



Al Murunah+ Evaluation: Baseline Report (Annexes)

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Annex 1. Terms of Reference

Background and Rationale

FCDO has requested SDDirect to lead on the design and roll out of an overarching qualitative impact evaluation for four gender transformative (AI Murunah+) pilots, which will be implemented under the AI Murunah project in Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon and Palestine. The AI Murunah project is a component of PHENOMENAL, FCDO's flagship regional climate change project in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. AI-Murunah aims to demonstrate the effectiveness and viability of Resilient Nature Based Water Solutions (RNBWS) to enhance water and food security in agricultural areas of MENA, thereby increasing the resilience of rural households and communities. The AI Murunah+ (AM+) pilots will layer economic and gender-based violence (GBV) prevention interventions onto the core interventions to test whether this improves AI Murunah's overall impact and sustainability. FCDO will commission SDDirect to carry out the impact evaluations, in close collaboration with implementing partners. Routine project monitoring and learning functions will be administered by the lead partner – International Water Management Institute (IWMI).

Purpose, Objectives, Scope

The purpose of this evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation is to assess whether the anticipated results laid out in the four AM+ pilot Theories of Change (TOC), developed by each country partner as part of the pre-inception phase,¹ have been achieved. Primarily this will involve evaluating to what extent there has been changes in outcomes amongst couples and opinion leaders enrolled in the four pilots. These include, but are not limited to, improved gender equitable attitudes and norms, increase in shared roles and decision making in the households, improved relationship quality between couples, and ultimately reductions in the experience / perpetration of GBV (with a particular focus on economic, physical and emotional violence). As a secondary focus the evaluation will provide some understanding of the impact of the TOC activities on incomes and application of climate smart agriculture, with a particular focus on the association between social and gender norms change and enhanced a.) incomes including more equitable distribution of incomes and b.) climate resilience. Insights from the evaluation will be used to inform future projects seeking to integrate gender transformative and GBV prevention strategies into climate change and adaptation programming in the region.

Evaluation Questions

These questions are designed on order to capture change against the different theorised pathways in the TOC, including GBV impacts and economic impacts. They will be further refined with partners in the inception period.

To what extent has the Al-Murunah+ pilots contributed to social and gender norms change or greater gender equality (including shifts in attitudes and behaviours)? (GBV impact questions)

- To what extent have the pilots effectively and sustainably contributed to reduction in targeted forms of intimate partner violence (including economic,² emotional and physical violence) and improvements in relationship dynamics amongst interviewed couples (interviewed)?
- To what extent is there evidence that the Al-Murunah+ projects have contributed to broader changes in knowledge, attitudes, practices related to gender norms / gender equality as described in the ToC, among the enrolled couples and leaders?
- What are the enabling and hindering factors of the changes across the different contexts?

To what extent has the Al-Murunah+ pilots contributed to improvements in incomes & climate resilience in the form of increased application of climate smart agriculture practices by women and men? (Economic / climate resilience impacts)

- To what extent have women and men involved in the Al-Murunah+ pilots increased their adoption of climate smart agriculture practices, and what has led to that increase? What is the perceived impact of these practices on water security, land degradation, and climate resilience?
- How effective have the project activities been in both increasing family incomes and increasing women's access to / decision making power over family finances?
- What are the enabling and hindering factors to change across the different contexts?

Approach and Methodology

This multi-country, impact evaluation will comprise of a baseline and endline study. The evaluation design will take a theory-based approach complemented by contribution analysis, drawing on qualitative and participatory methodologies.

The evaluation will use a range of qualitative methodologies to collect data from multiple key stakeholders. The evaluation will aim to follow a longitudinal sample of couples in all

pilot countries across two evaluation points, to explore changes in knowledge, attitudes and practices related to gender norms and forms of gender-based violence.

This data collection will be supplemented by a series of participatory workshops and focus group discussions with opinion leaders, programme participants and implementation staff. In addition, the evaluation will draw on secondary data and documents produced by the implementation teams through the lifecycle of the pilots.

The ambition is that this evaluation will cover all of the pilot programmes across the four countries, however the feasibility, in terms of safety and ethics, of conducting data collection in all contexts will be regularly reviewed throughout the contract. There is an understanding that due to the volatile context in two of the four countries particularly, that it might not be possible to proceed with the plan to conduct the evaluation across all locations and FCDO remain open to discussing and amending this in a context informed manner.

Please find below an overview of the proposed approach, method and activities at each stage of the evaluation:

1. Inception

A short inception phase will take place to finalise design and implementation plans in collaboration with FCDO and the implementation teams. During the inception phase the evaluation team will consult FCDO, the implementation teams and the TA support team to inform the design of the evaluation. Below is a summary of the inception phase activities:

- Kick off meeting with FCDO, IWMI and the implementation teams to present the proposed evaluation methodology, this will be an opportunity for feedback on the EQs and proposed approach, and for the team to input to the design.
- Review of the programme and pilot Theory of Change/s in collaboration with FCDO, TA support team and partners. The evaluation team will review the current overarching ToC and the nested pilot ToCs, to ensure coherence and synergy at impact and outcome level across the pilot TOCs.
- Identify the Ethical Clearance requirements and process. We will work with FCDO and IWMI to understand the ethical clearance requirements and costings across each country, make the required adjustments to the budget/workplan and begin the process.
- Conduct a document review of existing programme documentation and externally published literature that is relevant to nature-based solutions, household income generation and GBV within the context.

- Recruit and onboard the National researchers, during the inception phase the evaluation team will interview and recruit two national level research experts in each country (one male, one female) who will lead primary data collection with remote support from the global evaluation team.
- Set up safeguarding referrals and reporting structures for the evaluation. In collaboration with FCDO and the implementing partners we will identify and establish safeguarding referral pathways and reporting mechanisms for each of the countries.
- Identify samples in close consultation with the implementing partners. Work with the implementing partners to identify the longitudinal sample of couples to be interviewed and a sample of opinion leaders and programme participants enrolled in the EA\$E and/or the Indashyikirwa sessions to participate workshops across the evaluation.
- Adjust the final methodological design based on the considerations and consultations with FCDO, IMWI and the partners during the inception phase. For example, it is possible that there will need to be adjustments to the proposed methodology based on the outcomes of the consultations, changes in context and/or ethical clearance requirement (not yet known).
- Development of data collection tools will take place once any major adjustments to the methodology are known and will be reviewed by FCDO and the implementing partners.

A short report will be prepared to outline the finalised methodological design, this inception report will include background/context, final EQs, methodology, ethical clearance requirements, workplan and data collection tools.

2. Baseline

The baseline evaluation will kick off once the inception phase is completed, this will cover the first point of primary data collection and analysis.

Phase 1: Preparation

During this phase, additional document review and preparation for the country level data collection will take place. Please see these points outlined below:

- The global evaluation team will **deliver a hybrid training for the national researchers**. This training will cover the evaluation methodology, ethics and safeguarding, how to use the tools, how to apply GEDSI considerations, manage power dynamics, techniques such as trauma-informed interviewing, data management information and considerations for data collection.

- The global evaluation team will **develop a data collection protocol**, this document will cover essential considerations during the data collection process including how to collect and store data safely, essential steps in the data collection process, safeguarding reporting and referral pathways etc. We will also establish real-time communication mechanism with the national researchers to be used during data collection.
- The national researchers will **contextualise and translate data collection tools** based on the contextual and programmatic nuances at country level.
- **Kick off meetings with implementing partners** will be held to provide an introduction to the evaluation and an overview of the data collection. The national researcher alongside a member of the global evaluation team will then work with the implementing team to agree dates for data collection, arrange logistics for data collection and contact the sample.

Phase 2: Data collection

For each country there will be a team for data collection, this will include a global evaluation team member, two national researchers and two note-takers (provided by the programme staff).³ The national researchers will lead primary data collection in the pilot countries with a range of relevant stakeholders and data collection methods:

- **Couples interviews:** Interviews will be conducted with the longitudinal sample of couples who will participate in the EA\$E or Indashyikirwa couples curricula to explore their knowledge, attitudes and behaviour related to economic and intimate partner violence, relationship quality, and gender equitable attitudes and practices.
- **Opinion Leader Workshops:** sex disaggregated participatory workshops will be held with opinion leaders who will be enrolled in the Indashyikirwa opinion leaders curriculum. Use of participatory tools will explore change in their knowledge, attitudes, and broader social norms changes.
- **Programme Participant Workshops:** sex disaggregated participatory workshops will be held with programme participants to explore the secondary impacts of the pilots. This will include change in family-level dynamics (Egypt only), household-level decision making, incomes and application of climate smart agriculture/water resource management.

Data collection Method	Stakeholder	Sample Size
Couples interviews	With couples (sex disaggregated)	30 couples per country 60 people per country
Opinion Leader Workshops	With community leaders (sex disaggregated)	2 per country 5- 8 people per workshop
Programme participant workshops	With programme participants (sex disaggregated)	2 per country 5- 8 people per workshop
Total		240 interviews (240 people) 8 workshops with opinion leaders (40- 64 people) 8 workshops with opinion leaders (40-64 people) Approx. 320 - 368 people

Phase 3: Analysis and Report Writing

All data collected by the evaluation teams in interviews and workshops will be transcribed and translated into English for analysis by the global team in consultation with the national researchers.

Qualitative analysis will draw on both inductive and deductive analysis approaches, an initial coding framework will be designed in line with the EQs and sub-questions and then updated intuitively during the coding process as more themes emerge. The data collected across the four countries will be analysed as one large dataset, but the country level tag (alongside other descriptors) will be retained to allow for country level and programme level trends to be drawn out.

An internal analysis workshop with the evaluation team and national researchers will be used to triangulate findings from across data sources to inform key findings, conclusions and recommendations.

A baseline report will be drafted to outline the key findings, conclusions and recommendations.

Phase 4: Validation and Dissemination

A workshop with FCDO, IMWI and implementing partner teams will be conducted to validate findings, further to this a final presentation of findings will be hosted by the evaluation team once the report is approved.

3. Endline

The endline evaluation will apply theory-based and process evaluation approaches. The evaluation will utilise both primary and secondary data sources (generated by the partners MEL teams over the course of implementation). The evaluation will aim to answer the evaluation questions, outlined above and interrogate the programme level ToC developed at the baseline stage. Below is an outline of the phases of this endline evaluation stage.

Phase 1: Preparation Phase 1: Preparation

During this phase an initial desk review of programmatic documents and data will take place alongside preparation for the country level data collection will take place. Please see these points outlined below:

- A desk review will be conducted. This will include a review of relevant programme documents (up to 40) and analysis of secondary data collected through the programme MEL systems. This will serve as a secondary data source providing insight to a broader range of data and feedback from participants and provide insight into pilot implementation which will go on to inform responses to questions relating to implementation.
- **Documents** could include programme quarterly reports, progress reports, programme overview reports, results frameworks/logframes and case studies.
 - Secondary data collected throughout the life of the pilot through the programme MEL system (qualitative and quantitative).
- The core evaluation team will **provide a refresher training for the national researchers**. This training will cover ethics and safeguarding, how to use the tools, management information and considerations for data collection.
- The core evaluation team and national researchers will make any edits to the tools, then **contextualise and translate any edits**.
- **Kick off meetings with implementing partners** will be held to provide an introduction to the evaluation and an overview of the data collection. The national researcher alongside a member of the core evaluation team will then work with the implementing team to agree dates for data collection, arrange logistics for data collection and contact the sample.

Phase 2: Data collection

For each country there will be a team for data collection, this will include a core evaluation team member, two national researchers and two note-takers (provided by the programme staff).

The design of the data collection tools will be informed by the evaluation questions and the programme level ToC, however they will be adapted as needed to the context of each country and in line with the specific country level pilot ToCs. The evaluation team will develop data collection tools in consultation with the implementing partners to ensure that the tools are culturally and contextually relevant and appropriate.

The following data collection will take place in each country:

- **Couples interviews:** Interviews will be conducted with the longitudinal sample of couples who participated in the EA\$E or Indashyikirwa couples curricula to explore their knowledge, attitudes and behaviour related to economic and intimate partner violence, relationship quality, and gender equitable attitudes and practices.⁴
- **Opinion Leader Workshops:** sex disaggregated participatory workshops will be held with opinion leaders who have been through the Indashyikirwa opinion leaders curriculum. Use of participatory tools will explore change in their knowledge, attitudes, and broader social norms changes.
- **Programme Participant Workshops:** sex disaggregated participatory workshops will be held with programme participants to explore the secondary impacts of the pilots. This will include change in family-level dynamics (Egypt only), household-level decision making, incomes and application of climate smart agriculture.
- **Focus group discussions:** a focus group with key programme staff will be conducted to capture their perceptions of the pilots progress against the ToC, and explore perceived barriers and enablers to change. Below is an outline of expected data collection, this will be adjusted ahead of the endline and informed by the following criteria: total number of programme participants engaged for the full duration of the pilot, different stakeholders groups engaged by the pilot and the geographic location of the participants.

Below is an outline of expected data collection, this will be adjusted ahead of the endline and informed by the following criteria: total number of programme participants engaged for the full duration of the pilot, different stakeholders groups engaged by the pilot and the geographic location of the participants.

Data collection Method	Stakeholder	Sample Size
Couple's interviews	With couples (sex disaggregated)	20-21 couples per country 40-42 people per country
Opinion leader workshops	With community leaders (sex disaggregated)	2 per country 5-8 people per workshop
Programme participant workshops	With programme participants (sex disaggregated)	2 per country 5-8 people per workshop
Focus group discussion	With programme staff	1 per country 5-8 people
Total		160-168 interviews (160-168 people) 8 national workshops with opinion leaders (40-64 people) 8 national workshops with opinion leaders (40-64 people) 4 FGDs with staff (20 - 32 people) Approx. 260-324 people

Phase 3: Analysis and Report Writing

All data collected by the evaluation teams in interviews and workshops will be transcribed and translated into English for analysis. The analysis approach will synthesise and triangulate findings from across primary and secondary sources in all four countries.

Qualitative analysis will draw on both inductive and deductive thematic analysis approaches, an initial coding framework will be designed in line with the evaluation questions and sub-questions and then updated intuitively during the coding process as more themes emerge. The data collected across the four countries will be analysed as one large dataset but the country level tag (alongside other descriptors) will be retained to allow for country level and programme level trends to be drawn out.

For the couples-interviews, we will draw from dyadic data analysis. A dyadic approach aims to collect data from both viewpoints in a relationship (this can be a husband and wife or carer and patient), to explore the similarities and differences between perspectives, experience and knowledge. This approach will allow us to examine how the couples perceptions and behaviour change over time as individuals and as a partnership.

At this stage, additional analytic techniques will be employed to help us examine change over time and contribution and triangulation between data sources will take place. An internal analysis workshop with the evaluation team and national researchers will be used to triangulate findings from across data sources to inform key findings, conclusions and recommendations. During this workshop the team will test the assumptions in the ToC and review the contribution narrative with supporting evidence.

The evaluation team will produce a final evaluation report that synthesises findings, conclusions and recommendations from across the pilot countries.

Phase 4: Validation and dissemination

A workshop with FCDO, IMWI and implementing partner teams will be conducted to validate findings. FCDO will develop and implement a dissemination plan.

4. Quality assurance

We apply technical quality assurance (QA) to all project deliverables, in accordance with our internal QA policy. This requires us to integrate QA into all stages of the project cycle, using peer review across the core Evaluation Team, and our senior in-house experts to QA all written outputs and provide training in writing skills and constructive feedback to build the quality of written inputs from mid-level and more junior staff. We actively seek feedback from clients on the quality of outputs and monitor this information at Board level.

We wish to highlight the following management and quality assurance mechanisms that we will put in place to assure the quality of this evaluation. The key responsibilities will be as follows:

- Overall, at SDDirect, a Principal Consultant is responsible for ensuring that the design and structure of all projects meet quality assurance and ethical standards. A QA or QA pool is assigned to each contract.
- The Team Leader, Alix Clark, will have responsibility for overall delivery, project management and quality assurance as the project progresses, liaising with the focal point at FCDO, on a regular basis.

We will also implement the following assignment-specific measures to assure the quality of this delivery and deliverables of this evaluation.

- Assembling a diverse, multi-disciplinary team that offers exceptional knowledge and expertise in gender equality and women's empowerment, feminist evaluation approaches, mixed-methods, theory-based, utilisation-focused, participatory, and gender and human rights focused evaluations; as well involving team members from

the four countries with a deep understanding of the local context and necessary language skills.

- Clearly agreeing and assigning roles and responsibilities to specific team members, along with clearly defined lines of accountability between team members and FCDO.
- Ensuring regular and transparent communication and coordination between all team members, which also serves as a key risk management strategy, in allowing the team to identify, communicate and mitigate any risks at the earliest opportunity.
- Maintaining clear and regular dialogue with FCDO and IWMI to ensure that requirements and expectations are agreed and understood throughout the evaluation, and to share relevant information throughout the evaluation.

Annex 2. Influence and use plan

In consultation with FCDO and IWMI, the evaluation team identified several intended users and uses of the evaluation. This is detailed in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Intended users and use of the baseline evaluation

Intended users	Use
Primary:	
Al Murunah+ Pilot project teams	To adapt and strengthen the gender intervention design and delivery based on evidence of current context, status of norms and social/ community structures, gaps, what works, for whom, and in what context.
FCDO – notably climate, food security, livelihoods and gender teams	To generate evidence of what works and inform decisions on how to commission and/or mainstream gender transformative and GBV prevention approaches within climate resilience, food security and livelihoods programming in the MENA region.
IWMI and technical stakeholders	To inform monitoring and learning from integration of social norm and gender equality components into water and climate resilience projects for and beyond these pilots.
Secondary:	
Local women's rights organisations (WROs) and community actors	To support advocacy and GBV and economic empowerment programming grounded in lived experiences of enrolled couples and communities.

Wider sector	To contribute to the evidence base of what works to prevent IPV in fragile and climate-affected settings. To contribute to the evidence base around the intersection between climate change, WEE and GBV.
Donors	To provide evidence and act as a useful resource for funding and advocacy efforts.

There is no dedicated budget in the evaluation plan to cover a comprehensive dissemination of findings by the evaluation team. However, there are activities built in to facilitate the use and influence of the evaluation on the design of the project and the funding decisions. Some of these are detailed below for the baseline and endline evaluations.

Baseline

The evaluation has drawn on developmental methodologies, placing utilisation as a central principle. There have been different forums which the evaluation has utilised for co-creation and to feedback findings to inform project adaptation:

- **Regular implementation and evaluation meetings:** held between the evaluation team, FCDO, IWMI and the Technical advisory partner, What Works. In these meetings the design, challenges and findings of the evaluation have been discussed in real-time, and as a result the evaluation has been able to feed into project adaptation on an ongoing basis. Influencing project design and resourcing, for example, the evaluation uncovered the need for increased safeguarding resources and was able to work with IWMI and the What Works Technical Assistance (TA) team to determine what resourcing was needed for safeguarding.
- **Formal presentations:** In addition, preliminary findings were shared in a workshop with the implementing partners following the completion of data collection. These findings influenced the design of the economic interventions and opinion leader interventions.

Endline

The evaluation will continue to apply the principles of a utilisation-focused approach⁵ at the endline evaluation stage by ensuring consistent engagement of the intended primary users of the evaluation as well as creating a series of accessible products that can be used by FCDO and IWMI to disseminate the findings. This will include a final endline report and a formal findings presentation.

Annex 3. Evaluation framework

Table 2. Evaluation framework

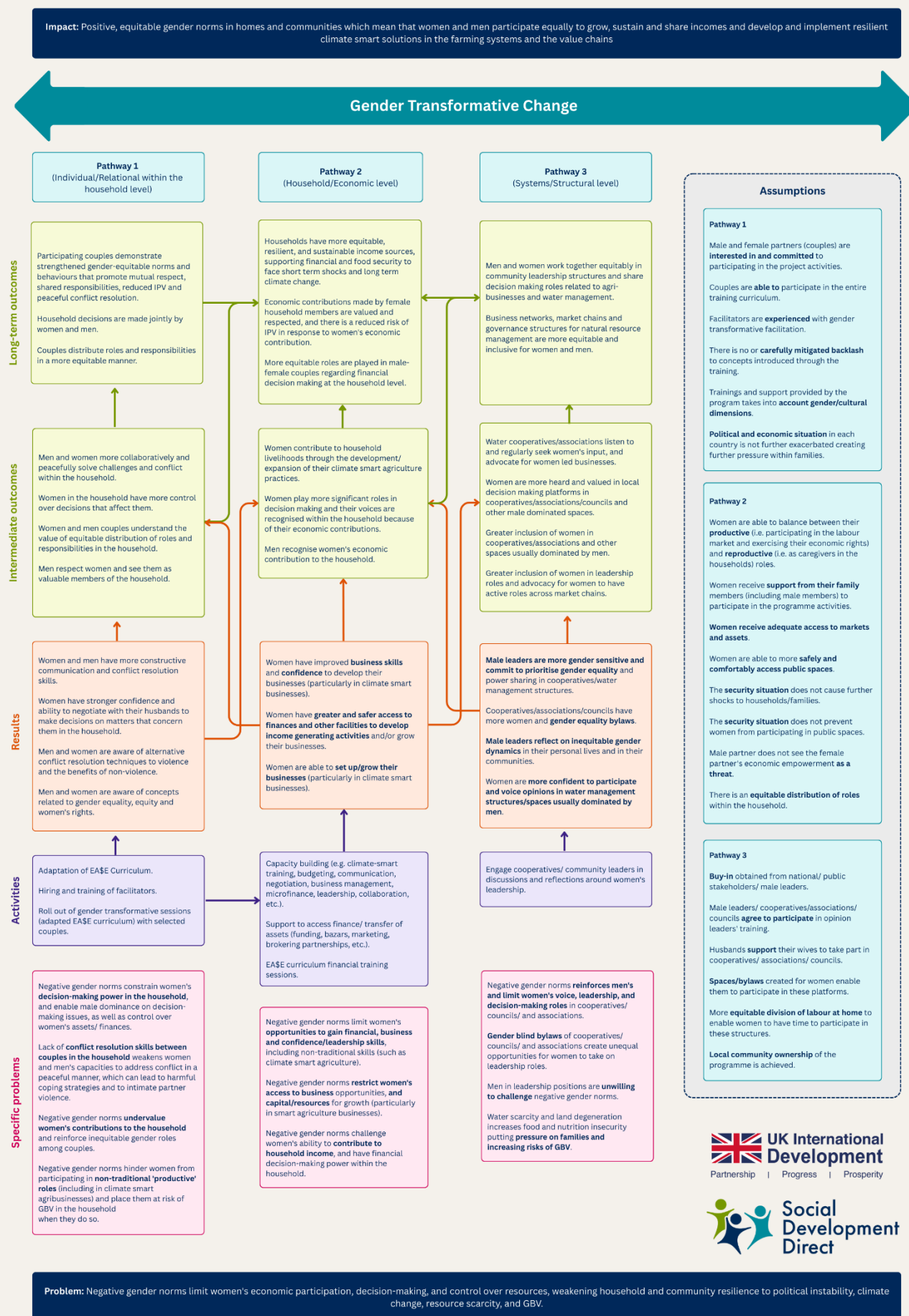
Evaluation question	Sub questions	Relevant OECD-DAC criteria	Indicators/ Areas of Analysis	Data collection method
<u>EQ1</u>: To what extent has the Al-Murunah+ project contributed to positive changes in gender norms, roles, and practices within households? ToC: Pathway 1	1.1 How effective has the Al Murunah+ project been in influencing more gender equitable attitudes, roles and practices among couples engaged in the EA\$E curriculum?	Effectiveness, relevance	– Evidence from discussions showing that couples distribute household roles and responsibilities fairly, rather than based on traditional gender roles. – Narrative evidence of men expressing appreciation, respect, and recognition of women's rights to make decisions on matters that affect themselves. – Narrative evidence to show that women and men understand gender equality, equity, and women's rights concepts.	Couples interviews⁶ Project participants Workshop
	1.2 To what extent has the Al-Murunah+ project contributed to more respectful communication, better conflict resolution practices and reduced economic and emotional IPV among couples engaged in the EA\$E curriculum?	Effectiveness, Impact	– Descriptive accounts from women and men of improved communication between couples. – Accounts from couples indicating better use of non-violent conflict resolution strategies during situations of conflict. – Descriptive accounts from women and men of increased knowledge of conflict resolution techniques to address disagreements in a non-violent manner. – Narrative evidence that economic and emotional IPV reduces	Couples interviews Project participants Workshop

<u>EQ2</u>: To what extent has the Al-Murunah+ project contributed to creating more gender equitable leadership and decision-making structures? ToC: Pathway 3	2.1 To what extent has the Al-Murunah+ project contributed to more gender equitable knowledge, attitudes and practices among enrolled opinion leaders?	Relevance, effectiveness, Impact	– Personal testimonies from opinion leaders showing awareness of gender inequalities and discussing changes in their attitudes or behaviours in community leadership. – Narratives indicating collaborative participation of men and women in leadership and joint decision-making in farming systems and across the value chains. – Accounts indicating that women's ideas and voices are respected and considered in decisions within traditionally male-dominated platforms.	Project Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) data Stakeholder Interviews Opinion leaders workshops
	2.2 To what extent has the Al-Murunah+ project contributed to more equitable leadership structures and business environment for women within targeted farming systems and value chains?	Impact, relevance	– Women reporting increased access to farming systems and value chains – Evidence that barriers women face to accessing leadership structures have reduced – Gender equitable policies and practices are established – Women's perceptions of safety in the workplace – Examples of community leaders promoting women's engagement in leadership positions within farming systems and value chains.	Project MEL data Stakeholder interviews Opinion Leaders workshops

<u>EQ3.</u> To what extent has the AI-Murunah+ project strengthened women's economic empowerment and climate smart agriculture skills, and how has this contributed to household resilience? ToC: Pathway 2 and the contributions of pathway 1 and 3.	3.1 How effective has the AI Murunah+ project been in supporting women's access to more sustainable and resilient income streams in farming systems and value chains?	Effectiveness, impact	– Women reporting increased access to economic opportunities that enable them to safely pursue and/or expand income-generating activities. – Descriptive evidence of women engaging in and expanding climate-smart practices in farming systems and across the value chains that support their household income. – Women describe increased knowledge, confidence, and skills to plan and manage ventures in farming and across the value chains. – Case examples of women initiating or expanding businesses in farming and across the value chains.	Project MEL data Couples interviews Project participants Workshops Stakeholder interviews
	3.2 How effective has the AI Murunah+ project been in increasing women's agency and participation in financial decision making and resource management within the household?		– Statements from women and men (couples) recognising women's increased influence in decisions and valuing their input as a result of their financial contributions. – Evidence of redistribution of unpaid work in the home. – Evidence that men's attitude to and respect over women's contribution and decision making over household finances.	Project MEL data Couples interviews Project participants Workshops Stakeholder interviews
	3.3 What is the evidence of and pathways through which a) addressing gender inequitable norms and attitudes (including those that contribute to IPV) and b) increasing women's agency and economic participation could contribute to household resilience longer term?	Effectiveness, impact, sustainability	– Couples reporting increased household income due to women's increased economic participation. – Households can provide examples of positive coping mechanisms – Accounts that application of climate smart practices lead to more reliable income – Demonstration of positive changes in income expenditure or use within households that create more absorbative capacity. – Stakeholders articulate the causal relationship between IPV, women's work and resilience	Project MEL data Couples interviews Project participants Workshop Stakeholder interviews Project staff FGD

EQ4: What are the internal and external factors that have enabled and hindered progress towards the project's intended outcomes across the four pilot countries? Is there evidence to suggest that these results are sustainable?	4.1 What are the programmatic, institutional or contextual enabling of hindering factors?	Relevance, Effectiveness	Internal: – Testimonies from staff and partners identifying project design features (e.g. approach, methodology, tools) that enhanced or limited effectiveness. – Feedback from project participants regarding the relevance, accessibility, and effectiveness / appropriateness of services or interventions delivered. – Narratives describing the role of monitoring, learning, and adaptive management in responding to challenges or improving implementation External: – Narrative evidence of how political climate, governance structures, or leadership support enabled or hindered project activities.	Couples' interviews Project participants Workshop Opinion leaders' workshops Stakeholder interviews
	4.2 What evidence is there to suggest that the project has resulted in sustainable change for women and their households?	Impact, Sustainability	– Testimonies from project participants describing continued use of knowledge, skills, or practices introduced by the project after direct support ended. – Community or stakeholder accounts of local ownership of project activities or approaches. – Examples of institutionalisation of project practices into local bylaws, policies, or organisational routines.	Couples' interviews Project participants Workshop Opinion leaders workshops Stakeholder interviews

Annex 4. Theory of change



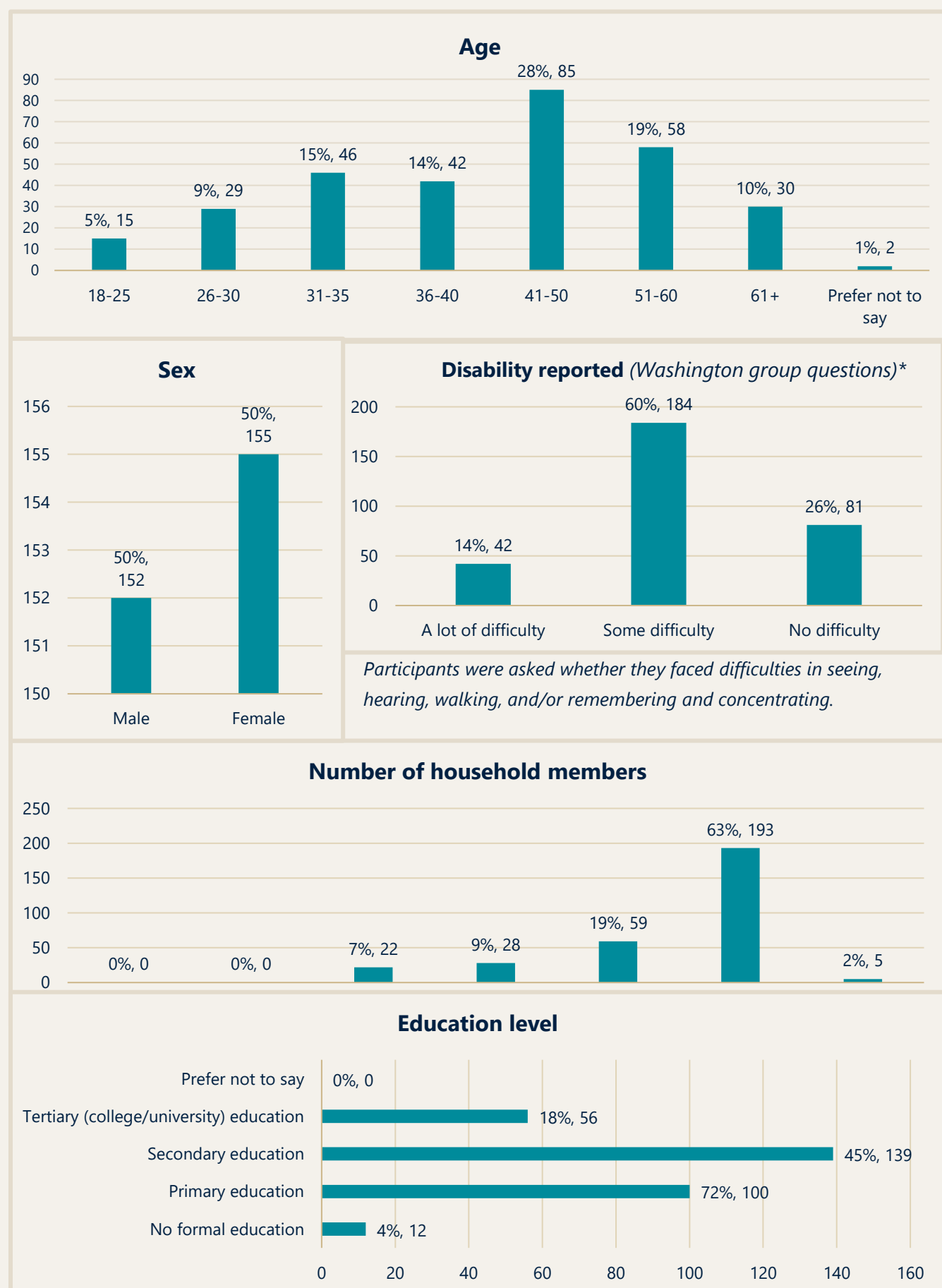
Annex 5. Stakeholders consulted

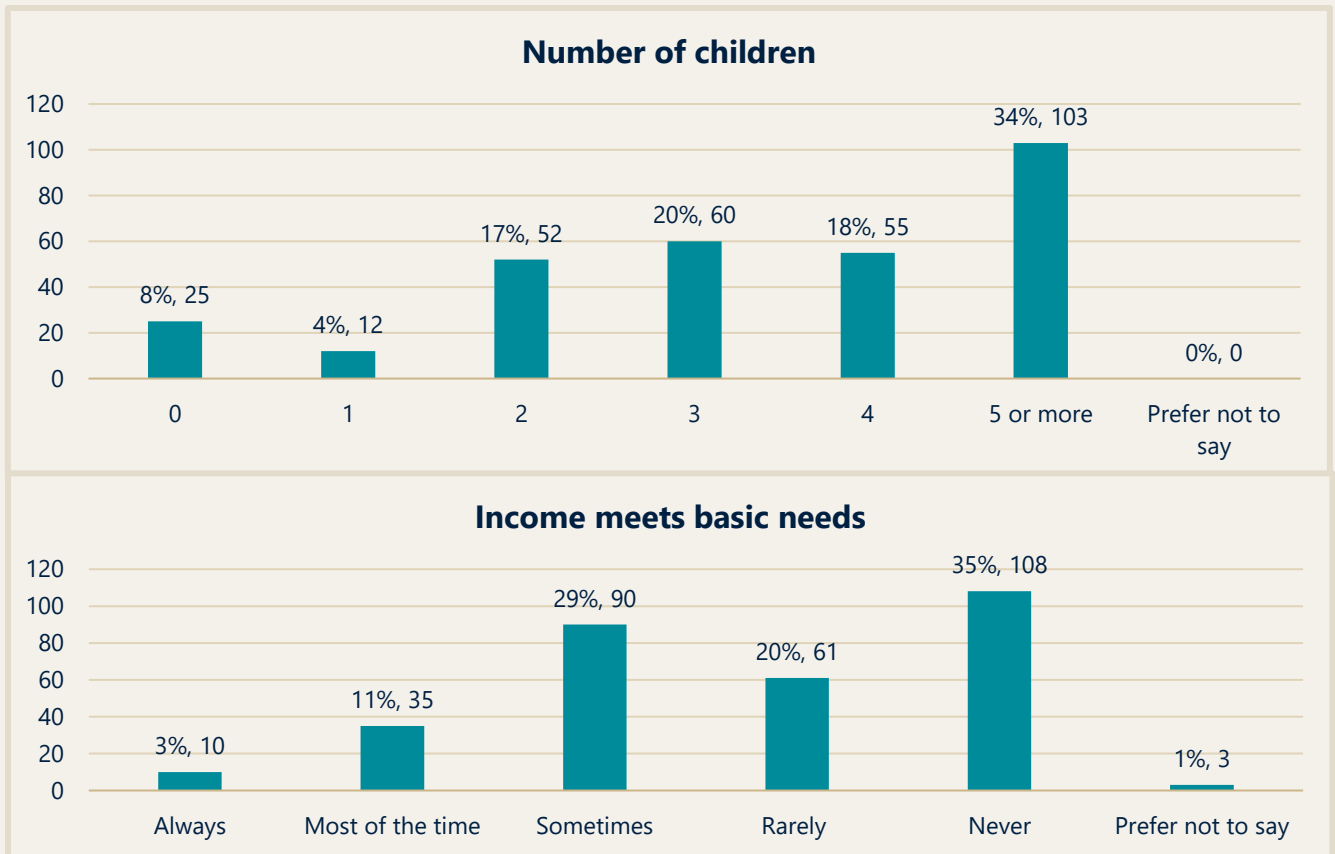
Across Lebanon, Palestine and Jordan, the baseline evaluation consulted with **354** individuals (Table 3). Due to the nature of the evaluation, the sensitivity and the vulnerability across the evaluation sample, it is not ethically advisable to share a list of the individuals consulted through this evaluation, however the sections below provide an overview of the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of different groups.

Table 3. Individuals consulted by baseline evaluation

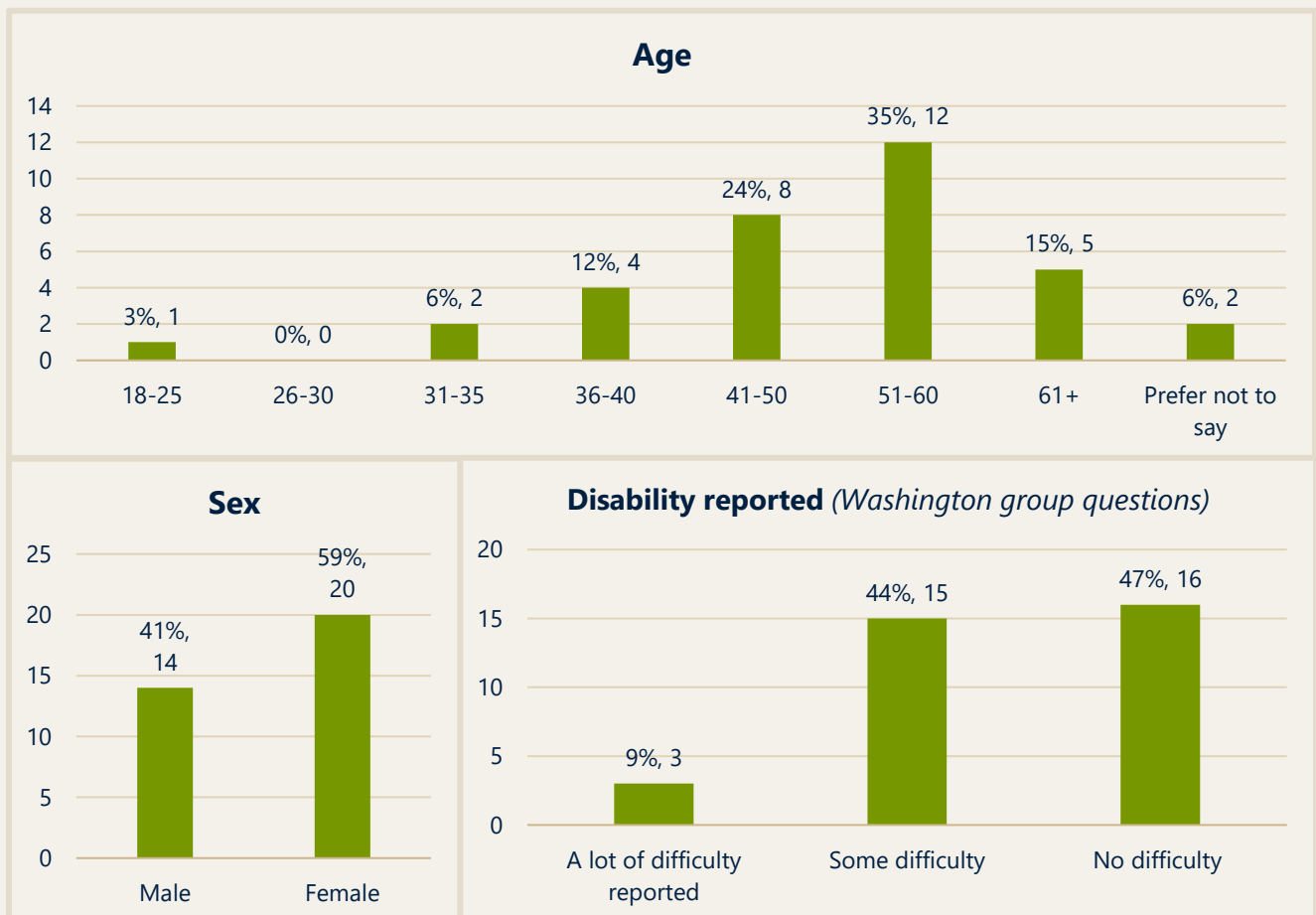
	Country	Sample
Project participants	Lebanon	99
	Palestine	108
	Jordan	100
	Total	307
Opinion leaders	Lebanon	10
	Palestine	9
	Jordan	15
	Total	34
Stakeholders	Lebanon	8
	Palestine	1
	Jordan	4
	Total	13

5.1 Project participants

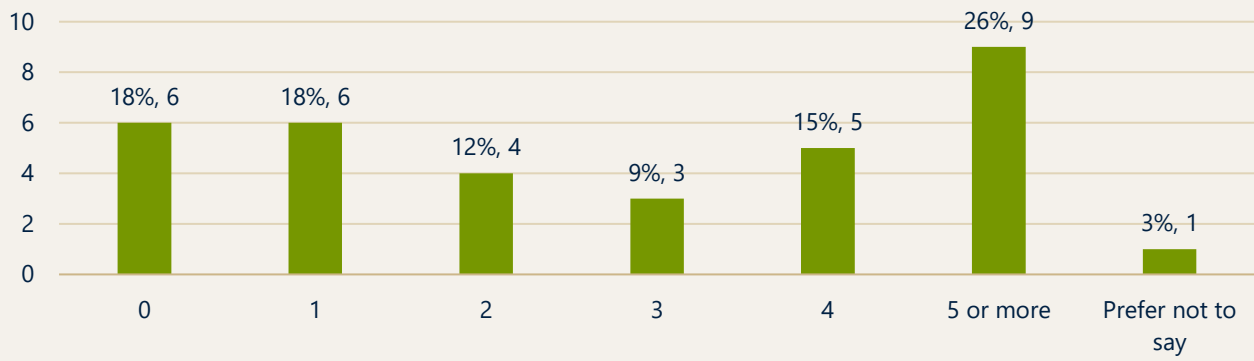




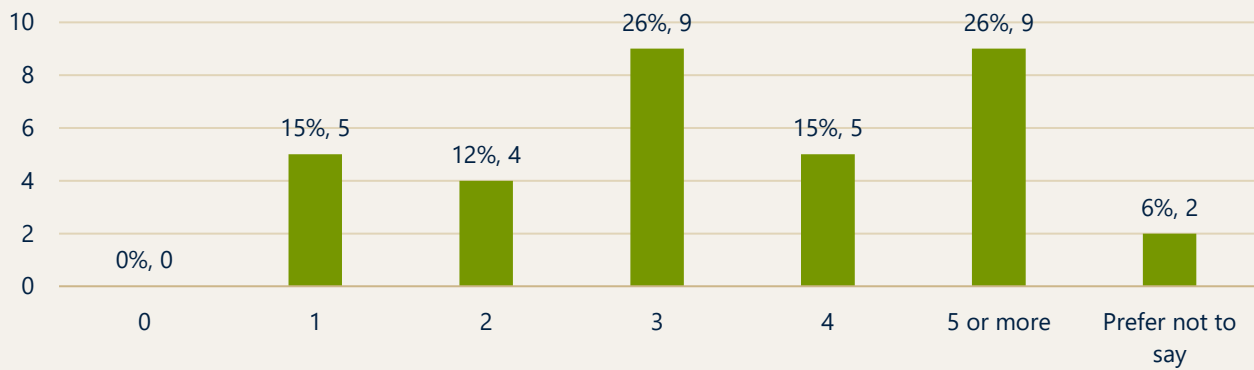
5.2 Opinion leaders



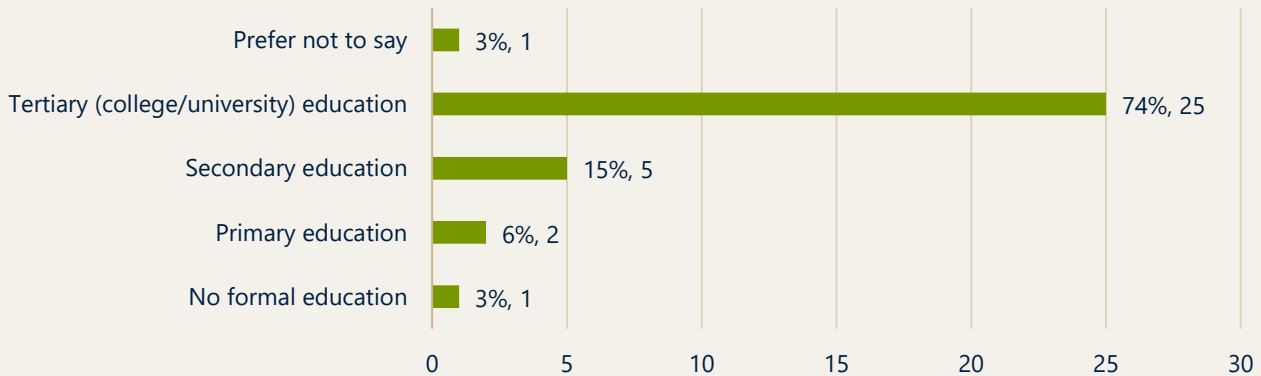
Number of children



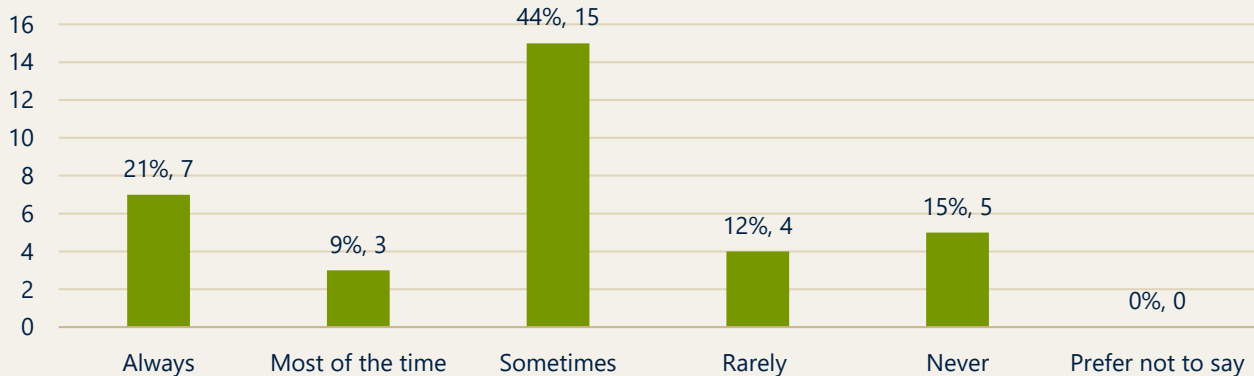
Number of household members



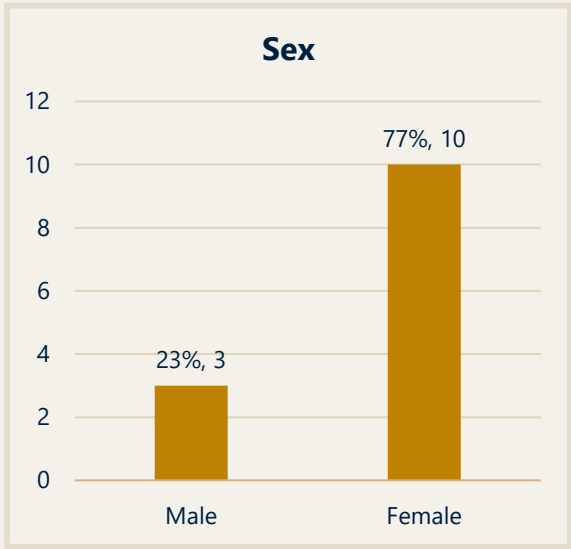
Education level



Income meets basic needs



5.3 Stakeholders



Annex 6. Bibliography

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Annex 7: Ethics and safeguarding

7.1. Ethical principles

SDDirect is committed to upholding high ethical standards, as set out in the Ethical Policy and Child Protection and Vulnerable Adults (Safeguarding) Policy. During the evaluation, all staff and external consultants were required to comply with these policies as well as the principles outlined below:

- Our work should lead to clear social development benefits in people's lives.
- Our work is conducted to a high standard in ways that are fit for purpose and ensure only the gathering of information that is relevant to the goals of our work.
- The safety of our researchers and participants is paramount.
- We are inclusive, ensure that marginalised groups are not excluded and are respectful of and informed by cultural differences and sensitivities.
- Participants take part in the evaluation voluntarily, based on valid informed consent.
- We compensate research participants for their involvement considering their transport and childcare needs, as well as their safety and wellbeing.
- Personal information is treated confidentially, and the privacy and anonymity of all individuals consulted is preserved

The evaluation was informed by international best practice and standards of ethical conduct in evaluation, as outlined in the [UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation \(2020\)](#) and [FCDO's Ethical Guidance for Research, Evaluation, and Monitoring Activities \(2019\)](#). These principles were translated into practical measures to ensure confidentiality, informed consent, data protection, reduction of direct and indirect risks to interviewees, and safe and meaningful participation:

- **Informed consent** – participants took part in consultations voluntarily, based on informed consent. Informed consent forms were provided, and completed, ahead of each interview taking place. These forms included information about the purpose of the research, how the data is collected and how it will be used as well as contact information for the evaluation team. Interviewers ensured that participants understood the content of these forms and provided the opportunity to ask questions before proceeding with any of the consultations. Participants were free to withdraw their consent at any point and could decide not to answer specific questions.

- **Meaningful participation** – a diverse group of stakeholders was recruited to take part in data collection activities, including couples, opinion leaders, and project staff across at least two project locations in each geography. The evaluation team enquired if the participants require any accommodation to be able to participate in consultations and provided reasonable adjustments to facilitate their engagement. Data collection activities were scheduled during times and in locations that were most suitable for participants, and which did not affect their care and work responsibilities. All consultations took place in private and safe locations, where participants could not be overheard or interrupted. Participants had the option to complete demographic data forms and provide information on their sex, age, disability status and impairment type, socio-economic status, education level and number of children. This information was pseudo-anonymised, securely stored separately to transcripts and used to disaggregate the evaluation results only.
- **Do No Harm** – to ensure that participation in data collection does not cause harm to participants and to minimise the impact of power dynamics, the evaluation followed key recommendations for recruiting couples as outlined in the inception report. Additionally, safeguarding considerations were embedded at all stages of the evaluation, as outlined in more detail in section 7.3 of this annex.
- **Beneficence** – The evaluation team will only collect and hold data that is necessary for the study. The evaluation will be published and is intended to be useful to a wide audience, including donors, academics, and practitioners involved in the design and implementation of IPV and climate-related projects. In addition, it will contribute rigorous evidence to the current evidence base on joint climate, women's economic empowerment, and IPV reduction interventions, including the growing literature on couples' programming for IPV reduction. The evaluation team will produce accessible dissemination materials, findings of the baseline will be fed back to the implementing partners to inform the project design and disseminated by the lead implementer.
- **Conflict sensitivity** – the approach and methodology guiding this research was sensitive to cultural, socio-economic, environmental and political context. Prior to each data collection stage, the evaluation team consulted the SDR team members and implementing partners to ensure that data collection approaches and tools are adequately contextualised.
- **Confidentiality** – Personal information was treated confidentially, and the privacy and anonymity of participants was protected (except as might be required by law) at all times, with primary data stored and managed securely as outlined in section 7.2 below.

7.2. Data protection

For the purpose of the evaluation, the following steps were taken to introduce strong data protection practices within the team:

- **All team members were trained on data management guidelines.** The data collected as part of this evaluation was stored on SDDirect's Microsoft SharePoint. Access to the data was restricted to members of the evaluation team on a "need to know basis". No primary data was shared over email or via other device.
- **No personally identifiable information (PII) or sensitive data was collected or stored,** with some special category data collected for sub-group analysis. Where PII was collected for analysis, primary data was separated from the PII and pseudo-anonymised. Each participant was assigned with a Unique Identifier (UID) number, which was used in all primary data documents (e.g. informed consent forms, interview transcripts) to protect anonymity. Any files containing PII, including files that link UIDs to participants' names, were stored separately, with access restricted to specific members of the evaluation team.
- **Data collection took place in person, in secure and private locations,** within the communities in which the project operated. For each data collection activity there was one, same-sex, researcher accompanied by a same-sex note-taker. The notes, saved in the Microsoft word note templates, were securely saved on the SDDirect SharePoint, in folders with restricted access. Where consent was given, the interviews were recorded by the note-taker on their phone for the sole purpose of supporting notetaking. The recordings were automatically uploaded to SharePoint and deleted from the phone following the upload.
- **Informed consent** was obtained before each data collection activity takes place and the informed consent form was completed and signed by participants. Any printed paper consent forms were photographed or scanned by the note-takers and uploaded to the SDDirect SharePoint and the hard copy destroyed. The informed consent forms were saved using the unique ID and located in a separate central folder within the SharePoint knowledge management system.
- **Any notes stored on individuals' devices were password-protected and deleted as soon as they were uploaded to secure folders** on SharePoint. All hard copies, for example the informed consent and demographic data forms completed by interview participants, were stored in safe places (on their person, in a locked hotel room or in a hotel safe), never left unattended, and destroyed as soon as they are uploaded to secure folders on SharePoint.
- **Stakeholders consulted as part of the evaluation are not identifiable** in evaluation deliverables, and non-anonymised data was not, and will not, be shared

with third parties. After the evaluation is concluded, data will be stored for the duration of the evaluation and then deleted.

- **Data protection and confidentiality-related risk** informed the development of the safeguarding measures.

In addition to the evaluation-specific measures, SDDirect is registered with the Information Commissioner in the UK as a 'data controller' in accordance with the provisions of the European General Data Protection Regulation (2018) and the Data Protection Act (1998). Our approach to data management is regulated by SDDirect's Data Protection Policy.

7.3. Safeguarding

Safeguarding technical assistance was built into the contract to ensure that evaluation activities are delivered in a safe and ethical manner. The measures complemented the ethical principles and data protection practices, aiming to ensure that everyone involved in the evaluation was protected from harm – this included both the evaluation participants and the evaluation team.

The safeguarding approach prioritised prevention and ensured that appropriate mechanisms were in place to address any arising concerns. This included:

- **Dedicated safeguarding measures were developed for the evaluation**, providing guidance on definitions⁷, minimum standards, best practice in implementing safe evaluation and research practices. These included:
 - **Reporting mechanisms**, providing multiple ways to report any safeguarding concerns.
 - **Case management procedure**, providing structured approach to cases and concerns received during the evaluation. Due to the nature of the evaluation, the procedure included disclosures of GBV cases to support team in understanding what action needs to be taken.
 - **Referral pathways**, providing a list of country-specific services available for survivors, including medical care, counselling, legal support, safe shelter, child protection services as/where available.
 - **Safeguarding risk register**, assessing the likelihood and potential impact of safeguarding risks which could occur during the evaluation. The risk register was used to propose adequate mitigations to prevent harm before it happens and was revised as needed.
 - **Further support available to the evaluation team**, recognising that the process of receiving a disclosure or listening to experiences of violent events can be triggering and affect the researchers' well-being.

- **The safeguarding measures were shared with the evaluation team and participants as follows:**
 - **The safeguarding measures were included in the Data Collection Protocol**, which was shared with all staff involved in the evaluation, including researchers and note takers.
 - **A safeguarding training for the team was delivered in July 2025**, covering basic information about safeguarding, introducing the evaluation-specific safeguarding measures (as included in the Data Collection Protocol). The training explained the importance of addressing the existing power imbalances between the evaluation team and the participants to ensure no harm is done in the course of the evaluation and provided a space for the participants to ask for clarifications and questions.
 - **The note takers received a briefing** which covered safeguarding.
 - **All evaluation participants received a copy of referral pathways and reporting mechanism while providing their consent to participate in the evaluation.** The available services were reiterated by the researchers if a disclosure of a GBV case was made during any of the activities.
- **A dedicated safeguarding focal point** was appointed in SDR as a first-point of contact for any safeguarding cases. The Safeguarding lead was on call to provide necessary advice during the evaluation activities. This proved particularly useful during the KIs due to the ethical and safeguarding concerns and the large number of GBV disclosures received by the researchers. All concerns were escalated to the Team Lead and other stakeholders as appropriate.
- **Well-being check-ins for the evaluation team:** due to the number of GBV disclosures received during the evaluation, a series of well-being check-ins was introduced. Further 1:1 calls were available to the evaluation team members as needed.

7.4. Duty of care

Given the nature of the evaluation, including data collection on sensitive topics such as gender equality and intimate partner violence, and the varying security and humanitarian contexts, a robust Duty of Care approach was embedded throughout the evaluation as follows:

- **Adapting to security and humanitarian contexts:** The evaluation team was continuously assessing the feasibility of data collection in each country based on safety and ethics, making necessary adjustments in consultation with FCDO.

- **Gender-matched national researchers:** each country team included one male and one female researcher to conduct sex-disaggregated interviews to ensure participant comfort and appropriateness when discussing sensitive topics.
- **Participant-led logistics:** to maintain ethical standards and support participant wellbeing, especially when engaging with vulnerable individuals, all interviews and workshops were arranged in collaboration with participants to ensure timing and locations were accessible, appropriate and agreed.
- **Ethical principles and safeguarding:** the evaluation followed the ethical principles outlined in the section 7.1, including informed consent, voluntary participation, and respect for participants' dignity and safety. Tailored safeguarding measures were introduced as outlined in section 7.3 above.
- **Ethical oversight:** all evaluation team members were trained on the ethical standards.
- **Confidentiality and data protection:** strict data protection regulations were introduced for the evaluation (see section 7.2 for further details).
- **Team coordination and ongoing check-ins:** regular virtual meetings and check-ins were held with all team members and national researchers to ensure clear communication and oversight throughout the evaluation process.

Annex 8: In-depth context

The situation of women and girls in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region is characterised by incremental but uneven and slow progress that often lags behind international commitments such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).⁸ While the region has seen significant improvements in general health indicators, such as lower maternal mortality, and higher educational attainment where girls often outperform boys, these gains have not effectively translated into economic empowerment.⁹ Consequently, the region maintains the lowest female labour force participation rate globally at approximately 19%, with many women further burdened by a disproportionate share of unpaid care work and a high concentration in informal and vulnerable forms of employment.¹⁰

These structural inequalities are reinforced by deep-seated patriarchal norms and discriminatory legislation, particularly personal status laws, which continue to restrict women's autonomy, access to justice, and leadership opportunities, while also sustaining high rates of GBV that have been exacerbated by regional conflicts and the COVID-19 pandemic.¹¹ In parallel, climate change-related stressors, including water scarcity, environmental degradation, and livelihood insecurity intersect with existing gender

inequalities to heighten economic precarity and household stress, which in turn increases risks for women and girls.^{12,13,14,15} These dynamics have been further exacerbated by regional conflicts and the Pandemic, which significantly increased women's economic vulnerabilities across the MENA region through expanded unpaid care and domestic responsibilities, constrained access to education and income-generating opportunities, and heightened exposure to violence against women.¹⁶

Labor Market Participation and Economic Opportunities

Women's labour market participation in the MENA region is the lowest globally, despite substantial improvements in women's education, health, and human capital.¹⁷ Female labour force participation has remained low and largely stagnant at around one-fifth of working-age women, while women experience higher unemployment rates than men and compared to women in other regions.¹⁸ This gap between strong educational outcomes and weak labour market engagement is also reflected in women's concentration in a limited range of sectors, particularly agriculture, food processing, and low-value service activities, with minimal presence in industry, management, or entrepreneurship.¹⁹ Consequently, women's employment-to-population ratios remain low and many working women are in informal, seasonal, or vulnerable employment.²⁰

In rural and peri-urban contexts in particular, women's participation in agricultural and food-related value chains is often characterised by unpaid family labour, low returns, and limited control over productive assets, land, and income.²¹ Climate change-related pressures, such as water scarcity, declining agri-productivity, and increased climate variability, further exacerbate these vulnerabilities by increasing workload burdens, reducing the viability of small-scale farming and food processing activities, and heightening income insecurity.²²

Women's economic opportunities in the MENA region are also constrained by intersecting social, legal, and institutional barriers. Gender norms place a disproportionate burden of unpaid care work on women and restrict their mobility, while labour markets often lack supportive policies such as affordable childcare, flexible work arrangements, effective anti-discrimination protections, and adequate access to finance and productive assets.²³ Limited access to finance, assets, and professional networks further curtails women's participation in higher-value segments of the private sector and agri-food value chains.²⁴ Together, these constraints not only hinder women's economic empowerment but also impose significant economic costs by preventing the region from fully benefiting from women's skills and productive potential.²⁵

Legal Frameworks and Personal Status Laws

Government policy and legal frameworks play a central role in shaping gender equality outcomes across the MENA region. Many governments have undertaken reforms to civil and criminal codes to strengthen protections for women and girls, especially in areas related to violence, harassment, and access to justice. However, progress remains uneven and fragmented, and personal status laws governing marriage, divorce, inheritance, and child custody remain a significant barrier to full equality, continuing to perpetuate women's subordinate status within families and limit their economic autonomy.²⁶

Across the MENA region, governments have increasingly adopted national strategies, action plans, and sectoral policies addressing gender equality and, to varying degrees, GBV. In the countries targeted by the Al Murunah+ project, policy commitments to women's rights and GBV prevention have expanded in the past decade, including Jordan's 2017 repeal of Article 308 (which had allowed rapists to escape prosecution by marrying their victims) and Lebanon's 2014 Law 293 on protection from family violence. These commitments are often aligned with international frameworks such as CEDAW and the SDGs. However, implementation gaps persist, driven by weak enforcement mechanisms, limited institutional capacity, and the continued primacy of discriminatory personal status laws.²⁷

At the same time, climate change and environmental stressors have become increasingly prominent within national policy agendas, particularly in relation to water scarcity and management, agriculture, and climate resilience. Despite this, gender considerations remain insufficiently integrated into climate and environmental policies, with recognition, although limited, of how climate impacts intersect with existing gender inequalities, care burdens, and exposure to GBV. Research shows that from the targeted countries, only Palestine and Jordan have mainstreamed gender into their national adaptation plans.²⁸ Globally, an estimated 80% of agricultural policies in low- and middle-income countries do not consider women and climate change.²⁹ This partial integration of gender, GBV, and climate objectives within government policy frameworks represent a key structural challenge for translating formal commitments into meaningful and inclusive outcomes for women and girls in the targeted countries and across the region as a whole.

National Development Plans and Gender Mainstreaming

Government approaches to gender equality vary considerably across the MENA region, and specifically across the Al Murunah+ focus countries of Palestine, Lebanon and Jordan. These variances reflect differing political economies, institutional capacities, and exposure to conflict and climate stress. Across these contexts, most governments have articulated formal commitments to gender equality through national development strategies, women's empowerment plans, and sectoral policies. However, the extent to which gender is

meaningfully mainstreamed across economic, social, and climate-related policies remains uneven, with implementation often constrained by weak coordination, limited resources, and competing political priorities.^{30,31,32}

In the **Occupied Palestinian Territory**, gender equality commitments are shaped by a highly constrained governance environment marked by territorial fragmentation, fiscal instability, and the impacts of prolonged occupation. While policy frameworks aligned with international conventions exist, their implementation is hindered by the absence of a functioning legislative authority and limited enforcement capacity. Women's economic participation is further constrained by movement restrictions, land access limitations, and climate-related stressors affecting agriculture and livelihoods, reinforcing dependence on informal work and unpaid care roles.³³

In **Lebanon**, prolonged political paralysis and economic collapse have significantly weakened the state's ability to implement gender-responsive development policies. While national strategies on women's rights and GBV have been adopted in recent years, their execution has been severely constrained by institutional fragmentation, fiscal crisis, and reliance on donor financing. Gender mainstreaming across labour, education, and climate policies remains limited, with women's economic participation further undermined by the erosion of public services, the informalisation of work, and the absence of social protection mechanisms, all of which are challenges that are intensified by climate shocks and displacement.³⁴

In **Jordan**, gender equality objectives are embedded within national development frameworks and the National Strategy for Women (2020–2025), alongside reforms to labour legislation aimed at increasing women's workforce participation through flexible work arrangements, childcare provisions, and anti-discrimination measures. While these policy commitments represent progress, structural barriers, including high childcare costs, transport constraints, and persistent social norms, continue to limit women's economic participation, particularly in the private sector and in climate-affected agricultural livelihoods.

These shifting labour market policies significantly shape women's economic opportunities. Structural adjustment programmes and reforms supported by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in Jordan, and Tunisia have had gendered impacts, often increasing women's economic vulnerability through public sector downsizing, subsidy cuts, and labour market flexibilisation.³⁵ These policies have disproportionately affected women by reducing public sector employment opportunities, increasing unpaid care work burdens, and exacerbating poverty and inequality.³⁶

Across all four contexts, government investments in girls' education represent a consistent policy success with near-universal primary enrolment and rising female participation in secondary and tertiary education.³⁷ However, persistent challenges remain including gender segregation in fields of study, limited vocational training opportunities aligned with labour market demands, and insufficient linkages between education systems and employment pathways.^{38,39} Addressing these gaps through integrated gender-responsive, climate-aware, and labour-oriented policy frameworks remains critical for advancing women's economic empowerment in the AI Murunah+ countries.

International Assistance and Donor Interventions

International assistance has played a central role in shaping gender equality, GBV prevention, and women's economic empowerment efforts across the AI Murunah+ countries, particularly in contexts characterised by fiscal constraints, political instability, and protracted crises. Evidence from comparative and country-level studies suggests that donor support to women's organisations and gender-focused programming has contributed to incremental gains in areas such as women's political participation, legal awareness, and access to services.⁴⁰ However, these effects are often contingent on broader political, legal, and institutional environments, underscoring that external assistance alone cannot overcome entrenched structural barriers related to discriminatory laws, restrictive social norms, and unequal power relations.^{41,42}

International organisations such as the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN WOMEN), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the World Bank, and bilateral donors have played significant roles in promoting gender equality in the MENA region. The World Bank's gender and development initiatives have emphasised economic empowerment, education, and legal reforms.^{43,44,45} These programmes have supported policy analysis, technical assistance, and lending operations aimed at expanding women's opportunities. However, critics argue that World Bank approaches have sometimes prioritised neoliberal economic frameworks that may not adequately address structural inequalities or cultural contexts.^{46,47}

In **Palestine**, international assistance has been critical in sustaining gender equality and GBV-related programming under conditions of prolonged occupation and severely constrained governance. Donor-supported interventions have prioritised protection services, GBV case management, psychosocial support, and women's economic initiatives, including cooperatives and small-scale agribusiness. However, structural constraints imposed and enforced by the Israeli occupation continue to undermine the sustainability of gains, highlighting the need for adaptive, resilience-oriented programming that links gender equality objectives with livelihoods and climate resilience.

In **Jordan**, international assistance has supported government-led gender reforms and women's economic participation through a combination of policy dialogue, institutional strengthening, and targeted livelihoods programming. Donors such as USAID (prior to the sweeping global aid cuts enacted by the Trump administration), UN Women, and the World Bank have focused on improving women's access to employment, entrepreneurship, and social protection, including among refugee populations. These efforts increasingly recognise the importance of GBV prevention integration into policy, as well as provision of childcare, and safe mobility into economic programming, particularly in climate-affected agricultural and water-scarce areas.

In **Lebanon**, international donor engagement has become the primary driver of gender equality and GBV-related interventions amid severe state fragility and economic collapse. UN agencies, bilateral donors, and international NGOs have provided essential support for GBV prevention and response services, legal aid, and women's livelihoods, particularly for crisis-affected populations. Evaluative evidence from donor-funded legal empowerment initiatives, such as those implemented by Oxfam, highlights the importance of multi-level interventions addressing both individual capacity and community norms, as well as the challenges of measuring empowerment in complex, context-specific ways.⁴⁸

Across all four contexts, the role of international financial institutions, and in particular the World Bank, has centred on policy reform, technical assistance, and investment in human capital, with a growing emphasis on women's economic participation. While these interventions have contributed to important policy dialogues and institutional reforms, critics note that market-oriented approaches may insufficiently address deep-rooted gender inequalities unless complemented by measures that explicitly tackle GBV, unpaid care burdens, and social norms. Taken together, the evidence from the AI Murunah+ countries highlights the importance of integrated donor strategies that align gender equality, GBV prevention, economic empowerment, and climate resilience within context-specific political and institutional realities.

Educational Achievements and Remaining Gaps

The MENA region has achieved remarkable progress in girls' education over the past several decades. Substantial improvements in female enrolment rates at all educational levels and near-parity or even female advantages in tertiary education in several countries have been documented.^{49,50,51} However, this educational progress has not translated into commensurate economic opportunities, creating high female educational attainment coupled with low labour force participation.^{52,53}

Country overview

Jordan

Women's status in Jordan is characterised by significant achievements in human development.⁵⁴ While the country has achieved near gender parity in primary education enrolment and women outnumber men in tertiary education, these gains have not yet translated into higher rates of economic or political participation.⁵⁵ Societal norms remain rooted in traditional roles that emphasise women's reproductive functions and financial dependency, which are further reinforced by masculinised educational curricula and stereotypical media portrayals.⁵⁶ Despite these challenges, broad national efforts and high-level political support are increasingly focused on achieving gender justice and inclusive development.⁵⁷

Jordanian female labour force participation remains among the lowest in the world at approximately 14-15%, with women predominantly concentrated in the public sector, specifically in health and education.⁵⁸ Major obstacles to employment include restrictive social norms, the high cost of childcare, and a lack of safe, reliable public transportation.⁵⁹ To combat these issues, the government has adopted the National Strategy for Women 2020-2025 and amended the Labor Law to introduce flexible work regulations, paternity leave, and mandatory employer-provided childcare.⁶⁰ International assistance from organisations such as USAID, the International Labour Organisation (ILO), and UN Women is vital to these efforts, providing technical and financial support for economic reforms, legislative advocacy, and programs targeting vulnerable populations like Syrian refugees.⁶¹

Syrian refugee women face several challenges exacerbated by their displacement, with many active in the informal sector where they lack legal protection.⁶² International support through the Jordan Response Plan (JRP) has introduced gender-transformative actions, such as "Oasis" centres in camps like Za'atari, which provide skills training and childcare to facilitate women's participation.⁶³ Furthermore, innovative humanitarian initiatives have utilised blockchain technology and iris scanning to provide cash assistance to refugee women without requiring traditional bank accounts or identification documents.⁶⁴

Nevertheless, patriarchal norms persist among women in Jordan. Traditional norms overemphasise women's reproductive roles as mothers and wives while designating men as the sole breadwinners and heads of household. These rigid roles are further reinforced by social expectations that pressure men to exert control over their female relatives in order to conform, even if they do not personally wish to do so. These social norms also serve as the primary barrier to women's economic participation.⁶⁵

In the case of child marriage, rates are substantially higher in Jordan than among Syrian refugees, with figures reaching roughly 8% nationally for Jordan and about 32% among Syrian refugee marriages.⁶⁶ The laws and policies in Jordan contain loopholes or weak enforcement that can legally or practically justify early marriage (under 18 years) and related gendered violence, and humanitarian and legal actors have called for closing such loopholes to increase accountability.^{67,68} Some of the contributing factors to child marriage practices include economic hardship, safety motives, and social norms and family honour.^{69, 70}

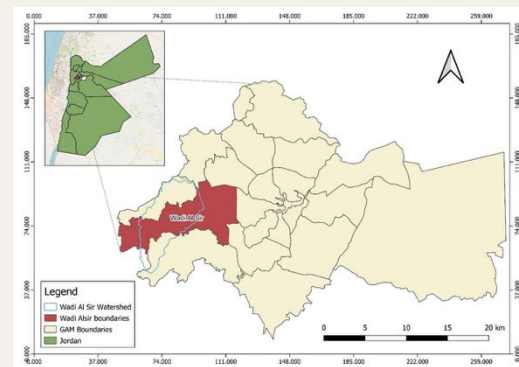


Figure 1 AM+ areas targeted in Jordan (AM+ Jordan Proposal)

The Al Murunah+ project in Jordan is being implemented in Wadi Seer, which is an area west of Amman, historically known for its natural springs. The area is also characterised with environmental and socio-economic challenges, such as, poor water distribution, deteriorated infrastructure, and a decline in agricultural productivity, which has resulted in limited income generating and livelihood opportunities in the area, as well as increased economic vulnerability among the community residents.⁷¹

Lebanon

Lebanon consistently ranks at the bottom of global gender equality indices, hampered by entrenched patriarchal structures and a lack of a unified civil personal status code.⁷² Women face systematic discrimination through 15 different religious personal status laws that govern marriage, divorce, custody, and inheritance, often prioritising male authority over women's rights.⁷³ While recent legislative advancements, such as the criminalisation of sexual harassment under Law 205, represent progress, significant enforcement gaps persist, and marginalised groups like migrant domestic workers remain excluded from standard labour protections under the restrictive kafala system.⁷⁴ Politically, women are largely marginalised from decision-making spaces, holding less than 5% of seats in the national parliament, according to a 2021 UN Women and World Bank report.⁷⁵

Although Lebanon has achieved gender parity in education with women frequently outperforming men in university attainment, this human capital success has not translated into economic empowerment. The Lebanese labour market has been devastated by a multi-layered crisis, starting with the 2019 socioeconomic collapse that triggered hyperinflation and widespread poverty, which was then compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 Beirut port explosion, and the catastrophic 2024 escalation of hostilities by Israel

against Lebanon.⁷⁶ These overlapping shocks have led to a massive contraction of the economy and a surge in unemployment, with women suffering disproportionate job losses – estimated at 27% compared to 22% for men- and many being forced to exit the workforce entirely as businesses closed.⁷⁷ Beyond losing paid employment, women have seen their unpaid care burdens triple due to pandemic lockdowns and the repurposing of schools as shelters, while the recent 2024 bombings have destroyed the farms and small businesses that sustained rural livelihoods, triggering a massive displacement crisis that exposes women to heightened risks of gender-based violence and exploitation.⁷⁸ Furthermore, the currency collapse has rendered many households unable to pay migrant domestic workers, leading to mass departures that have further intensified the domestic labour burden on Lebanese women, while the lack of social protections in the informal sector leaves them without a safety net during these cascading disasters.⁷⁹

The war in South Lebanon has also triggered unprecedented internal displacement that disproportionately impacts women by intensifying pre-existing inequalities and exposing them to heightened risks of GBV, exploitation, and increased care burdens.⁸⁰ Additionally, the Syrian refugee crisis in Lebanon has left women with extremely low labour force participation rates of approximately 10%, often confining them to the informal agricultural sector where they earn wages less than half of those received by men. These women also face heightened risks of GBV and severe protection challenges, as evidenced by a child marriage rate of 41% among young refugee women and maternal mortality rates that are nearly double those of Lebanese citizens.⁸¹ International assistance for gender equality in Lebanon is primarily driven by the World Bank's Mashreq Gender Facility (MGF), which provides technical assistance to enhance women's economic participation with backing from the governments of Canada and Norway.⁸² Major international organisations, including the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UN Women, have provided the essential technical and financial support required to develop the National Strategy for Women in Lebanon (2022–2030) and its accompanying National Action Plan (2024–2026).⁸³ Bilateral support from nations such as the Netherlands, Germany (GIZ), and Switzerland further fuels projects related to the Women, Peace, and Security agenda and the reform of discriminatory laws.⁸⁴ Given Lebanon's severe economic crisis and the resulting paralysis of public institutions, the success of these national empowerment strategies is now almost entirely dependent on sustained donor funding and international

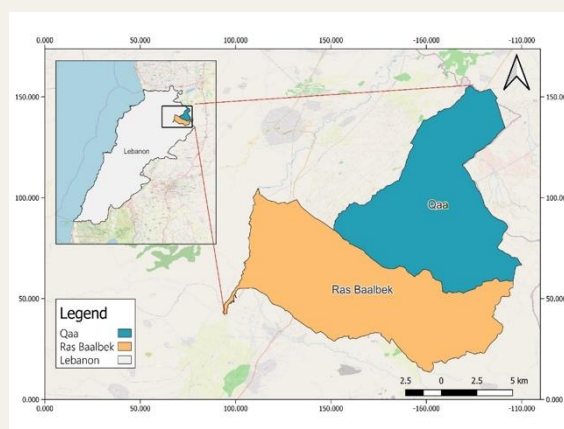


Figure 2 Implementation sites of AM+ in Lebanon (Source AM+ Lebanon Proposal)

coordination through agencies like UNRWA, UNICEF, and Save the Children to provide basic services and protections.

The Al Murunah+ project in Lebanon is being implemented several villages in the Governorate of Baalbek, namely: Hermel (North East of Lebanon), Arsal, Fakiha, Ras Baalbek, and Qaa. Both Ras Baalbek and Qaa experience environmental challenges such as flash floods, and groundwater drawdown. This combined with poor irrigation water management has contributed to a drop in agricultural income in these areas.⁸⁵

Occupied Palestinian Territories

Palestinian women and girls face a complex environment characterised by entrenched discrimination rooted in traditional patriarchal norms and inequitable power dynamics, which are compounded by the ongoing Israeli occupation. Although the State of Palestine acceded to CEDAW in 2014, aligning national legislation with international standards remains stalled due to territorial fragmentation and the inability to convene the Palestinian Legislative Council, leaving women subject to outdated and discriminatory legal frameworks.⁸⁶ GBV also remains at alarmingly high rates, with 29% of ever-partnered women experiencing physical, sexual, or psychological violence, while political participation is severely limited; women held only 11.8% of parliamentary seats after the 2006 elections and continue to be under-represented in senior decision-making roles.⁸⁷

Regarding the issue of economic empowerment, women in Palestine have one of the lowest labour force participation rates in the world (17.2% to 18.9%) despite achieving higher primary and secondary education enrolment rates than their male counterparts.

Unemployment for women is nearly double that of men, recorded at 40.6% in early 2022, and women-owned businesses suffered more severe impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic and military escalations compared to those led by men.⁸⁸ This situation is further hindered by legal barriers, as the State of Palestine scores lowest worldwide in a World Bank assessment of laws and regulations affecting women's economic opportunities, including constraints related to pay, property, and business ownership.⁸⁹

International assistance in Palestine includes interventions such as the provision of essential protection services like GBV, case management, psychosocial support, and the establishment of specialised courts to provide survivors with safe access to justice. To foster economic empowerment, international organisations also fund women-led cooperatives, provide vocational training in sectors like agriculture and food processing, and support technology-driven initiatives like Gaza Sky Geeks to create pathways to financial independence. Furthermore, international entities work with the Palestinian government to strengthen national action plans and advocate for the endorsement of legislative reforms that align domestic laws with international standards like CEDAW.⁹⁰ Nevertheless, structural

Annex 9. Additional information on EQ3

Table 4. Types of work among women

Lebanon	Jordan	Palestine
• Teaching and tutoring • Agricultural production and mounneh • Nursing • Embroidery • Online sales • Shopkeeping and retail assistance • Doctor's secretary or clinic assistant roles • Work with international organizations (depending on education level) • Cleaning services • Home-based nurseries run by women for the children of working mothers—mostly teachers • Baking and pastry production.	• Raising livestock (sheep, chickens, goats) for produce (Self-employed, home-based) • Small business (ladies salon) • Teacher • Sewing • Small-holder farming crops self-employed (at home cultivation, family owned or rented land) – figs, olive, wheat, barley, lentils, okra, pomegranate, plumd • Seasonal farming work (employed) – olive, fig picking • Food production at home (dairy – butter, cheese and yoghurt, dried mulukhiyah or thyme, kunafeh, baking bread • Tutoring/ Child-minding • Small home shop • Nurse • NGOs or associations • Cleaning services	• Food production (home-based) – drying herbs, grapevines, making yoghurt, grapes • Selling goods from home (home-based) • Working at the women's centre (e.g. giving private lessons) • Teaching • Smallholder livestock (sheep for milking) (home-based) • Sewing/embroidery (factory and home-based) • Tobacco rolling (home-based) • Small shop (at home) • Planting and harvesting on family land (grapevines) • Volunteering at foundation/NGO • Nurse *Other sources income • UNRWA vouchers/ social assistance

Table 5. Types of work among men

Lebanon	Jordan	Palestine
• Police/internal security forces • Army • Retired soldier pension/ stipend • Govt disability stipend for ex-soldiers • Small-holder farming crops self-employed (at home cultivation, vegetables, tomatoes, cabbage, grapes, olive trees, roses, pomegranate, apricots, wheat, eggplant, figs) • Farmer/ agricultural worker • Wood cutter • Stone cutter - popular industry • Auto mechanic • Phone shop apprentice • Boiler company technician • Small business owner/ entrepreneur (bakery shop, Stone cutting workshop, transportation work, rents store to pharmacy, chicken farm, • Odd jobs - bread delivery, driving a van, pickup truck driver, surface painting/ preparation, sand/ cement/ rubble work labourer • Administrative employee • Tuktuk driver • Taxi driver • Construction worker • Rock mill worker	• Army • Retired soldier pension/ stipend • Pension • Private company employee • Small-holder farming crops self-employed (at home cultivation; figs, olives, cherry) • Team organising events/ conferences • Small business owner/ entrepreneur (salon shop, • Odd jobs – delivery using personal car, seasonal farm work, part- or full-time work at supermarket or shops, day labourer, weeding, service driver • Farming/ agricultural work • Livestock rearing (personal) • Security guard • Courier at school • Taxi driver • Gardener • Construction work (plasterer, tiler) • College lecturer • Post deliverer on the bike • gypsum board – decorative painting and interior decorator • Small grocery shop owner • Subleasing own shop to other • Bakery worker	Farming/ agricultural work Labourer (daily, waged, Plastering work Former prisoner stipend Livestock rearing (personal) Odd jobs (seasonal agricultural work, construction work/ labour, local services, metal work, Plumbing work Toy distribution shop worker Village council worker (hospitality) Street vegetable seller Factory worker Jobs at 'the Authority' (Presidential Guard) Small business owner/ entrepreneur (small shop under house, grocery shop, Metal worker UNRWA Humanitarian assistance Cleaning jobs at UNRWA

Table 6. Types of climate smart practices undertaken by couples

Lebanon	Jordan	Palestine
• Good domestic practices – watering plants with small bottles • Drip systems (limited) • Household food preservation for consumption/ small scale selling (preserved olives (zeytoun) or cabbages; growing tomatoes, parsley, and eggplants) • Crop diversification (especially drought-resistant such as olive trees that produce olive oil)	• Protected greenhouses • Water-efficient crops • Organic fertilisers • Crop diversification • Using solar-powered cold storage facilities • Well drilling • Efficient irrigation (water conserving) • Drip irrigation (expensive) • Water ponds • Domestic planting for consumption (fig and lemon trees) • Well-based rain water harvesting • Water harvesting • Reusing greywater • Recycling agricultural and food waste • Agro-processing • “cocoon technology”	• Good domestic practices – water conservation by reusing water/ organising chores to conserve water. • Raising sheep/ livestock for selling milk and cheese • Grapevine harvesting • Efficient irrigation (water conserving) • Adjust planting to rainfall

Table 7. Negative and positive household coping mechanisms across countries

Jordan	Lebanon	Palestine
Positive		
• Borrowing from family or financial associations • Reduce spending on non-essential items (entertainment) • Using savings or selling gold bought as savings • Growing crops for subsistence • Food processing and preservation • Home-based work to supplement income (dairy)	• Food processing and preservation • Growing crops for subsistence • Using savings or selling gold bought as savings • Financial support from family or NGO • Reduced spending on non-essentials • Find alternative sources of income	• Reliance on family members • Using savings or selling gold bought as savings • Investing in something productive in good times • Reduce non-essential spending • Buy in bulk to reduce costs
Negative		
• Selling assets and accumulating debts • Cutting food consumption, eating nutritionally lacking diets.	• Selling assets and accumulating debts • Defaulting on medical costs • Withdrawing children from private schools • Cutting food consumption, eating nutritionally lacking diets. • Buying groceries on credit	• Selling assets and accumulating debts • Defaulting on medical costs • Cutting food consumption, eating nutritionally lacking diets.

Table 8: Summary of barriers to women's work (full list)

Level	Key barriers for women
Individual	Chronic illness; disability; low literacy/ qualifications; no start up capital; weak market networks; low self-confidence; exhaustion from care work; age constraints

Household	Entrenched gender roles; care burden; need husband's approval; family interference; limited transport money; women's work seen as 'help' or 'assistance'; norms of honour and respectability
Community	'Woman belongs home' norms; gossip and stigma; certain jobs as 'shameful'; leadership seen unfeminine; limited opportunities
Workplace / market	Unsafe work environment; long hours, far work sites'; unequal pay; workplace discrimination; mixed gendered workplaces; GBV/ harassment risks, inaccessible for disabilities, men favoured across value chain
Societal⁹⁵	Climate stress, draught; weak transport systems; high travel costs; poor finance access; weak inclusion enforcement; conflict, check points, insecurity; economic decline, low or unreliable wages; legal barriers for migrants

¹ Through the evaluation method we propose to develop an overarching ToC which will be the key ToC for the purpose of this evaluation.

² Economic abuse is a unique form of intimate partner violence (IPV) and includes behaviours that control a survivor's ability to acquire, use, and maintain resources. These tactics can result in someone becoming economically dependent on their partner and may limit their ability to leave the relationship and establish independence (<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9121607/>).

³ There will be an even split of male and female researchers and note takers to allow for same sex interviewing.

⁴ Upon review of other similar GBV evaluations that follow a longitudinal sample of couples, we note an attrition rate of approximately 30%. We are assuming a 30% attrition rate to our longitudinal sample.

⁵ Utilisation-focused evaluations are designed and conducted in ways that increase the likelihood of findings being used. They require intended users to be clearly identified and engaged throughout the evaluation process. This helps to ensure that the intended uses of the evaluation guide decision-making about the evaluation process, ultimately enhancing the overall usefulness and uptake of the evaluation findings. Source: Better Evaluation (2021) [Utilisation-focused evaluation](#).

⁶ To clarify, these interviews will not be conducted with both partners of the couples together and that separate interviews will be conducted with the male and female married partners.

⁷ Al Murunah+ Evaluation uses the following definition of safeguarding: 'Safeguarding means preventing harm to people in the delivery of development and humanitarian assistance. We understand safeguarding as taking all reasonable steps to prevent harm from occurring both to the evaluation participants and staff and responding appropriately when harm occurs.'

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