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EVALUATION REPORT



**UDF-PAL-10-376: Advancing the rights of women in the West Bank periphery
(Palestine)**

Date: 18 February 2015

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Women at a training session

Disclaimers

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I. Executive Summary

i. Project Data

Between 1 June 2012 and 31 May 2014 (including a three-month no-cost extension to take into account interruptions due to the security situation in the West Bank), the International Peace and Cooperation Centre (IPCC), a non-governmental organization (NGO) based in Jerusalem, implemented a project called “Advancing the rights of women in the West Bank periphery”, with a total budget of USD 150,000, including USD 15,000 set aside by UNDEF for final evaluation.

The overall development objective of the project was: “to promote social change and empower women in the West Bank to increase their participation within local governance frameworks and positions...specifically in urban and environmental planning at the level of local councils, and to increase public awareness and support for women’s participation in local governance and urban and environmental planning”.

The grantee opened a project office in Ramallah to take account of travel restrictions on the majority of participants and in particular the inability of participants to travel into Jerusalem. Also because of travel difficulties, the project’s activities were decentralized as far as possible, although security disruptions during the project meant that some training had to be relocated to Ramallah. The project was implemented in the north, middle and south of the West Bank, focusing on zones included in ‘Area C, where the Israeli authorities have control of land use. In each of these areas, villages were grouped into two subregions where activities were organized. The subregions were: South and South-East Nablus and North-East and South-West Jenin in the north; North-West Jerusalem and North Jerusalem in the middle; and West Bethlehem and North-West and South Hebron in the south.



ii. Evaluation questions

The evaluation team comprising an international and a national expert undertook a field mission to Jerusalem and the West Bank from 1 to 6 December 2014. The evaluators interviewed staff of the grantee, women from all four categories of participant in Ramallah (middle), Nablus (north), Jenin (north) and Bethlehem (south), trainers, representatives of relevant ministries and UN agencies (in Ramallah and Jerusalem).

In considering the project’s **relevance**, the evaluators focused on the unusual and very specific focus on urban planning as a tool for the empowerment of women within their communities and the labour market. It was found that this innovative approach to equipping women with skills and understanding that gives them a comparative advantage – particularly in forums where they (and the voices of women in general) are traditionally under-represented such as local government bodies – was highly relevant. Moreover, upskilling local councils through the training of women both elected and aspiring to election filled a specific and significant need in relation to appropriate development of communities in the most challenging areas of the West Bank.

In considering the project’s **effectiveness**, the evaluators looked at the different components of the project, their content and how they were implemented. The evaluators also considered how well relationships with key stakeholders were developed and whether these were likely to support the outcomes of the project. In all these areas, the project performed well. Importantly, each component was both designed and implemented to contribute directly to achieving the objectives identified.

In relation to **efficiency**, the evaluators were concerned at the obvious shortfall in the project budget, which had no funds available for transport, accommodation or for overheads. This put the project seriously at risk. While the grantee was able to provide own funding of more than 30% of the grant, this was not without consequences for the financial well-being of the organization. The evaluators noted that the use of provided funds was well balanced, with most of the funds being allocated directly to training, meetings and materials directly related to achievement of the project’s objectives.

The project did not meet all its targets in relation to the number of community members, in particular men, who would be engaged by the activities, however IPCC used this as an opportunity to learn lessons on the challenges of persuading men to consider new approaches to community decision making. Having a partner with experience in mobilizing male community members might have been useful in this regard.

The **impact** of the project worked at a number of levels: women in all four target groups (elected councillors, community activists, recent graduates and young professionals) detailed the positive effects of their participation in the project’s activities. This ranged from increased self-confidence to enhanced influence in local government bodies. The younger women in particular said that they felt they could now represent other women more effectively and that they sought opportunities to do that. A number of women reported that they now chair planning committees in their communities and several aspire to be mayors in the near future.

“I’ve been a councillor now for seven years, and in the first five years I did lots of training with little effect. The IPCC training really made a difference to my role in the council. Now I understand what each agenda item means and I can make informed decisions. And I can argue and join in discussions fully. I am enthusiastic about standing again for council. I would like to be mayor.”

Woman councillor from Himara

The impact on women’s participation in leadership and governance is therefore positive, although there is more to do in this area. Some of the women’s organizations that participated are lobbying to increase the current quota of 20% female participation in decision-making bodies. They called for more training from IPCC: extending training to more communities; providing Training of Trainer courses to permit a multiplier effect; and additional sessions on leadership, governance, conflict management and communication.

The impact of increased skills in urban planning on the development of West Bank communities is embryonic and will take some time to be demonstrable, however some of the young graduates and professionals are now in work placements and will as a result be able to compete more equitably for planning jobs. Women from these two groups have been providing input to the Palestinian Authority’s Physical Planning Manual.

The evaluators considered the **sustainability** of the project’s outcomes and concluded that the implementation methodology followed sowed the seeds of sustainability. In particular, the project engaged the two West Bank universities (and individual academics in them) that have urban planning programmes, so that the concept and practice of women’s representation and participation in this field can be mainstreamed into the education of future urban planners, architects and engineers. The project also built strong ties with relevant Ministries as well as

with UNHABITAT, embedding its methodology and outcomes into these important and relevant future partners.

“In Ahraba, the women trainees met the mayor and he articulated the community’s needs. The women interrupted: ‘We don’t need a kindergarten near the mosque!’ they insisted, ‘where the loudspeakers wake the children several times a day!’”

IPCC Trainer reporting on a field visit

To support the sustainability of the women’s achievements, there will need to be more efforts to engage men in understanding both the importance of urban planning and the need to involve women in informing it and taking decisions affecting it. While some of the women believed that the best way to do this is to offer training to the men too, this

would reduce the women’s comparative advantage, and a better way to proceed may be to consider a focus on youth in the community who are more open to the concept of gender equity and who will be the councillors of the future.

The evaluators noted that IPCC must ensure its own sustainability by maintaining a balance between core funding and project-focused funding. It will be important for the organization to remain focused on its strengths and not be distracted by donor-driven agendas.

It was clear to the evaluators that the project provided significant **value-added for UNDEF** because of its innovative nature and tangible outcomes. The evaluators believe that it might be presented as an example of good practice: a women’s empowerment project that is not limited to informing women of their rights but that provided practical tools for achieving them. The project also provided good visibility for UNDEF in critical areas of local governance in the West Bank, opening the door for future work in leadership and democratic reform.

iii. Conclusions

- **The project was highly relevant.** Indeed, the project was not only relevant but innovative. It went beyond the many projects that do no more to empower women than teach them about their rights but give them no avenues or tools to achieve them, by equipping the women participants with scarce and much-needed knowledge and skills that would allow them both to contribute to the development of their communities and take a leadership role in achieving this.

- **The project was effective.** The intelligent design of the project was reinforced by careful implementation that also responded to the challenges arising from restrictions on movement. The mix of centralized and decentralized training as needs dictated, the strong links forged between trainees and trainers, and among the different women’s groups and local and national governance structures including the Ministry of Local Government, the Ministry of Women, UNHABITAT, UNDP and Birzeit and An-Najah universities, all contributed to the project’s strength and effectiveness.

- **The “missing men” weakened the community support component.** It was a pity that the community awareness sessions did not attract the interest of men in the communities. It may well be that IPCC needed help in this area of implementation from an organization with some expertise in mobilizing men’s participation; alternatively, it might have looked at an alternative forum to include men in the project.

- **The project was extremely efficient despite serious under-funding.** The budget was intelligently allocated and used, however the grantee was obliged to top-up UNDEF funds in order to cover transport and accommodation costs that were unavoidable given both the nature of the project and the restrictions on movement in the West Bank. These categories of expenditure, as well as overheads, should have been included in the budget projections from the outset.

- ***The project had a positive impact at a number of levels.*** The women interviewed gave numerous examples of the positive impact of the project on their self-confidence and skills level, but also on the nature of their profile within their communities and in particular as representatives of other women in various forums. Additionally, however, the project has the potential over time to have a positive impact on urban planning in the West Bank and in particular on how it takes into account the needs of women and children.

- ***Some elements of the project are sustainable.*** The impact of the project on individual women and their positions within their communities is an important factor in the sustainability of the project's outcomes. To ensure that this remains true, however, the follow-up mechanisms put in place will need to be maintained, particularly for the young graduates and professionals. Sustainability will also be enhanced if the training can be extended to more communities across the West Bank, building a stronger group of advocates for gender-sensitive planning at local and central levels.

- ***This project brought important value added to UNDEF.*** This was an innovative project that can be used as a 'good practice' example of actions that truly empower women by giving them the tools they need to negotiate their positions within their communities. The project provided good visibility for UNDEF in critical areas and opened a door for future work in governance and leadership in LGUs and potentially even in relation to electoral reform. It is regrettable that the grant awarded was not higher.

iv. Recommendations

For IPCC

- ***It is important to stay focused on the organization's obvious strengths and in particular on urban planning as a tool for empowerment.*** For areas of project activity that go beyond IPCC's expertise (for example mobilizing men in the community), it would be a good idea to identify a partner organization that has that expertise and to work with them.

- ***In any follow-up programming, it would be useful to consider the suggestions made by a number of participants:*** consider Training of Trainers courses for some of the women already trained, perhaps working with the Association of Engineers or Birzeit and An-Najah universities. Add further modules to the training programme to focus on the skills that women need in their enhanced representational role (communication skills, conflict management, governance and leadership).

- ***Take care to strategize the balance between general programming and specific projects to minimize financial risk.*** Keeping a balance between revenue raising/core funding from donors and project-specific funding will minimize the risk that under-funding from a donor will put a strain on the organization and threaten the organization's well-being. Projects should ideally be short-term, innovative/pilot in nature and designed to demonstrate clear impact and outcomes that also allow lessons to be learned for broader programming. Always include a provision for overheads in the budget – this is standard practice and obviates the need to top up from scarce core resources.

For UNDEF

- ***This project might be used as a good practice example of a women's empowerment project that goes beyond teaching women their rights and practically equips them to realise those rights.***

I. Introduction and development context

i. The project and evaluation objectives

From 1 June 2012 to 31 May 2014 (including a three-month no-cost extension to take into account interruptions due to the security situation in the West Bank), the International Peace and Cooperation Centre (IPCC), a non-governmental organization (NGO) based in Jerusalem, implemented a project called “Advancing the rights of women in the West Bank periphery”. There were no partners in the project. The total budget was USD 150,000, including USD 15,000 set aside by UNDEF for final evaluation.

The overall development objective of the project was: “to promote social change and empower women in the West Bank to increase their participation within local governance frameworks and positions...specifically in urban and environmental planning at the level of local councils, and to increase public awareness and support for women’s participation in local governance and urban and environmental planning”.

The project was implemented in the north, middle and south of the West Bank, focusing on zones included in ‘Area C’ (see map). In each of these areas, villages were grouped into two subregions where activities were organized. The subregions were:

- South and South-East Nablus (in the north)
- North-East and South-West Jenin (in the north)
- North-West Jerusalem (in the middle)
- North Jerusalem (in the middle)
- West Bethlehem (in the south)
- North-West and South Hebron (in the south).

The project strategy focused on “raising awareness and the capacity of women at the local level, and endorsing action at the policy level”. The women targeted were women at the grassroots level (mainly “activists” involved in women’s groups), women who had been elected to local councils, recent graduates in relevant fields (engineering, architecture) and young professionals. The women participated in the project through a series of targeted training activities.

Additionally, the project envisaged a number of information/awareness raising activities:

- Preparation of a detailed needs assessment/baseline report;
- One-day community awareness campaigns in each of the six subregions;
- 24 half-day awareness sessions in collaboration with local government in the context of the government’s strategic plan for sectoral gender mainstreaming 2011-2013;

The intended outcomes of the project were:

- Outcome 1: Increased public awareness and support for women’s participation in local government and urban and environmental planning in the six project subregions;
- Outcome 2: Increased capacity of women to participate in local governance related to urban and environmental planning in the six project subregions.



Area C map from the Israeli Human Rights organization B'Tselem

ii. Evaluation methodology

An international expert designated to lead the evaluation prepared a preliminary planning note (Launch Note) in November 2014 in consultation with the national expert and Transtec Evaluation Manager. The Note was based on a review of project documentation (see Annex 2). Meanwhile, the grantee and national expert began developing a schedule of interviews that would take place during a field mission to Jerusalem and the West Bank from 1 to 6 December 2014. Although IPCC is based in Jerusalem, the organization maintains a project office in Ramallah because of the difficulty of staff moving outside areas for which they have permits (there is more on this in the Development Context section below).

The evaluators interviewed staff of the grantee, women from all four categories of participant in Ramallah (middle), Nablus (north), Jenin (north) and Bethlehem (south), trainers, representatives of relevant ministries and UN agencies (in Ramallah and by phone to Jerusalem). UNWOMEN declined to be interviewed. The full list of people interviewed is presented in Annex 3.

Information was collected, analysed and is presented in this report according to the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria of: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. The evaluation questions are outlined in more detail in Annex 1.

iii. Development context

The social, economic and political development of Palestine¹ – including the stability of democratic processes, people’s participation in governance and the institutions of democratic freedom -- cannot be separated from the political realities on the ground.

The area known as the West Bank (from its location to the west of the Jordan River) and the narrow strip of land known as the Gaza Strip, are nominally one territory, however they are separated not only by a 60 kilometre land bridge but by checkpoints, the Israeli “seam line” barrier, and permissions and restrictions on movement that are heavily policed by the Israeli army and civilian authorities. As a result, the people of the West Bank and Gaza Strip live separate lives.

The two territories live under distinctly different political structures and regimes. Following the death of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat in 2004, Mahmoud Abbas was elected President of the Palestinian Authority (PA). The PA leadership has its headquarters in the West Bank town of Ramallah. In January 2006, the Gaza-based Islamic Resistance Movement, HAMAS, won control of the Palestinian Legislative Council and took control of the PA. Negotiations with President Abbas to develop a common political platform for the West Bank and Gaza failed and it took until May 2011 for HAMAS and Fatah to agree to reunification of the territories, although final decisions on governance and security structures have not been implemented as of end-2014.

The West Bank is divided into 93 local government units (LGUs), and for the first time in six years, in October 2012 people were able to vote for their local councillors. Under recent legislation, 20 per cent of the councillors must be women, although this quota has to a large extent been manipulated by powerful families who have put female family members forward and then ensured that they do not participate once elected. Nevertheless the number of women standing for election and being elected to LGUs increased markedly:

¹ In November 2012, the UN granted Palestine “non-member state” status, thus effectively recognizing it as a state. Some UN bodies and governments still, however, refer to the State of Palestine as the ‘Occupied Territories of Palestine’ (OPT), especially in documents dealing with Palestine refugees. Most official UN documents, however, have now dropped the use of OPT and use the name Palestine.

Results of elections to local bodies, 2012/2013

Percentage of women (quota = 20%)	Number of winners by acclamation			Total Winners			Electoral area
	Total	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men	
2	242	50	192	286	58	228	Jerusalem
13	292	63	229	498	105	393	Jenin
9	118	27	91	210	45	165	Tolkarm
2	47	11	36	108	22	86	Tobas
19	305	73	232	495	110	385	Nablus
6	136	28	108	213	43	170	Qalqia
18	40	9	31	186	38	148	Salfit
20	407	87	320	655	139	516	Ramallah & al Beira
3	38	8	30	80	17	63	Jericho
5	234	50	184	356	73	283	Bethlehem
6	252	59	193	387	82	305	Hebron
103	2,111	465	1,646	3,474	732	2,742	Total

Source: Central Elections Commission 2013

Palestine is ranked in the “medium human development” category and in 2014 had continued a slow improvement in its ranking in the UNDP Human Development Index to 107 of 186 countries with comparable data,² although there are significant differences between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

The West Bank has a population of approximately 2.79 million (Gaza has 1.76 million).³ In September 2014, 382,031 Israeli citizens lived in almost 400 settlements scattered across the West Bank.⁴

Gender equality and development indicators suggest that women and men have similar life expectancy, mean years of basic schooling and secondary education. However there is a significant gender gap in labour force participation rates for workers over the age of 15: in 2012 the labour participation rate for men was 66.3% while for women it was only 15.2%. This explains to a large extent the resulting GNI per capita of USD 1,651 for women in 2013 and USD 8,580 for men.⁵ This contributes to a significantly patriarchal society in which, although girls and boys have equal opportunity, adult women are not considered to be decision makers (outside the home) or to have equal social value to men.



Israeli settlement in the West Bank (photo: Reuters)

² UNDP: *Human Development Report 2014*.
³ Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2014.
⁴ News report at www.mondoweiss.net, 17 September 2014.
⁵ UNDP: *Human Development Report 2014*.

The baseline study prepared as part of the project under consideration emphasized this and in particular its impact in relation to decisions made about planning and development of communities. Women's voices are largely unheard when decisions are made about construction and development in the communities. This is particularly crucial in development of communities in the part of the West Bank categorized as Area C, which is subject to stringent control.

Areas of control in the West Bank

Following the 1993 Oslo Accords, the West Bank was divided into three administrative divisions: Area A, covering some 18% of the West Bank, is home to 55% of the Palestinian population and is under PA administration; Area B, also under PA civil administration but whose security is under Israeli control, covers 21% of the land and is home to 41% of the population; Area C is under Israeli administration and covers 61% of the West Bank with just 4% of the population being Palestinian.

This is the most contested area, with growing numbers of settlements resulting in restrictions on road use for Palestinians and frequent unrest.

Land use is strictly controlled by the Israeli authorities, from whom a permit is needed for all new construction. Structures that do not have a permit, even on private land, are subject to demolition. For this reason, urban planning and in particular understanding of what can and cannot be built, and where, is a highly prized skill.

It is in the context of the imperative for appropriate urban planning and the need to make sure that women's voices are heard in this that the current project was conceived and implemented.

II. Project strategy

i. Project approach and strategy

IPCC has staff specialized in urban planning, engineering and architecture, and this was their entry point to the project, which aimed to equip women from the four target groups with a very specific set of skills that would allow them to take leadership roles within their communities and/or workplaces. At the same time, the skills provided in the area of urban planning (reading maps, understanding planning legislation – particularly complex in Area C – and taking into account community needs, including the specific needs of women and children, in urban design) are much needed in Palestine, where urban development has traditionally been male-dominated and based on commercial rather than community demands.

This two-pronged approach – upgrading urban planning skills in the target groups and using these new skills as a tool of empowerment for the women concerned -- was new to the grantee and indeed new to the region. It was implemented primarily through training of the four target groups, however the grantee was very aware that these women, once empowered, would depend also on the understanding of their communities and in particular of the men who had hitherto exercised power within local councils, community structures and male-oriented workplaces. The strategy therefore included community-based awareness-raising events and half-day educational/awareness sessions that included local government officers and central government representative from relevant ministries.

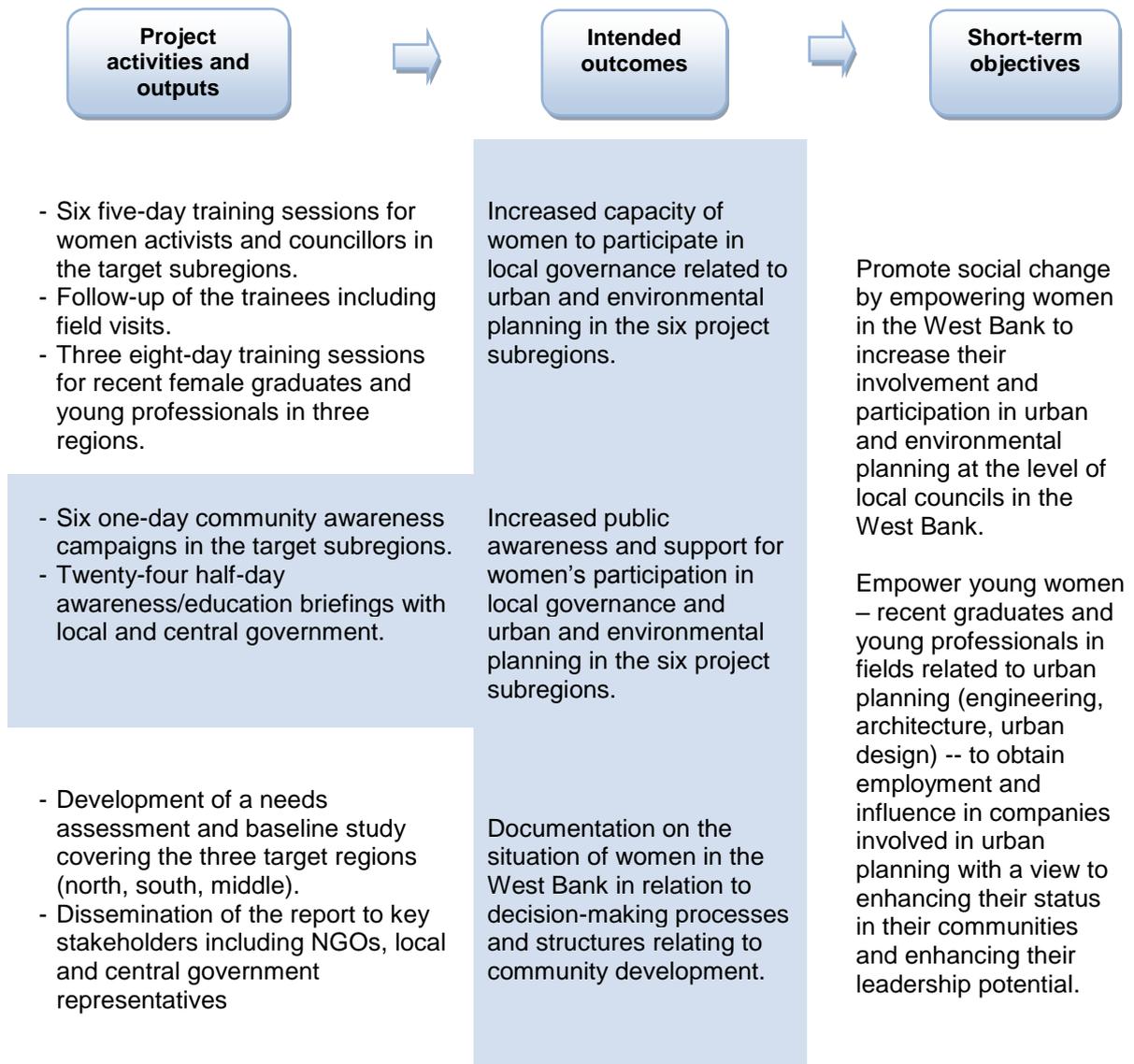
“We’ve done training before, but it always concentrated on gender and rights. In this course, the focus was completely new. Now I have unique capacities within my council and other members ask for my advice”

Woman councillor in Jenin region

The project operated only in the West Bank of Palestine. Although the Ministry of Local Government (MoLG) operates in Gaza, municipal councils are not yet elected there. Moreover NGO activity has been interrupted by the security situation in Gaza as well as the disengagement of most donors.

The strategic links between the activities carried out and the medium-term objectives of the project are illustrated in the logical framework diagram below. This has been constructed by the evaluation team based on the project documents but also on their understanding of the project following extensive discussion with the grantee and others.

ii. Logical framework



III. EQ answers/findings

i. Relevance

As noted in the original Project Document, the needs and rights of women living the towns and villages of the West Bank of Palestine in relation to their communities’ design and facilities are largely overlooked. To a great extent this is because they are under-represented in local government structures and, when they are elected to municipal councils or LGUs in their villages, they have little influence on decision making.

The result is that the communities in which women and their children live, work and play are planned by men whose primary concern when plans for new buildings or infrastructure are considered is whether the results are commercially desirable. Commercial and industrial imperatives prevail and little attention is paid to schools or community facilities. The impact of their decisions is often negative on women and children. One woman interviewed for this evaluation, for example, explained how her local council’s decision to widen a road to allow bigger trucks to pass through the village had resulted in the removal of footpaths, putting the safety of villagers – especially children and the elderly -- at risk and making it impossible for women with babies in strollers or young children at their sides to walk in the streets safely.

A basic needs survey undertaken at the beginning of the implementation period showed that less than 1% of women surveyed understood urban planning. The project was designed on the premise that the problems of urban design and, in particular, how it must take the needs of women and indeed the whole community into account, might be solved by training female local councillors and women’s groups in the basic skills of urban planning. This was seen as particularly important in what is known as ‘Area C’ – the area of the West Bank where land use is under Israeli control and where building is subject to a permit being obtained. The project therefore focused on three main regions in Area C, divided into six subregions: the north (South and South-East Nablus and North-East and South-West Jenin); the middle (North and North-West Jerusalem); and the south (West Bethlehem and North-West and South Hebron).

By giving female local councillors and women activists (members of active women’s groups) training in urban planning, the project aimed also to give them a ‘tool’ that would allow them to take a leadership role in this particular area of local government, thus allowing their voices to be heard in municipal and town governance structures. The women interviewed agreed wholeheartedly that this was much needed. Although the PA has ruled that there must be a woman in the top three names of electoral lists for each party contesting local elections, the women explained that the women who make the top three are generally token representatives chosen by prominent families and that, after the election, the women do not even turn up to meetings. By possessing a skill of considerable value to the community, the women trained by the project would greatly enhance their chances of making it to the candidate lists. The MoLG confirmed that feedback



OCHA map of Palestine showing the West Bank regions

from women councillors in general was that they needed to move into non-traditional areas in their work, such as finance and planning, and the project facilitated this shift into more professional councils.

Looking to the future, the project also included training for recent women graduates and young professional women in areas related to urban planning, such as engineering and architecture. The aim was to enhance their employment prospects but also to empower them as representatives of young women, poised to take a leadership role in their communities. All the women were mentored as they developed ideas to feed into the national planning strategy. Only two universities in the West Bank have programmes in urban planning (Birzeit and An-Najah universities), and specialists are rare. Moreover



An awareness/education session for the broader stakeholder groups

none include issues like social responsibility and women's participation. Once the women graduate, moreover, they find it difficult to obtain placements that might give them work experience and allow them to compete for jobs. The project therefore included links with professional associations and others who might facilitate placements for the trainees.

Alongside the training for these four groups of women, the project recognized the need to help the community as a whole – including the men – to appreciate the importance of including women's voices in decisions relating to urban planning in the community. This was addressed through a series of campaign days in the communities concerned where local people were invited to learn about the project. More formal half-day awareness/educational sessions were also organized specifically for local council and LGU members and these also included representation from central government ministries concerned with planning, local government and gender issues.

This explanation contributes to Conclusion (i).

ii. Effectiveness

The project was implemented as planned, although the security situation at certain times meant that logistics were affected, for example when movement was restricted between the zones for which permits are issued. Since the training courses were five days and eight days long (for councillors/activists and graduates/professionals respectively), this meant that the women had to be brought together in central locations. Where possible, the training was decentralized and carried out in the three regions, however in one instance it was necessary to provide transport and accommodation for a group of trainees in Ramallah. This had financial implications (see Efficiency section). Although security restrictions meant that there had to be a three-month extension to the project, it otherwise progressed as planned.

▪ Training courses: contents and implementation

The five- and eight-day training courses were, as far as possible, offered in the three regions using some local and some national trainers. This allowed the students to also make field visits to observe the elements of urban planning they were learning about. All those interviewed agreed that the field visits were an essential part of their learning.

The five-day course included training on positive thinking and creating effective solutions through self-confidence, effective communication with the community, and the importance of community participation. It then progressed to the concept of urban planning and urban development, including gender-specific components, stages of the planning process and effective participation in decision making. There was a module on environmental development in Palestine and the most prominent biodiversity features of the land, and advocacy on issues relating to biodiversity and the environment. Trainees also went on field visits.

The eight-day training programme additionally covered the relationships between local and regional planning, the impact of planning decisions on the social urban fabric, joint services and cooperation, and community participation in planning. Participants in the eight-day course were recent graduates and young professionals invited to submit their credentials and selected on the basis of their skills and potential.

All the trainees spoke highly of the training and the trainers, who had continued to mentor them and make themselves available after the project ended. The grantee, IPCC, also continued to support the trainees and the project office in Ramallah has become a drop-in centre for the young women especially.

The trainees further said that they wish to continue the training and learn more. They would also appreciate specific training in leadership and the 'business' of council meetings, as well as in communication with the media and in public forums. A number of women suggested that the men on the councils should also be trained, however this would of course reduce the comparative advantage the women have in various committees and at the council/LGU.

A representative from the PA's urban planning section said that the MoLG had assessed the contents of the training and that it was scientifically sound. They had shared ideas with the trainers and felt like a partner from the beginning of the project.

These findings lead to Conclusion (ii).

- ***Awareness raising for the community and education/briefings for relevant stakeholders***

The grantee was aware that, if the women who had been trained were to take up the leadership roles for which they were being prepared, they would need the support of their communities. At the same time, it is important that community members understand the importance of urban planning. For many years in Palestine, families built their houses on land they owned without asking anyone's permission. Now permits are required for all development, not only because of local regulations and plans but also because of conditions imposed by Israeli authorities on Area C. The project therefore included one-day awareness-raising campaigns/sessions in each of the subregions. These sessions were supported with posters and information brochures.

In addition to the community awareness days, the project included a series of half-day briefings/educational sessions that brought together the trainees, women's organizations and representatives of local and central government to forge closer ties among these actors and provide general information on urban planning issues. In follow-up to these sessions, the recent graduates and young professionals prepared input to the Palestine Physical Planning Manual and discussions continue with



Design of the poster and training book cover

the MoLG on integrating this gender-focused input into the next version of the Manual.

These actions were extremely important both for providing a reinforcing context for the trainees and for building a broader coalition of individuals and bodies with understanding not only of planning issues but also of the importance of women's participation and the gender aspects involved.

The grantee itself identified one weakness in this element of the project: men did not turn up to the community sessions and, despite all efforts, do not seem to have engaged with the efforts in their communities. Many of the women interviewed noted this, however they also said that the men with whom they worked in decision-making bodies were interested and more supportive as the women demonstrate the skills they have learned.

These findings contribute to Conclusion (iii).

IPCC also made efforts to raise media interest of the project and the issues with which it dealt. The project coordinator, a media specialist, drafted a concept paper on urban planning and sent it to the media and news agencies. There was considerable curiosity about urban planning and how women fit into it, and media coverage was good. Al-Raya radio agency did three interviews with IPCC staff, and there was good print coverage too.

▪ ***A note on gender***

This was a project that focused almost entirely on women: the contribution they can make to their communities and the need to listen to their voices and take them into account. However a focus on women is not equivalent to an understanding of 'gender' and often project designers do not understand this. It is important to note, therefore, that this project was significantly gender-appropriate, based on a solid understanding of the gendered aspects of community governance and development. This was evident also in the Baseline Study produced and distributed at the beginning of the project.



A practical exercise during training

iii. Efficiency

The project budget was disbursed as agreed, however it had to be 'topped up' with more than USD 50,000 from IPCC's scarce resources because the budget projections did not include essential items. At the time of contract negotiation, the budget did not include necessary funds for transport and accommodation or for overheads.

This put the project at risk. There was no way to train the women, who came from different villages, few of which have regular public transport, other than to bring them together either within the three regions (for example in Nablus, Jenin or Bethlehem) or, if circumstances dictated, in Ramallah. This involved not only transport costs but accommodation costs, since the women could not come and go every day to their villages and had to be accommodated during the five- and eight-day courses.

The UNDP representative interviewed, who also monitored the milestone events in the project, expressed concern that having to top up project funding put the viability of the grantee at risk. In fact, the grantee seems resourceful and able to manage its finances efficiently, however it is unlikely to be able to sustain repeated shortfalls in project funds.

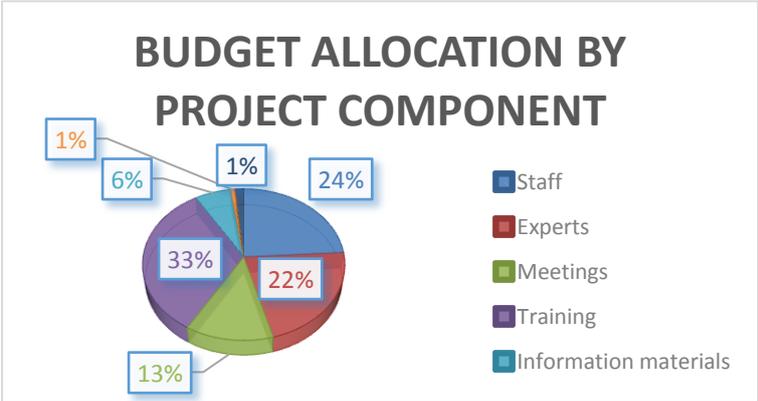
These findings contribute to Conclusion (iv).

▪ **Budget allocations to project components**

By far the largest component of expenditure in the project budget as agreed by UNDEF was the cost of the training. This represents an appropriate balance of resources in relation to achieving the project’s objectives. The second largest expenditure items related to staff and experts contracted to design and deliver the training in collaboration with the grantee, or to work on the advocacy and educational sessions. As noted above, IPCC had to meet the costs of transport and accommodation for all staff and consultants itself because they were not included in the submitted budget.

The advocacy and information materials produced cost almost USD 10,000, although this also includes research, writing and dissemination of the Baseline Study. The budget included no allocation for office/administration costs such as telephone and Internet access, rent (of a separate project office set up in Ramallah) or miscellaneous overheads. These, too, were funded by the grantee itself.

The percentages of the budget allocated to each item are illustrated in the diagram.



▪ **Numbers involved**

The project set ambitious targets for the numbers of participants it intended to engage in the project: at least 150 women to participate in the five-day training (25 per subregion), and 60 young graduates and professionals for the eight-day training (20 per region). It was hoped that the advocacy efforts would reach at least 2,000 people through six community awareness and advocacy days.

The project largely achieved these numbers for the trainees but fell short on attracting people to the community awareness days, largely because the men in the community did not show up but also because of some scepticism among the women in the community about the electoral hurdles women faced, despite the quota system. The grantee noted that there was a particular lack of interest in North-West Jerusalem, from both community members and local government representatives, because of the political reality of life in that subregion and the weakness of women’s organizations there. In conjunction with the meetings, 3,000 information brochures were printed and distributed, and 10 posters and four banners were made.

By the end of the project, some 654 people had participated in the advocacy sessions, and 512 had attended the half-day educational briefings. These had good participation from local and central government representatives. The evaluators were able to meet with women from the Ministry of Women and the MoLG, who judged these sessions to be valuable and thorough. The representative of the Ministry of Women said that she had had positive

feedback from civil defence and public works members who had attended the training and meetings and that the project responded well to the ministry's needs. She was pleased, too, at the positive media coverage of the project and hoped that the relationship with IPCC would continue, since other ministries were now requesting follow-up.

Training was carried out for local councillors and women activists in the six subregions, with 114 women participating. As follow-up to the training (both five- and eight-day courses), a focus group of 12 women was formed to drive the network further and to coordinate input to a social urban agenda for women. IPCC continues to work with this group and to support their meetings. The project achieved the target of 60 recent graduates/young professional women to participate in the eight-day training.

These findings contribute to Conclusion (iv).

iv. Impact

The project achieved important positive impact at a number of different levels:

▪ **Impact on the women who participated**

Women in all four target groups (elected councillors, community activists, recent graduates and young professionals) detailed the positive effects of their participation in the project's activities. This ranged from increased self-confidence to enhanced influence in local government bodies. The younger women in particular said that they felt they could now represent other women more effectively and that they sought opportunities to do that. A number of women reported that they now chair planning committees in their communities and several aspire to be mayors in the near future.

"I am now on the municipality's urban planning and procurement committees. In fact, I am on every committee that has an engineering focus. As a result, I have a broad overview of all municipality projects – roads and electricity supply, for example, and I have been instrumental in reviewing them."
Woman councillor interviewed in Jenin

They were realistic, though, about the limits to their new-found empowerment if men, and indeed the community as a whole, do not accept this and were anxious that more work must be done in helping the whole community to understand the contribution women can make to decision making as well as the importance of making sure decisions reflect women's views and needs. Conversely, the elected councillors said that their male colleagues had quickly accepted their 'louder voices' because the contribution they were able to make was significant and valued.

▪ **Empowerment: impact on women's leadership and governance roles**

The impact on women's participation in leadership and governance is therefore positive, although there is more to do in this area. Some of the women's organizations that participated are lobbying to increase the current quota of 20% female participation in decision-making bodies. They called for more training from IPCC: extending the current training to more communities; providing Training of Trainer courses to permit a multiplier effect; and additional sessions on leadership, conflict management, governance and communication.

▪ **Impact on development in the West Bank**

The impact of increased skills in urban planning on the development of West Bank communities is embryonic and will take some time to be demonstrable, however some of the young graduates and professionals are now in work placements and will as a result be able to compete more equitably for planning jobs. Women from these two groups have been providing input to the Palestinian Authority's Physical Planning Manual. The representative of UNHABITAT underscored the difficulty of working in Area C and the unique challenges there.

She stressed the need to take into account in any evaluation the limits on possible outcomes for those who work in this area and the difficulty of demonstrating success, especially in East Jerusalem.

These findings contribute to Conclusion (v)

v. Sustainability

▪ **Good project design and implementation support sustainability**

The evaluators considered the sustainability of the project’s outcomes and concluded that the implementation methodology sowed the seeds of sustainability. In particular, the project engaged the two West Bank universities (and individual academics in them) that have urban planning programmes, so that the concept and practice of women’s representation and participation in this field can be mainstreamed into the education of future urban planners, architects and engineers. The project also built strong ties with relevant Ministries as well as with UNHABITAT, embedding its methodology and outcomes into these important and relevant future partners.

To support the sustainability of the women’s achievements, there will need to be more efforts to engage men in understanding both the importance of urban planning and the need to involve women in informing it and taking decisions affecting it. While some of the women believed that the best way to do this is to offer training to the men too, this would reduce the women’s comparative advantage, and a better way to proceed may be to consider a focus on youth in the community who are more open to the concept of gender equity and who will be the councillors of the future.

“We all need more training, but training should also target young people, the 14 year-olds, so that they are ready when they reach adulthood. Ideally training should begin at school and go through university too.”
Woman activist from Jenin

The evaluators noted that IPCC must ensure its own sustainability by maintaining a balance between core funding and project-focused funding. It will be important for the organization to remain focused on its strengths and not be distracted by donor-driven agendas.

vi. UNDEF value-added

It was clear to the evaluators that the project provided significant **value-added for UNDEF** because of its innovative nature and tangible outcomes. The evaluators believe that it might be presented as an example of good practice: a women’s empowerment project that is not limited to informing women of their rights but that provided practical tools for achieving them. The project also provided good visibility for UNDEF in critical areas of local governance in the West Bank, opening the door for future work in leadership and democratic reform.



Young professionals during the training

IV. Conclusions

i. The project was highly relevant. Indeed, the project was not only relevant but innovative. It went beyond the many projects that do no more to empower women than teach them about their rights but give them no avenues or tools to achieve them, by equipping the women participants with scarce and much-needed knowledge and skills that would allow them both to contribute to the development of their communities and take a leadership role in achieving this.

ii. The project was effective. The intelligent design of the project was reinforced by careful implementation that also responded to the challenges arising from restrictions on movement. The mix of centralized and decentralized training as needs dictated, the strong links forged between trainees and trainers, and among the different women's groups and local and national governance structures including the MoLG, the Ministry of Women, UNHABITAT, UNDP and Birzeit and An-Najah universities, all contributed to the project's strength and effectiveness.

iii. The "missing men" weakened the community support component. It was a pity that the community awareness sessions did not attract the interest of men in the communities. It may well be that IPCC needed help in this area of implementation from an organization with some expertise in mobilizing men's participation; alternatively, it might have looked at an alternative forum to include men in the project.

iv. The project was extremely efficient despite budget shortfalls. The budget was intelligently allocated and used, however the grantee was obliged to top-up UNDEF funds in order to cover transport and accommodation costs that were unavoidable given both the nature of the project and the restrictions on movement imposed by Israel, because these were not included in the budget projections. The budget also had no provision for overheads.

v. The project had a positive impact at a number of levels. The women interviewed gave numerous examples of the positive impact of the project on their self-confidence and skills level, but also on the nature of their profile within their communities and in particular as representatives of other women in various forums. Additionally, however, the project has the potential over time to have a positive impact on urban planning in the West Bank and in particular on how it takes into account the needs of women and children.

vi. Some elements of the project are sustainable. The impact of the project on individual women and their positions within their communities is an important factor in the sustainability of the project's outcomes. To ensure that this remains true, however, the follow-up mechanisms put in place will need to be maintained, particularly for the young graduates and professionals. Sustainability will also be enhanced if the training can be extended to more communities across the West Bank, building a stronger group of advocates for gender-sensitive planning at local and central levels.

vii. This project brought important value added to UNDEF. This was an innovative project that can be used as a 'good practice' example of actions that truly empower women by giving them the tools they need to renegotiate their positions within their communities. The project provided good visibility for UNDEF in critical areas and opened a door for future work in governance and leadership in LGUs and potentially even in relation to electoral reform. It is regrettable that the grant awarded was not higher.

V. Recommendations

For IPCC

- (Based on Conclusions I and iii): ***It is important to stay focused on the organization's obvious strengths and in particular on urban planning as a tool for empowerment.*** For areas of project activity that go beyond IPCC's expertise (for example mobilizing men in the community), it would be a good idea to identify a partner organization that has that expertise and to work with them. This need not be for the whole project but just for those components that require different expertise and experience.

- (Based on Conclusion vi): ***In any follow-up programming, it would be useful to consider the suggestions made by a number of participants:*** consider Training of Trainers courses for some of the women already trained, perhaps working with the Association of Engineers or Birzeit and An-Najah universities). Add further modules to the training programme to focus on the skills that women need in their enhanced representational role (communication skills, conflict management, governance and leadership).

- (Based on Conclusion iv): ***Take care to strategize the balance between general programming and specific projects to minimize financial risk.*** Keeping a balance between revenue raising/core funding from donors and project-specific funding will minimize the risk that under-funding will put a strain on the organization and threaten its well-being. Projects should ideally be short-term, innovative/pilot in nature and designed to demonstrate clear impact and outcomes that also allow lessons to be learned for broader programming. Always include a provision for overheads in the budget – this is standard practice and obviates the need to top up from scarce core resources.

For UNDEF

- (Based on Conclusions i, ii, v, vi, vii in particular): ***This project might be used as a good practice example of a women's empowerment project that goes beyond teaching women their rights and actually equips them to realise those rights.***

▪ ANNEXES

Annex 1: Evaluation questions

General evaluation question categories

DAC criterion	Evaluation Question	Related sub-questions
Relevance	To what extent was the project, as designed and implemented, suited to context and needs at the beneficiary, local, and national levels?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Were the objectives of the project in line with the needs and priorities for democratic development, given the context? ▪ Should another project strategy have been preferred rather than the one implemented to better reflect those needs, priorities, and context? Why? ▪ Were risks appropriately identified by the projects? How appropriate are/were the strategies developed to deal with identified risks? Was the project overly risk-averse?
Effectiveness	To what extent was the project, as implemented, able to achieve objectives and goals?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent have the project's objectives been reached? ▪ To what extent was the project implemented as envisaged by the project document? If not, why not? ▪ Were the project activities adequate to make progress towards the project objectives? ▪ What has the project achieved? Where it failed to meet the outputs identified in the project document, why was this?
Efficiency	To what extent was there a reasonable relationship between resources expended and project impacts?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Was there a reasonable relationship between project inputs and project outputs? ▪ Did institutional arrangements promote cost-effectiveness and accountability? ▪ Was the budget designed, and then implemented, in a way that enabled the project to meet its objectives?
Impact	To what extent has the project put in place processes and procedures supporting the role of civil society in contributing to democratization, or to direct promotion of democracy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent has/have the realization of the project objective(s) and project outcomes had an impact on the specific problem the project aimed to address? ▪ Have the targeted beneficiaries experienced tangible impacts? Which were positive; which were negative? ▪ To what extent has the project caused changes and effects, positive and negative, foreseen and unforeseen, on democratization? ▪ Is the project likely to have a catalytic effect? How? Why? Examples?
Sustainability	To what extent has the project, as designed and implemented, created what is likely to be a continuing impetus towards democratic development?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent has the project established processes and systems that are likely to support continued impact? ▪ Are the involved parties willing and able to continue the project activities on their own (where applicable)?
UNDEF value added	To what extent was UNDEF able to take advantage of its unique position and comparative advantage to achieve results that could not have been achieved had support come from other donors?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What was UNDEF able to accomplish, through the project, that could not as well have been achieved by alternative projects, other donors, or other stakeholders (Government, NGOs, etc). ▪ Did project design and implementing modalities exploit UNDEF's comparative advantage in the form of an explicit mandate to focus on democratization issues?

Annex 2: Documents reviewed

Background documents

CIA World Factbook: West Bank, Washington DC 2014

Developments in Palestine, SIDA May 2014 (www.sida.se)

Human Development Report 2014, UNDP, New York 2014

Humanitarian Factsheet on Area C of the West Bank, OCHA 2014

2014 Humanitarian Needs Overview: OPT, OCHA November 2013

World Report 2014: Israel and Palestine, Human Rights Watch (www.hrw.org/world-report/2014/country-chapters/israel-and-palestine)

Project outputs

Baseline study (in Arabic)

Training manual (in Arabic)

Project brochure (in Arabic)

Poster

Project documentation

Project Document, UDF-PAL-10-376

Mid-term Progress Report, UDF-PAL-10-376

Final Project Narrative Report, UDF-PAL-10-376

Project budget provisional and reconciled

Annex 3: People Interviewed

Monday 1 December		
Ramallah		
Dr Rami Nasrralah	Director	IPCC
Sharar Barghuthi	Quality and Evaluation Manager	IPCC
Kayed Ma'ari	Project Coordinator	IPCC
Islam De'as	Trainer	Urban planner
Basel Qtaneh	Trainer	IPCC
Eng. Mamon Abo Ryan	Trainer	Assn. of Engineers
Mahmod Abed Al-Aziz	Trainer	MoLG
Jhad Ashhab	Finance Manager	IPCC
Suad Ishtewi	Awareness campaign expert	Urban planning unit, An-Najah Uni.
Amal Abo Ghoush	Awareness campaign expert	Urban planner
Tuesday 2 December		
Jenin		
Fafwa Qameel	President, Kabatia Charitable Women's Association	Woman activist participant
Fatima Assaf	Treasurer, Kabatia Charitable Women's Association	Woman activist participant
Tamam Qenawi	Manager, Social Rescue Association for developing Palestinian women	Woman activist participant
Suzan Jarar	Palestinian Working Women's Association for Development	Woman activist participant
Kefah Hannon	President, Feminist Action Centre, Jenin Refugee Camp	Woman activist participant
Samar Geeli	Yamon Women's Centre	Woman activist participant
Asma'a Kharoob	Manager, Social and Gender Unit, MoLG Jenin	Ministry rep./participant
Samah Kabhan	Councilor, Berdaa LGU	Council participant
Reem Garam	Councilor, Al Fadomia LGU	Council participant
Hana Sah	Councilor, Araba Municipality	Council participant
Etaf Badarna	Councilor, Araba Municipality	Council participant
Amira Qasrawi	President, Association of Palestinian Girls	Woman activist participant
Mai Younis	Councilor, Kirbat Abdallah Al-Younis	Council participant
Nablus		
Hiba Mahamda	Councilor, As-Sawia LGU	Council participant
Reem Hija	Vice-President, Burka LGU	Council participant
Nadia Hussin	Councilor, Deir Hatab LGU	Council participant
Zuhaira Abu-Sood	Councilor, Borin LGU	Council participant
Ahlam Khdeer	Councilor, Jamahin Municipality	Council participant
Khairya Oda	Councilor, Howara Municipality	Council participant
Samar Hawash	Palestinian Working Women's Association	Awareness campaign expert
Maisara Soboh	Coordinator, Women's Empowerment	Trainer
Zein Ktefat	Graduated 2009, Industrial engineering	Young graduates group
Walaa Al-Ahmad	Graduated 2009, Industrial engineering	Young graduates group
Hala Mahmoud	Graduated 2012, Civil engineering	Young graduates group
Jowan Aref	Graduated 2012, Architectural engineering	Young graduates group
Lubna Al-Khyat	Graduated 2010, Architectural engineering	Young graduates group
Malak Issa	Graduated 2012, Civil engineering	Young graduates

		group
Reham Hassona	Graduated 2013, Civil engineering	Young graduates group
Wednesday 3 December		
<i>Bethlehem</i>		
Hyam Abu Ali	Councilor, Ar-Ebeida Municipality	Council participant
Amany Thawabta	Beit Fajar Rural Women's Development Assoc.	Woman activist participant
Nadya Thawabta	Beit Fajar Rural Women's Development Assoc.	Woman activist participant
Zaynab Abed	Councilor, Tqu'a Municipality	Council participant
Yola Yaqub	Councilor, Beit Sahour Municipality	Council participant
Rania Al-Kateeb	Rural Women's Development Association	Woman activist participant
Eman Mosa	Rural Women's Development Association/Youth	Woman activist participant
Tamam Al-Qadi	Councilor, Zatra Municipality	Council participant
Kawther Salah	Councilor, Al-Kader Municipality	Council participant
Gader Qunam	Employee, Al-Kader Municipality	Council participant
Suzan Al-Hathwa	Employee, Beit Jala Municipality	Council participant
Rasmeia Humade	Head, Gender Unit, MoLG, Beit Laham	Participant
Leena Fararqa	Councilor, Al-Doha Municipality	Council participant
Rubi Ayyad	Councilor, Al-Doha Municipality	Council participant
Hanan Abu-Shaqra	Councilor, Al-Marah Mouala LGU	Council participant
Kitam Hasan	Marah Mouala Women's Association	Woman activist participant
Mariam Mosa	Al-Kader Women's Development Association	Woman activist participant
Rawabi Jebreen	Councilor, Tqu'a Municipality	Council participant
Samia Hamdan	Councilor, Ganata Municipality	Council participant
Thursday 4 December		
<i>Ramallah</i>		
Paradise Aslan	Graduated 2009, Civil engineering	Young professionals group
Reema Mansour	Graduated 2011, Architectural engineering	Young professionals group
Rida Abusbeeh	Graduated 2009, Electrical engineering	Young professionals group
Ayat Mhana	Graduated 2009, Industrial engineering	Young professionals group
Walla Jarar	Graduated 2009, Applied chemistry	Young professionals group
Shaza Al-Badawi	Graduated 2006, Architectural engineering	Young professionals group
Lubna Shaheen	Senior Urban Planner	UNHABITAT
Fatma Radaida	Head, Office of Advocacy and Support	Ministry of Women
Ahud Menanya	Urban Planner	Ministry of Local Government
Friday 5 December		
<i>Jerusalem</i>		
Sofian Moshashe	Consultant	UNDP
Debriefing		

Annex 4: Acronyms

DAC	Development Assistance Committee
EQ	Evaluation Questions
GNI	Gross National Income
IPCC	International Peace and Cooperation Centre
LGU	Local Government Unit
MoLG	Ministry of Local Government
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OPT	Occupied Palestinian Territories
PA	Palestinian Authority
UN	United Nations
UNDEF	United Nations Democracy Fund
UNHABITAT	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNWOMEN	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
USD	United States dollar