

Women's Economic Empowerment in Protracted Crisis: Syrian Refugee Women in Southeastern Turkey



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	2
ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS.....	4
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
INTRODUCTION.....	7
METHODOLOGY	8
HOW IS WEE CONNECTED TO WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT AND GENDER EQUALITY?	8
1. WOMEN’S ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT: LIVELIHOOD ACTIVITIES	10
1.1. Value Chains.....	11
Thematic Learning: (Not)questioning Traditionally Male vs Female Jobs	12
2. WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT AND GENDER EQUALITY	13
2.1. Unpaid Care Work: The Risk of Overburdening Women.....	14
2.2. Considering Gender-based Violence in WEE Projects	16
2.3. Engaging Men and Boys for WEE	18
Thematic Learning: (Not)separating Women and Men Spaces	20
Thematic Learning: Working in Private vs Public Space.....	20
2.4. Women-only Spaces for Women’s (Economic) Empowerment.....	21
3. SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS	23
4. BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	28
5. Annex 1: KII Details	31
6. Annex 2: KII Questions	31
7. Annex 3: FGD Details.....	32
8. Annex 4: FGD Topics and Probing Questions	33

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CEFM	Child, early and forced marriage
DGMM	Directorate General of Migration Management
EMB	Engaging men and boys
ESSN	The Emergency Social Safety Net
EU FRIT	European Union Facility for Refugees in Turkey
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GBV	Gender-based violence
ILO	International Labour Organization
ISKUR	Turkish Employment Agency
INGO	International non-governmental organization
IPS	Information Protection Center
KII	Key informant interview
MoFLSS	Ministry of Family, Labour, and Social Services
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
SADA	SADA Women Development and Solidarity Center
SET	South East of Turkey
TPID	Temporary Protection Identity Document
TUIK	Turkey Statistics Institute
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WEE	Women's economic empowerment

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As Syrian refugee crisis entered its ninth year, the protracted nature of the crisis has become more prominent, with the need of better integration of humanitarian response and development goals. Livelihoods activities with their long-term focus play an important role in humanitarian development nexus. This research is conducted to review and discuss best practices and potential risks for women's economic empowerment (WEE) projects in protracted crisis in general, and in southeastern Turkey context in particular. The following report should be of interest to any humanitarian organization that conducts livelihoods projects for Syrian refugees in SET region, and that shares the commitment to achieve a more gender-equal society.

In general, women face additional social obstacles to reach economic resources, which span from unpaid care work to gender norms regarding women's being provider. Majority of Syrian women in Turkey are not actively seeking employment because of their childcare responsibilities, not getting permission to work from either their husband or extended family, care of disable and elderly in the household, and housework.¹ Designing a livelihoods program without considering these additional obstacles women face means that the program is not equally approachable for all genders. Hence, women are the ones left behind as they are the less employable. This research clearly shows that *the only way to have a sustainable impact on WEE is to ensure not only women's economic advancement but also women's empowerment and gender equality.*

MAIN FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

- The research shows that regular livelihoods projects in SET region are not equally accessible for women because of special social barriers women face in their employability, and hence creates unequal results for men and women. Livelihoods projects are more likely to select men as beneficiaries as they are the most reachable and employable.
- Syrian women do not constitute a homogenous group. There are and will always be different needs and preferences of Syrian women in SET region. Correspondingly, different livelihoods projects should be running at the same time.
- Women need to be supported throughout the value chain as they (especially the ones working at home) generally do not have required networks to keep their businesses sustainable.
- Most of the livelihoods projects in SET region reproduces the gender discrepancies by not considering women's unpaid care work. The unproportioned division of unpaid care work between men and women is a problem, and needs to be addressed. We need to remind ourselves, unpaid care work is the top reason for women for not actively seeking employment both in general in the world² and for Syrian refugee women in Turkey³.
- Research shows that newly-married women and widows are the ones less free in terms of their movement and employability. Most of them are restricted by their husbands or other male members of the family. Recognizing how masculinity plays a role here, and creating role models are crucial. It is important to encourage men and boys to examine how gender

¹ UN Women & SGDD-ASAM, 2018. *Needs Assessment of Syrian Women and Girls Under Temporary Protection Status in Turkey.*

² International Labour Organization, 2018. *Care Work and Care Jobs: For the Future of Decent Work.*

³ UN Women & SGDD-ASAM, 2018. *Needs Assessment of Syrian Women and Girls Under Temporary Protection Status in Turkey.*

norms affect their own lives, and to think towards being an ally for a more gender-equal society.

- When key informants are asked regarding possible interactions of livelihoods programming with GBV, most of them immediately pointed out their protection team. This is a reactive way of thinking, which regards GBV as unintended consequence that can be handled later. Often times, GBV is not taken into consideration while designing livelihoods projects. Whether and how the planned livelihood projects affect gender relations, whether they increase the risks of GBV, and whether they can be used to eliminate or prevent already existing GBV risks should be analyzed. In addition to considering changing gender dynamics within the household, workplaces and transportation also needs to be considered as women tend to work in informal economy and in exploitative work environments.
- Humanitarian (I)NGOs sometimes need to work around gender norms to make sure women also have access to the support. In SET region, common examples are separating women and men spaces for an activity to ensure active participation of women who cannot participate in mixed gender activities; promoting traditionally female fields of work which women feel more confident and comfortable with; supporting women's home-based business ideas which enable women continue meeting their care work at home. These activities work around gender norms to make sure women's access to resources and support, which otherwise would not be accessible to some women. However, it is important for humanitarian staff to be aware that this kind of activities are reproducing gender norms on some level. While conducting such activities we need to be strategically think how to challenge and then transform these gender norms in the long run.
- It is crucial to understand that the aim here is not to cease traditionally-female fields of work, or not to push all women to the public sphere. Yes, women can do any work. However, it is important to respect women's choices. Indeed, forcing women for anything that they are not ready or not willing to do, is quite disempowering. The ultimate aim is to create an environment where all options that are available to men are available to women as well. The aim is to transform gender norms that prevent women to choose their work freely, deny their access to education, put extra shame for women working in public sphere.
- Except a couple of examples in SET region, women's empowerment and gender equality are not an integral part of WEE projects. Both past research in the literature and this research show that WEE is always need to be coupled with women's empowerment and gender equality to have long-lasting results.
- Gender relations are power relations, which are deeply rooted in our daily lives, and hence difficult to be challenged and transformed. Giving awareness raising sessions, which is the common practice in SET region, would do a limited work here. Creating role models and women-only spaces where women can freely share their experiences and raise their voices should be supported.
- As gender a thoroughly cross-sectoral issue, a holistic approach is needed for WEE. This research shows how detached the sectors are. Sectors, once created for effective response and reporting, shape how we conceptualize humanitarian response. We should not forget the fact that what we called as different sectors in humanitarian response, like education, livelihoods, protection; are deeply entangled in complex ways in people's lives. Operating without analyzing what is happening in the intersections of different sectors would result in ineffective interventions at best, and would most likely cause harm.

INTRODUCTION

The number of forcibly displaced people worldwide is the highest since World War II, as the United Nations attests.⁴ Among the tide of refugees are 5.6 million⁵ Syrian people who fled their country after the Syrian civil war began in 2011. Hosting 3.6 million⁶ registered Syrian refugees, Turkey hosts the highest number of refugees in the world at present. Provincial breakdown of Syrian refugees in Turkey indicates that after Istanbul (549.903), southeastern cities, where Turkey shares its longest border with the Syrian Arab Republic, host the largest numbers of Syrian refugees in Turkey, starting with Sanliurfa (429.717), Gaziantep (452.101), and Hatay (440.920).⁷ It is important to note that Syrian refugees constitute 3,65% of Istanbul population while they span from 21% to 81% (Kilis) of the population in southeastern cities,⁸ which in turn creates more service demand, more pressure on the municipalities, and competition over the limited resources.

As the Syrian refugee crisis entered its ninth year, the protracted nature of the crisis has become more prominent. Donors, aid organizations, and Turkish government recognize a need of transition, which is envisioned as equipping Syrian refugees with skills and competences that the labor market requires to make them less dependent on international aid and social assistance.⁹ As Turkish government indicates its willingness “to implement more development-oriented assistance programs rather than humanitarian assistance,”¹⁰ international and local NGOs has started to turn their attention to sustainable livelihoods projects.

In general, women face additional social obstacles to reach economic resources, which span from unpaid care work to gendered norms. Hence, to achieve sustainable results in women’s economic empowerment (WEE) projects, women need to be empowered in social and political spheres as well. This research is conducted to review and discuss best practices and potential risks for women’s economic empowerment projects in protracted crisis in general, and in southeastern Turkey context in particular. A variety of topics are covered under the research, and discussed both in operational and conceptual terms. The themes include, but not limited to, value chains, considering gender based violence in WEE projects, women’s unpaid and invisible care work, and engaging with men and boys for WEE. After delineating data collection process in a methodology section, the report discusses how WEE is closely tied to women’s empowerment and gender equality in general. The research shows that to have a sustainable impact on WEE, two pillars need to be supported at the same time: i) women’s economic advancement and ii) women’s

⁴ UNHCR. *Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2015*. Accessed on Nov 5, 2019. <<https://www.unhcr.org/576408cd7>>.

⁵ UNHCR. Operational Portal for Syria Regional Refugee Response. Accessed on Nov 5, 2019. <<https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria>>.

⁶ UNHCR. Accessed on Nov 5, 2019. <<https://www.unhcr.org/tr/en/refugees-and-asylum-seekers-in-turkey>>.

⁷ DGMM, 2019. Accessed on Nov 5, 2019. *Provincial Breakdown of Syrians under Temporary Protection Status*. <<https://www.goc.gov.tr/gecici-koruma5638>>.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Frit Office of the Presidency of Turkey & MoFLSS, 2018. *Exit Strategy from the ESSN Program*.

¹⁰ Ibid.

empowerment and gender equality. These pillars will be discussed in details, and followed by a section for summary of the findings and suggestions.

This report is to be used by any organization that conducts livelihoods projects and shares the commitment to achieve a more gender-equal society. The research shows that regular livelihoods projects in SET region are not equally accessible for women because of special social barriers women face in their employability, and hence creates unequal results for men and women. Therefore, this research results are not only relevant to those implementing WEE projects in particular but also should be of interest of those conducting any livelihoods projects for Syrian refugees in SET region.

METHODOLOGY

This research is conducted through a variety of primary and secondary data sources. Related (I)NGO and UN reports, Turkish government websites, meeting minutes, and webinars are used as secondary data sources. Also, desk review is conducted for CARE strategy documents, CARE livelihoods program documents, CARE and donor indicators regarding gender norms, CARE gender resources, and finally the reports and guidelines produced by CARE Regional Applied Economic Empowerment Hub. The primary data for this research is collected through qualitative data collection methods, namely focus group discussions with CARE's WEE beneficiaries, key informant interviews, case study collections, and first hand observation in related meetings and webinars. Three FGDs with Syrian participants in Gaziantep, Sanliurfa, and Kilis, and an FGD with Turkish participants in Gaziantep are conducted. The number of participants for each FGD span from 7 to 10 and add up to 32 women in total for four FGDs. Among those, 3 women are selected for case studies, and in-depth semi-structured interviews are conducted with them. Among key informant interviewees, there are country directors, livelihoods managers, a gender consultant, a women-only space coordinator, a local official, an M&E manager, gender focal points from local and international NGOs, UN agencies, and chambers. In addition to these, first hand observation is performed in livelihoods working group meetings in the SET region, including the one with UN Women participation. The details and questions of KIIs and FGDs can be find in Annexes.

HOW IS WEE CONNECTED TO WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND GENDER EQUALITY?

According to UN Women report on needs assessment of Syrian women and girls in Turkey¹¹, only 17% of Syrian women that are not active in the formal or informal labor market are looking for a job. This means that most of Syrian women (83%) are not looking for a job. However, this does not mean that these women *do not want to work*. The question to be asked is that why majority of Syrian women are not actively seeking employment. When it is asked directly, childcare responsibilities (38%), not getting permission to work from either their husband or extended family (20%), care of disable and elderly in the household (11%), and

¹¹ UN Women & SGDD-ASAM, 2018. *Needs Assessment of Syrian Women and Girls Under Temporary Protection Status in Turkey*.

housework (9%) are the major reasons for not seeking for employment.¹² Among all Syrian women participated in the research, only 24% say that they don't want to work.¹³ This statistic clearly shows that even if the only aim is to enhance women's involvement in economy and their access to economic resources, social obstacles women face need to be addressed.

Women's empowerment in other areas is key for achieving WEE. Today, it is widely acknowledged in humanitarian and development sector that "achieving meaningful economic empowerment requires transformative and systemic change for women across social, political and economic domains."¹⁴ CARE regards WEE as one of four priority areas of impact¹⁵ and defines it as:

*"the process by which women increase their right to economic resources and power to make decisions that benefit themselves, their families and their communities. This requires equal access to and control over economic resources, assets and opportunities as well as long-term changes in social norms and economic structures that benefit women and men equally."*¹⁶

In other words, women's economic empowerment cannot be solely about the ability to maintain a living wage, financial decision making, or control over economic resources as these are not achievable without considering gendered social norms and policies that keep women away from equally participating in the economy.¹⁷

Theory underpinning CARE's work regarding women's empowerment and gender equality has three pillars that needs to be considered and developed hand in hand: *agency* (aspirations, capabilities, choices), *structure* (the environment that surrounds and conditions), and *relations* (power relations).¹⁸ Gender *relations* are power relations through which people live their lives, whether it is intimate household relations and social networks in non-formal sphere, or relations in formal sphere, like market negotiations and group membership.¹⁹ Gender relations are deeply rooted in different spheres of society and reproduce already existing *structures*, like discriminatory gender norms, customs, values and exclusionary practices in non-formal sphere; or laws, policies, procedures, and services in formal sphere.²⁰ Therefore, building women's *agency*, i.e. building consciousness, confidence, self-esteem, aspirations (non-formal sphere) and

¹² The reasons for not seeking a job are not mutually exclusive, meaning that more than one reason can be selected by the same woman.

¹³ UN Women & SGDD-ASAM, 2018. *Needs Assessment of Syrian Women and Girls Under Temporary Protection Status in Turkey*.

¹⁴ Oxfam, 2019. *Women's Economic Empowerment: Supporting Women-led Businesses*.

¹⁵ CARE, 2014. *Working for Poverty Reduction and Social Justice: The CARE 2020 Program Strategy*.

¹⁶ CARE, 2016. *Women's Economic Empowerment Strategy*.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ CARE Regional Applied Economic Empowerment Hub in the MENA Region, 2019. *Bringing Gender Equality closer to Women's Economic Empowerment*.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

developing knowledge, skills, and capabilities (formal sphere), would not be enough without considering gender relations and structures.²¹

A comprehensive research on CARE's WEE / livelihoods programs in MENA region over the last 5 years shows that the only way to have a sustainable impact on WEE is to ensure not only women's economic advancement but also women's empowerment and gender equality.²² WEE requires a holistic approach to not to be harmful and to be sustainable. The practices that solely focus on economic advancement without integrating some project components on women's empowerment (related to women's agency, gender relations, and structures) would likely to fail and contribute to the prejudgments about women being unsuccessful business actors. On the other hand, for example, the projects solely focusing on women's agency (practices to build confidence and skills) without considering gender relations and norms (without engaging men and boys) would leave women alone to deal with social constraints on their own. In a nutshell, disregarding any of these components would lead to failure in creating sustainable women economic empowerment at best, or be potentially harmful.²³ It is important to note that vast majority of livelihood activities in SET region falls under the former category that is making economic growth a goal without coupling it with women empowerment and gender equality.

1. WOMEN'S ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT: LIVELIHOOD ACTIVITIES

Making a living is almost always difficult for affected population in humanitarian settings. Natural disasters and conflict situations change people's day to day activities, their access to economic resources. In the case of displacement and refugee situations where affected population start living in another country, it is even more challenging to secure livelihoods.

Any livelihoods project in humanitarian settings necessitates market analysis to identify possible gaps within the labor force in that specific country. Turkish Employment Agency (ISKUR) conducts research on the demand side of labour market for each province and for the country as a whole to see the distribution of open jobs across different business sectors.²⁴ To be able meet detected gaps in the labour force, related vocational trainings can be provided, or already experienced persons and employers can be introduced through marketing networks. The risks to create social tension between refugee and host community should be analyzed and mitigated, especially in the countries with shrinking economies like Turkey.²⁵

²¹ CARE Regional Applied Economic Empowerment Hub in the MENA Region, 2019. *Bringing Gender Equality closer to Women's Economic Empowerment*.

²² Tibi, Hiba 2019. Gender Advisor and Lead. Presentation at Webinar "Bringing Gender Equality closer to Women's Economic Empowerment."

²³ CARE Regional Applied Economic Empowerment Hub in the MENA Region, 2019. *Bringing Gender Equality closer to Women's Economic Empowerment*.

²⁴ ISKUR, 2018. *Labor Market Research Turkey Report*.

²⁵ Turkey is recently experiencing an increase in unemployment rate and still recovering from the currency shock of August 2018. According to Turkey Statistics Institute, the unemployment rate is increased and realized as 13.9% as of July 2019.

If all these efforts are made without considering the gender dynamics, the ones left behind are refugee women as they are generally the ones less employable. Women face additional obstacles regarding accessing to opportunities and assets to support themselves and their families. These obstacles span from women's lack of marketing skills to gendered social norms, from women's unpaid care work to the related policies. That is why designing a livelihood program without considering these additional obstacles women face means that the program is not equally approachable for all genders.

In SET region, most of the livelihoods projects open to both men and women, without having additional consideration for women. However, without addressing to the reasons for women not being able to seek job, like not getting permission from male members of the family or community, or unpaid care work, then it is not surprising to have only limited number of female participants in the livelihoods projects. As one of the key informant highlighted that this kind of livelihoods interventions preserve already existing gender dynamics in the region and provide job opportunities mainly for men and reproduce myths like "Syrian refugee women do not want to work."

1.1. Value Chains

A product needs to go through different activities before reaching to the customer. These activities start with *inbound logistics*, obtaining and storing the raw material that may necessitate engaging with suppliers, transporting the raw material, and warehousing. Then, production *operations* take place using raw materials and machinery. After the manufacturing, final products need to be distributed to customers, which is generally called as *outbound logistics*. Another set of activities is *marketing and sales* that covers pricing, advertising to enhance visibility, targeting appropriate customers, etc. Finally, activities regarding consumer experience like customer service, repair, exchange need to take place, which is called *service*. This chain of activities add value to the products, and businesses employ value chain analysis to reduce unnecessary costs and increase productivity with an aim of producing valuable products with the lowest cost possible.

For any business to sustain, whole value chain should be analyzed and improved. However, in the SET context, current LH projects, especially the ones trying to include women, generally focus on supporting them with machinery and marketing. So, it is either regarding operations or outbound logistics or both. Employing market analysis, giving informative sessions on marketing and technical skills, organizing temporary bazaars and job fairs are among existing activities in livelihoods sector. Especially women that conduct home-based business need to expand their network. Women working at home generally depend on small network including relatives and neighbors for their businesses, which then creates non-resilient businesses. For example, a Syrian FGD participant in Gaziantep tells the story of how she lost her customers after moving to a new neighborhood. "No one knows me here. I do not have any neighbors. No one is asking for sewing or repairing cloths," she says.

In terms of creating more sustainable networks, a permanent local market can be established in collaboration with local authorities to showcase local women's produce.²⁶ As an intermediate step, a bazaar for local women's products can be scheduled once a week. This

²⁶ Oxfam, 2019. *Women's Economic Empowerment: Supporting Women-led Businesses*.

would provide more sustained marketing networks for women compared to organizing a one-time-only bazaar. On the other side of the equation, gender awareness campaigns targeting “the private sector, retailers and consumers to increase their understanding of the importance of the role of local women producers in the economy”²⁷ can be organized.

Also, a different marketing strategy can be pursued through emphasizing how buying these products will contribute to women’s empowerment. A good example in the SET context can be seen from RET International’s women center in Kilis, where participants get together to produce hand-made dolls with the guidance of a trainer from Public Education Center. Through social media accounts they advertise their participants’ products as “hand-made nature-friendly products from female producers, for sustainable development and women empowerment.”²⁸ This kind of advertisement situates a business above the dichotomy of cost-quality optimization. Now, the product has not only use value for the customer but also serve to a social cause, women’s empowerment, and hence adds moral value to the product.

As indicated above, focusing solely on marketing component of the value chain would not lead to sustainable businesses. Lessons learned from literature shows that to be able to sustainable in the competitive market whole value chain needs to be considered and improved.²⁹ Trainings can be provided for improving product quality and standardization, delivery to the customer, packaging and labelling, and retail sale. In SET context, among all phases of the value chain, procurement was the phase women need the support most. Some of Syrian participants in the FGDs indicate that they need support on obtaining raw materials. A woman who does tailoring states “I wish I knew where the quality and low-cost fabrics are. I wish there is a place where I can trust and buy all the materials I need with good prices.” It is understandable as one needs to have a network to know where to buy. Syrian women also need improved language skills to communicate and negotiate. Some other women who establish a certain customer profile want to enhance their production techniques, like learning different techniques to decorate cakes.

Thematic Learning: (Not)questioning Traditionally Male vs Female Jobs

Most of the livelihoods programs in the SET region that specifically target Syrian refugee women provide vocational trainings for traditionally female jobs (sewing, hair dressing, cooking, etc.). Being align with cultural norms and creating opportunities for women to work with their traditionally comfortable skills to be able to provide livelihoods support can be seen as being gender sensitive³⁰. While working around existing gender differences to provide equitable support, i.e. to provide job – we just utilize women’s already existing skills. This is widely used

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Instagram account of Leap Natural. Accessed on Nov 5, 2019. <<https://www.instagram.com/leapnatural/>>.

²⁹ World Bank Group & Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, 2017. *Women and the Economy: Lessons Learned on Operational Approaches to Women’s Economic Empowerment in Afghanistan*.

³⁰ CARE, 2019. *Gender Marker Guidance*.

as a strategy, as an intermediate step in other protracted crises as well.³¹ However, it is important to note that while escaping from possible community backlash, this kind of creative industries generally has small market demand, and hence provide small and generally unsustainable income, irregular employment for women. Also, this kind of intervention is not gender responsive in the sense that it is not providing opportunities for women to be able to choose traditionally male jobs.

Next step can be to challenge inequitable gender norms regarding traditional female vs. male jobs. Female participants and male members of the community need to be provided with opportunities to question and challenge the gender norms around who can do what kind of work. At the same time, traditionally male jobs/trainings should be available for women along with the traditional women's field of work. The caveat here is to think traditionally male dominated skills/jobs as superior and more preferable than traditionally female skills/jobs. There is nothing wrong for a woman to tailor and earn a living by that activity. The problem occurs if they do it because they have no other option, if other options are not available for them. The idea is to create an environment where women can freely choose whichever jobs they want to do. We should not forget that Syrian women does not constitute a homogenous group. Different groups of women may need and willing to work in different sectors.

Also, it is important to note that these traditional female environments create opportunities for women to socialize, share their experiences, and notice their common problems. For example, both in SET context and in other protracted crisis cooking is widely used to enhance social cohesion among women from refugee and the host community. It is good to have and keep these traditionally-female dominant environments, as the gender consultant from UN Women indicates "these are the places where women feel comfortable... they incredibly enjoy and they are strong about it, and it is uniting. Then, it is important to ask their preference about the new areas of employment."

2. WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND GENDER EQUALITY

Literature on WEE acknowledges that creating enabling environment and focusing on gender equality not just in economic spheres but also social and political is important, and some claims that it should precede the efforts directly related to economic resources.³² However, it is a well-known fact that generally for the reasons like budget and time constraints, and donor's priorities, WEE projects just focus on vocational trainings, employment status, and earnings. Literature and past research shows that livelihoods projects generally focus on market-related issues like market distortions, and overlook gender dynamics.³³

³¹ World Bank Group & Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, 2017. *Women and the Economy: Lessons Learned on Operational Approaches to Women's Economic Empowerment in Afghanistan*.

³² World Bank Group & Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, 2017. *Women and the Economy: Lessons Learned on Operational Approaches to Women's Economic Empowerment in Afghanistan*.

³³ Women's Refugee Commission, 2014. *A Double-Edged Sword: Livelihoods in Emergencies*.

In the SET context, even though when directly asked all key informants³⁴ agree that women's economic empowerment efforts need to be supported by other kinds of activities for women ideally, their degree of realizing this is different for one another. Among the key informants, the ones that do not have women employment as their priority, generally think the relation of WEE with women's empowerment for the first time during the interview. One may think that's because they are not targeting for women. However, it is important to keep in mind that humanitarian projects affect individuals, household, and communities in general. It is not realistic to think humanitarian intervention will only affect that specific beneficiary. Designing a livelihoods project without considering gender dynamics would reproduce gender relations in the best-case scenario. Gender mainstreaming is not just developing projects that include women but keeping gender relations in mind throughout the project cycle, starting with project design. Therefore, regardless of a livelihoods project is targeted for women or not, its possible influence on existing gender dynamics needs to be carefully examined.

Key informants are aware that constraints women face go beyond their direct access to financial products and services. However, they tend to think these different aspects under different sectors. For example, regarding the questions on whether WEE projects can increase or decrease the risks of GBV at the household level, whether and how they affect early marriage, key informants generally refer their protection outreach teams. A general comment emerged from KIIs is that "if a GBV case occurs, we refer it to our protection team." This shows, how sectoral categories once created for practicality now starts to influence how we conceptualize social phenomena. In real life, all these sectors are connected, and operating without analyzing what is happening in the intersections of different sectors would result in ineffective interventions.

2.1. Unpaid Care Work: The Risk of Overburdening Women

Work, in general, necessitates time and energy to be invested regardless of being compensated in the market, i.e. *paid work*, or not, i.e. *unpaid work*. Unpaid care work can be mainly divided into direct care work and domestic work.³⁵ Direct care refers to taking care of elderly, children, and ill persons within the household or the community. Domestic work refers to the works that are necessary for the maintenance of a household, such as cleaning, washing, cooking, and shopping.

Unpaid care work is also called as reproductive work – kind of work that is outside of economy, hence unrecognized and uncompensated, but necessary for productive work within economy. For example, a factory worker needs to eat to be able to work and earn a wage. So, for the factory worker to conduct productive work, there are some unproductive works that are needed to be done, such as cooking. Historically speaking, not only family or community life but also societies and economies rely on this unproductive and unpaid work.³⁶ Because of the gendered division of labor, women generally undertake this kind of work, which in turn

³⁴ Please note that key informants in this report do not refer to project beneficiaries but (I)NGO and UN staff that were asked to answer the questions in Annex 2.

³⁵ OXFAM, 2019. Counting on Women's Work Without Counting Women's Work. *Women's Unpaid Work in Jordan, Lebanon, Tunisia, and Egypt*.

³⁶ Oxfam & Unilever, 2019. Business Briefing on Unpaid Care and Domestic Work.

liberating the rest of the family members from their own necessary reproductive labor while holding back women to participate in paid work. According to ILO report:

“In no country in the world do men and women provide an equal share of unpaid care work. Women dedicate on average 3.2 times more time than men to unpaid care work: 4 hours and 25 minutes per day, against 1 hour and 23 minutes for men.”³⁷

With the entrance of women into the labor force in 1970s, scholars who work on gender equality, generally within the feminist discourse, start to point out women’s domestic labor.³⁸ Considering that unpaid care and domestic work generally undertaken by women around the world, women have been part of labor force before their incorporation into productive work. It is just that their work within household has been invisible and uncompensated.

It is crucial to recognize this unpaid care work undertaken by women, and consider this while designing women’s economic empowerment projects. As gender specialist Iris Bjorg Kristjansdottir from UN Women indicated in one of the livelihood working group meeting for SET context, developing livelihood projects without considering unpaid care work means overburdening women. She highlighted that women have lots of work that are not recognized economically and culturally: “We are trying to add new jobs to their already existing work, and then conclude that Syrian women do not want to work. Instead, we need to consider traditional gender roles and think about how we can create a better atmosphere for them to be willing to work.”³⁹ While most of the key informants see the relation conceptually, only a couple of them indicate that their organizations address the problem of women’s unpaid care work through providing child care services while women working or getting vocational training. Only one of the organization make providing childcare services for livelihoods projects mandatory.

A couple of Syrian women from FGDs referred providing child care as a part of strong foundation for a livelihood project along with Turkish language course and providing raw material. All Turkish and Syrian women participated in focus group discussions indicated that they are the main care giver and responsible persons for almost all housework. Most of them are not getting any help from their husbands while a couple of them are getting some sort of help on very basic tasks, like pouring the tea. A couple of women were strictly against the idea of getting help for housework from their husbands as they internalize housework as women’s work. For those, getting help from their husbands is only acceptable for temporary situations. When it comes to childcare none of them get any help except some rare occasions. For example, a Syrian woman exemplified that “if I am occupied with some housework and if the baby starts crying, then he may help, like he may hold the baby.”

There is nothing wrong for a woman or a man to want to do housework or take care of their children and elderly. Indeed, reproductive work is needed to be done for maintenance of the house and household. However, the unproportioned division of unpaid care work between men and women across the world is a problem. Culturally attributing care work as feminine role is a

³⁷ International Labour Organization, 2018. *Care Work and Care Jobs: For the Future of Decent Work*.

³⁸ Daniels, Arlene Kaplan. 1987. Invisible Work. *Social Problems*, 34(5), 403-415.
doi:10.2307/800538

³⁹ Kristjansdottir, Iris Bjorg. 2019. Presentation on behalf of UN Women. Livelihoods Working Group Meeting in Gaziantep.

problem as it leads to unequal division of care work within household. It has to be reminded that unpaid care work is the main reason for women to be outside of labor force. In ILO's 2018 worldwide research, when the reason to be unavailable for employment or for not seeking a job is asked, 41.6% of inactive but working age women declared as due to unpaid care work while only 5.8% of inactive but working age men declared the same reason.⁴⁰

It is very important to recognize how masculinity (set of roles and behaviors that are seen as manly and associated with men and boys) affects this unequal division of care work between men and women. Masculinity is a social construct and reproduced not only by men, also by women.⁴¹ Hence, it is not surprising to encounter with women and men who think a man doing housework or taking care of his own kid as less manly, less masculine. Therefore, as some of the key informants indicated, it is important to create role models. More on this can be seen under section on engaging with men and boys.

2.2. Considering Gender-based Violence in WEE Projects

Gender based violence refers to any physically, sexually, or mentally harmful act that is perpetrated due to gender differences (socially ascribed differences between women and men) and against a person's will.⁴² Most forms of violence perpetrated against women and girls because of the systemic gender inequality that exists in every society in the world. Though it is important to highlight that GBV can occur in regular times, the focus of this report is on crisis situations. Already existing gender inequality always compound in humanitarian crises. During conflicts and displacement, women often times face domestic violence, child and/or forced marriages, forced prostitution, trafficking, and sexual harassment.

In humanitarian settings, GBV is generally seen under the responsibility of protection sector. Protection-based assessments prioritize risks and vulnerabilities for GBV cases. However, often times GBV is not taken into consideration while designing livelihoods projects.⁴³ For livelihoods projects, the focus is generally on the risks of market distortions, or the risks of creating social conflicts between different communities in refugee settings. However, GBV needs to be kept in mind in the sense that whether and how the planned interventions affect gender relations and whether they increase the risks of GBV should be analyzed.⁴⁴ Also, to assess whether livelihoods projects can be used to eliminate or prevent already existing GBV risks is always a good practice.

⁴⁰ International Labour Organization, 2018. *Care Work and Care Jobs: For the Future of Decent Work*.

⁴¹ UN Joint Program for the Prevention of Child, Early and Forced Marriage, 2019. "Male Perception Research Study on CEFM." Meeting minutes prepared by CARE MEAL Coordinator.

⁴² Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2015. *Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action: Reducing risk, promoting resilience and aiding recovery*. Thematic Area Guidelines for Livelihoods.

⁴³ Women's Refugee Commission, 2014. *A Double-Edged Sword: Livelihoods in Emergencies*.

⁴⁴ Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2015. *Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action: Reducing risk, promoting resilience and aiding recovery*. Thematic Area Guidelines for Livelihoods.

As almost all gender related problems, GBV is a cross-sectoral issue. It is impossible to tackle with such a multi-dimensional issue without considering how other sectors play a role on it. However, generally the rush to be quick in response overweighs the imperative to do no harm. So, interventions in different sectors generally do not consider GBV, and handle the unintended consequences later with lessons learned.⁴⁵ For example, education sector member organizations need to consider whether their cash for education interventions or removal of them may prevent or enhance the risks of child marriage, which is a form of GBV. Likewise, livelihoods projects, regardless whether they are only focusing on women's employment or not, need to consider whether and how they affect gender norms and relations within household or community in general.

Key informant interviews and informal chats with livelihoods sector members in SET context show that when informants are asked regarding possible interactions of livelihoods programming with GBV, most of them immediately pointed out their protection team. In case they cannot deal with the cases within the organization, they refer them to related protection organizations. This shows that internal and external referral pathways are working, which is quite important to handle GBV situations. However, the conversation generally ends here. Most of the informants consider for the first time that whether economic strengthening of women can be used to prevent GBV or whether a certain LH project increase the potential risks for GBV. Being aware of the possibility of changing household dynamics with empowering women economically, the coordinator of SADA women-only center in Gaziantep points out the possible "destruction of masculinity when male family members may not be able to meet their traditional responsibilities as 'breadwinners'" which may increase the risk of domestic violence. Hence, once again engaging with men and boys on traditional masculine roles as 'breadwinners' and creating role models are crucial.

For the intersection of GBV and livelihoods, in addition to considering changing gender dynamics within the household, workplaces and transportation also needs to be considered as women tend to work in informal economy and in exploitative work environments. Women may need to travel through unsafe areas or during dangerous times of day or night to be able to work. IASC thematic guidelines on how to integrate GBV interventions in livelihoods activities highlights that: "Women, girls and other at-risk groups are particularly susceptible to exploitation, harassment and abuse from customers, suppliers and market administrators, especially in unregulated markets and when they must borrow money, negotiate prices or manage a shop alone."⁴⁶ It is also crucial for women who start to work at private or public space to know their rights. Even occurs at the minimum level, they will interact with new people, like suppliers. In the case of sexual harassment, they need to know their rights. As finding employment is already difficult for Syrian refugee women, they may be scared of losing their jobs, or even their TPID. They should be informed regarding not only labor rights but also the related laws on GBV. This kind of informative sessions should be an integral part of all livelihoods interventions. Having the knowledge on their rights would empower women and make them more confident during their livelihoods activities.

⁴⁵ Women's Refugee Commission, 2014. *A Double-Edged Sword: Livelihoods in Emergencies*.

⁴⁶ Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2015. *Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action: Reducing risk, promoting resilience and aiding recovery*.

2.3. Engaging Men and Boys for WEE

WEE projects are generally conducted in developing countries where women held responsible for housework and taking care of dependents, and where working women are involved in insecure jobs with low income. In this context, women may not be allowed to work by the male members of the family, or in the best-case scenario they may need support from male family members for their employment activities. Moreover, CARE's experiences on engaging men and boys across 20 offices shows the requirement for "involving men as allies for a broader gender justice agenda."⁴⁷ Engaging with men and boys is crucial as they are key actors for change not only with respect to WEE, but also for the collective process towards a more gender-equal society.

Past research shows that among working Syrian women in Turkey, only 12.5% are married whereas 32.5% are divorced, 26.4% are never married, 13.4% are widow.⁴⁸ This statistic shows that majority of working Syrian women in Turkey do not have spouses. FGDs conducted in the scope of this research indicates that Syrian women start to become freer regarding their mobility and employment when they are single or older. During an FGD with Syrian women, one says: "when I was single, I was working and going everywhere alone; now I'm married there is no such thing to go wherever you want. If I want to go somewhere, he [her husband] says he would take me and he doesn't agree to go everywhere." One middle-aged Syrian woman states: "When I got married, my husband didn't allow me to work. But now I am older, I raised my kids, he doesn't intervene anymore. He doesn't say anything about me going outside now." It is obvious that gender norms play an important role here. Raising kids are seen as women's role within the household. Being mobile and free to work are seen as masculine characteristics that is associated with men.

It is also important to note how social norms of Syrian communities around working women are changing since they fled to Turkey. A couple of key informants who have experience regarding WEE projects within Syria and Turkey highlighted that Syrian women are working more often in Turkey compared to the situation in Syria because of the changing roles and norms. A key informant indicates "There is less pressure from community for the household regarding working women [in Turkey], so women can contribute to household income... Inside Syria, the community is more pressure for them because they know they are at home." The informant adds that the idea of working woman is more acceptable among Syrian communities in Turkey as they also know this is a temporary situation.⁴⁹ Another aspect of having less cultural restrictions related to gender norms after fleeing to Turkey can be seen in abandoned women and

⁴⁷ CARE, 2014. Gender and Empowerment. *Engaging Men and Boys for Gender Equality Series: Stories of Engagement*. Brief 1.

⁴⁸ UN Women & SGDD-ASAM, 2018. *Needs Assessment of Syrian Women and Girls Under Temporary Protection Status in Turkey*.

⁴⁹ Here, it is important to note that this research does not cover WEE activities and related gender dynamics of Syrian communities in Syria. Making a comparison between *current* gender norms around WEE of Syrian communities in Turkey and in Syria requires further research. However, existing research shows that *comparing with pre-war Syria*, social norms around working women has been changed and it is more acceptable now for women to work with increasing needs of affected Syrian communities both in Turkey and in Syria.

kids. One of the key informants mentions “because family ties are getting loose, some men are abandoning their wives and kids and choose to live alone. We have lots of cases like this.”

Past and current research show that it is almost impossible to strengthen women economically without understanding male members’ perceptions, priorities, fears around the issue.⁵⁰ According to the traditional gender roles within Syrian culture, men are the bread winners. As UN Women’s gender consultant indicates, when women start to work and become bread winners for the household, decision making processes start to change. Hence, men generally feel their masculinity is challenged and even shattered. Therefore, the informant highlights, “it is very problematic to left men out while trying to empower women economically. When you do that, you make him like a bomb ready to explode.” Another key informant touched on the same issue with mentioning men’s shattered egos with their wives working. However, the gender consultant from UN Women states that while conducting engaging men and boys-activities, it is crucial to not to conduct activities that disempower women. For example, male members of the family sometimes seize the cards or cash that is intended for women. These cases should never be overlooked as this is disempowering women. It shouldn’t be forgotten that the main aim is to empower women and to engage with men and boys to have them on board for that aim.

This research shows that in SET context, engaging with men and boys for WEE projects unfortunately is not a common practice. Even though most of the key informants agree on its importance on the conceptual level, they do not include any practice related to male members of the community in their livelihoods projects. Only one livelihoods project, SADA Women Development and Solidarity Center, has a specific way of engaging male members of their women participants. Because it is a women-only center, male members are not allowed to enter since the onset of the project. The key informant indicates “instead of giving informative sessions, we create role models. For example, a man supporting his wife from community tells his story. The same man, for example, didn’t allow his wife to go vocational training two years ago but the woman continued participating. Right now, she is in our cooperative and getting full support of her husband. We have such examples in our community. They are role models for change.” It is important to create role models as gender dynamics are societal relations that we reproduce every day. Because it is very difficult to change such deeply rooted power dynamics, giving awareness raising sessions, which is the common practice in the SET context, would work only to some extent. It is important to use more effective ways, like creating role models, rather than just giving awareness raising sessions.

CARE Jordan⁵¹ is now establishing a pilot project, creating EMB peer group to support self-change and awareness on WEE. They plan to build capacities of the peer group participants and community leaders through related workshops and trainings, and sensitize them on WEE. Then, EMB peer group members will conduct community-based initiatives to counter harmful masculinities. Approaching men as partners and allies, the aim is to start and continue the dialogue within the community about men’s perceptions on women increasingly becoming providers in their families and communities. They plan to support this with media campaigns that

⁵⁰ CARE Regional Applied Economic Empowerment Hub in the MENA Region, 2019. *Bringing Gender Equality closer to Women’s Economic Empowerment*.

⁵¹ Karic, Irina 2019. M&E Manager on behalf of CARE Jordan. Presentation at CARE’s WEE Webinar.

promote men's role as fathers and caregivers, and explaining how men can benefit from these efforts, for example via paternity leave. As the gender consultant from UN Women indicates that "we can explain them [men] that the masculinity is firstly harmful for men; that they will not have to work a lot when their wives work. It is good for their kids too, they will not have to work at this age and be withdrawn from school." CARE's learning across 20 offices regarding EMB also highlights that it is crucial to encourage men and boys "to examine how patriarchy affects their own lives and opportunities, alongside deeper questions on what it means to stand as an ally for gender equality."⁵²

Thematic Learning: (Not)separating Women and Men Spaces

In the SET context, male members of the family may not allow women to participate in mixed-sex activities. This is a common issue most of the humanitarian organization face. Organizing activities for men and women in different spaces can be seen as being gender sensitive in the sense that organizers work around established gender norms to be able to reach women participants. UN Women research in Turkey context also indicates that for now, it is better to "continue women-only programming to support more women that are not willing or able to attend mixed-gender activities, so that they can become more active participants of the society."⁵³ Most women in the FGDs prefer having women-only activities as they feel comfortable and get permission from their husbands on that premise. However, there are also a few women indicating that they can participate mixed-sex activities if the income they get is good. So, again, some women can be ready for mixed groups. While using women and men only spaces, we need to consider altering this social norm as this same norm also sometimes cause parents to withdraw their girls from schools due to the mixed-sex classrooms.

Thematic Learning: Working in Private vs Public Space

Designing livelihoods projects for women to be able to work at home can be seen as working around existing gender norms. However, it needs more attention regarding its implications. As reproductive labor, i.e. unpaid care work, is associated with private space, women in general spend more time at home compared to men. This research shows that livelihoods sector members may sometimes accept this without questioning. A staff from a UN Agency in livelihoods working group meeting generalizes "Syrian women feel more comfortable at home, so they want to work at home." A key informant from an organization conducting WEE projects more than a decade indicates "We cannot interfere women's personal lives, that needs to be respected. Most of them are mothers. Women in developing countries, they have a lot of responsibilities at home." All these sentences are true to some extent. However, they need to be contextualized. We all know that prevalent perception of doing housework and care work as feminine cannot be changed suddenly. However, first, the reasons for why women feel more comfortable at home and why they need to stay at home to look after kids should be analyzed and then challenged. As indicated above, often times male members of family do not allow

⁵² CARE, 2014. Gender and Empowerment. *Engaging Men and Boys for Gender Equality Series: Stories of Engagement*. Brief 1.

⁵³ UN Women & SGDD-ASAM, 2018. *Needs Assessment of Syrian Women and Girls Under Temporary Protection Status in Turkey*.

women to work outside. On the other hand, forcing women to go to work in public sphere would not empower women. Again, what needs to be asked is why Syrian women generally staying away from public spaces. Then, the conditions that create this result need to be challenged and changed. Also, as there are women who are ready to work in public spaces, they should be supported as well. Different groups of women with different needs and preferences exist in SET context, and hence related various interventions should be available at the same time in the same region.

2.4. Women-only Spaces for Women's (Economic) Empowerment

Creating women-only spaces where women can freely share their experiences among each other is quite important and effective for women's empowerment. Women's empowerment cannot be achieved through individual sessions. As women suffer from a social hierarchy, namely inequity of gender dynamics within the society at large, transformative empowerment can only be achieved when women themselves notice how their problems and experiences are similar to each other. Having awareness about gender dynamics means to notice and understand how gender relations work in everyday life. When women have free spaces where they can raise their voices, they would notice that their gender related problems are similar, which may require similar solutions. Hence, it is better to think women's empowerment as a group empowerment instead of individual empowerment. When seen as a group, once again, it is important to highlight that women are heterogeneous that can be cut through the lines of nationality, social class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and the like. So, there can be different power dynamics between Syrian and Turkish, or Kurdish and Arab women in a women-only space. In other words, intersectionality, how gender intersects with other oppression forms, should always be kept in mind.

UNFPA defines women and girls' safe spaces as a place "where women and girls, being the intended beneficiaries, feel comfortable and enjoy the freedom to express themselves without the fear of judgment or harm."⁵⁴ These safe spaces can take many different names, such as women community centers, women-only spaces, women's empowerment center; and may have different priorities. For example, some women-only spaces may have GBV as their primary focus and may use skill development trainings as entry points to talk about traumatic experiences of refugee women. Some others can be livelihoods centered while creating safe spaces for women to share experiences and foster social bonds. As stated throughout the report, literature suggests that WEE starts in social sphere: "interventions should develop and strengthen social bonds among women."⁵⁵ This would make economic strengthening for women both possible and sustainable in the long term.

Social enterprises have the potential to offer two impacts together: the economic and the social. A social enterprise in this context is an entity that is ensuring a sustainable income for the beneficiaries while addressing their social needs - in some cases, applying their profits to address

⁵⁴ UNFPA, 2015. *Women and Girls Safe Spaces. A guidance note based on lessons learned from the Syrian crisis.*

⁵⁵ World Bank Group & Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, 2017. *Women and the Economy: Lessons Learned on Operational Approaches to Women's Economic Empowerment in Afghanistan.*

social needs.⁵⁶ CARE Regional Applied Economic Empowerment Hub in the MENA Region creates a guideline to ensure sustainable social and financial impact through social enterprises, according to which, social enterprises should be “based on the needs of and opportunities available to the target group, making sure their needs/restrictions/wishes are addressed in the design and implementation of the business.”⁵⁷ In SET region, SADA Women Development and Solidarity Center is an effective example for this. Designed and operated by UN Women, ILO, ASAM, and Gaziantep Municipality, this women-only center provides what women need in one place. These social enterprises – such entities may be called in different names – can be great places for building women’s agencies, supporting women to learn from within, and mentoring for each other as well as enhancing their economic advancement.

⁵⁶ CARE Regional Applied Economic Empowerment Hub in the MENA Region, 2019. UptakePreneur: Model for Uncovering & Accelerating Social Enterprises & Social Market Solutions in Fragile Settings.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

3. SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

Do not reproduce the myth of “Syrian women do not want to work.”

- Past research states that when directly asked, only 24% of Syrian women say that they don't want to work. Most of Syrian women in Turkey are not actively seeking employment because of their childcare responsibilities (38%), not getting permission to work from either their husband or extended family (20%), care of disable and elderly in the household (11%), and housework (9%).⁵⁸

Syrian women do not constitute a homogenous group. Do not generalize about Syrian women's preferences and needs.

- This research illustrates how Syrian women have different needs and preferences in SET region, which supports the past research results for Syrian women in Turkey.⁵⁹ We need to remind ourselves that there are and will always be different needs and preferences of Syrian women in SET region. Accordingly, there needs to be different livelihoods projects at the same time in the same region.
- Before using general statements, like “women are only willing to work in traditionally female fields, like sewing” or “women feel more comfortable with staying and working at home,” first, we need to ask why. Existing gender norms create an environment where women are expected to prefer traditionally female jobs. Hence, these choices do not necessarily reflect women's genuine choices, but rather heavily dominated by social structures. Women are born to a society surrounded with gender norms that prevent them to choose their work freely, deny their access to education, put extra shame for women working in public sphere.

Yes, women can do any work. However, it is important to respect women's choices. Indeed, forcing women for anything that they are not ready or not willing to do, is quite disempowering.

- The aim here is not to cease traditionally-female fields of work, or not to push all women to the public sphere. The ultimate aim is to create an environment where all options that are available to men are available to all individuals within society, including women. We need to create such an environment that when a woman want to work, she does not have to get permission from husband, she does not feel shame or regret for leaving kids at home for not being a good mother or a good wife.

While working around existing gender norms to ensure women's access to livelihoods resources and support, it is important to be strategic: aim to challenge and then transform those norms in the long run.

⁵⁸ UN Women & SGDD-ASAM, 2018. *Needs Assessment of Syrian Women and Girls Under Temporary Protection Status in Turkey.*

⁵⁹ UN Women & SGDD-ASAM, 2018. *Needs Assessment of Syrian Women and Girls Under Temporary Protection Status in Turkey.*

- Humanitarian (I)NGOs sometimes need to work around gender norms to make sure women also have access to the support. In SET region, common examples are separating women and men spaces for an activity to ensure active participation of women who cannot participate in mixed gender activities; promoting traditionally female fields of work which women feel more confident and comfortable with; supporting women's home-based business ideas which enable women continue meeting their care work at home. These activities, working around gender norms to make sure women's access to resources and support, which otherwise would not be accessible to women, can be seen as gender sensitive. However, it is important for humanitarian staff to be aware that this kind of activities are reproducing gender norms on some level. While conducting such activities we need to be strategically think how to challenge and then transform these gender norms in the long run.

When (I)NGOs design livelihoods programs without considering women's different needs and preferences, they are more likely to select men as beneficiaries as they are the most reachable and employable.

- Designing livelihood projects open for both men and women is not enough as this assumes that equal treatment will bring about equal benefit for each individual. Equal treatment would lead to equal benefit only in a just world. Considering existing gender dynamics, we need to seek gender equity instead of equal treatment. First, we need to level the playing field to not to leave Syrian refugee women out.
- In SET context, we need more economic strengthening projects focusing on women. However, such projects need to include women in every phase of the project, from planning to evaluation.

Women need to be supported throughout the value chain as they (especially the ones working at home) generally do not have required networks to keep their businesses sustainable.

- Research shows that livelihoods projects in SET context generally support women with machinery and marketing. So, they either focus on operations or outbound logistics or both. Some FGD participants indicate their need of support for obtaining raw material and support to improve their production techniques specific to their area of work. For any business to sustain, whole value chain should be analyzed and improved.

Women's economic empowerment starts in social sphere.

- Except a couple of examples in SET region, women's empowerment is not an integral part of WEE projects. Both past research in the literature and this research show that women's economic empowerment cannot be achieved without considering empowering women in other aspects of life. Best practice is recognizing how gender dynamics play out in a society / community, analyzing how these dynamics affect women in different aspects of life, and designing livelihoods projects accordingly. In other words, WEE is always need to be coupled with women's empowerment and gender equality to have long-lasting results. As gender is a thoroughly cross-cutting and cross-sectoral issue, a holistic approach is needed to achieve WEE.

Livelihoods programs and WEE projects need to pay attention to women's unpaid care work. Otherwise, they take the risk of overburdening women and reproduce gender inequality.

- There is nothing wrong for a woman or a man to do housework or take care of their children and elderly. Indeed, reproductive work is needed to be done for maintenance of the house and household. However, the unproportioned division of unpaid care work between men and women is a problem, and needs to be addressed. We need to remind ourselves, unpaid care work is the top reason for women for not actively seeking employment both in general in the world⁶⁰ and for Syrian refugee women in Turkey⁶¹.
- Most of the livelihoods projects in SET region reproduces the gender discrepancies by not considering women's unpaid care work. They overburden women via adding a new job on top of their existing unrecognized care work. Providing child care should be an integral part of all livelihoods activities.

Engaging men and boys is crucial not only for women's economic empowerment but also for achieving a more gender-equal society.

- Research shows that newly-married women and widows are the ones less free in terms of their movement and employability. Most of them are restricted by their husbands or other male members of the family. This is sometimes out of childcare which is culturally believed as women's job. Recognizing how masculinity plays a role here, and creating role models are crucial. It is important to encourage men and boys to examine how gender norms affect their own lives, and to think towards being an ally for a more gender-equal society.

Often times, GBV is not taken into consideration while designing livelihoods projects. Whether and how the planned livelihood projects affect gender relations, whether they increase the risks of GBV, and whether they can be used to eliminate or prevent already existing GBV risks should be analyzed. +

- When key informants are asked regarding possible interactions of livelihoods programming with GBV, most of them immediately pointed out their protection team. This is a reactive way of thinking, which regards GBV as unintended consequence that can be handled later.
- For the intersection of GBV and livelihoods, in addition to considering changing gender dynamics within the household, workplaces and transportation also needs to be considered as women tend to work in informal economy and in exploitative work environments.

Deeply rooted gender dynamics requires more than informative sessions to be challenged and transformed. Creating role models and women-only spaces where

⁶⁰ International Labour Organization, 2018. *Care Work and Care Jobs: For the Future of Decent Work*.

⁶¹ UN Women & SGDD-ASAM, 2018. *Needs Assessment of Syrian Women and Girls Under Temporary Protection Status in Turkey*.

women can freely share their experiences and raise their voices should be supported.

- General practice of INGOs in SET region is providing awareness raising sessions regarding gender equality. To achieve women's (economic) empowerment, rather than just giving awareness raising sessions, we need to engage with already existing women role models, and contribute to create new role models. We need to foster women to women support groups, and support women to learn from within and mentoring for each other. It is important because as for all power dynamics, gender dynamics are created and recreated during day to day activities within society, and thus very difficult to change. Informative sessions would do a limited work here.

General Recommendations

The protracted nature of the crisis requires us to think how to better integrate humanitarian action with development goals.⁶² As livelihoods related activities come after meeting the urgent needs of an individual in a crisis situation, livelihoods assistance lie at the core of humanitarian and development nexus.

- Being aware of the protracted nature of the crisis, WEE projects have started to become more long-term focused. Some of the key informants indicate that providing vocational training without linking to a possible employment opportunity was a common practice in SET region a couple of years ago. However, livelihoods projects have started to look at longer term outcomes lately. This is especially important for WEE projects. The literature suggests that exit strategies from WEE programs need to be considered and planned within the project proposal.⁶³ To overcome post-project difficulties, greater local ownership should be aimed.⁶⁴ Working with provincial authorities and local actors is important for sustaining impacts.
- In addition to perspective of the project and donor, how beneficiaries see their future in Turkey is also important. Most of the beneficiaries participated in the FGDs express their concern on being temporary in Turkey, referring to past events in Istanbul⁶⁵. For example, this affects their willingness to invest in learning Turkish, and in turn their employability and the effectiveness of the livelihoods projects in SET region.

⁶² CARE Regional Applied Economic Empowerment Hub in the MENA Region, 2018. *Doing Nexus Differently: How can Humanitarian and Development Actors link or integrate humanitarian action, development, and peace?*

⁶³ World Bank Group & Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, 2017. *Women and the Economy: Lessons Learned on Operational Approaches to Women's Economic Empowerment in Afghanistan.*

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ DGMM, 2019. Press release on Syrian foreigners who do not have temporary protection registration in Istanbul. Accessed on Nov 5, 2019. <<https://en.goc.gov.tr/press-release>>.

Gender mainstreaming cannot be achieved only by including women as beneficiaries. As gender is a cross-cutting issue, it requires a thoroughly holistic approach.

- There should be incentives for humanitarian staff to recognize the areas for women's empowerment. Staff should internalize the importance of analyzing how gender dynamics would affect the project and would be affected by the project. This can only be achieved through an organizational culture that give importance to improvement, quality, and never-ending learning.
- Research shows that gender awareness of the humanitarian staff should be improved for all sectors. However, as one of the most male-dominant sectors, gender awareness of livelihoods sector members in SET region need to enhanced.
- For most of the humanitarian organization, considering all these aspects of WEE may not be possible. However, it is important to discuss what has to be done ideally even though it may not be realistic to achieve all right now. It is important to highlight that well-known INGOs and UN agencies' detailed guidelines on gender dynamics also have similar suggestions. However, there is a discrepancy between what the guidelines recommend and the implementations in the field.

Research shows that gender is seen as a phenomenon easy to talk and generalize about, not only by beneficiaries but also by humanitarian staff.

- This is somewhat understandable as gender dynamics is inherent to daily lives of every one of us. However, gender norms and roles are socially constructed, hence vary for different societies and different time periods. Therefore, it is important to not to generalize from a limited sample. This is especially problematic when it is done by humanitarian staff as they are the ones responsible for the design, implementation, and monitoring of the projects. It would not be possible to implement humanitarian projects aiming for a more gender-equal society if humanitarian staff has limited awareness on gender.

Sectors, once created for effective response and reporting, shape how we conceptualize humanitarian response. We should not forget the fact that what we called as different sectors in humanitarian response are deeply entangled in complex ways in people's lives.

- This research shows how detached the sectors from each other. Dividing the response into different sectors, like education, protection, livelihoods, etc. has many benefits, like effective coordination and reporting within a sector. However, operating without analyzing what is happening in the intersections of different sectors would result in ineffective interventions at best, and would most likely cause harm. Having referral pathways working is important but not enough.

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5. Annex 1: KII Details

	Position	Organization Name	Date of the Interview
1	M&E Manager Gender Focal Point Kudra Project Manager*	GIZ	3 July 2019
2	Gender Consultant	UN Women	4 July 2019
3	Project Coordinator	SADA Center	2 July 2019
4	Country Director	Basmeh and Zeitoneh	18 June 2019
5	Livelihoods Project Manager	Orange	13 June 2019
6	Syrian Desk Coordinator	Gaziantep Chamber of Commerce	18 June 2019
7	Strategy and Business Development Coordinator	Grameen Bank	2 July 2019
8	Deputy Executive Director	Syrian Economic Forum	24 June 2019

*This one was a group interview with 3 people.

6. Annex 2: KII Questions

Project specific questions

1. What is your job title and what kind of responsibilities it involves?
2. Does your organization have any livelihood project focusing on Syrian women right now?
3. (If the livelihood project includes both women and men) Is there any difference for different genders in any phase of the program? (planning, implementation, evaluation etc.) How do you address these differences?
4. Could you describe the details of the program? What are the short and long-term aims of the program? (sustainable employment, challenging discriminatory social norms, etc.) Do you seek social cohesion between refugee and host communities in your project?
5. How did you decide on this particular project? Does your project address some gaps among the projects in this sector?
6. Do women meaningfully participate any of the programming cycle (from planning to evaluation)?

7. Do you have any follow-up mechanism? Could you describe?
8. Could you describe your monitoring and evaluation mechanisms? How do you define and evaluate the success of your program? What kind of indicators do you look at to evaluate project success?

General questions regarding WEE

9. From a broader perspective, how do you see gender sensitive livelihood programs in humanitarian development nexus?
10. What does women economic empowerment mean? How does it relate to women empowerment in general?
11. What are some potential risks for women’s well-being in a WEE project? How do you mitigate these?
12. What are some structural barriers (laws, policies, social norms) to Syrian women’s economic participation and control of resources in general? What are some difficulties Syrian women face while using and controlling economic resources in Turkey?
13. Can Economic strengthening (ES) be used as a means for preventing GBV? How?
14. Is engaging with male members of families and communities important for WEE projects? What are the best ways to conduct this engagement? What kind of risks can this engagement entail and how they can be mitigated?

7. Annex 3: FGD Details

	Number of Participants	Nationality	City	Venue	Date
1	7	Turkish	Gaziantep	A woman’s house in Perilikaya Neighborhood	16 July 2019
2	7	Syrian	Gaziantep	A woman’s house in Cumhuriyet Neighborhood	17 July 2019
3	10	Syrian	Kilis	Yoyav Hacı Mustafa Topcuoglu Kadın Meslek Zenginlestirme Merkezi	19 July 2019
4	8	Syrian	Sanliurfa	CARE Haliliye IPS	23 July 2019

8. Annex 4: FGD Topics and Probing Questions

1. Being able to equally participate in household financial decision-making

Probing questions: Who keeps the money in the household? Who decides how to spend the money? How have participating this project affected the financial decision making process at home?

2. Whether their income increased after getting micro-credit loans

Probing questions: Did you have any income before being a participant of this project? Have you ever earned your own money before? Whether and how did this project change your net income?

3. Improved social cohesions through women's economic empowerment activities

Probing questions: Do you have any Syrian/Turkish neighbors? Do you have any of them within your micro-credit group? What did you think about them when you first met? How did your relationship evolve? Whether and how participating this project together affect your relationship?

4. Empower communities to identify sustainable changes to local problems/needs.

Probing questions: Do you think you have common problems/needs with your neighbors? Do you ever talk about possible solutions to these common local problems with your neighbors / friends? Do the weekly meetings facilitate this kind of sharing? Do you talk about other local problems and possible solutions during or after the meeting with your friends?

5. Access to market oriented skills development

Probing questions: Did you participate agency building sessions provided by CARE? Which topics did you like the most? (leadership, active communication, team work, negotiation) After participating those sessions, do you feel like better equipped for market oriented skills? Do you feel more confident to work?

6. Men and boys are engaged in women economic empowerment

Probing questions: Are you married? Do you live with your husband? Do you have any sons? Are there any other male members of family that live with you at the same apartment? What were their initial reactions when they heard your decision about participating this project? Did they raise any concerns? Were they supportive? Are they supportive now?

7. Refugee and host communities are aware of women and girls' economic rights

Probing questions: Are you aware of your economic rights? If yes, how did you get information on them? If no, do you think knowing your economic rights would make you feel more confident for participating in economic activities?

8. Unpaid care work: the risk of overburdening women

Probing question: Who is responsible for cleaning and cooking at home? Do you share these responsibilities with your husband, or does he help in any way? Does your husband take care of children as much as you do? How much time does it take daily to take care of kids and elderly, and complete all the housework on average? If you were to start working how much time would

you have to allocate to that business? Do you think having access to child care would encourage you to work?

9. Working at home, staying at home

Probing question: Do you prefer working at home or outside? Why? Do you know Turkish? Are you confident to communicate with Turkish people that you don't know? Do you think knowing the language would encourage you to work outside home? Do you think having less care work would motivate you to work outside home? Do you have any concerns regarding working outside?

10. Changing household dynamics - Who has the control over money? – GBV?

Probing question: Who makes the financial decisions at home in general? Did you have control over money when you got micro-credit loan? Have getting micro-credit affect household dynamics in any way?