight the importance of formal education, suggesting that efforts to increase access to higher education for women could have a significant impact on their employment prospects.
- **Work Experience:** A significant number of respondents point out the importance of work experience, which underscores the need for internships, apprenticeships, and other opportunities that can provide real-world experience to young professionals.
- **Language Skills:** Knowing a second language, likely referencing Hebrew in the context of Jerusalem and broader Israeli employment markets, is seen as a valuable asset, indicating a need for language training programs.
- **Personal Connections:** The acknowledgment of the role of personal connections in job acquisition reflects a common reality in many job markets and highlights the importance of networking and mentorship programs for women.

حسب رأيك، ما هي اهم التخصصات المطلوبة لعمل المرأة في القدس

154 responses



Healthcare and Education: These fields are perceived as the most critical for women's employment in Jerusalem, which may reflect societal values about traditional gender roles but also the significant demand and respect for these professions. It suggests strong opportunities for women in these sectors, where their participation is likely vital and well-regarded.

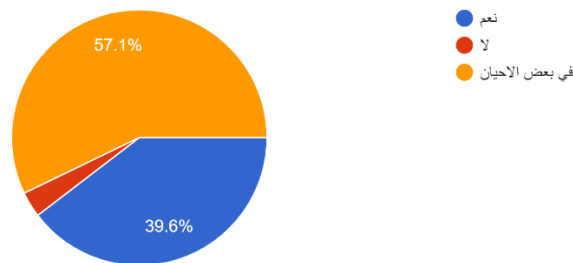
Administrative Roles: The prominence of administrative and office roles indicates a recognized pathway for stable employment for women in the region.

Business and Economics, and Technology: Emerging interest in these areas reflects a broader shift in the job market and the potential for women to engage in more diverse and economically impactful fields.

The diversity of fields beyond the top choices shows that there is a range of opportunities for women, but there might be a need to increase awareness and training in less traditional fields to ensure women can compete effectively in the evolving job market.

هل باعتقادك ان المرأة في القدس لديها الحرية في اختيار شريك حياتها؟

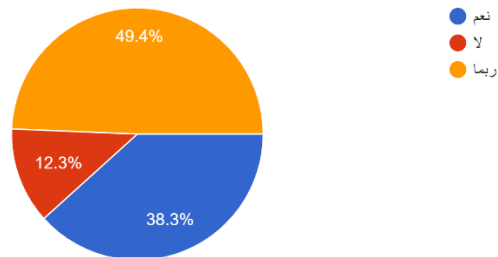
154 responses



Survey Responses:

- **57.1%** of respondents believe that women in Jerusalem do have the freedom to choose their life partners.
- **39.6%** do not believe that women have this freedom.
- A small portion, which is about 3.3% are uncertain or did not respond.

هل باعتقادك المرأة في القدس لديها حرية الاختيار في الانجاب وتحديد عدد الاطفال؟
154 responses

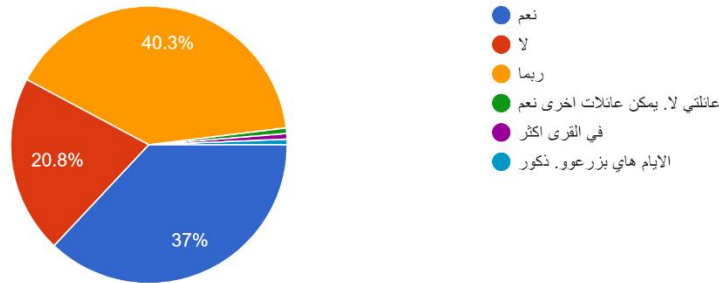


Survey Responses:

- **49.4%** of respondents believe that women in Jerusalem have the freedom to decide on childbirth and the number of children.
- **38.3%** do not believe women have this freedom.
- **12.3%** are unsure.

هل باعتقادك ما زالت المرأة المقدسية التي تنجب اناثا تتعرض لتعنيف أو نظرة دونية من الزوج والاسرة؟

154 responses



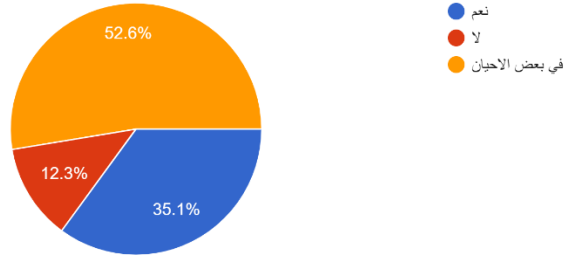
Survey Responses:

- **40.3%** of respondents believe that women who give birth to daughters still face violence or derogatory attitudes.
- **37%** do not believe this is the case.
- **20.8%** are unsure.
- A small percentage (1.9% combined) mention other factors or nuances, possibly indicating specific conditions or exceptions.

Analysis and Implications:

- The fact that a significant portion of respondents (40.3%) perceives ongoing violence or derogatory attitudes towards women based on the gender of their children indicates deep-seated gender biases and societal challenges.
- The nearly equal proportion of respondents who disagree with the premise might suggest improvements or less visibility of such attitudes in certain parts of the community. However, it also highlights the divided perceptions on gender equality within the community.
- The considerable percentage of uncertainty (20.8%) could reflect a lack of direct knowledge or exposure to such cases, or ambiguity about what constitutes violence or derogatory attitudes.

من تجربتك الخاصة هل تحصل المرأة في القدس على حقها في الميراث؟
154 responses



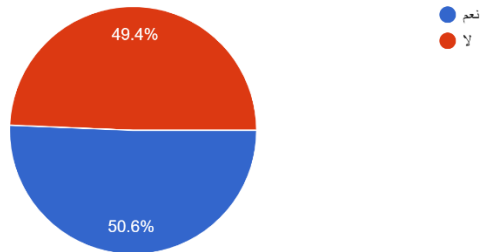
Survey Responses:

- **52.6%** of respondents believe that women in Jerusalem do not receive their rightful inheritance.
- **35.1%** believe that women do receive their rightful inheritance.
- **12.3%** are unsure.

Analysis and Implications:

- The majority opinion that women often do not receive their rightful inheritance highlights a significant issue regarding gender equality and legal rights in inheritance matters.
- The substantial minority that believes women do receive their inheritance suggests that there may be variations in how inheritance laws are applied or perceived, possibly influenced by family, cultural, or religious practices.
- The considerable uncertainty (12.3%) could reflect a lack of clear understanding about inheritance rights or variability in how these rights are enforced or respected.

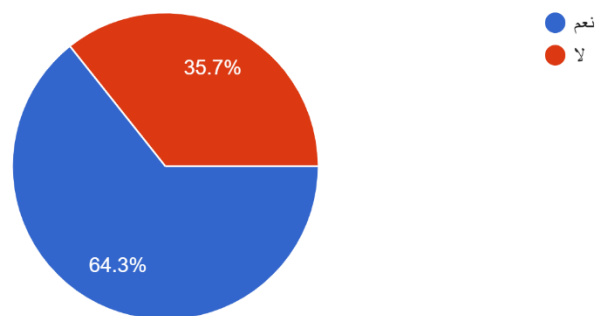
إذا كان الجواب نعم هل تتم القسمة حسب الشرع بين الإناث والذكور؟
154 responses



- The nearly even split in responses reflects a significant division in practice or perception regarding the application of religious laws to inheritance, which often allocate different shares to males and females.
- This data points to a complex landscape of inheritance practices where traditional religious rules may be upheld in some cases but not in others, possibly influenced by personal, family, or community values and the legal framework.
- The fact that almost half of the respondents see a departure from traditional religious divisions may indicate evolving attitudes toward gender equality, or it might reflect legal interventions or personal agreements that aim for a more equitable distribution.

هل باعتقادك يتم التعامل بمساواة بين الذكر والانثى في البيت فيما يتعلق بحقها في التعليم المدرسي او الجامعي؟

154 responses



Analysis and Implications:

- The majority of respondents perceive that males and females are treated equally regarding educational opportunities, which suggests a positive trend towards gender equality in education within many families.
- However, a significant minority perceives inequality, indicating that disparities still exist in some households, possibly influenced by traditional gender roles or economic constraints that prioritize one gender over the other.
- The data reflects ongoing challenges in ensuring complete gender parity in educational opportunities, which is crucial for empowering women and promoting socio-economic development.

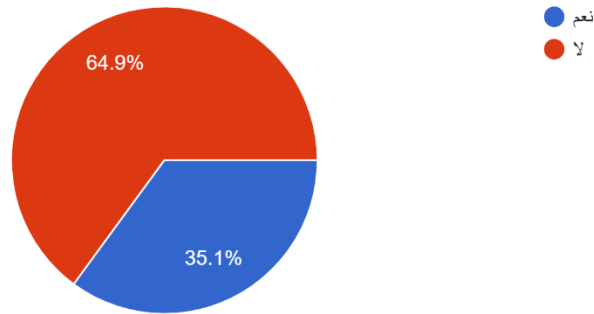
Recommendations:

- Efforts to promote educational equality should continue, particularly targeting communities or families where traditional views may still influence unequal access to education for girls.
- Programs that provide financial support or incentives for educating girls can help address economic barriers that might contribute to unequal access.

- Awareness campaigns that highlight the benefits of educating both males and females equally could help change persistent cultural norms that favor one gender in educational pursuits.

او الطبخ او رعاية الصغار ؟ هل يطلب من الذكر في العائلة المساعدة في اعمال البيت مثل التنظيف

154 responses



Survey Responses:

- **64.9%** of respondents indicated that males are not typically asked to help with household tasks.
- **35.1%** responded that males are asked to participate in such activities.

Analysis and Implications:

- The majority of respondents indicate a traditional gender role separation where males are less likely to be involved in domestic chores, reflecting persistent cultural norms about gender roles within the household.
- However, over a third of the respondents acknowledging male participation in household tasks suggests a shift towards more egalitarian domestic responsibilities, albeit slowly evolving.
- The division in responses highlights varying household dynamics in Jerusalem, with some families adhering to traditional roles while others embrace more modern, shared responsibilities.

Annex 6: Focus Group with Women Representing Several Neighborhoods in EJ Conducted at the Old City Youth Association

Twenty-five women have participated in the focus group that was conducted on June 25, 2024 with the support of the Old City Youth Association. Discussion focused on women conditions and women's rights in East Jerusalem in general. Participants explained the difficulties faced by women living in East Jerusalem and the particularity of the context they are living in based on their own experience. They have also expressed their opinion on women's rights and social norms related to education, work, movement, divorce, decision making, financial dependency and reproductive rights.

The participants expressed the need for business support programs to cover topics like accounting, branding, online marketing, and craft workshops. They agreed that the training workshops provided so far do not take them to the next level of technical and design skills, allowing them to create marketable, high-quality products. They enumerated some of the trainings that can help women in East Jerusalem to start up their own businesses such as creative jewelry, woodwork and furniture design, recycling and readjustment of clothes, food processing and cooking and hair related trainings. As for the psychosocial support, women suggested outdoor activities including summer camps. Most women in the old city but also in other neighborhoods live in a very limited space which impacts their psychosocial state.

The group discussed the social norms' impact on women's development in the context of Jerusalem. Participants said that majority of women in East Jerusalem prefer to continue their education rather than get married at an early age. Nevertheless, they believe that certain jobs are reserved for men such as tourism and journalism. For those who do not continue their higher education, they get enrolled in trainings to be able to financially support their families. Women noticed that they perceive a raise in the divorce cases due to economic and social reasons but mainly because of differences between the married couple and the influence of the social media. As for reproductive rights, participants agreed that women in East Jerusalem decide freely and responsibly on number of children and the stigma of punishing women for having birth to females only is disappearing. Women in East Jerusalem can easily access to sexual and reproductive services covered by the health insurance such as counseling, spacing between births, contraception, and IVF services.

Participants agreed that women in Jerusalem suffer from inequality in having their shares of heritage as well as GBV. They believe that awareness is needed on both issues. They explained that women find themselves threatened by the males in their families if they claim their share in inheritance. As for domestic violence, some women refer to the Israeli police and social services which some of them believe that it may stop the violence inflicted on women but destroys the family fabric.

The pictures below are taken during the focus group with women from East Jerusalem:



Annex 7: Focus Group with men from different neighborhoods in East Jerusalem

Focus Group Summary: Gender-Related Discussions with Men in East Jerusalem

Objective: The focus group was facilitated by Station J Organization aimed to engage 14 men from East Jerusalem in an in-depth dialogue about various gender-related issues, exploring their attitudes towards women's roles and rights in different societal and domestic contexts.

Key Discussion Points:

1. **Inheritance and Legal Rights:** Participants unanimously agreed that women should receive their rightful inheritance as dictated by religious laws, showcasing a strong alignment with traditional norms. This point prompted a broader discussion on how religious and cultural interpretations impact perceptions of gender roles.
2. **Education and Professional Employment:** The group largely supported women's rights to education and professional careers. However, differences emerged on the extent and types of roles women should pursue, with some advocating for no restrictions, while others preferred traditional fields or part-time engagements.
3. **Domestic Responsibilities and Decision-Making:** The conversation revealed varied opinions on sharing household duties. Most men supported shared responsibilities in theory, though a few admitted to struggling with its practical application. The discussion also highlighted a strong trend towards supporting shared decision-making in family life, contrasting with traditional views where men often have the final say.
4. **Reproductive Rights and Family Planning:** The group was divided on women's autonomy in reproductive decisions, including family planning. While over half supported this right, there was significant hesitation and opposition from others, reflecting underlying tensions between modern perspectives and traditional values.
5. **Workforce Participation:** The discussion around women working outside the home was particularly animated. While a majority acknowledged the economic and personal benefits of women's workforce participation, concerns about the impact on family life and child-rearing were significant.

Observations and Insights:

- The focus group revealed a spectrum of views, from progressive to traditional, often intertwined with personal experiences, religious beliefs, and cultural backgrounds.
- The dialogues were constructive, though occasionally contentious, highlighting a community at a crossroads, grappling with evolving gender norms while holding onto traditional values.
- The discussions underscored a general trend towards recognizing women's rights, although practical acceptance and application of these rights vary significantly among individuals.

Recommendations for Future Engagement:

1. **Continued Dialogue and Education:** Regular focus groups and educational sessions can help bridge understanding and ease the transition towards more egalitarian views on gender roles.
2. **Community Involvement:** Engaging community leaders and influencers in these discussions can facilitate wider acceptance and endorsement of progressive gender norms.
3. **Targeted Interventions:** Developing interventions that address specific areas of resistance, such as reproductive rights and workforce participation, can help mitigate concerns and promote more inclusive attitudes.

List of participants

Name	Mobile	Name	Mobile
Mohammad Abdel Qader	0548724065	Diaa Abu Snineh	0523187903
Saif Abbasi	0526453554	Nidal Hussain	0549180424
Amer Dwiat	0507575203	Mahmoud Abu Ghayatha	0527572368
Jasser Awawdeh	0544218665	Yazan Abbasi	0527512223
Fathi Froukh	0547550881	Marwan Jaber	0532203407
Rami Naser Alden	0527512223	Tareq Tayem	0542489962
Mohammad Mhalwes	0523763971	Ali Sawahreh	0526118837

Annex 8: Directory of Jerusalem Civil Society Organizations⁴⁷

⁴⁷ The Directory is provided as a standalone PDF file as part of this report.

A directory of civil society organizations operating in East Jerusalem, including organizations working with women and on gender issues, was edited and published by the Palestinian Family Planning and Protection Association (PFPPA) with the support of UNFPA in 2023. The Directory lists 36 organizations providing services to Jerusalemite women in different fields such as public health, women's health, women's mental health, services to protect Palestinian women and families from Violence, in addition to legal counselling related to Sharia law, Reunification and residency in Jerusalem, in addition to social and economic empowerment programs and vocational training.