



## **Post-Project Sustainability Study**

**TATWEER**

*“Livelihood Security and Civil Society Strengthening in the OPT.”*



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## I. STUDY SUMMARY

- Title:** Livelihood Security and Civil Society Strengthening in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (oPt): TATWEER Post-project sustainability study
- Design:** TATWEER was implemented from May 2009 - April of 2015 utilizing partnerships with three Palestine NGOs (Applied Research Institute-Jerusalem (ARIJ), Economic and Social Development Center of Palestine (ESDC), and New Farm Company (NFC). The project was implemented to help devastated farmers begin to regain food security in the Jenin and Tubas regions. This research seeks to understand and assess the sustained post-project outcomes and impacts both achieved and unintended of the TATWEER as a food security enabler among Palestinian households. CARE Palestine, CARE USA, and partners used mixed methods for this post-project sustainability study.
- Population:** This study was conducted among several key stakeholder groups, including community members who participated in TATWEER during its implementation, their families/influential members in their communities, staff of community-based organizations in the areas of the study.
- Duration:** The duration of each respondent's participation lasted between 2-3 hours, depending on the qualitative method used. All data was collected over 4-6 weeks between June and July 2021.
- Primary Objectives:** CARE Palestine West Bank and Gaza (WBG) conducted a Post-Project Sustainability Study (PPS) of the TATWEER project to measure the extent to which the outcomes and structures that were in place at the end of the project have remained and, if so, how they have continued to grow.
- Study Sites:** The study was conducted in Jenin and Tubas governorates of the occupied Palestinian territory.

## II. Abbreviations and Acronyms

ARJI	Applied Research Institute-Jerusalem
CO	Country Office
ESDC	Economic and Social Development Center of Palestine
IDI	In-depth interview
IDIG	In-depth interview guide
KII	Key Informant Interview
MEAL	Monitoring, evaluation, accountability, learning.
MSC	Most Significant Change
NFC	New Farm Company
NGO	Non-government organization
oPt	Occupied Palestinian Territory
OH	Outcome Harvesting
PPS	Post Project Sustainability
TATWEER	Livelihood Security and Civil Society Strengthening in the Occupied Palestinian Territory
WB	West Bank

### III. Executive Summary

The occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) remains in a protracted crisis due to the continued Israel occupation. A protection crisis persists, driven by the systematic denial of Palestinian rights, structural barriers to Palestinian development, conflict, and lack of accountability for violations of international law, resulting in chronic humanitarian needs and dependence on relief.

TATWEER project was implemented in partnerships between CARE Palestine West Bank and Gaza (WBG) and three Palestinian NGOs May 2009 - April of 2015. The project aimed help devastated farmers begin to **regain food security** in the Jenin and Tubas regions. More specifically, the project aimed to 1) improve food security, livelihoods, and natural resource management 2) Increase the participation of women and youth in the Palestinian development process, and 3) Strengthen the role of community organizations in the development process. TATWEER targeted 6,325 vulnerable Palestinian farming households - an estimated 34,788 individuals - of which 48% are women, 44% are children under 14, and 16% are youth aged 15-24.

Five years since project closure, CARE WBG conducted a Post-Project Sustainability Study (PPS) of the TATWEER project. The study aimed to measure the extent to which the outcomes and structures that were in place at the end of the project have remained and, if so, how they have continued to grow and the extent to which the project has helped transform gender relations in the process of promoting equity as a means to reach economic outcomes.

A mixed-method evaluation was used in the study combining quantitative and qualitative research techniques to collect, analyze, triangulate, and interpret results. The primary methodology used in the study was outcome harvesting to assess and explain sustainability of the project. The methodology was complemented with Empowerment Self-assessment Survey targeting women from the project target communities in three domains: economic, social, and political at family and community levels, utilizing five core empowerment indicators. Finally, to assess the inclusivity and gender-responsiveness of local development platforms and civil society institutions, a self-assessment survey with the participant CBOs was applied and assessed gender inclusion in seven organizational dimensions.

The study concludes that the three objectives of TATWEER have been achieved and sustained; Women's participation and the role of CBOs in the development process were enhanced as well as Food security, livelihoods, and natural resource management. However, the study provided learning of sustainability as a dynamic and not static process. **Many of the harvested outcomes at the end of the project were sustained** though not in all target communities or CBOs, nor were they equal or at the same pace.

Key Learning:

- 1. On the sustainability of established structures and CBOs role in development:** The PPS revealed that the more the CBO's business model was needs based and economically viable, the more likely the achieved outcomes. The successful businesses that sustained at the supported CBOs were those built on identified needs and thorough market analysis. Only the market-ready projects reached the market, grew, and succeeded. Facilitated linkages amongst different VC actors that were not market-driven did not continue. Successful CBO projects continued and grew including servicing devastated farmers which enhanced community trust in CBOs and their acting as legit actors in their local community development.

2. **Women Empowerment and Gender Equality must be approached in a comprehensive manner** when working with CBOs to support women empowerment and participation in local development and local structures. CBOs, including mixed-gender CBOs, improved in gender inclusion through TATWEER, but continue to lack the proper mechanisms and sufficient resources to continue to do so systematically. Development actors need to support organizations in capturing the benefits of women empowerment and participation and avoid dealing with it on project/ component level.
3. **On Women Empowerment and Gender Equality:** As a multidimensional and interconnected process, empowerment is reflected in women's control over resources and their life; their mobility and participation in public life; people's attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs. In TATWEER, the socioeconomic status of women was elevated and mostly reflected in their choice of produce/ project and market, in their personal and professional networks, and even in the level of achieved outcomes (income, food security, etc). While the economic dimension of empowerment was more noticeable amongst targeted women, political and social empowerment was also evident. The PPS also found that economically empowered women such as self-employed ones are more involved and independent in strategic and economic decisions, while educated ones are more independent in the social and political issues.

#### **Main Recommendations to CARE and its partners:**

1. Capitalize on TATWEER PPS (achievements and lessons learned) in future programming. Continue focusing on the targeted communities in supporting new projects that build upon the community-based structures, resources and capacities and engage in follow up and coordination activities at higher levels (district, sectoral) to sustain and magnify impact. Importantly, CARE should avoid undermining sustained outcomes from TATWEER project by distorting the market in other interventions or projects.
2. Allocate more budgets and qualifications for market side and business development in economic development projects. Build the organizational capacities of social enterprises as in the case of Newfarm in a sustainable manner to serve as profitable market gateway for CBOs and support CBOs develop their business models to succeed.
3. Facilitate linkages and complementarities amongst targeted CBOs such as seedbank selling forge for Sheep farm, and the farm provide milk or cheese for food processing units, and so forth.
4. Focus on educated (and single) women in economic empowerment projects particularly in untraditional roles/ positions, products/ markets, and/ or sectors.

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Background and Rationale

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The occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) remains in a protracted crisis due to the continued Israel occupation. A protection crisis persists, driven by the systematic denial of Palestinian rights, structural barriers to Palestinian development, conflict, and lack of accountability for violations of international law, resulting in chronic humanitarian needs and dependence on relief. On the ground, the continuous construction of settlements coupled with initiatives and incentives to attract settlers ('pull strategy') is exacerbated by a 'push strategy' that limits physical and social space for Palestinians. The coercive environment which gives rise to forcible transfer manifests itself through a discriminatory permit regime for construction<sup>1</sup>, lack of access to basic services, forced evictions and planned relocations, confiscation and destruction of civilian property, obstruction of humanitarian assistance, land expropriation, settlement expansion, construction of the Wall, movement and access restrictions, declarations of live fire zones and closed areas, settler violence, and military operations. These policies and practices make Palestinian communities increasingly uninhabitable by preventing the development and maintenance of physical structures, community life, and livelihoods, eroding their resilience, and rendering them dependent on humanitarian aid ('de-development process').

Though the agriculture sector is one of the main pillars of the economy, employing 11.5% of the West Bank population, its contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is a modest 4.2%.<sup>2</sup> Despite agriculture's significant potential to increase food production and sustain farmer's livelihoods in the West Bank, food and livelihood security in the oPt was deteriorating at an alarming speed. In 2009, food insecurity remained high throughout the oPt, reaching 36% of Palestinian households. The year 2013 experienced a significant increase in the proportion of food-secure households (35%) and a decrease in insecurity (33%) in Palestine. In the West Bank, food insecurity remained below the 2009 level of 22% (the first time that food security was measured in Palestine) but slightly above the lowest level of 17% achieved in 2011<sup>3</sup>.

The complex agribusiness environment in Palestine is becoming increasingly vulnerable. Climate change, political instability, and conflict, natural resources depletion, as well as market inefficiency are drivers of what is termed chronic vulnerability<sup>4</sup>. Loss of soil fertility and degradation are critical issues resulting from a mix of factors, including insufficient incentives for the broader implementation of sustainable agricultural practices, long-term land tenure insecurity, and fragmentation<sup>5</sup>, political uncertainty, as well as the myriad of restrictions imposed on the Palestinian economy by Israel occupation, which continue to constrain market systems within oPt. These impediments are distorting the functioning of agricultural markets and eroding the profitability of Palestinian producers. These impediments have adversely affected distribution to internal and external markets, hindering the competitiveness of Palestinian producers and leaving the domestic agricultural production in a disadvantageous situation.

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<sup>1</sup> 70% of Area C is not accessible for Palestinian construction with a further 29% heavily restricted. Less than 1% has been planned for Palestinian development by the Israeli authorities.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.anera.org/blog/how-aid-can-help-agriculture-in-palestine/>

<sup>3</sup> Food Security Bulletin. Issue 10, Autumn 2014. Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS)

<sup>4</sup> Vulnerability is property of a system (a set of conditions characterizing it) that describes its susceptibility to harm as it relates to a broad range of physical, social, economic and environmental processes. Birkmann, J. 2006. Measuring vulnerability to promote disaster-resilient societies. United Nations University Press, Tokyo, Japan. pp 9-54.

<sup>5</sup> Out of 111,000 farms - holdings, 94% are smaller than 40 dunums.



TATWEER (“Progress” in Arabic) was implemented during 2009-2015 under the AMENCA II funding mechanism from the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID)<sup>6</sup>. The project’s primary aim was to **reduce the vulnerability of households** through **sustainable livelihood security and increased capacity of civil society organizations**. Under the management of CARE WBG, the project was implemented by three Palestinian NGOs (namely the Applied Research Institute in Jerusalem (ARIJ), the Economic and Social Development Centre (ESDC), and New-Farm Company (NFC). Project interventions were implemented in 17 communities<sup>7</sup> located in Jenin and Tubas districts of the northern West Bank. TATWEER targeted 6,325 vulnerable Palestinian farming households - an estimated 34,788 individuals - of which 48% are women, 44% are children under 14, and 16% are youth aged 15-24.

TATWEER was selected for post-sustainability study (PPS) to help inform future programming as well as contribute to the general body of knowledge at CARE and other interested stakeholders. PPSs help provide an understanding how development interventions have evolved and been sustained or adapted after the conclusion of a project. It also provides an opportunity for MEAL staff to build new skills and for all staff in a country team to use data more effectively—both for project design and advocacy. PPS and the data and insights generated through this study are critical to prompting advocacy with local partners and governments, which can help scale CARE’s programming for a more significant impact.

TATWEER Project’s four main objectives were to:

1. Improve food security, livelihoods, and natural resource management.
2. Increase the participation of women and youth in the Palestinian development process.
3. Strengthen the role of community organizations in the development process, and
4. Contribute to efficient and effective management of the AMENCA 2 Program.

The **expected outcomes** of the TATWEER project were:

1. Improved food security at the household level through increased food production for family consumption.
2. Improved agricultural practices, including more effective and ecologically appropriate farming methods and Natural Resource Management (NRM).
3. Enhance the potential for women to increase their livelihood and income.
4. Improved access to locally available quality services and skills.
5. Strengthen the capacity of the participating civil society organizations to better address, advocate and respond to their constituent/community priorities and needs.
6. Strengthen the responsibilities, role, and status of Palestinian women through NGOs and CBOs.
7. Strengthen the governance and management of CBOs, including resource mobilization.
8. Strengthen collaboration amongst AMENCA 2 partners and others for learning and continuous improvement throughout implementation.

TATWEER was expected to leave behind the following outputs, which by the end of the project will be owned and entirely operated, independently, by Palestinian partners:

1. A seedbank that provides seeds and services for 2,000 rain-fed farmers.

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<sup>6</sup> Integrated later in 2013 into the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is the department of the Government of Australia (DFAT)

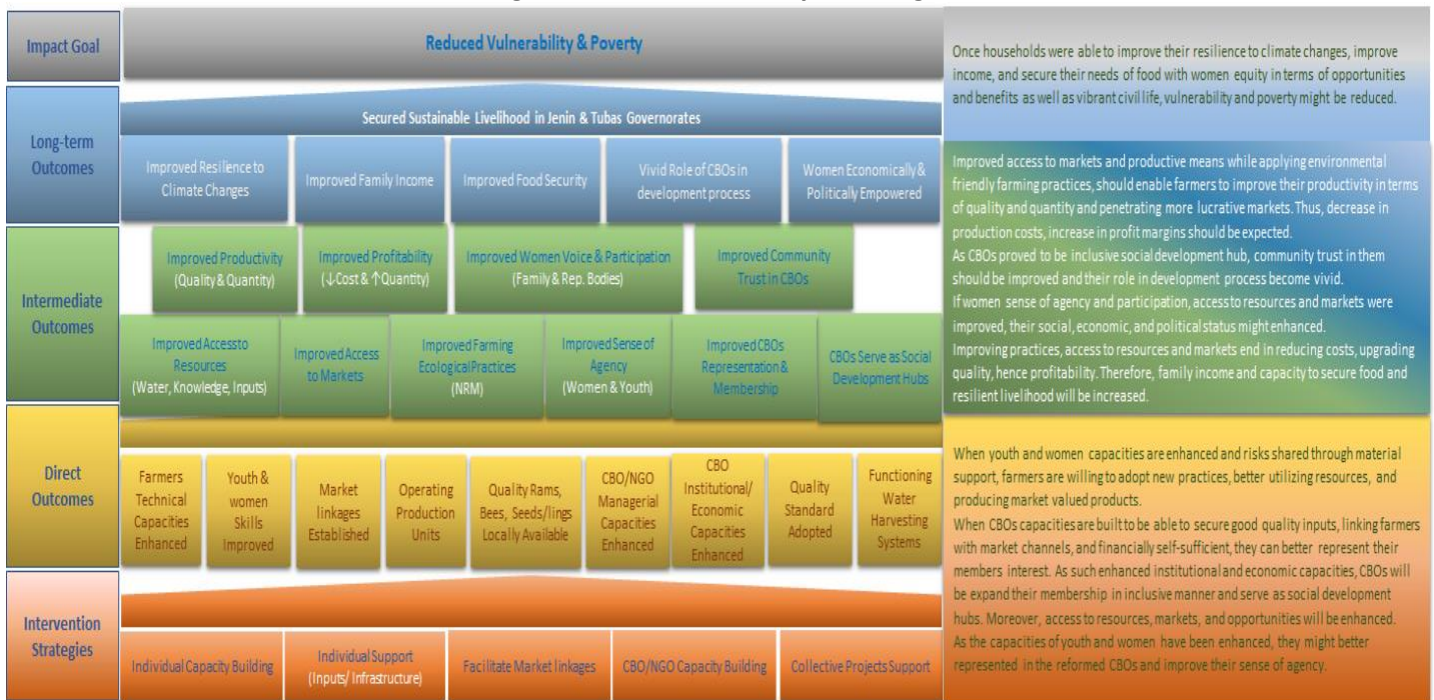
<sup>7</sup> **Communities in Jenin District:** Arabbuna, Faqqu'a, Beit Qad al Janubi, Deir Abu Da’if, Jalbun, Arrana, Aba ash Sharqiya, Aba al Gharbia, Raba, Al Mughayyir and Al Jalama.

**Communities in Tubas District:** Kardala, Ein Beda, and Bardala, Al Malih, Tubas and Aqqaba

<sup>9</sup> Funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

2. A seedling nursery that provides high-quality inputs for 1,000 irrigated farmers.
3. A packing station that provides better marketing facilities for 350 irrigated farmers.
4. Agricultural inputs to support 850 irrigated farmers to rehabilitate their greenhouses.
5. A sheep farm that provides high-quality inputs and veterinary services for 670 livestock breeders.
6. A queen bee production unit that provides high-quality inputs and services for 780 beekeepers.
7. Water harvesting systems enable 200 women to produce food in their home gardens that they can sell through the marketing network set up by the project to generate and sustain more income.
8. A marketing network that enables 450 women to sell their products more easily and at higher prices.
9. 17 strong local CBOs and one farmers' association at the district level in Jenin that can provide high-quality services to agricultural communities and depend less on external support.

**Figure 1: TATWEER Theory of Change**



## 2. Evaluation Design

The purpose of the study is to understand the **sustained impact the project has made** on the lives of TATWEER's participants and the communities and organizations with which it partnered five years after the closure of the project. The **PPS is set out to better understand and gather evidence on impactful projects and approaches, which could inform how to invest more effectively in approaches that will have long-term effects** especially in addressing vulnerabilities to livelihoods caused by a protracted crisis and natural disasters (climate change, etc.) that threaten health and economic outcomes for people, households, and communities.

More specifically, the study intends to assess sustainability measures and the extent to which the project has **helped transform gender relations in the process of promoting equity as a means to reach economic outcomes.**

To achieve an understanding of the complex drivers of sustained food security and women's empowerment, the TATWEER-PPS study applied **a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods** and utilized both primary and secondary data. Due to the study's goal of evaluating sustainable change, the most appropriate approaches will be Outcome Harvesting (OH) to collect the sustained impacts of TATWEER project and Comparative Case Study approach to compare the sustained impacts achieved with different intervention.

**Impact occurs at multiple levels and timeframes.** How impact is defined will necessarily determine the scope and content of the study as it prioritizes different aspects of impact and implies different concepts of causality. This study employed the following definitions.

**Impact:** The positive and negative changes produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended, or unintended (OECD-DAC Definition).

**Outcome:** a change in the behavior, relationships, actions, activities, policies, or practices of an individual, group, community, organization, or institution (IDRC Definition).

**Sustainability:** time function of net benefit flow within defined boundaries and dynamic circumstances i.e. When the net positive changes remain viable and relevant (economically, socially, politically, environmentally) to targeted stakeholders within the targeted location over time. Sustainability is not static, it includes changes and improvements, it is resilient to risks through evolution or innovation in response to changing external factors. (*Advance* Definition)

**Economic empowerment:** is the capacity of women and men to participate in, contribute to and benefit from growth processes in ways that recognize the value of their contributions, respect their dignity, and make it possible to negotiate a fairer distribution of the benefits of growth<sup>8</sup> (OECD-Definition).

**Women Economic Empowerment:** is the process by which women increase their right to economic resources and power to make decisions that benefit themselves, their families and their communities – and implicates the domains of agency, structure, relationships. (CARE Definition)

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<sup>8</sup> Economic empowerment increases women's access to economic resources and opportunities including jobs, financial services, property and other productive assets, skills development and market information.

**Women's empowerment:** the sum of changes needed for a woman to realize her full human rights in agency<sup>9</sup>, structure<sup>10</sup>, and relations<sup>11</sup> (CARE Definition).

**Inclusion & Inclusivity** is a process and outcome where difference is seen as a benefit to utilize; and where services, resources, and opportunities are equality accessible for all to achieve their full potential in life, regardless of their background, gender identity or expression. (Drawn from Gender Spectrum Definition, The Employers Network for Equality & Inclusion Definition, and UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs Definition).

**Gender responsiveness** refers to outcomes that reflect an understanding of gender roles and inequalities and encourage equal participation, including equal and fair distribution of benefits. (UNDP Definition).

## 2.1. Evaluation Process

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The TATWEER PPS study applied mixed-method evaluation that systematically combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques to collect, analyse, triangulate, and interpret results. Outcome harvesting was the primary methodology which included TATWEER's end-line documentation desk review, surveys, and interviews amongst local partners, and CARE staff. The study was carried out in three consecutive stages.

**Inception Phase:** the stage aimed to establish a clear articulation of the scope and breadth of TATWEER project, design the outcome harvesting exercise, capture intended outcomes, draft outcome descriptions, and to scope and outline the full review process.

- **Design the Outcome Harvest:** during the inception stage, *researchers* developed questions to guide the harvest. These were applied in document review by the team, and further reflected in the Data Collection tools.
- **Review documents and draft outcome descriptions:** during the inception period as well, researchers reviewed all the projects' documents provided by CARE. Documents included the project document, community and household baseline, final completion report and end of project evaluation, and other documents (best practices draft, partnership model presentation, no harm analysis, V4M, case studies, etc.). The review **resulted in capturing a list of 28 preliminary changes (outcomes)**. As below shown, **outcomes are mainly concentrated at the individual and group level (19/28 s)**, followed by outcomes at the **organizational level (6/28)**, and **3 outcomes at the community level**, as illustrated in table 1. According to the **type of change**, the most is the **change in status (12/28)**, followed by the change in activities (6/28), change in practices (5/28), behavioral changes (3/28), policy change (1/28), and change in relationships (1/28).

**Fieldwork Phase:** This phase was carried out to substantiate and further validate the findings from the desk review and the different elements of the study according to the study questions. The **fieldwork phase** was split into five main activities.

- **Orientation & Outcome Description Workshop:** *researchers* conducted a full day participatory workshop with the project staff from CARE and local partners. The workshop aimed to reflect on preliminary outcome description, identify additional ones, describe the significance of the outcomes, and identify the causal contribution of the project interventions.

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<sup>9</sup> Her own aspirations and capabilities.

<sup>10</sup> The environment that surrounds and conditions her choices.

<sup>11</sup> The power relations through which she negotiates her path.

- **Validation & Augmentation of the findings:** this step was pursued through feedback from TATWEER participants via FGDs and through constructive discussions with partners through semi structured interviews.
- **Inclusion Self-Assessment Survey:** the survey was drawn from HI inclusion guideline. The questionnaire targeted 9 CBOs that had participated in the project to assess organizational across seven dimensions of inclusion (Governance, Program, Human Resources, Financial Resources, Accessibility, Communication, and Participation).
- **Women Empowerment Self-assessment Survey:** this survey targeted women above 26 years of age living in targeted communities to assess level of empowerment mainly in two dimensions **relations** and **agency**. The survey was filled by (45) participant and (63) non-participant women from the target communities.
- **Seedbank Case Study:** to develop the case, *researchers* conducted interviews with JGFA and women farmers as well as TATWEER management.

### Synthesis & Reporting Phase

- **Analysis and interpretation:** in this stage *researchers* organized the outcome descriptions to make sense of them, analyze and interpret the data that would nourish in reconstructing TOC, and provide evidence-based analysis.
- **Case Studies Writing & Study Report Drafting:** This report will provide findings, analysis, and evidence-based recommendations; and will contain descriptive analysis of results in summative form. The researchers conducted a PowerPoint presentation for CARE and its partners outlining assessment process, main findings, and recommendations.
- **Finalization of the Study Report:** Feedback received during the presentation and in writing following CARE’s review, were addressed as deemed suitable.

## 2.2. Sampling Method, Study areas and Sample Size

The study sampling universe consists of all farmers residing within Tubas and Jenin districts and the project team and partners in Ramallah district. The methodology followed outcome harvesting and a quasi-experimental design utilizing propensity score matching (PSM) techniques based on surveys with a stratified cluster sample selected through a probabilistic approach and developed in two stages with communities as primary sampling units and farmers as the basic sampling unit.

The individual and group interviews were conducted with a gender-balanced sample purposefully selected based on their knowledge and engagement with the project, i.e., well-informed people who have a great deal of information about the interventions. Interviews were conducted face to face at informants’ places or in a hall at their convenience. They followed gender-sensitive and socially acceptable setting that ensure informant privacy and protection. This was also supported by the furnishing of a gender-balanced research team.

Table 2: Sample Framework

Stakeholder	Data Collection Method	Sample Size	Sampling Strategy	Location
Project Staff	OH Workshop	12	Purposeful	Ramallah
Project Partners				
Women	Survey	120	Random	Tubas & Jenin District

Stakeholder	Data Collection Method	Sample Size	Sampling Strategy	Location
Female Participants (Women only CBOs)	FG	12	Snowball	Targeted Communities in Tubas & Jenin District
Female Participants (Mixed CBOs)	FG	12	Purposeful	Targeted Communities in Tubas & Jenin District
Male Participants	FG	12	Snowball	Targeted Communities in Tubas & Jenin District
Youth Participants				
CBO Management	Survey	10	Purposeful	Targeted Communities in Tubas & Jenin District
Female Member in JGFA CBO	SSI	1	Purposeful	Jenin (Seedbank)
Board Member in JGFA CBO	SSI	1	Purposeful	Jenin (Seedbank)

Sampling was subject to increase until researchers were not getting any new information or were no longer gaining new insights. The team was trained and competent to address the questionnaire and perform random sampling in the field: segmentation and systematic random sampling.

The sample size was design to allow representative results for each of them, referring to a uniform allocation by applying the following formula and parameters:

- Confidence level (Z): 95%
- Estimated prevalence (p): 50%
- Precision (e): 6.2%
- Design effect (f): 1
- Non-response rate (k): 0%
- Number of stratums (k): 6
- Sample size (n)

$$n = \frac{Z^2 \cdot p \cdot (1 - p) \cdot f \cdot k}{e^2}$$

*Equation 1: Sample Size calculation*

$$n_h = \frac{n}{k}$$

*Equation 2: Sample Size allocation*

Therefore, a sample size of 120 women would allow obtaining a precision of 9% with a 95% of confidence level for the combined strata, assuming Simple Random Sampling. For each stratum, a proportional allocation of 20 women per strata would allow obtaining a precision of 21.2% with 95% confidence. A total of 108 women filled the woman empowerment survey, and 6 CBOs filled the inclusion assessment survey. Also 21 participants partook in 3 focus group discussions, and three key stakeholders from JGFA board representatives were interviewed via Semi-structured interviews.

### 2.3. Limitations and challenges

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1. Availability and sufficiency of data: The only available documents to the study were those presented in the previous section under *“Documents review and draft outcome descriptions”*. The study relied on these data as well as quantitative and qualitative data from other external sources as needed. **Monitoring data per intervention and or location was not available**, and a list of project’s ultimate beneficiaries was also not available. The study team worked jointly with the project staff and participant CBOs to identify a sample of beneficiaries which was an extensive process that prolonged the timeframe of the study.
2. The importance of covering multiple interventions, value chains and contexts years after the closure of the project put a strain on effective assessment process and validation. The experienced team made every effort to review the various components of the assessment. Composition of the proposed team reflected this challenge (in terms of assigning roles/ areas of focus). However, there existed some undocumented practices that were hard to triangulate. The team ensured that these aspects get covered/ explained during interviews and visits and through a validation workshop with Care and local partners.
3. Access to Stakeholders: The Outbreak of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic-imposed travel and movement restrictions and posed severe coordination challenges to the research team. When no face-to-face interviews were possible due to repeated lockdowns, the assessment sought virtual interviews with institutional stakeholders. Target beneficiaries were however all reached face to face. The covid-19 situation challenged the primary data gathering resulting in numerous rescheduling and standstill periods.

### 2.4. Ethical Considerations

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Ethical clearance for this study was secured from Dr. Niveen, Birzeit University, Birzeit, Palestine. All Participants were informed about the requirements for participating in the study and participation was voluntary. Written informed consent in Arabic was obtained for individual interviews and focus group discussion participants. Information was read to participants expected to verbally agree and sign the informed consent sheet. Moreover, the signed consent forms were kept separately from completed questionnaires and interview notes.

The principles of independence, credibility, utility and quality are interrelated and underpin the study objectives of:

- Accountability in that they provide the framework to ensure independent, credible, high-quality and useful of results, whether they are successes or shortfalls.
- Learning in so far that it requires independent, credible, high-quality and useful study to generate essential lessons that will help improve future programming performance and outcomes.

Research assistants were trained on ethical issues to ensure that ethical conduct is clearly implemented and understood.



### 3. Main Results

#### 2.1. TATWEER Intended Outcomes

According to the project documents and “End of Project Evaluation,” TATWEER contributed to its stated outcomes<sup>12</sup>. The desk review research identified around **28 outcomes** that were categorized at level and type that resemble the result chain of the project that is reflected in its TOC (Figure 1). Five years later and during the outcome harvesting and description workshop, the project team aggregated and verified that **14 out of the 28 outcomes have been sustained (in green)**. The sustained outcomes were validated by interviews with farmers and women groups and reflect that they have had different lifespans. Some project outcomes that were achieved have been sustained, whereas others either continued for a few years or disappeared right after the project closure. Some new outcomes also emerged such as continued collaboration amongst CBS. Each of the harvested and sustained outcomes is discussed below. It is worth noting these some of the outcomes may combine several outcomes of the initially 28 identified during the desk research.

Level	Type of Change					Status (Intermediate-Long-term Outcomes)
	Behaviour	Relationships	Actions/ Activities	Policies	Practices	
Individual/ Group	1. Improved Women Voice & Participation (Family & Rep. Bodies) 2. Improved Sense of Agency (Women & Youth)	3. Market linkages Established	4. Functioning Water Harvesting Systems 5. Increased awareness about best practices in managing natural resources 6. Increased women’s contribution to household income and food production		7. Farmers Technical Capacities Enhanced 8. Youth & women Skills Improved 9. Quality Standard Adopted 10. Improved Farming Ecological Practices (NRM)	11. Improved Family Income 12. Improved Food Security 13. Reduced Vulnerability & Poverty 14. Improved Resilience to Climate Changes 15. Functioning Production Units 16. Women Economically & Politically Empowered 17. Improved Access to Markets 18. Improved Productivity (Quality & Quantity) 19. Improved Profitability (↓Cost & ↑Quantity)
Community	1. Improved Community Trust in CBOs		2. High-quality agricultural services and assets provided by local CBOs 3. Improved Access to Resources (Water, Knowledge, Inputs)			
Organization/ Institution			1. CBO Economic Capacities Enhanced	2. Local NGOs and CBOs have improved internal systems and plans.	3. CBOs Serve as Social Development Hubs	4. CBO/NGO Managerial Capacities Enhanced 5. Vivid Role of CBOs in development process 6. Improved CBOs Representation & Membership

**Sustaining livelihood security** amongst targeted households was the primary aim of TATWEER interventions. According to The Food Security Sector (FSS) in Palestine; “Food security levels had

1. <sup>12</sup> Improved food security at the household level through increased food production for family consumption.
2. Improved agricultural practices, including more effective and ecologically appropriate farming methods and Natural Resource Management (NRM).
3. Enhance the potential for women to increase their livelihood and income.
4. Improved access to locally available quality services and skills.
5. Strengthen the capacity of the participating civil society organizations to better address, advocate and respond to their constituent/community priorities and needs.
6. Strengthen the responsibilities, role, and status of Palestinian women through NGOs and CBOs.
7. Strengthen the governance and management of CBOs, including resource mobilization.
8. Strengthen collaboration amongst AMENCA 2 partners and others for learning and continuous improvement throughout implementation



improved in 2014 relative to 2013: the share of food secure households increased in one year from 54% by seven percentage points, while the severely food insecure had declined from 15.8% by 3 percentage points. Nonetheless, this gain had been reversed by 2018, perhaps suggesting a chronic, rather than transitory weakness. Indeed, the share of the two food insecure categories (severe and moderate) was only 2.5 percentage points lower in 2018 than in 2013. **The West Bank's share of severely and moderately food insecure households have persistently decreased since 2013**, to 3% and 6.2% respectively of all households by 2018. Consistently, the share of food security has risen standing at 68.3% in 2018, despite the shifts from food secure to marginally food-secure category. The level of food security, in 2018 and recently, also varies at the sub-regional level. The West Bank's **greatest gains in food security were realized in the north of the West Bank including the governorates targeted by TATWEER**<sup>13,14</sup>.

#### 1. **Outcome:** *Continued collaboration among cooperatives*

**Outcome Description:** In 2010, **three cooperatives** in Northern Jordan Valley (Kardala, Bardala, Ein Al Beida), initially competitors, but all were subjected to frequent closures by occupation forces that hindered their access to inputs, **created a joint nursery** as their first-ever joint farmer-owned cooperation model. The nursery was managed by representatives from the board of directors of the three coops.

**Significance:** This outcome demonstrates that a **well-informed, needs-based** initial emergency intervention **can catalyze and empower collective local action/ solutions to systemic impediments** (immediate and long-term needs) to food security and development of vulnerable communities (i.e., catalyzing Nexus programming in the sector at CARE WBG). The nursery serves almost 250 farmers and their families in the three villages. It owns around **1,680 dunums (415.137 Acre) greenhouse** and cultivates about **8,000 dunums with irrigated vegetables**. The nursery secures approximately **3.5 million seedlings** in three seasons annually with a **20% saving in seedlings' prices** and **saving in other costs** such as transportation and damages resulting from shipping or difference in climate conditions. In addition to savings, the nursery secured varieties and introduced new varieties to farmers.

**Contribution:** After identifying mutual needs amongst cooperatives, TATWEER facilitated the linkage between three cooperatives and mediated their negotiations to establish the nursery. The project supported the nursery establishment in the first **two dunum** greenhouse and building of small office, two automated irrigation lines, and a modern agriculture machine.

**Sustainability:** **the nursery has continued to serve the local community for almost ten years**. The nursery just recently ceased its operations (during the PPS, in early June 2021) because the lessor wanted to reclaim the rented farmland on which the nursery was established. Also, despite TATWEER offering capacity building support to CBOs managerial capacities, the accumulation in account receivables (aging debts) resulting from **small subsistence farmers** non-paying their due affected the nursery's cash flow and consequently its operations. Farmers' abstention is attributed to farmers' loss in several bad seasons that generated a crack in management and fed conflict amongst board members. Nowadays, the nursery management is still considering its alternatives, and the three coops are still collectively trying to find an alternative location to move the nursery and re-operate it.

#### 2. **Outcome:** *Farmers continue to be better served because of the seedbank expansion*

**Outcome Description:** A seedbank was established by Jenin Governorate Farmers Association (JGFA) in 2006 during the previous phase of AMENCA I (LIOPT)<sup>15</sup>, which was also implemented by CARE. In 2011, during TATWEER, the seedbank began expanding its business in terms of the seed quantities and services

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<sup>13</sup> According to PCBS classification, Northwest Bank includes Jenin, Tubas, Nablus, Tulkarem, Qalqiliya, and Salfit.

<sup>14</sup> Socio-Economic & Food Security Survey 2018, State of Palestine. Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) & the Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS), 2020. [https://fscluster.org/sites/default/files/documents/socio-economic\\_food\\_security\\_survey\\_sefsec\\_2018\\_full\\_repor\\_02.09t.pdf](https://fscluster.org/sites/default/files/documents/socio-economic_food_security_survey_sefsec_2018_full_repor_02.09t.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> The Livelihoods Improvement Project in the occupied Palestinian territories

to farmers. Besides lending local varieties of drought-resistant seeds, with TATWEER support, the seedbank has started providing machines for lease (such as tractor, Freekeh unit), offering extension services, and innovative techniques, as well as networking services to farmers.

**Significance:** The establishment of the seedbank was a **lifeline for small producers** and poor farmers during the sharp increase in seeds prices (increased by up to 7 times) and deteriorated quality of available seeds in the market. The Seedbank continues to provide affordable high-quality local varieties that are adapted to the local climate and resistant to drought and common diseases. Thus, farmers both can afford seeds and are able to grow crops despite the drought and pest infestations. Farmers also continue to access other support services such as extension services and linkages as well as leasing of new equipment that JGFA has introduced following TATWEER through support of other development actors.

**Contribution:** TATWEER helped the seedbank lower the cost by increasing its seed storage capacity and improve its ability to offer new seed varieties and services to farmers. TATWEER provided the seedbank with 22 tons of seeds, linked the seedbank to partner organizations to increase seeds varieties, supported the seedbank with tractor and sieve, and connected the seedbank with private enterprises and cooperatives. The project also built the organizational capacities of JGFA. The freekeh production unit was as well supported by TATWEER.

**Sustainability:** Since its establishment, the seedbank has been steadily growing due to JGFA's continued efforts namely through cultivating a plot of land owned by JGFA and producing their own seeds. The provisioned tractor and sieve continue to comprise a main source of income through leasing revenues. JGFA's growth was enabled by support from other development partners who built on TATWEER's intervention. Nowadays, the seedbank is providing 8,000 tons of seeds and serving around 3,000 farmers compared to the 2,000 farmers initially served during TATWEER.

### 3. **Outcome:** *Farmers continue to access better quality, locally resourced, and affordable inputs*

**Outcome Description:** In 2011, around 250 vulnerable men and women farmers from Kardala, Bardala, Ein Al Beida began purchasing affordable and quality inputs from the local nursery. A Model Sheep Farm was established in Tubas in 2010. With TATWEER support, the Sheep Farm provided Tubas lead farmers with affordable, better quality rams that are not only showing high productivity but more resistant to diseases and adaptability to the local climate. A queen bee production unit based on international technology was also established to provide farmers with high-quality locally produced queen bees and associated beekeeping services. The Farmer association also improved its seeds and offering of improved quality and affordable seeds to farmers in Jenin.

**Significance:** Most agricultural inputs are imported and under Israeli control. Access restrictions coupled with a combination of scarce natural resources and environmental challenges made access to affordable quality inputs a constraint for sector development. TATWEER improved the access to affordable high-quality inputs for 3,614 households from established facilities (300 from sheep farm, 2,500 from seedbank, 250 from nursery, 945 queen bee unit). This outcome served in materialization of **consequent outcomes** including **improved CBOs representation and membership, demonstrated the vivid role of CBOs in the development process** through expansion of relevant services, reduced farmers' costs and risks, improved productivity, and ultimately, helps to ensure or improve income and food security. All tangible positive effects by locally led partners (CBOs) who respond directly to the specific needs and context of the communities, thus promoting their legitimacy and community trust in their role as an actor in their local economic development.

**Contribution:** TATWEER provided the cooperatives with infrastructure and quality and climate-appropriate seeds, seedlings, rams. Moreover, the project supported the development of CBOs' capacities to run their projects, better serve their constituents, and mobilize their communities. The queen bees unit was maintained at the local partner premise ARIJ.

**Sustainability:** As above described, both the seedbank and the nurse, have continued to provide services to their constituents. The Sheep Farm in Tubas was finally able to breakeven in 2019 after nine years of its establishment. The farm provides a full package of services for its members including rams though not at the same quality as intended. The queen production unit which was managed by ARIJ did not continue its operations after the project's conclusion. According to the project team, this result demonstrates the importance of development actors maintaining the role of facilitator in the market system and not to assume the role of a market actor in the system, and rather and focus on enabling local market actors and organizations to assume their role and improve it. Assuming the role of a market actor is a form of market distortion, which can negatively affect market coordination and governance and undermines sustainability.

**4. Outcome:** *Farmers continue to access new and improved water resources*

**Outcome Description:** In 2012-2014, farmers began accessing new and improved sources of water for agricultural production.

**Significance:** Improving water harvesting and management is a crucial issue in Palestine. Around 85% of the water reservoir in OPT is controlled by the Israeli occupation, and 37% of freshwater is bought from an Israeli water company. Agriculture consumes 70% of fresh water and over 65% of holders purchase water to irrigate their crops. Given the current trends, the occurrence and intensity of drought is highly likely to increase in the next decade. The calculated trend-line (1845-2012) indicates that rainfall is decreasing at an average rate of 1.4 mm per year. The trend-line of the total annual rainfall for the rainy season from 1964 to 2012 indicates decreasing at an average rate of 3.3 mm per year and an average reduction of -23.2 mm per year over the last 10-year period.

**Contribution:** TATWEER facilitated farmers' access to water storage and built farmers' skills in efficient water harvesting and management. Eight water cisterns were rehabilitated in Aaba and Aqaba, two automated irrigation lines were provided to the seedling nursery in Jordan North Valley, 210 women were provided with small-scale water harvesting systems. In addition, project staff and partners conducted awareness sessions on irrigation related knowledge and dripping pipes in almost all target locations.

**Sustainability:** Farmers continue to benefit from water harvesting mechanisms including cisterns as these were permanent fixtures and cost-effective maintenance requirements. The irrigation nets however were not adopted by all farmers as they perceive it too costly and/ or not applicable to types of land<sup>16</sup>.

**5. Outcome:** *Farmers continued to practice improved technical and ecological farming practices (NRM)-*

**Outcome Description:** In 2012-2014, farmers, including women began applying improved agricultural/ farming practices.

**Significance:** Natural resources are needed to support human settlements and livelihoods. In Palestine, the scarcity of natural resources is aggravated by environmental degradation and destruction resulting from both natural and manmade disasters, including climate change. Sustainable natural resource management (NRM) has the potential to contribute to food and livelihood security, including by maintaining soil productivity, recycling resources, and water management.

**Contribution:** TATWEER provided extension service support and linked farmers with the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and nursery extension agents. Farmers were trained on new NRM techniques, such as using raised beds in greenhouses for farming. New techniques and practices such as soil solarisation, rainwater harvesting, fertilizer and pesticide rationing, agricultural waste recycling e.g., silage, usage of drought-tolerant seeds, and others have contributed to NRM especially water conservation, lowered use of pesticides. , .

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<sup>16</sup> The Balanced drip irrigation system was proven by CARE to be most effective in lands with sharper slopes.

**Sustainability:** The sustainability of these practices was correlated to the sustainability of the agricultural activity itself such as cultivation and so on. Thus, farmers who continued to cultivate their farmland and captured the value of NRM especially in relation to market value for their investment, kept applying these practices. Moreover, some farmers also upgraded their methods and adopted safety measures and standards in their practices.

6. **Outcome:** *Continued and improved recognition of Quality following increase in farmers' technical capacities and adoption of quality standards by CBOs.*

**Outcome Description:** During TATWEER, some farmers started to adopt quality standards in their production e.g. Global GAP, and CBOs provided quality inputs such as seeds, seedlings, rams, and queen bees. Food processing units (FPU) run by CBOs pursued adopting food safety and hygiene standards.

**Significance:** Quality of inputs is a major determinate of crop yield. Quality and safety standards have become a prerequisite for market entry and consumer protection rights. Quality and safety are becoming legally binding as trade policy measures and affecting competitiveness in agri-food trade. This outcome demonstrates the role of CBOs in upgrading quality and the potential of the private sector in improving farmer's adherence to market requirements.

**Contribution:** TATWEER facilitated access to locally produced high-quality seeds, seedlings, rams, and other agricultural inputs for the targeted communities. FPU (Frikeh, Maftool, Olive paste, pastry, and dried herbs) received several capacity-building trainings on safety, quality systems, HACCAP, and Herb's planting. NFC, a social enterprise, also supported the CBOs and farmers to reach the highest quality and safety standards through TATWEER.

**Sustainability:** According to informants, functioning units and farms have kept practicing quality standards in their operation for instance North Jordan Valley nursery, JGFA Seedbank, and Tubas Modern Sheep Farm. The main driver for sustain quality standards was the relevance of the projects to their needs (tailored approach) and their need to meet market requirements to access more lucrative markets by either through CBOs' own resources or through its linkages to private sector enterprises.

7. **Outcome:** *CBOs Managerial Capacities Enhanced*

**Outcome Description:** CBOs' financial and administration capacities were enhanced. In 2014-2015, the nursery and seedbank partner cooperatives conducted a feasibility study and developed management and administrative systems to sustain the operation of their projects.

**Significance:** Without management, there is no organization. Management guides the development and directs group efforts towards the achievement of pre-determined goals and leads to better economic production avoiding wastage of scarce resources. It enables the organizations to survive in changing environment. Thus, good governance and management practices strengthen the internal structure and establish the credibility of the organization. This outcome demonstrates economic viability and good governance's essential role in sustaining new community-owned investments and the importance of considering them from the outset of the intervention design.

**Contribution:** TATWEER first conducted an organizational assessment utilizing the participatory organizational assessment tool (PONAT) to define the gaps and needed capacities of CBOs. The project provided CBOs with capacity-building trainings, tailored accounting software, Legal revision of their by-laws, and supported the development of CBOs' strategic and business plans. TATWEER has approached this in a participatory way, led by animators from target CBOs.

**Sustainability:** The wellbeing and effectiveness of an organization is a mixture of institutional (structure, strategy, systems), individual (skill, staff, management style), and cultural (shared values, social aspects, transparency) elements. The interplay of these three elements was not equal for participant CBOs, thus some CBOs continued and grew, whereas others stayed the same at best.

#### 8. **Outcome:** *CBOs Serve as Social Development Hubs*

**Outcome Description:** During the project lifespan, CBOs provided farmers with quality inputs (ram, seeds, queen bees, seedlings), trainings and extension services, scaling up food production units, linking producers with a marketer (NFC), and services provide (extension agents). CBOs provided job opportunities for women and youth as workers and animators, established collective income generation projects, and acted as a critical liaison between communities and development actors for the latter to help community needs, vulnerabilities and needed capacities.

**Significance:** small producers lack bargaining power in arm stretched VCs at both ends of supply and distribution. Small producers need to collaborate through an organized body such as cooperative or CBO to leverage collective power and voice. As such, CBOs act as platforms for coordination and consolidation of small producers that assist relevant actors (MOA, service providers, input suppliers, traders, etc.) to play their roles in an efficient and economically viable manner. CBOs promoted community development, NRM, and food security. This outcome demonstrates collective platforms increasing vulnerable communities' access to government support services and enabling their rights i.e. collective voice and rights-based representation with duty bearers.

**Contribution:** TATWEER facilitated the linkage between MOA and the partner cooperatives and facilitated the introduction and linkage between CBOs with private sector marketing companies e.g. seedbank with Alkluna in the UK and Sanabil il Nassr in Palestine, women PFUs with NFC. The project also facilitated the linkages between CBOs and suppliers e.g. linked seedbank with 5 women coops work in Freekeh and nursery with seeds suppliers as well as linkages amongst farmers through exchange visits and like the case of North Jordan Valley nursery. TATWEER provided technical and legal support to farmers' CBOs as well as equipment.

**Sustainability:** CBOs continued to deliver services to their constituents at a different scale. The most prominent ones were those who **sustained their economic projects**. Economic sustainability was evident in the cases where farmers were the owners and the customers e.g., nursery, seedbank, and sheep farm, and their success is independent of third-party interests and capacities. Akluna and NFC stopped their business relationship with the seedbank sometime after the project closure. In Jalboun beekeepers stopped dealing with NFC because of delayed overdue payments. Herb production unit stopped because the cost of production is higher than the market price that NFC was unable to compete in the market. Also, farmers in Jalameh received an unsuitable packing unit for herbs- the unit was not suitable for the market and too complex for farmers to operate and maintain.

#### 9. **Outcome:** *Vivid Role of CBOs in the development process.*

**Outcome Description:** following project end, and since 2015, JICA invested in the nursery by establishing a drafting unit. Oxfam supported the expansion and rehabilitation of the nursery, and FAO supported the seedbank with one million NIS electronic strainer for seeds. MOA provided the seedbank with a tractor and nursery with some seeds and fertilizers.

**Significance:** This outcome demonstrates how relevant and successful pilot interventions can act as a catalyst attraction to other actors to capitalize upon and scale i.e. crowding in of other development actors.

**Contribution:** TATWEER facilitated the establishment and joint cooperation model that continued to engage and demonstrate their model to other actors.

**Sustainability:** working through CBOs is more efficient for development actors and allows capitalization. CBOs still play this role and development actors' engagement with CBOs is dependent on the success of their business model.

#### 10. **Outcome:** *CBOs are more inclusive and representing the collective voice of farmers.*



**Outcome Description:** Since the inception of TATWEER, CBOs increased their membership by 25%, particularly of women and women served as Board members. In 2017, CBOs began advocating for the collective rights and priorities of their farmer members. The seedbank advocated for tax exemption and voiced farmer's demand for electricity and water supply.

**Significance:** This outcome demonstrates how CBOs' social legitimacy can be improved by the adoption of a rights-based approach.

**Contribution:** TATWEER helped facilitate CBO's position in their communities by improving their relevance and services to their constituents. Through the support of the project in Faqua', 13 women established their own association.

**Sustainability:** When physical, social, economic, and institutional barriers that prevent women or youth from fully participating in political, economic, and/ or social life are reduced, they will participate and improve their wellbeing. TATWEER interventions served in improving women and youth agency and relationships aspect at individual and community level. Unavoidably the structural aspects (institutional and social norms) were less tackled. Exclusion consists of dynamic, multi-dimensional processes driven by unequal power relationships. Moreover, social inclusion is an incremental and lengthy process. (See the upcoming section on CBOs Gender inclusion).

11. **Outcome:** *Women are economically empowered and contribute to household income.*

**Outcome Description:** Between 2014 and 2015 women started generating income, equipped with needed technical skills to promote their control over the business model/ gardens. Moreover, women started to generate income individually or in groups. In Aaba women formed a group amongst themselves to manage four greenhouses as a collective income-generating opportunity. In Faqua and Aqaba they established FPU, in Jalboun Freekeh and Maftool, In Jalameh thyme, etc.

**Significance:** This outcome demonstrates how increased but capacitated women ownership over their projects, increased their income that may promote their contribution to decision making (initially in the business- buying, inputs, assets, capital, etc.) and positively influenced attitudes of men toward women. Women have the capabilities, skills, and confidence to act as contributors to the HH income recourse.

**Contribution:** TATWEER provided equipment, soft skills, and technical training including food processing in Faquaa and Aqaba, Frikeh and Maftool in Jalboun, Thyme in Jalameh, and Soap in Aqaba. It also facilitated the connection between women groups and MOA and influenced the community to give more roles to women in business model management.

**Sustainability:** Generally speaking, individual and mixed (female and male) projects were more successful than women only collective projects. Homebased food processing and home gardens continued in different locations. The Soap project in Aqaba continues to be run by three women and is successfully functioning. Women in Aaba stopped working in greenhouses. Now, the greenhouses are run only by men following the coop decision.

12. **Outcome:** *Improved Women and youth Voice & Participation.*

**Outcome Description:** In TATWEER, youth (men and women) animators were linked to and worked at CBOs in technical and management support functions. Animators led community initiatives and engaged in other income-generating opportunities and in an established learning center for students.

**Significance:** This outcome demonstrates that models for engaging youth in the agricultural sector serve to influence CBOs' positive attitudes and inclusion of youth as a valuable resource to their organizations and community.

**Contribution:** TATWEER provided capacity building to 30 youth animators, subsidized the work of 20 youth at CBOs, and provided grants for community work and income-generating projects. At the end of the project, 2 village councils and 4 CBOs created a youth community committee to reflect youth perspectives in the planning and implementation of community/ CBO major activities affecting youth.

**Sustainability:** In Aqaba there are still three women on the board and almost CBOs ratio of women members to men was kept the same. One of the three female animators was hired by Faqua coop and is still working until now. For the first time, the participating women from Al Jalameh have their own bank account and believe that they can run their projects. In 2015, Women in Aba complained that the CBO management treated them unfairly in terms of pay, working hours, and conditions.

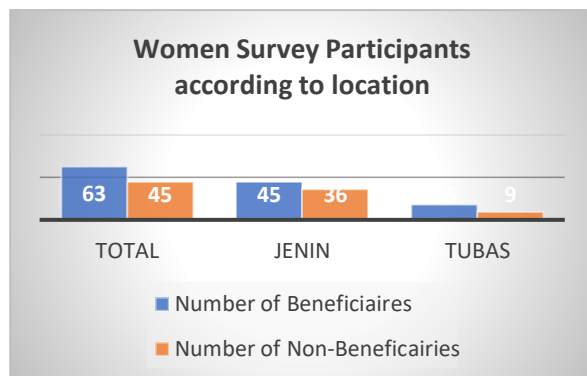
## 2.2. Women’s Empowerment

Empowerment relates to a woman’s capacity to make choices that resemble her interests. The degree of women empowerment is determined by a dynamic process of interrelated factors, including agency, structure, and relations<sup>17</sup> that are reflected in desired outcomes.

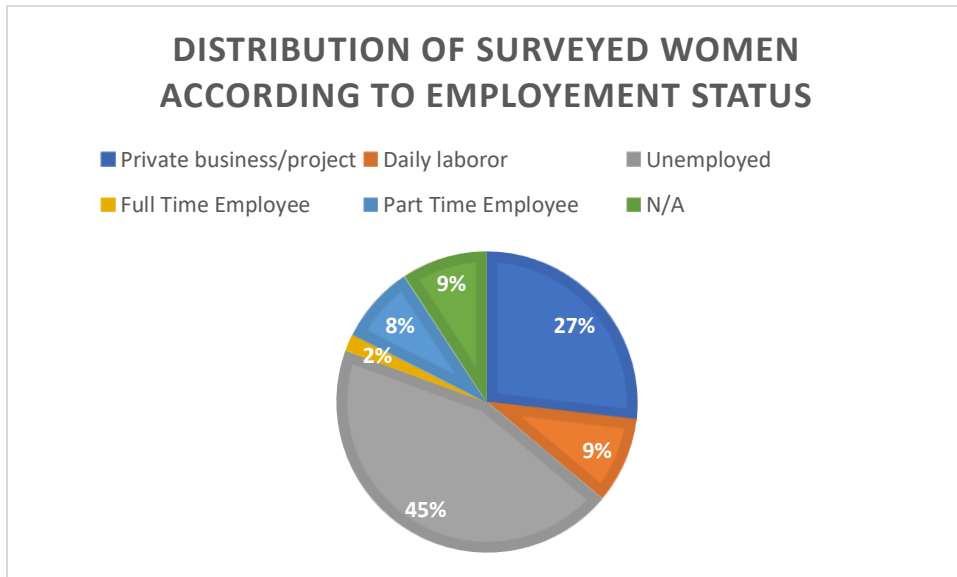
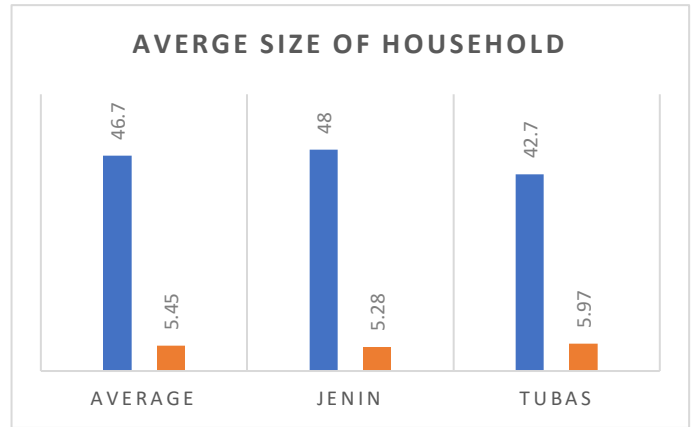
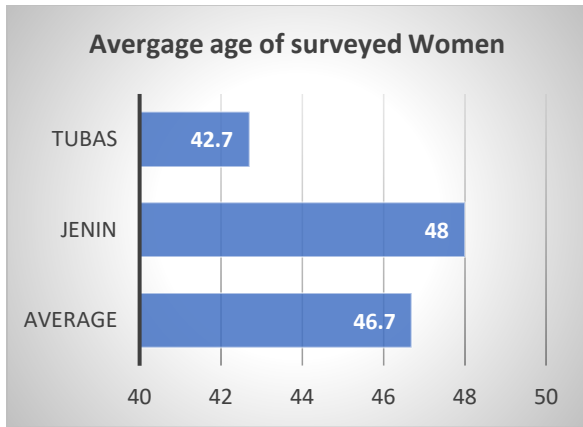
Two of the 8 intended outcomes in TATWEER reflected its commitment to strengthening women’s empowerment outcome 3- enhancing the potential for women to increase their livelihood and income. And outcome 6 “Strengthen the responsibilities, role, and status of Palestinian women through NGOs and CBOs.”

As reflected in the project TOC, Women’s empowerment outcomes were approached through skills enhancement and access to resources and capital and increased agency in linkages to gender-aware and inclusive CBOs for improved women conducive of women’s increased agency and representation. in these. In short, TATWEER’s WE&GE rationale was that if women sense of agency and participation, access to resources and markets were improved, their social, economic, and political status will be enhanced and they will contribute to improved family income, food security and resilient livelihoods.

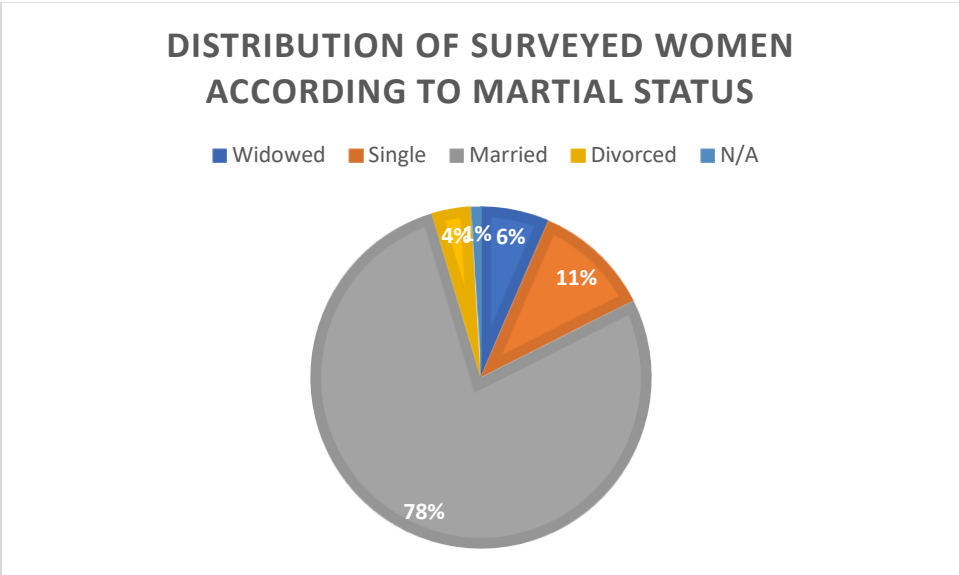
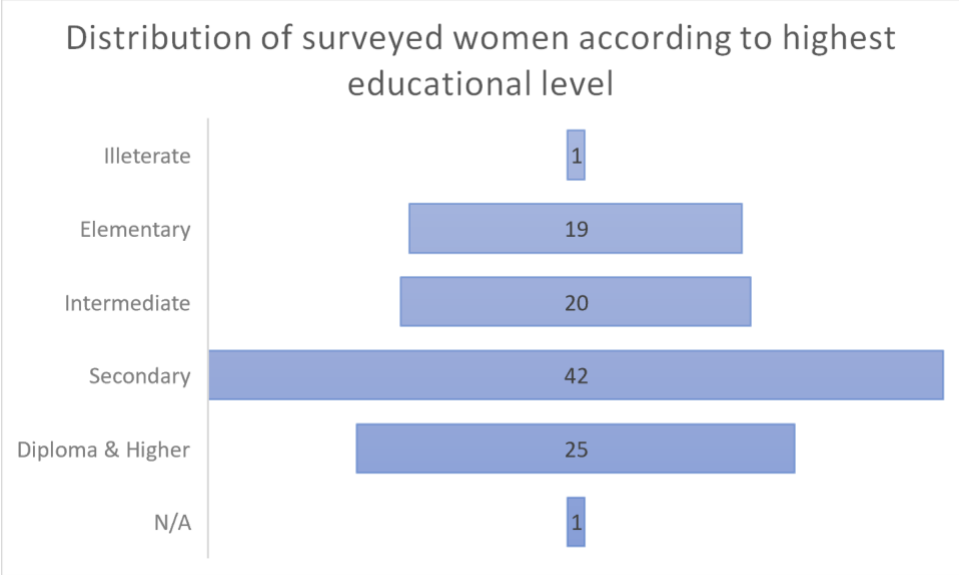
To assess the degree to which the project has empowered women, according to the third objective of this study, Advance conducted a survey targeting women from the project target communities. The survey measured women’s empowerment in three domains: economic, social, and political at family and community levels, utilizing five core empowerment indicators. Respondent characteristics are below demonstrated:



<sup>17</sup> CARE’s Gender Transformative Approach dictates agency, structure, and relations domains where transformation is needed to advance gender equality.







Empowerment is a multidimensional and interconnected process. It is reflected in women’s control over resources and their life; their mobility and participation in public life; people’s attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs. **In TATWEER, the socioeconomic status of women is mostly reflected in their choice of produce/project and market, in their personal and professional networks, and even in the level of achieved outcomes.** Analysis of survey indicates participant women in TATWEER have a higher degree of agency (power within), knowledge and capacities (power to), participation and engagement (power with), and control of resources (power over) than non-participants at different levels mainly individual, household, and community. While the economic dimension of empowerment was more noticeable with participant women, political and social empowerment was also evident.

**2.2.1. Mobility**

Mobility refers to physical mobility in terms of time, place, space, and locality. **TATWEER participants reported only slightly higher overall mobility** (whether jointly or alone) compared to non-participants (Participants 46% vs. non-participants 44%). Participant women also **reported a higher degree of ‘agency’ in their mobility** as the percentage of women who can move alone is higher (P 56% vs. N 53%).

While **participants** reported **higher independent mobility** in eight variables related mainly to the **market and social spheres, traveling out of locality for different purposes**, **non-participants** reported higher ‘alone or independent mobility’ in three variables related to **personal** care and entertainment. Moreover, findings indicate a positive correlation between a woman’s years of education and her mobility irrespective of her participation in TATWEER. For example, women who finished secondary school and above reported a higher degree of mobility (jointly and alone: 48%). Additionally, **59%** of educated women showed that they could move independently for different purposes or locations.

### 2.2.2. Decision Making

This dimension gauges women’s ability to exercise choice vis-à-vis the extent of freedom/ involvement in decision-making about economic, political, and social (including reproductive health) issues.

Findings show that **participant women are slightly more involved in the decision-making process** (jointly or alone) than non-participants (Participant 47% vs. non-participant 44%). Likewise, **educated** (47%) and **self-employed** women (47%) exercise higher decision-making than non-participants. Also, participant women reported a higher percentage of individual decision-making than educated, self-employed, or non-participants (52%, 51%, 50%, and 45%, respectively). More importantly, **the gap between participants and non-participants widens** when it comes to **independent strategic and economic issues; strategic issues** related, for example to (when to have children and how many, running for a local council or parliament election, etc.) as well as **economic ones** (borrowing or lending money, purchasing or selling of land, to having a job, etc.)

Survey findings show that educated women are more involved in personal, social, or political life decisions than others. Also, self-employed women are more engaged in decisions about reproductive rights, advocacy, and economic affairs. **Participants reported a higher** weight of independence in **decision making about political and strategic social and economic issues** (14 variables) than educated women. Participant women also report higher decision-making in social matters (family and reproductive health) and political life (19 variables) than self-employed women.

Educated women are found more independent in decision making in issues pertaining to social (enhance the quality of life) and advocacy activities (10 variables) compared to participant women. Likewise, their participation in social and political life (13 variables) particularly in collective work (such as coop, council, advocacy, and charity) are higher than self-employed women. However, self-employed women are found more independent in their decisions regarding strategic economic issues and participation in social activities beyond family compared to participated women (6 variables). Self-employed women are more independent than educated women in financial and strategic life decisions (11 variables). It is worth noting that the percentage of women who reported being involved in advocacy, political, and strategic economic decisions is much less in other aspects.

### 2.2.3. Access

**Access to various rights, resources, and services were in general modest.** Results indicate that participant women in TATWEER report slightly higher access to services and rights than non-participants (participant 25% vs. non-participant 21%). Also, 30% of **participant women reported continuous access across resources, services, and rights compared with 16% of non-participants.** This difference was mainly concerning access to social services such as health, education, and electricity.

#### 2.2.4. Awareness

Generally speaking, **women reported a low level of awareness/** knowledge about their **rights** (gender equality, GBV, and protection), technical and managerial skills, markets, and programs. However, **participant women in TATWEER reported relatively higher level of awareness** across different variables than non-participants (participant 23% vs. non-participant 18%). More than half of women who participated in TATWEER reported excellent knowledge in subjects related to gender equality and rights, technical and professional, and support programs.

#### 2.2.5. Participation

Women's share and role in various activities in society are **moderate.** The highest involvement was reported in social events (Participants 82% and non-participants 70% are often or engaged continuously in family and social events). The lowest participation was in political parties (Participants 20% and non-participants 5% reported frequently or constantly engage with a political party). In general, **participants reported a higher degree of engagement** than non-participants in different activities (participant 25% vs non-participant 18%).

#### 2.2.6. Outcomes

Overall, **participants experience slightly higher degree of positive outcomes** than non-participants (participant 29% vs. non-participant 27%). Livelihood and food security appear higher among participant women than non-participants. More participant women reported improved food varieties (diversity and balance) compared to non-participants (66% vs 56%) and less so on the level of sufficiency (adequacy and availability) is 29% for participants 25% for non-participants). Also, nearly one third of participants (32%) report frequently saving a good amount of money compared with 17% of non-participants (reported ability to save money is 20% for participants and 14% for non-participants). Similarly, 33% of participants reported regular or constant sufficiency of household income compared with 24% of non-participants.

Additionally, a higher percentage of participant women perceive positive support from family and society than non-participants (participant 44% and 35% of non-participant the average of five variables). Unexpectedly, the level of oppression reported by participant women like that reported by non-participants (64% the average level reported by participants and 63% by non-participants). This could be attributable to slightly more frequent reports of by economic exploitation among participants (29% vs 25%, participants vs. non-participants). On the other hand, 15% of participants experienced violence by their husbands at least once (verbal or physical abuse or threats of divorce or another marriage). In comparison, 17% of non-participants experienced verbal or physical abuse, and 19% were threatened by their husbands' divorce or another marriage.

### 2.3. CBO's Gender Inclusion

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The third objective of TATWEER (AMENCA II) was to strengthen the role of community organizations in the development process. The second objective of this study is to assess the inclusivity and gender-responsiveness of local development platforms and civil society institutions. To that effect, Advance conducted a self-assessment survey with the participant CBOs to assess gender inclusion. The survey gauges degree of inclusion in seven organizational dimensions.

CBOs, and especially mixed CBOs, sustained gender inclusion but continue to lack the proper mechanisms and sufficient resources to do so systematically.

- 2.3.1. **Governance:** Gender equality is mentioned in 80% of CBO's strategy documents and policies but did not come out in almost half of the CBOs. (100% in women-only CBOs and 50% in mixed CBOs)
- 2.3.2. **Program Management & Practices:** the design and planning of services in Women only CBOs respond to the particular needs of women only. All assessed CBOs lack systematic monitoring and impact measurement of gender inclusion. In general, the staff is encouraged to work on gender inclusion and women and are consulted in the design and planning. In 80% of CBOs, the number of female beneficiaries is comprehensive, occupying equitable positions.
- 2.3.3. **Human Resources:** Gender is part of the human resource policy of almost half of assessed CBOs. Some CBOs have taken actions to enable women employment. Representation of women can be seen on all levels in half of mixed CBOs. Gender expertise exists within CBOs but is not necessarily or regularly used within the organization or by partners.
- 2.3.4. **Financial Resources:** was the weakest rated variable by almost all assessed CBOs. CBOs management revealed that they do not allocate a budget for the inclusion of women in their programs, explaining that they do not have that money to allocate.
- 2.3.5. **Accessibility:** most of CBOs' facilities are accessible to all community members, including girls, boys, men, and women who can reach safely, enter, move around, and use the office building and access events and community meetings. Separate toilets are available, and most project activities pay consideration to equality.
- 2.3.6. **Communication:** On certain occasions like project design, CBOs listen to the communities' needs, thoughts, and feelings. Most of the time, key information is provided verbally in meetings, but a two-way communication is not necessarily applied.
- 2.3.7. **Participation & Attitude:** Organizations recognize equal rights and treatment of all people are report ensuring active participation for all in planning but not necessarily in implementation or monitoring. Every CBO member has an equal right and opportunity to lead and represent the organization according to CBOs' bylaws.

## 2.4. Seedbank Case Study

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**TATWEER's primary intervention was to develop the capacities of the JGFA as a strong local mobilizer to run the seedbank sustainably.** The seedbank was established in 2006 by combining four CBOs through the support of the AMENCA I program represented in 24 tons of seed and cover the rent of land parcel from MOA. JGFA planted the 24 tons and replicated them into 52 tons in 2009. TATWEER provided JGFA in 2009 with a simple sieve, tractor, plows, and water tanks. When JGFA started working on the Freekeh project, TATWEER gave JGFA 32 tons of Freekeh. **As result, many development organizations capitalized on the TATWEER initiative and provided JGFA with many agricultural equipment and machines e.g. another tractor from the MOA and an advanced sieve from FAO (cost more than one million USD).** The national research center (NARC) worked with the seedbank and identified more than 30 varieties of wheat and advised to focus on 5 quality varieties that replaced the Israeli products. In 2012, TATWEER facilitated

the linkage between the seedbank and Newfarm Company. The cooperation lasted for several years until recently.

**JGFA's sustainability and growth was enabled by the proven needs-based economically viable business initiated by TATWEER (expanded services, market driven linkages) which encouraged the support later received by other development actors to further solidify** Lending seeds to farmers does not return much profit to grant continuity of the seedbank. According to JGFA management, the main reason behind the continuity of the seedbank has been the parcel of land that replicates seeds which was pursued later. The running costs of the seedbank are also covered through the Freekeh project as they take one shekel per kilo in return for sieving, drying, and storing freekeh for the different clients. The annual leasing of tractors to farmers also secures additional income to JGFA, between 5,000 to 10,000 NIS.

**JGFA's growth and expansion reached more farmers and enhanced their access to inputs and services but continues to be undermined by MOA and other development actors:** Nowadays, the seedbank provides 5 varieties of wheat, 2 barley, 3 chickpeas, indigenous lentils, 2 vicia, and other seeds. Also, JGFA rents plowing mechanisms (tractors), a dryer, and a sieve for purifying and storing freekeh. The 250 farmers who constituted JGFA in 2006, increased by ten folds reaching 2,500 farmers in 2021 with a lending capacity of up to 800 tons of seeds annually. The number of JGFA members was much higher but in recent years, the number of beneficiaries has decreased by almost 20% due to the **free distribution of seeds by the Ministry of Agriculture and various projects without linking them to the seedbank.**

**Nevertheless, as a local community actor, the seedbank flexibility enhanced farmers' trust in it.** For example, two years ago, JGFA relinquished half the quantity of lent seeds due to the bad season. In some cases, farmers who were unable pay back the quantity of seeds were deferred to the next year without any fees.

**Fragility, inconducive regulatory and coordination frameworks continue to pose a challenge to the feedback sustainability:** JGFA continues to face several challenges in their operations including lack of farmers' commitment vis-à-vis their evasion to pay back the borrowed seeds, absence of any guarantee/ insurance schemes, and free distribution of seeds and grants by different projects.

The number of female members at JGFA was 12 in 2006, reached 30 by the end of 2014 and **300** by the end of **2020**. JGFA deals with 5 to 6 women groups and **one of the TATWEER's conditions to support the seedbank was the presence of women on the association's board of directors.** To that effect, two women were appointed out of the twelve board members. Nine years later, **the two women resigned** from the board. According to the women empowerment survey, participant women from JGFA report less ability to move freely, to participate in decision making as well as social, economic, and political activities than other TATWEER participants. However, they report better access, knowledge, and livelihood outcomes than other participant women.

JGFA women are slightly less able than other participant women to freely move (JGFA 44% vs CBOs 46%). Yet, they are more able to travel abroad for business, go to sport-club or Spa, market for selling, or visit the cooperative. They also have slightly less maneuver for decision making (JGFA 46% vs CBOs 47%). However, they have more space in decisions related to political and social participation, managing their own money and jewels, and involvement in income-generating activities or jobs outside their homes. They have better access to services and resources than other participated women (JGFA 28% vs CBOs 25%). Peculiarly they have less access to quality inputs than other women (JGFA 22% vs CBOs 27%). Women from JGFA have a higher level of knowledge than other women who participated in TATWEER (JGFA 25% vs CBOs 23%) in almost all variables except in markets and business opportunities and shelters and women support organizations. However, JGFA women are less engaged than other participated women in

political, social, and economic spheres (JGFA 22% vs CBOs 24%) with exception of being more vocal such as participating in discussions and advocacy campaigns for women rights. JGFA women have better livelihood levels than other participated women including the sufficiency of food verities, the sufficiency of household income, and saving a good amount of money.

JGFA was less gender-responsive and inclusive than other assessed CBOs i.e. gender is not fully integrated but approached **as a separate/ standalone gender-specific component** or attached to a mainstream activity. According to JGFA management, Gender equality is mentioned in the strategy documents and worked out in some policies. Gender equality is mentioned in the majority of the planning, monitoring and evaluation formats. Yet, gender disaggregated data is not collected in any program. While JGFA recognizes equal rights and treatment of all people, women are consulted in the design of some projects. Moreover, JGFA listens to the community on certain occasions like project planning but not necessarily keeping two-way communication or giving feedback. Accessibility to the facilities and activities are safely guaranteed for both males and females.

## 4. Conclusions & Recommendations

According to the study findings, **the three objectives of TATWEER have been achieved and sustained. Women's participation** (as evident in self-assessment survey results and secondary sources) and **the role of CBOs** (based on desk research and FGDs) **in the development process were enhanced.** Food security, livelihoods, and natural resource management were also enhanced as revealed by self-assessment survey, desk research, and informants' feedback in the FGDs.

Many of the harvested outcomes at the end of the project were sustained though not in all target communities or CBOs, nor were they equal or at the same pace. The more the CBO's business model is economically viable, the more likely the achieved outcomes to continue. The successful businesses were those built on identified needs and thorough market analysis e.g. nursery and seedbank. Only the market-ready projects reached the market and succeeded. Facilitated linkages amongst different VC actors that were not market-driven did not continue, e.g. linkages with Newfarm.

The degree of empowerment is measured by the existence of choice (alternatives), the use of choice (agency), and the achievement of choice (desired outcomes). Participant women in TATWEER use choice when appropriate alternatives are available and affordable (access, mobility, and knowledge) to achieve the desired outcomes (livelihood). Different research suggests women are socialized differently and therefore will perceive opportunities in a different way<sup>18</sup>. **In TATWEER, the socioeconomic status of women has been reflected in their choice of produce/ project and market, in their personal and professional networks, and even in the level of achieved outcomes.**

The analysis of women's ability to move freely clearly reflects the cultural and social aspects of the movement as well as women's agency. Educated and participated women have better mobility than non-participants. Their mobility is not limited by geographical locations, or the availability of transportation rather linked to their socioeconomic status, willingness, and needs i.e., the causes of movement. **Apparently, economically empowered women such as self-employed ones are more involved and**

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<sup>18</sup> DeTienne, D. & Chandler, G. (2007) The Role of Human Capital and Gender in Opportunity Identification. *Entrepreneurship Theory & Practice*, 31(3), 365-386

**independent in strategic and economic decisions, while educated ones are more independent in the social and political issues.**

CBOs Lack the proper mechanisms and sufficient resources to systematize gender inclusion. All CBOs are weak in monitoring inclusion and assess impact. Communication also needs to be strengthened. It can be said that the assessed CBOs have integrated inclusion within their systems and practices except for JGFA that adopt inclusion as a component approach.

CARE and its partners are encouraged to:

1. CBOs role in development: Capitalize on TATWEER achievements and lessons learned in future programming by continued focusing on the targeted communities in planning new projects that build upon the community based resources and capacities especially the supported CBOs and/ or engage in follow up and coordination activities at higher levels (district, sectoral) to sustain and magnify impact
2. Allocate more budgets and qualifications for market side and business development in economic development projects.
3. Focus on educated (and
4. continue exploring Nexus approach integration – think outside traditional practices of heavy inputs’ distribution, continue incorporating business analysis as part of program design, etc single) women in economic empowerment project particularly in untraditional roles/ positions, products/ markets, and/ or sectors.
5. Avoid undermining sustained outcomes from TATWEER project by distorting the market e.g. distribution of seeds as part of AMENCA III through traders without coordinating with seedbank.
6. Building the organizational capacities of Newfarm in a sustainable manner to serve as profitable market gateway for CBOs.
7. Facilitate linkages and complementarities amongst CBOs such as seedbank selling forge for Sheep farm, and the farm provide milk or cheese for food processing units, and so forth.
8. Develop the business model of targeted CBOs and provide them with the needed support to succeed.

CBOs are encouraged to:

1. Focus on income generation projects and fortify existing ones.
2. Balance between the social and economic dimensions in their work by not jeopardizing the economic viability and growth of income generating project for social benefit of farmers.
3. Walk the talk by enhancement of gender mainstreaming and devolution of power.
4. Give more space to youth in future programs.