

SAVING
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Gender, Risks and Urban Livelihoods Study in three cities in Syria:

Aleppo, Homs and Lattakia



July 2018

Contents

Acknowledgements	i
Executive Summary	ii
1. Introduction	1
2. Analytical Framework and Methods	4
Framing the analysis: livelihoods, gender and protection mainstreaming	6
Analytical framework	6
Methods	6
3. Background: The Urban Crisis	11
Brief profiles of the three cities	12
4. Findings: Gendered constraints and risks to income generation	17
Introduction: pre-existing inequalities and gender biased norms and institutions	18
Findings of the gender analysis from the semi-structured interviews	20
5. Discussion: Implications of the findings for gender-responsive livelihoods interventions	31
6. Recommendations for urban livelihoods project design	39
Annex 1: Glossary	46
Annex 2: Semi-structured interview respondent profiles	47
Annex 3: Protection risks and prevention or mitigation strategies	49
References	51

Displacement-affected men and women in rural and urban contexts face very different food security and nutrition-related challenges. In recent years, the World Food Programme has been addressing these challenges through a variety of livelihoods initiatives across the Syria crisis response. However, there remains limited information on the vulnerabilities and capacities of displacement-affected men and women and the risks they face when engaging in livelihoods in urban areas, especially in Syria. More work needs to be done to understand the opportunities and risks for different vulnerable people arising from livelihood interventions.

WFP's Regional Gender Policy identifies the need to increase attention on mainstreaming gender equality and women's empowerment programming into mid to longer term responses aimed at building the resilience of communities to shocks and stresses, including socio-political shocks (policy shifts, instability and conflict), while ensuring that interventions 'do no harm'. It also identifies the need to build staff capacity in gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) programming and for improved gender and age analytical work to support the design and monitoring of gender-responsive interventions in access-constrained contexts.

This study was commissioned by WFP in 2017 to help build the evidence base in this area. It aims to provide fresh new insights to evolving and emerging urban livelihoods dynamics using a gender and protection lens and based on a set of qualitative investigations across three of Syria's major urban areas: Homs, Aleppo and Lattakia. It also identifies ways in which WFP and other actors can better support the design of safe, gender-responsive urban livelihoods strategies for vulnerable groups, mainly internally displaced persons (IDPs) and host communities in Syria.

Report written by Gabriella McMichael, independent consultant.

Acknowledgements

This study was conducted jointly by the UN World Food Programme Regional Bureau in Cairo and Syria Country Office, with direction from a core team of Haitham Alashkar, Muriel Calo, Christine Clarence, Samuel Clendon and Gabriella McMichael. Many thanks to the Syrian women and men who gave their time to participate in this study and for their valuable insights into the challenges that women and men are facing in Syria. Special thanks are due to Abdulrahman Najeh, Hiba Hanano, Ahmad Hammoud, Gaith Fadel, Diaaeddin Kakhi, Oula Mohamad and Nart Koushha for conducting the field study. Thanks also to Gregory Scarborough, who provided support in the initial stages of the study.

The report was written by Gabriella McMichael and reviewed by the core team. Others contributed to the final report, including Wafeya El-Shinnawy, Ruth Ferreras, Lameece Gasser, Julie MacDonald, Noemi Vorosbak and George de Stefano.



Executive Summary

This report presents findings of a Gender, Risks and Urban Livelihoods exploratory study conducted in three cities in government-held areas of Syria (Aleppo, Homs and Lattakia) to inform the development of safe, gender-responsive, urban livelihoods programme strategies by the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) in Syria and other actors. The study aimed to:

1. Identify opportunities for safe, gender-responsive, urban livelihoods programming for targeted vulnerable groups, mainly IDPs and the host communities in Syria; and
2. Design practical, qualitative tools to support the collection of primary data in access-constrained contexts.

The analysis is guided by WFP's Gender Toolkit and Protection Guidance Manual, with the main protection risks and constraints mapped onto a women's empowerment sequence to help identify entry points and prevention or mitigation strategies for safe, gender-responsive, urban livelihoods programming. The study aimed to gain a more in-depth understanding of the protection risks and constraints that vulnerable and food-insecure women and men face when engaging in income-generating work. It relied on a qualitative methodological approach employing two main methods: semi-structured interviews with WFP beneficiaries (women and men) in both host and IDP communities, as well as a desktop review. The study conducted thirty-three semi-structured interviews (ten with women in households headed by a man; ten with women in households headed by a woman and 13 with men) in both host and IDP communities.

FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR GENDER-RESPONSIVE LIVELIHOODS INTERVENTIONS

The findings show that vulnerable and food-insecure women and men in the three cities, whether in vulnerable host or IDP communities, live in fragile and insecure environments that constrain their access to income-generating opportunities to meet basic needs. The combination of pre-existing gender inequalities and deeply embedded gender-biased social norms and institutions, stress and upset, displacement, family separation, poverty, sexual harassment and other protection risks, and the fact that many women are mothers who now need to provide for their families on their own, puts women and their children especially in a vulnerable position. These factors undermine women's ability to generate income, to benefit from it and to achieve self-reliance on an equal footing with men. The findings are:

1. Deeply embedded gender-based social norms and institutions constrain the ability of women to access and benefit from productive work.

The findings suggest that in Aleppo, Homs and Lattakia, food-insecure, displaced and host community women in households headed either by women or men continue to be constrained by deeply embedded social norms and values that assign care and domestic responsibilities primarily to women and "breadwinning" to men. Many women were prevented from working by their families or showed little interest in pursuing income-generating work. Fear of kidnapping and general insecurity because of the crisis was often presented by women and men respondents as a reason for the increasing restrictions on women's mobility by their families. Nevertheless, the persistence of patriarchal values and traditional gender stereotypes mean that women faced many of the same mobility constraints as before the crisis, limiting the hours they can work and the nature of work they can do. When women did work, gender stereotypes tended to restrict them to specific, low-productivity occupations. Men also tended to be stigmatised in some situations for challenging traditional roles. Cultural norms restrict women in other areas. For example, income-earning women in households headed by a man continued to have limited say over major financial decisions in the home. Women's lack of financial independence and their corresponding lack of confidence and experience in making financial decisions explains the more limited financial literacy of women and their lack of financial inclusion compared to men. This is supported by findings from the desk review. Such factors not only limit women's ability to engage in productive work but also to realise its benefits. Nevertheless, the study notes instances where men do participate in household tasks and take responsibility for children's education.

2. Women who work are likely to face a dilemma between engaging in livelihoods and motherhood, family responsibilities and domestic work.

Because women bear primary responsibility for domestic work and childcare, women interviewees who worked faced a dilemma between working and their responsibilities in the home. The ability of women to access childcare support was crucial to their ability to generate income. Additionally, because men often did not take on domestic burdens in the home when women went out to work, women ended up shouldering a "double burden".

WFP and other actors consider improved livelihoods mainly as the ability to sustainably engage in productive work and improve productive assets and capacities in a manner that strengthens resilience to shocks and stresses. However, it is important to recognise that household self-reliance does not rest simply on the ability of individual household members to maximise their income-generating potential. Rather, it relates to the interconnected productive and reproductive roles women and men carry out in the private and public spheres. Acknowledging the contributions made in the private sphere, and their complementarity with those in the productive sphere, can encourage greater focus on the long-term and strategic needs of women and men and gender-transformational programming.

3. Low psychological well-being and absence of a supportive environment in urban communities constrain women and men in engaging in productive work.

Although it was beyond the scope of this study to assess psychosocial issues, most interviewees indicated that their own psychological well-being or that of family members including children had been severely affected during the crisis. Interviewees cited hopelessness, grief, anxiety, depression, nightmares and trouble sleeping, constant fear and personality changes.

These issues were compounded by the fact that for IDPs especially, displacement often meant the absence of a supportive environment and lack of protective mechanisms (such as families and friends, home community and social networks). The various aspects of social cohesion — social interaction, social networks, trust and reciprocity among neighbours, perceived safety and sense of community — appeared to be weak for many women and men respondents. The lack of supportive environments, especially for women in households headed by a woman, means that when mothers work, children can also be put at risk or withdrawn from school to look after younger siblings.

4. Neither women nor men form homogenous groups; therefore, gender is not the only determinant of difference.

Interviewees had different skills and capabilities depending on their backgrounds, life situations and their capabilities and assets. Some women referred to their limited education and literacy whereas others had been trained and had become experienced in a profession. Some women had no experience of working outside the home.

5. Women and men face various protection risks that constrain their ability to pursue and benefit from livelihoods.

Although it is not possible to ascertain the extent of protection risks for women, men, girls and boys from the data, the information points to the wide-ranging threats that they face. Women and men faced threats when just moving outside the home, including from car bombs and being caught in crossfire. Many respondents perceived a high risk of kidnapping or abduction. There was the potential for vulnerable women and men to be exploited as they engaged in casual wage labour and for high levels of sexual abuse and harassment, especially for women. For example, interviewees highlighted threats of sexual harassment and exploitative wage-labour conditions (perceived to affect women more) and of violent theft or extortion because of possession of physical productive assets (perceived to affect men more). Reports also suggest that women are increasingly engaged in transactional sex for income to survive.

The interviews also highlight that protection risks are not only a detriment to well-being; they also undermine social interaction, trust among neighbours, perceived safety and sense of community and the willingness of women and men to invest in and engage in productive labour.

6. Women's increased engagement in livelihoods may lead to protection risks for children.

There were instances where women working outside the home led to child labour and less school attendance. This especially related to older children being withdrawn from school to take care of younger siblings so that their mothers could work outside the home. The interviews also suggest that many children are suffering psychosocial issues. At the same time, the desk review indicates that boys and girls may drop out of school and be exposed to protection issues because they are working or begging on the streets to support their families. Early marriage is increasing, especially affecting girls.

7. Opportunities to expand women's strategic choices may be limited in the current crisis context

For women interviewees, empowerment to increase their ability to make choices and decisions was not necessarily a priority given the prevalence of poverty, psychosocial issues and insecurity. For example, many women were working simply to enable themselves and their families to survive, and had little interest in longer-term work. Rather, most aspired to the *status quo ante* in their roles and responsibilities in and outside the home.

Previous reports have well described the challenges of implementing developmental livelihoods approaches to achieve self-reliance in a crisis, where there are ongoing risks to physical safety and freedom of movement. They note the importance of gradual and integrated approaches to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment and to equitable, safe access to livelihoods. The first step is to ensure that interventions "do no harm". Humanitarian agencies also need to consider wider needs and rights beyond supporting access to income generation. In the long run a variety of approaches is required to ensure that vulnerable women and men can make strategic choices.

Other constraints to income generation, especially by women, are detailed in the report. The empowerment sequence presented in the report addresses constraints on tangible and intangible assets, transforming tangible and intangible assets into economic opportunities, benefiting from economic activities and control over income.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SAFE, GENDER-RESPONSIVE URBAN LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES

1. In line with best practice, ensure a participatory approach to the design and implementation of livelihoods interventions that incorporates gender, age, and protection risk analyses. Establish a budget for gender equality and women's empowerment-related programming and develop the capacity of humanitarian workers in gender and protection mainstreaming.
2. Ensure that urban livelihoods strategies offset women's double burden and childcare responsibilities by:
 - Providing childcare services to women and men participants in livelihood projects;
 - Selecting assets in household and community asset creation programmes that are especially beneficial for women; and
 - Considering opportunities to promote the efficiency and productivity of household tasks.
3. Use an integrated programming approach so that livelihoods projects incorporate gender awareness-raising, psychosocial support, financial literacy and life skills and social empowerment support to address the psycho-social issues and other constraints that vulnerable women and men face.
 - Invest in promoting supportive social networks in and across IDP and host communities, for example, through peer support provided by women's and parents' groups for recreation and nutrition-sensitive, healthy lifestyles.
4. Support women to engage in better paid and higher productivity sectors through a laddered approach to livelihoods programming. Promote women's financial inclusion.
 - Seek partnerships with protection-mandated agencies and pair livelihoods activities with protection interventions.
 - Provide support services to strengthen and complement women's and men's economic empowerment including the creation of women's groups, community childcare and peer-support mechanisms.
 - Promote women to work in non-traditional, better-paid sectors.
 - Support women-run bakeries as part of a gender-responsive Bread strategy.
 - Support mixed and women's cooperatives building linkages with other programming areas, in the case of WFP such as school feeding through a Healthy Kitchens model.
5. Identify livelihoods interventions that target women and integrate options to combat or mitigate harassment and sexual abuse.
 - Analyse opportunities to provide support for home-based work.
 - Consider opportunities to promote the Decent Work Agenda in relation to domestic work in partnership with agencies such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO).
6. Build protective elements into projects and raise awareness among employers, communities and vulnerable women and men regarding their rights, including their labour rights.
7. Ensure urban livelihoods strategies incorporate outreach plans and campaign to address constraints and risks that women face when working to generate income.
8. Build the capacities and sustainability of gender-aware local organisations to enhance gender equality and women's empowerment.
9. Identify opportunities to influence humanitarian interventions and recovery to provide an enabling environment for women's engagement in productive work.
10. Ensure that gender considerations are mainstreamed into technical support and support provided to the government in the development of national policies, including those aimed at linking safety nets and humanitarian support and longer-term social protection. Promote equal rights and ensure that the different needs and life situations of women, men, girls and boys are considered. ■



INTRODUCTION

1 Introduction

Research in conflict-affected areas in the Middle East and elsewhere demonstrates that war can cause radical shifts in gender roles and responsibilities (Buvinic, Das Gupta, Casabonne and Verwimp, 2012; Justino, 2017). This is apparent in Syria where, after more than six years of internecine crisis, increasing poverty, death or absence of family members, mobility constraints and displacement are compelling women to generate income outside the home in opposition to longstanding gender ideologies. At the same time, many women are now experiencing a “double burden”, bearing responsibility for both housework and childcare while undertaking some form of income-generating work (CARE, 2016b; Khalaf, et al., 2017).

The crisis also has created new vulnerabilities for individuals and increased their protection risks. The vulnerability of many women and girls, but also of the elderly and people living with disabilities, has increased (Khattab and Myrntinen, 2017; UNHCR, 2017). Men and boys face risks of enforced disappearance or forced conscription whereas women are more likely to face increased risks of sexual and gender-based violence as well as exploitation and abuse when they work outside the home (*ibid*). Children are also severely affected, with many taking on adult responsibilities to help support their families or because they have been left with no adult care. Estimates suggest that a third of school-age children in Syria do not attend school and many are engaged in various forms of child labour (UNOCHA, 2018). Boys face the additional risk of recruitment by armed groups, and girls, of child marriage (*ibid*).

Before the crisis, Syria was highly urbanised¹ and the crisis has had a particularly devastating impact on towns and cities. Aleppo, Homs, Damascus and smaller towns have served as combat zones for government and armed opposition groups, with dire consequences for residents (Grunewald, 2013). As in other conflict-affected countries, the scale and pace of displacement has led to an increasing number of people arriving in urban areas. Other cities that have thus far been insulated from the extensive destruction and violence, such as Lattakia in Syria’s northwest coastal region, instead have had to contend with the arrival of a massive number of internally displaced persons (IDPs). UNOCHA estimates that urban areas in Syria host 84 percent of IDPs (UNOCHA, 2018).

The United Nations, as part of its response to the crisis in Syria, is looking at how to provide longer-term assistance in addition to basic support to the most vulnerable women and men. The United Nations Strategic Framework (UNSF), which has been extended to 2019, emphasises resilience and supporting the most vulnerable. WFP seeks to develop the livelihoods of moderately food-insecure households in urban and rural areas so that they can meet their basic food and nutrition needs and become more resilient². WFP implements livelihoods programmes that support home-based and community assets through Food Assistance for Assets interventions and that increase household income by enhancing human capital through Food Assistance for Training interventions. WFP aims to work with private sector partners on market support or retail sector rehabilitation. Projects are implemented in partnership with national and international NGOs.



WFP/Hussam Al Saleh

¹ Fifty-six percent of the Syrian population lived in urban areas before the crisis.

² Strategic Outcome 2 of WFP’s Transitional Interim Country Strategy for Syria for 2019 focuses on resilience building.

The concern with livelihoods takes us into the domain of gender equality and women's empowerment. There is increasing recognition that the crisis in Syria, where coping is prompting women to step outside their traditional roles and engage in livelihoods outside the home, may present an opportunity for humanitarian organisations to support gender-transformative change in society. However, little is formally known and documented regarding how women and men might be pursuing livelihoods in different urban contexts in Syria and the opportunities and constraints that they face. This lack of knowledge is compounded by the recurring problems that undermine humanitarian agencies in their ability to conduct gender and protection risk analyses. These include budget limitations, time constraints, problems in accessing field sites for non-local staff, and difficulties in recruiting staff with skills in gender and protection risk analyses.

Responding to this knowledge gap, this report summarizes the findings of a Gender, Risk and Urban Livelihoods study that WFP conducted from May to July 2017. The overarching aims of the study were to:

- Identify opportunities for safe, gender-responsive urban livelihood programming for targeted vulnerable groups, mainly IDPs and the host communities in Syria;
- Design practical, qualitative tools to support primary data collection in access-constrained contexts.

This study aimed to gain a more in-depth understanding of changing gender roles in vulnerable and food-insecure households in three Syrian cities (Aleppo, Homs and Lattakia) and the protection risks that men and women may face when accessing livelihoods. The study relied on a qualitative approach employing two main methods: semi-structured interviews with WFP women and men beneficiaries, and desktop review. Thirty-three semi-structured interviews – 10 with women in households headed by a man; 10 with women in households headed by a woman, and 13 with men – were conducted in both host and IDP communities.

STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

Section 2 of the report provides an overview of the analytical framework and methods. Section 3 provides a background to the crisis and the three cities where fieldwork was conducted. Section 4 details the main themes emerging from the interviews. Section 5 discusses the implications of the findings for livelihood programming and offers recommendations to address the constraints that women face when generating income. The final section makes recommendations to guide the development and implementation of safe, gender-responsive urban livelihood programmes in Syria. Annex 1 provides definitions of terms ■



WFP/Marwa Awad



ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODS

2 Analytical Framework and Methods

FRAMING THE ANALYSIS: LIVELIHOODS, GENDER MAINSTREAMING AND PROTECTION MAINSTREAMING

A livelihood comprises the “capabilities, assets, and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stress and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base” (WFP, 2016a). Communities, households and individual men and women develop livelihood strategies based on their tangible and intangible assets and the livelihoods available to them. Most individuals and households develop a mixture of productive and reproductive (including domestic) work, borrowing or saving, and social networks, adjusted to their own circumstances and preferences (Beall and Kanji, 1999). The livelihoods available to women and men differ because of their different roles and responsibilities in society, the resources that they possess and the control they can exercise over them. Women can face more constraints to access livelihoods compared to men because they often have more limited education and skills, more restricted movement and/or public participation to access livelihoods and more limited social networks to access information to seek out work compared to men (Pozarny, 2016).

Such factors also mean that livelihood interventions affect women, men, girls and boys differently. For example, higher engagement of women in livelihoods is commonly assumed to represent more gender-sensitive programming. However, women generally end up with heavier “double burdens” because income generation is layered on unpaid responsibilities in homes and communities (Chant, 2003). As such, increased income generation can come at the cost of depletion of other valued resources such as time, health and general well-being. Moreover, women’s wages may be lower than men’s and women may be pressured into giving up their earnings to husbands, fathers or other relatives (*ibid*).

Livelihoods interventions can also undermine the protection of women, men, girls and boys in different ways if they are implemented without sufficient understanding of the context. Evidence shows, for

example, that interventions that increase engagement of women in income-generation can lead to greater problems for children and youth, such as more child labour and less school attendance, particularly in the short term (CPC Livelihoods and Economic Strengthening Task Force, 2013). Although the links between women’s empowerment and domestic violence are not straightforward, evidence shows that economically empowering women can, in some cases, lead to tensions and violence in the home as gender relations shift. In other cases, it can help alleviate household tensions over how to use scarce resources (Bolis and Hughes, 2015).

Many organisations, including WFP, aim to incorporate gender equality and women’s empowerment and protection considerations into their assistance through mainstreaming. WFP recognised the importance of, and officially committed to a “gender-transformative approach to food assistance programme and policies” and to “working for gender-transformative results with its beneficiaries” in the Gender Policy 2015–2020. WFP is concerned with gender equality; its Gender Policy is not a women-focused policy. Nevertheless, given that gender inequalities mainly disadvantage women and girls, emphasis is usually placed on the inequalities and constraints women and girls experience so that interventions contribute to women’s empowerment. For WFP, empowerment “refers to the process of building capacities through which an individual can make choices and make decisions about his or her own life. Empowerment is related to self-determination. It is a term that can also be applied to groups.” Understanding the multiple constraints that women face and how they may be bypassing these constraints is critical to designing gender-transformative programmes and identifying opportunities to empower women.

WFP also is committed to ensuring that, at the very least, its interventions adhere to the “do no harm”³ approach. This means that WFP must strive to minimise the harm it may inadvertently cause when providing assistance, as well as consider the harm that may be caused by not providing assistance. WFP must not create, exacerbate or contribute to gender inequalities or discrimination and must mitigate risks of gender-based violence (GBV) in programmes.

³ WFP Gender Toolkit - <http://gender.manuals.wfp.org/en/gender-toolkit/>

⁴ This includes negative coping mechanisms such as child labor, transactional sex and irregular migration or smuggling; hazardous or exploitative working arrangements or human trafficking; threats of conflict or violent crime; marginalization and inability to access basic services (WFP, 2016b).

⁵ <http://gender.manuals.wfp.org/en/gender-toolkit/>

⁶ Care’s Gender Analysis Framework (GAF) available at: <http://gendertoolkit.care.org/Pages/core.aspx>

WFP is not a protection-mandated agency and so mainstreams protection considerations into its work to ensure that its food assistance programmes contribute to the safety, dignity and integrity of vulnerable people. This requires understanding the protection risks faced by women, men, girls and boys⁴, the cause of the risks and how they affect the implementation of WFP's programmes (WFP Humanitarian Protection Policy).

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

WFP's Gender Toolkit⁵ and Protection Guidance Manual (WFP, 2016b) inform the analysis in this report. A gender analysis examines and interprets quantitative and qualitative information about people from a gender perspective to provide information and logic to design, implement, monitor and learn from interventions. Gender analysis mainly aims to understand the conditions and characteristics of agency, structure and gender relations when trying to identify practical gender needs and strategic gender issues of men and women. It aims to uncover the dynamics of gender differences across areas of enquiry or categories. Drawing on the WFP Gender Toolkit and Care International's Gender Analysis Framework⁶, this study focuses on the following:

1. Roles and responsibilities;
2. Participation and power in the domestic and public spheres;
3. Access to and control over resources;
4. Capacities and vulnerabilities (with respect to pursuing livelihoods);
5. Access to public spaces; and
6. Aspirations.

The study also incorporates a protection risks analysis⁷ in line with WFP's Protection Guidance Manual (WFP, 2016b):

- The protection risks women and men may face when pursuing livelihoods and the implications for children (for example, are they vulnerable to hazardous or exploitative working arrangements? Is their safety threatened by conflict or violent crime?);
- How protection risks might affect the implementation and/or impact of WFP's programmes;
- How WFP can avoid exposing its beneficiaries to protection risks when implementing its programmes; and

- How WFP's programmes can protect women, men, girls and boys by reducing risks (do people pursue negative coping mechanisms⁸ and can food assistance reduce negative coping mechanisms that put women, men, girls and/or boys at risk?).

The findings of the gender and protection risks analysis are mapped onto a modified livelihoods and empowerment sequence, which runs as follows (Abril, 2009) (p10–15):

1. Access to and control of assets (credit, information, productive inputs) as well as intangible assets such as education and skills determine women's and men's different abilities to generate income.
2. Access to income-generating opportunities and to the labour market, either in the form of self-employment or paid employment, increases women's income.
3. If women control their income and the benefits they obtain from income-generation, this can expand their strategic choices, and, therefore, their empowerment.

However, many obstacles exist for women's empowerment. "Some of these obstacles can be external, related to the economic environment and the functioning of the economy (for example, high unemployment, deficient infrastructure) and would affect women and men alike. Others, however, are rooted in gender-biased social institutions and norms including a discriminatory legal system" (Abril, 2009: 8).

METHODS

This study sought an in-depth understanding of changing gender roles in vulnerable and food-insecure households in three Syrian cities (Aleppo, Homs and Lattakia) and the protection risks that men and women may face when pursuing livelihoods.

While quantitative studies explain the extent to which certain social situations are occurring based on statistical research methods designed to achieve representativeness, qualitative studies focus on individual experiences and perceptions to explain the "why" or "how" of social situations. Qualitative studies typically rely on small sample sizes and unlike quantitative studies, which rely on representative sampling, there are no specific rules for determining an appropriate sample size⁹.

This study was based on two main methods: in-depth semi-structured interviews (SSIs) with WFP beneficiary men and women, and desktop review. The original

⁷ On the other hand, a protection analysis usually begins with an analysis of human rights or IHL violations, and then may examine the impact on populations, considering who is responsible for violations (see (Jaspars, O'Callaghan and Stites, 2007)).

⁸ See supra text accompanying note 7.

⁹ "Rules of thumb" for qualitative sampling derive mainly from three sources: traditions in social science research studies, common-sense ideas about how many will be enough and practical concerns about how many people can be interviewed and analysed considering financial and personnel resources. Standard sample sizes range from 12 to 26 people per study area (see (Luborsky, 1995). See also (Guest, Bunce and Johnson, 2006).

intent was to conduct informant interviews at the local level with knowledgeable actors in local government and with WFP cooperating partners (CPs) and women's rights organisations. However, because of the sensitive context and slowness in obtaining official permission for the study, it was not possible to interview non-WFP beneficiaries. Instead, background and supplementary interviews with WFP staff and CP staff provided additional information. Documents reviewed in the desktop research included academic papers, news articles and documents from international organisations such as Care International, the World Bank and UNOCHA, and civil society reports that were relevant to the objectives of the study. They are integrated throughout and referenced in this report.

The study focused on developing accounts from men and women who are food insecure or vulnerable to food insecurity regarding gender roles and responsibilities, especially around productive and reproductive work, decision making and protection risks outside the home in the three urban areas. Interviewees were asked to describe how the crisis had affected roles and responsibilities in and outside the home, their perceptions regarding appropriate roles for women and men, the different risks men and women faced when pursuing livelihoods, and decision-making roles in the household. Other areas covered in the interviews included livelihood aspirations and social and support networks.

SELECTION OF STUDY LOCATIONS

The selection of Aleppo, Homs and Lattakia reflects WFP's focus in Syria on urban areas severely affected by the crisis (encompassing both physical destruction and an influx of IDPs). Additionally, selection was based on pragmatic considerations regarding the locations in which WFP has ongoing food assistance programmes and CPs and field staff with access to communities.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT SELECTION

How field staff gain access to study participants and develop a rapport with them is crucial to carrying out a field study. The study teams worked with WFP CPs who informed communities about the purpose of the study in different areas of each city and helped recruit interviewees. This was done in close liaison with WFP staff to minimise bias in interviewee selection.

Because the study was interested in intra-household dynamics around productive and reproductive roles

and decision making, a purposive sampling approach was used to select working-age women in households headed by a woman and households headed by a man¹⁰ and working men in both host community¹¹ and IDP¹² communities. Interviewees were within an age range of 18–45 years old. Interviewees were selected through WFP's food distribution points. All interviewee households received food assistance so they can be considered vulnerable to food insecurity or food insecure. The study aimed for an overall sample of 36 respondents. In total, 33 people were interviewed: in Aleppo and Lattakia, 8 women and 4 men were interviewed. In Homs, because of capacity constraints, 4 women and 5 men were interviewed.

Because of ethical considerations and the fact that the study findings were to inform livelihoods interventions targeting adults, females and males under the age of 18 years were excluded, although many also engage in income-generating work. As the goal was to provide for the same numbers of women in households headed by either men or women, and men to enable exploration and description of the conditions especially for women (and not to determine prevalence or incidence), the ratio of women in households headed by a man, to women in households headed by a woman, to men interviewed was 1:1:1.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS AND WFP FIELD STAFF INVOLVEMENT

The interviews were conducted in May and June 2017. Two WFP field staff members from each location (one male and one female, except in Homs where all WFP livelihoods field staff were male) contributed to the development of the sampling criteria and interview protocols and undertook the fieldwork. Detailed interview notes were handwritten and then typed and translated from Arabic to English. Responses were checked and confirmed during study team debriefings. Interviews have been analysed on a thematic basis.

Before the fieldwork, all members of the study team participated in a three-day workshop in Beirut, Lebanon. The workshop incorporated training on gender analysis and built a shared understanding of the objectives of the study and research ethics. This included requirements for securing informed consent from interviewees. The workshop also included an initial mapping exercise of the three cities. The tools were tested in each of the three cities and a gender specialist gave feedback on the tests to the team.

¹⁰ Households headed by a woman were those managed by a woman without the mediation of husband, father or other male relative in the day-to-day activity of the household. A household headed by a man was one where the husband was present.

¹¹ Two host community members interviewed in Aleppo were also returnees who had been displaced in other locations in Syria.

¹² IDPs included people who had been displaced from rural to urban areas and urban to urban areas. In Aleppo and Homs, for example, IDPs included people who had been displaced from the city well as from rural areas.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Procedures for interviews were written in Arabic and were clearly explained to interviewees before interviews began. Study participants were informed about the purpose of the study and were asked to consent before participating. Interviewees were told that if they did not want to answer a question they did not have to, or if they wanted to stop the interview at any time they could do so. Interviewees were told that the information they provided would remain confidential. Data in this report are presented anonymously.

Security was a major consideration and interviews were planned so they did not put interviewees or interviewers at risk. Given the insecure nature of the cities, interviews took place during the daytime only. Interviewees had to be comfortable with the location of the interview and were offered alternatives (at WFP or CP premises, in a public place or in their homes). In Aleppo and Latakia, interviews took place either in interviewees' homes or in CP premises. In Homs, interviews took place in the WFP office.

Qualitative studies that deal with sensitive topics can pose emotional and other risks to both interviewees and interviewers. None of the interviewers engaged in the study had direct experience of working with people who have suffered protection issues, including physical and mental trauma, GBV and child protection. Respondents were not asked to explicitly talk about their own experiences or to report incidents. Additionally, the interview protocol did not include questions that broached on tensions in the home and domestic violence although some interviewees did indicate such issues voluntarily. Questions regarding the gendered risks that people might face when pursuing livelihoods or moving outside the home were asked in general terms. Again, some respondents voluntarily revealed their own experiences.

Because the people being interviewed were WFP beneficiaries and thus particularly vulnerable, and because the interviewers were WFP employees, interviewers had to be very careful not to raise concerns or expectations regarding the food assistance that individuals were receiving, defusing them through preliminary discussion before interviews. Additionally, the insecure context in each city and an often-perceived oppressive control by the government meant that many WFP beneficiaries were suspicious of inquiry into their experiences and background. It was not always clear to interviewees why they were being asked about protection risks and mobility constraints and some voiced concerns about the use of the information. Interviewers reassured interviewees about the confidentiality of their responses and that the study was not being used to determine eligibility for food assistance.

STUDY LIMITATIONS

The study has limitations that reflect the constraints on fieldwork in sensitive and insecure, conflict-affected contexts. The study only included men and women visiting food distribution points and was conducted on weekdays during daylight hours only. Thus, it does not include people with severe mobility constraints and so did not obtain, for example, perspectives of women from very conservative households, men who remain at home because they fear being forced to engage in the crisis but who may work in the local neighbourhood, and men and women living with severe disabilities. In addition, the study did not include women and men with inflexible, full-time working hours.

Limitations were also present in the desktop research. Urban livelihoods programming is in its infancy in government-held areas of Syria and there are few studies to draw on. In addition, it was not possible to source background quantitative information beyond public domain information.



WFP/Marwa Awad

One of the study objectives was to learn lessons and design tools to support the collection of primary data in access-constrained contexts. The remote management setup of the study contributed to this learning objective, but it also posed quality challenges. Experienced WFP Syria staff provided mentoring and oversight to field staff to ensure that as high a standard as possible of data collection was maintained.

The study did not examine in detail the tensions among different ethnic and religious groups, including IDPs and host communities. This was because of the sensitive nature of the study, the different belief systems relating to gender that are held across various social and religious groups, and tensions among ethnic and religious groups in the context of the current crisis and displacement ■

Figure 1 shows how various obstacles and constraints interfere with the different stages of the empowerment sequence. Ultimately, these obstacles need to be addressed through structural change in social norms and institutions (*ibid*).

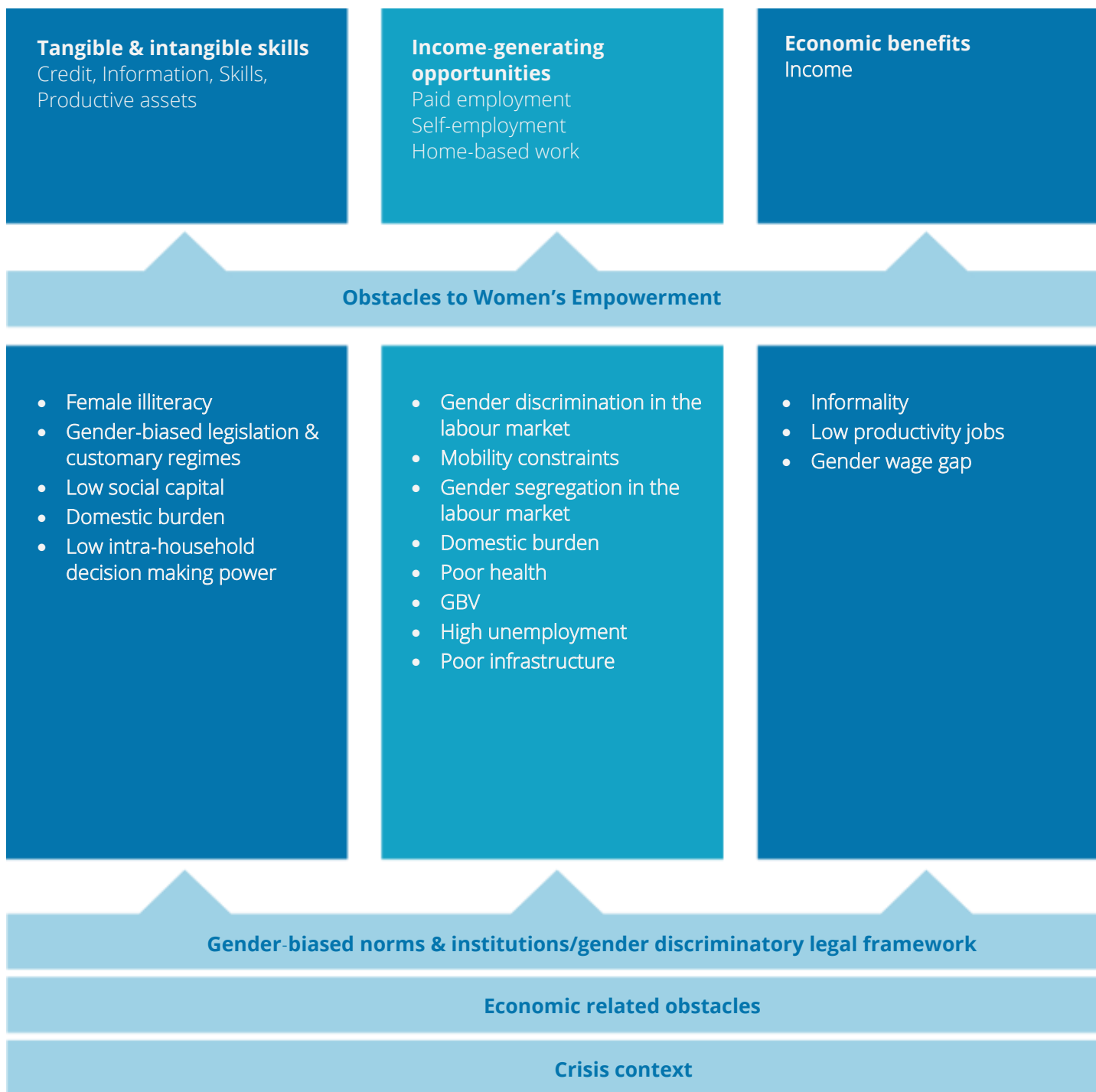


Figure 1: Core areas of inquiry and issues considered (modified from Abril 2009)

Women's control over benefits

Expanded strategic choices

Women's empowerment

- Low decision-making power
- Low legal literacy
- Low level of education
- Low self-image/self-esteem
- Low participation in the public sphere

- Which will contribute to lift some of the obstacles for future generations of women & girls.

- Structural change in social norms & institutions

A woman in a black headscarf carries a large, bulky bundle wrapped in clear plastic on her head. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent red filter. The text 'BACKGROUND: THE URBAN CRISIS' is centered in white, uppercase letters.

BACKGROUND: THE URBAN CRISIS

3 Background: the Urban Crisis

The crisis in Syria is one of the world's largest humanitarian crises. In 2017, UNOCHA estimated that there were 13 million people in need in Syria, including an estimated 6.1 million — 45 percent of the population — who were internally displaced (UNOCHA, 2018). Communities have been fractured and much of Syria's infrastructure has been destroyed. By the end of 2016, more than 80 percent of Syrians were living in poverty (UNDP, 2016) and cumulative losses in gross domestic product were estimated to amount to over USD 226 billion from 2011 to 2016 (World Bank, 2017b). More than three million Syrians had lost their jobs and almost 12 million people had lost their primary source of income (*ibid*) with concomitant increases in the vulnerability of the population and criminality. Since 2011, the country has fallen from 113 to 134 in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Index (HDI) (UNDP, 2016).

The crisis is now a protracted one; displacements continue, with many people still fleeing the country. Most IDPs have been displaced from their original locations for more than a year. Syria's cities are at the centre of the crisis, with large numbers of IDPs moving to, in and between cities. Cities in government-held areas are now hosting heterogeneous populations of people who have never left, IDPs, and thousands of people who are returning to their homes. Within these groups are split families, vulnerable men, women and children, most of whom have suffered immeasurable trauma since the crisis began (IIED, 2018). Exposure to continuous, distressing and potentially traumatic events, depletion of resources, forced displacement and lack of security are negatively affecting the mental health of many vulnerable individuals, increasing risks of maladaptation and undermining the ability of individuals to cope and pursue livelihoods (Quosh, Eloul, and Ajlani, 2013; UNOCHA, 2018).

Many people have exhausted their savings and resorted to coping mechanisms that cause harm over the long term, such as selling off assets. In turn, faced with depleting asset bases and increasing costs of living, many people have resorted to extreme coping mechanisms, such as sending children to the streets to beg. Households are increasingly relying on income from child labour, leading to long-term negative effects on children's health and education (UNOCHA, 2018). Child marriage of girls is an increasingly common coping strategy of vulnerable households, and a reason

many girls do not attend school, as families attempt to mitigate the effects of limited economic opportunities and increasing poverty, disrupted family structures and social and support networks, and as they seek to protect their daughters from sexual violence and its consequences. The major drivers of child marriage are heightened by the anxiety, uncertainty, and lack of control in conflict situations (Glinski, Sexton, and Meyers, 2015).

It is difficult to assess the scope of GBV in Syria, but studies with Syrian refugees suggest that men, women and children have commonly experienced or witnessed torture, kidnappings and massacres. Many, particularly women and girls but also men and boys, have been victimised by rape and other forms of sexual violence. Individuals have been targeted — and have seen people killed — by bombs and snipers. People have suffered physical injuries and their loved ones have been killed or disappeared (James, Sovcik, Garoff and Abbasi, 2014). Stigmatisation, shame and distrust, along with lack of protection and support services, make it difficult for individuals to report or seek support if they have experienced trauma.

BRIEF PROFILES OF THE THREE CITIES

Urban areas are always recipients of IDPs because of family ties and social networks as well the possibility of finding relative safety, income-generating opportunities, access to shelter and services and humanitarian aid. Cities also offer a degree of anonymity for rebuilding lives that can be harder to find in rural areas (IDMC, 2016). Knowledge with respect to government-held urban areas in Syria today remains incomprehensive. Nevertheless, data suggest that, despite regional differences, there are significant similarities in the situation of the urban poor and food insecure.

Across government-held Syria, cities continue to be characterised by the widespread struggle for survival in high-risk environments (Grunewald, 2013). The urban poor and vulnerable face multiple constraints beyond their immediate control. Among the causes of the 2011 uprising in Syria was increasing inequality and urban informality, fed by rapid natural population growth and rural-urban migration, lack of economic development, high urban unemployment, governance failures and divisions along ethno-religious lines (Kilcullen and Rosenblatt, 2014; Khalaf, et al., 2017; Batarwi, 2018). In Aleppo, Homs and Lattakia, increased unemployment has resulted in loss of household income; housing has become

increasingly expensive; many people do not have security of tenure and are food insecure. Government investment also is lacking (Batarwi, 2018; World Bank, 2017b; NRC, 2016; NRC, 2017). Rising unemployment and food insecurity have put inflationary pressure on the economy. For example, WFP found that food prices have exhibited an upwards trend since 2015 mainly because of the depreciating Syrian Pound. This has put immense pressure on households, rendering those without regular access to incomes highly vulnerable (FAO, WFP, 2017).

Protection threats are severe across Aleppo, Homs and Lattakia, affecting women, men, girls and boys differently through the gendered dimensions of displacement, violence, kidnapping, restricted movement and limited access to infrastructure and services (Khattab and Myrntinen, 2017; Khalaf, et al., 2017). Men and boys make up the large majority of direct victims of armed conflict and are more at risk compared to women and girls of forced military engagement and detention. Women, men, girls and boys are at risk from kidnapping, with abduction of women and girls more commonly associated with rape and sexual assault or forced marriage (GBV AoR, 2017; Khattab and Myrntinen, 2017).

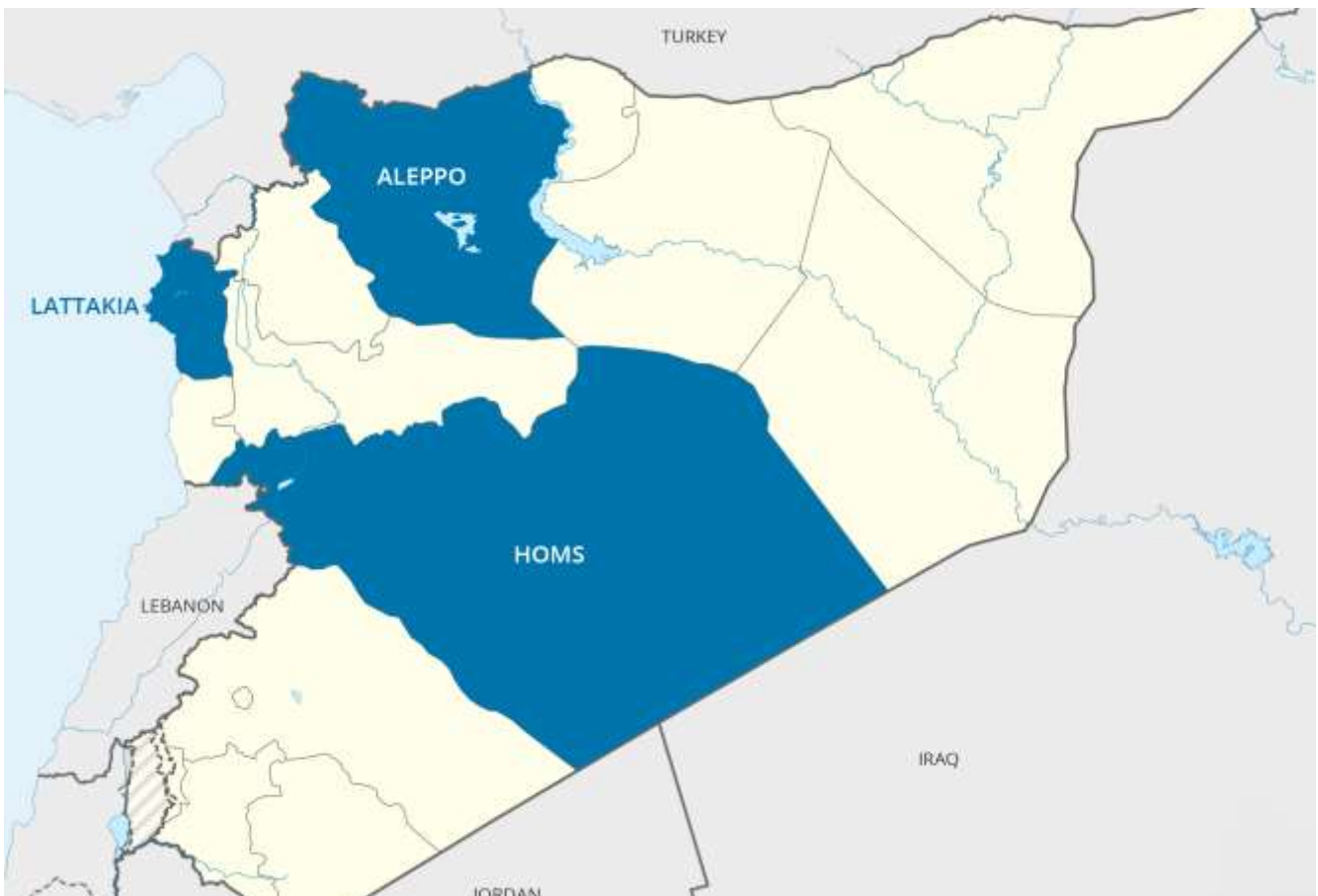
Life in government-controlled cities poses similar conditions for low-income, food-insecure and vulnerable men and women in both host and IDP communities. These tend to be more encompassing

than the differences between each city. Nevertheless, there are also some inter-city differences.

ALEPPO

The destruction of Aleppo, which began when armed opposition groups seized eastern portions of the city in 2012 and concluded with the Syrian regime's takeover in November 2016, is perhaps one of the most prominent stories of the Syrian crisis so far. Reports released during the 2016 siege described the extreme suffering of the civilian population brought about by weeks of bombardment, shortages of food, medical care and fuel for heating. Their ordeal was compounded by the fact that the fighting prevented humanitarian assistance from reaching the eastern part of the city for almost five months (Dadu-Brown, Dadu and Zaid, 2017).

Aleppo historically was the focal point of northern Syria and the country's financial and industrial hub, with a pre-crisis population of more than four million¹³. Raw materials produced in eastern Syria supplied Aleppo's industry and factories. A network of relations between the Aleppine business class and senior figures in the Syrian government shaped and balanced the relationship between this economic centre and the capital, Damascus. In Aleppo itself, the business class was mainly concentrated in the western part of the city. Workers came from Aleppo's east, a poorer area of informal settlements mostly populated by Sunni, religious, conservative



¹³ www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2017/11/5a096a894/aleppo-returnees-assess-scale-rebuilding.html

people from the countryside deprived of services and economic opportunities (Kilcullen and Rosenblatt, 2014).

From 2012 until December 2016, Aleppo was divided between east and west, with the parts occupied by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), other rebel forces and government forces. Most IDPs settled in western Aleppo or fled to other governorates such as Latakia, Homs, Tartous and Hama. By March 2017, 141,493 IDPs had been registered in newly accessible areas of Aleppo City. According to the information collected in a needs assessment in early 2017 in newly accessible areas, almost 40 percent of the surveyed families were headed by a woman, and 18 percent of all households had at least one family member with disabilities. According to the survey, 42 percent of children were out of school, and reports of unaccompanied children also were received (UNOCHA, 2017).

Of the three cities in the study, Aleppo has experienced the most physical damage, with an estimated 40 percent of the city damaged (World Bank, 2017a). Reports indicate that equipment in factories has been plundered and that many businesses have moved their production to more secure locations along the Syrian coast such as Latakia, undermining (re)establishment of employment in Aleppo (Gobat and Kostial, 2016). The destruction of the city has led to water and electricity shortages and many public facilities delivering basic services, including schools and hospitals, remain unopen. Electricity is available from private generators, water from wells or tanks filled by aid agencies, bread from charities and basic education and healthcare with help from the UN and NGOs (Dadu-Brown, Dadu and Zaid, 2017). The alternative is buying water at a very high price compared to the income rate (1000 litres/SYP2000 = USD 4 average with the average income rate for a non-qualified labourer SYP1500 = USD 3 for eight working hours daily) (*ibid*).

At the time of writing, there are some signs that life in Aleppo is improving. Increasing stability in the city and the Governorate has led to the return of some IDPs and refugees to their homes in East Aleppo City¹⁴. However, this has also put additional pressure on the already overloaded service infrastructure and the limited job market (Khaddour, 2017). Nevertheless, considering the early reconstruction drive, one report suggests that the retail, wholesale, transportation and construction sectors could present an opportunity for resilience-building in Aleppo (Dadu-Brown, Dadu and Zaid, 2017).

Although the situation is still grim, people are beginning to rebuild their homes and local government is reconstructing roads and re-establishing basic services.

HOMS

As Syria's third largest city, Homs in western Syria was an important industrial centre and functioned as a link between Syria's interior and the Mediterranean coast, with a pre-crisis population of 800,000 (UN Habitat, 2014). The city had a Sunni majority, but it was a mixed community, although more religiously conservative than Damascus and Latakia (Nakkash, 2013). Like Aleppo, Homs has served as a major battleground and after Aleppo, it is the second most physically damaged city in Syria¹⁵. At the start of the crisis, the city served as the revolution's centre and it suffered a two-year siege during which 70 percent of the buildings in the Old City were destroyed. By 2017, the city centre was still largely uninhabitable. Urban vulnerability was present mostly in the form of food insecurity for many households, though the overall situation was judged more favourable than in Aleppo. Living conditions for the poor and vulnerable in Homs are characterised by widespread lack of basic services like water and electricity¹⁶. Although most displaced people of Homs left the city, 44 percent were displaced in the city, 58 percent of its current population. In 2017, Homs was home to 314,400 IDPs (Azzouz and Katz, 2017; WoS Protection Sector, 2016).

There is a dearth of data regarding the situation of people living in Homs, but by 2017 some families had returned, resettled and begun to repair their partially damaged houses. In 2014, as noted in UN Habitat's City Profile Homs report, the collapse of the role of traditional markets, and the shift in population densities because of hosting and sheltering in residential neighbourhoods, led to the emergence of new informal street markets, providing thousands of job opportunities to the original population and IDPs. The privately led transportation sector also was a major contributor to income generation in the city. The public services sector is the dominant employment sector in the city today, especially in the south-eastern neighbourhoods.

Azzouz and Katz (2017) note that despite the support of humanitarian agencies and incipient reconstruction, there are significant challenges facing IDPs in Homs to remain in their new areas. Many IDPs in Homs are trying to return to their ruined neighbourhoods and repair their damaged

¹⁴ Between January and November 2017, an estimated 440,000 displaced Aleppans returned to the city and surrounding areas. www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2017/11/5a096a894/aleppo-returnees-assess-scale-rebuilding.html.

¹⁵ www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2016/05/24/the-importance-of-planning-syria-s-eventual-reconstruction

¹⁶ www.haaretz.com/middle-east-news/syria/ancient-heart-of-syria-s-homs-still-in-ruins-1.5743903

houses, but some people have left their homes again because of the lack of basic infrastructure and services in damaged neighbourhoods. They have therefore settled in better-maintained areas in Homs where the markets, schools and medical centres are functioning, and where there are more families and a stronger sense of community. Another issue is that, after more than six years of crisis, many IDPs have re-established their lives elsewhere in the city and created new social, economic and other connections in these places. The destruction of Homs has made parts of the city unrecognisable, and the movement of its citizens outside the city has changed its economic, social and cultural fabric. Many citizens say they feel like strangers in their own city, lamenting that the city has "lost its soul" and that "there is not [as] much life as before the war". Azzouz and Katz argue that for Homs to recover, agencies will need to empower communities to enable them to recover from the damage and trauma that has changed them and their city (*ibid*).

LATTAKIA

Located on Syria's Mediterranean coast, close to Turkey, Lattakia was an important trade hub and gateway to the industrial and commercial economy of Aleppo before the crisis. It is the largest port city in Syria, and the largest city in Lattakia Governorate. In 2010, the city's population was 400,000¹⁷. Unlike Homs and Aleppo, Lattakia has the reputation of being a liberal and cosmopolitan city.

In contrast to Aleppo and Homs, Lattakia has escaped violence and destruction and it has not witnessed an exodus of its population. Of the three cities in this study, it has been the least affected by the crisis, although the crisis has increased pressure on its infrastructure and services and an already limited job market because of the influx of IDPs¹⁸ (World Bank, 2017a). This has resulted in a decrease in the price of labour and falling daily wages (Khaddour, 2016). Although the city gives an impression of relative prosperity when compared with others in Syria, there are great disparities in living standards. The conditions of the urban poor and vulnerable are dire, urban poverty is highly visible in some areas and the crisis has altered the living circumstances of much of the city's local population, which is mainly Alawite (*ibid*). Most IDPs are Sunnis from the more conservative areas of Idlib, Al Raqqah, and Al Hassakah and Aleppo, the arrival of whom has heightened pre-existing tensions between Sunni and Alawite groups in some parts of the city (*ibid*).

Since the crisis, the city's economy has radically changed, with a new "displacement economy" having emerged. Before the crisis, Lattakia's economy was

dominated by its port and complemented by the tourism sector during the summer, and most business was linked to import-export, insurance, and legal services. Additionally, many urban residents were engaged in agriculture on peri-urban land. With the crisis, however, port operations have diminished and business has shifted to housing, manufacturing and commerce with the movement of IDPs into the city. Middle and upper- middle-income IDPs from other cities have taken advantage of a relatively stable political situation and the position of the city as a major trade hub. Not only have they transformed seasonal summer resorts into shelters; they also have relocated their own investment to the commercial heart of the city. Syrian factories have moved out of the northern province of Aleppo¹⁹ and hundreds of shops, clinics and offices have emerged. There has been an increase in new housing units. Between 2011 and 2014, there was a 58 percent increase in building permits issued by the local government. Between 2010 and 2014, there also was a 31 percent increase in licences issued for small and medium-sized enterprises (from 27 to 861). New income-generating opportunities are emerging in construction. The industrial area is offering employment opportunities in factories and industrial workshops while the importance of agriculture in peri-urban areas has also increased ■

¹⁷ www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/Lattakia-is-assads-achilles-heel

¹⁸ According to UNOCHA, in 2015 Lattakia city was hosting 200,000 IDPs.

¹⁹ <https://theArabweekly.com/syrian-factories-relocating-coastal-area>



A photograph of a woman wearing a patterned headscarf and a red top, smiling gently while holding a young child. The child is wearing a blue long-sleeved shirt with a cartoon character on it. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The text 'FINDINGS: GENDERED CONSTRAINTS AND RISKS TO INCOME GENERATION' is centered in white, uppercase letters.

FINDINGS: GENDERED
CONSTRAINTS AND RISKS TO
INCOME GENERATION

4 Findings: Gendered constraints and risks to income generation

INTRODUCTION: PRE-EXISTING INEQUALITIES AND GENDER BIASED NORMS AND INSTITUTIONS

In the current crisis, pre-existing gender inequalities translate into women facing more and different challenges in accessing and benefiting from income generation than their male counterparts. In the decades before the crisis, the status of Syrian women had improved. Their participation in the government administration, though minor, had been improving and the country had made progress in closing the gender gap in literacy and educational attainment. Nevertheless, girls continued to face greater challenges in accessing secondary education. This is reflected in the highly variable gender gaps by region and income level. Rural families and families with low incomes generally had a large gender gap and overall low educational attainment²⁰.

Reduced gender inequalities in education have not translated into higher rates of female participation in the formal economy. Before the crisis, only 22 percent of Syrian women were labour force participants compared to 82 percent of men (Hausmann, Tyson and Zahidi, 2010). In cities, women joined the labour force at an older age compared to rural women, many of whom were performing agricultural labour, and urban women had a lower labour force participation rate at all ages (Ovensen and Sletten, 2003). Female labour force participation correlated with their relationships with household heads. In both rural and urban areas, women living with their siblings or parents had the highest participation rates. Married women worked less than the female average, particularly in cities. Unmarried women heads had high rates of participation; they had to work because there usually was no able-bodied man in the household (*ibid*). Syria ranks 133 out of 159 countries in the 2015 Gender Inequality Index (GII), which measures gender-based inequalities in reproductive health, empowerment and economy. The country ranks 142 out of 144 in the 2016 Global Gender Gap Index. This compares to a ranking of 86 out of 145 countries in the 2011 GII and 124 out of 134 in the 2010 Gender Gap Index.

Like other countries in the Middle East, women's limited engagement in the labour market is attributed to the interplay of conservative socio-cultural norms relating to gender roles and discriminatory laws and policies. The concept of family honour is enormously important to understanding the constraints that women in Syria face, especially in orthodox Muslim households (Moghadam, 2013). Women and girls are expected to remain "pure" until marriage, giving rise to strict codes of conduct that severely restrict the mobility of women and dictate how they should dress and mix with men who are not members of their close family. In some families and communities, adolescent girls and women may be expected to be veiled outside the home and to remain secluded. For women who are not allowed to leave the home, family especially provides the primary or only social outlet. Outside the home women, at least in theory, must be accompanied by a male guardian or chaperone (*ibid*).

In Syria, women's rights to make decisions about their lives are often significantly limited. Men are regarded as the "protectors" of women, and an older man, usually a father or grandfather, has authority over family decisions. Social and cultural norms have tended to dictate that men work in wage labour in the public sphere and that women carry out unpaid care and domestic work in the private sphere. In rural areas, women typically have engaged in milk and food processing and tending livestock, although men have remained responsible for business. Roles of children in the household are varied based on age and gender. Before the crisis, boys and girls generally attended primary school, although boys were slightly more likely to be literate. Boys generally have been expected to follow their father's career path outside the home whereas girls often aided their mothers in domestic work.

In Syria, as in other countries in the Middle East, women and girls face discrimination under the law. Analysts vary in their assessments of the status the State accords women and girls compared to men and boys. The Government of Syria legislated gender equality into the Constitution²¹ in 1973 and since

²⁰ 2007 data indicate that overall literacy rates were low, with only 76.5 percent of adult women and 89.7 percent of adult men literate.

²¹ According to the 1973 Constitution, Syrian women enjoy equality with men before the law. The Syrian Constitution enshrines the principle of equality of all citizens and calls for a removal of obstacles that limit women's advancement. The Constitution grants equal rights to all its citizens in Article 25, regardless of gender, and Article 45 states that women are guaranteed "all the opportunities that enable them to participate fully and effectively in political, social, cultural, and economic life".

then it has ratified international conventions protecting women's and children's rights²². However, gender inequalities remain deep in legislation because of laws that contain discriminatory provisions. Although Syria ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 2003, it maintains reservations²³ and has not yet ratified the Optional Protocol. Women and girls are disadvantaged most notably in freedom of movement and residence, marriage, divorce, inheritance, child custody and laws against sexual violence. There is also no legislation specifically prohibiting gender-based discrimination (Kelly and Breslin, 2010). Where laws protecting women's rights do exist, they are often poorly enforced.

There are also significant legal obstacles for women and for those who wish to work outside the home. The 2010 Labour Law (Art. 75) mandates equal remuneration for men and women for work of equal value, but there is no law mandating non-discrimination based on gender in hiring. All women are barred from working at night (except in certain professions, for example, healthcare) and in professions deemed injurious to their health or morals. According to the Personal Status Law (Article 73) a wife forfeits her maintenance rights²⁴ if she works outside the home without her husband's consent (Tabet, 2005).

Religious-based cultural norms continue to affect other laws regarding women's rights and responsibilities, reinforced by Syria's religious-based family courts. Thus, for example, although the minimum age of marriage is 18 for men and 17 for girls, a court can allow persons younger than the legal age to marry with the consent of their guardian. Before the crisis, 13 percent of Syrian women aged 20 to 25 were married before the age of 18²⁵.

Socio-cultural norms restrict women in other areas. Before the crisis, financial institutions were reluctant to grant loans to rural women and the ability of low-income men and women to access credit was limited because of their lack of assets and collateral. In one study, 78 percent of rural women were found to be interested in obtaining credit, with half of them

intending to use it to start a business or expand their farming. However, banks generally focused on funding large-scale projects requiring substantial assets as collateral. Additionally, a lack of training programs and awareness about credit opportunities put potential women entrepreneurs at a disadvantage compared to men (Kelly and Breslin, 2010).

Notwithstanding these constraints, there were and still are many Syrian women who face fewer restrictions. Social class and geographic location significantly affect women's ability to make their own choices. Women born into the middle and upper classes in cities and who have a higher education have far more opportunities than those born into lower-class families and in rural areas. Before the crisis, they were far more likely to have participated in the labour force. Illiterate urban women hardly participated in the labour force at all (Ovensen and Sletten, 2003).

More than six years of crisis is changing the constraints that vulnerable women and men face in generating income. Since 2011, the number of women participating in the formal labour market has decreased, but formal labour opportunities have decreased for men, too. Women are now more likely to be engaged in informal and small-scale work. According to some news articles, women make up the overwhelming majority of the workforce in some sectors in certain parts of Syria. For example, women make up 90 percent of the agricultural workforce, and there have been reports of factories in Damascus that are almost totally populated by women (Hilton, 2017).

In Syria, poverty affects women more than men. The crisis has exacerbated this; many women are widowed or are living in households headed by a woman. Many men have died or gone missing because of the fighting, leaving their wives and children without a breadwinner in the family.

Data on the numbers of households headed by a woman and conflict-affected households in Syria are limited, but 2015 estimates suggest that between 12 percent and 17 percent of households in Syria were

²²This includes the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Optional Protocols on the involvement of children in armed conflict and the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

See http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=170&Lang=EN

²³In the Qu'ran, marriage is made through mutual consent, and according to which women are expected to be "obedient". In return, women can expect men to provide for them in the life style to which they were accustomed prior to the marriage. In marriage women have maintenance rights and men are not only expected to financially support their wives, but also to treat them affectionately (see Tabet, 2005: p2).

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²⁵ UNICEF, [State of the World's Children: Adolescence: An Age of Opportunity](#), 2011 as cited in Care, [To Protect Her Honour: Child Marriage in Emergencies – The Fatal Confusion Between Protecting Girls and Sexual Violence](#), 2015

²⁶ Women's employment rate in 2015 was 14 percent according to UNDP's Human Development Report.

headed by women, compared to 4.4 percent in 2009²⁷. According to International Displacement Monitoring Centre, women and children constitute 80 percent of the IDP population and tend to be the most vulnerable to poverty and deprivation. Income in households headed by a woman tends to be lower than that of households headed by a man (CARE, 2016b).

The restricted freedom of movement of men and boys resulting from the volatile security situation has meant the loss of the traditional male role as breadwinner, affecting household income (CARE, 2016a; CARE, 2016b). In contrast, in many areas women can move more freely, including through checkpoints (*ibid*). Additionally, labour migration of men household members is widespread and remittances from abroad are often the most important source of household income.

Recent studies in opposition-held parts of Syria reveal how gender roles are changing as a result of

such factors (CARE, 2016a; CARE, 2016b; UNOCHA, 2018). Women increasingly are the sole providers of food and shelter for their families. These studies also indicate that women increasingly participate in decision making on household finances. Nevertheless, they also point to the many barriers and constraints that women face when generating income. Women face many socio-cultural constraints and considerable social stigma when working and are often limited to low-paid, non-productive, “gender-appropriate” work where they may be exposed to harassment and GBV. These constraints are exacerbated by inadequate basic services, displacement and dwindling assets, along with limited opportunities in the formal sector.

FINDINGS OF THE GENDER ANALYSIS FROM THE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

The story of Nadia, a 36-year-old woman from (and still living in) Homs, exemplifies the gendered effects of the crisis on urban women.

Before the crisis, Nadia never thought of earning money herself, and her husband’s business was the only source of income for the family. Like many, she is suffering deeply because of the impact of the crisis on her husband and children. She says that “my husband has psychological problems after his brother went missing in uncertain circumstances four years ago and because of the large responsibilities and pressures he shoulders financially and spiritually for us”. Her husband now supports his father, his missing brother’s wife and children and his sister (whose husband also went missing) and her children through his work as a wage labourer. Meanwhile, Nadia’s own children are deeply traumatised “because of the troubles they witnessed in the neighbourhood - they have become aggressive to one another, and they don’t accept others especially newcomers to the neighbourhood”. Her daughter feared sleeping in case she did not wake up.

Meeting basic needs has become extremely difficult for the family because “prices have increased tenfold — we have had to economise and confine our spending to basic needs, depriving our children of some of their basic foods like the morning glass of milk before school”. As a result, Nadia’s husband finally accepted that she work with a charity, something he would never have accepted before the crisis. But her burdens have increased as a result, partly because she no longer has a washing machine and vacuum cleaner (they disappeared) and they don’t have water.

This has led to “extra toil simultaneous with my need to work outside home and my husband becoming ill”.

Although Nadia is working, her husband does not help with cooking, cleaning and childcare. She believes that a man should not “bear a woman’s responsibilities and duties especially the domestic ones. “One of the advantages of cultural and religious practices in our community is that they make a woman more committed to her home and family so she fulfils her duties as a wife and a mother according to our religious culture,” she explains. Ensuring that her husband continues to find her work acceptable is stressful, and she must carefully manage her responsibilities. She works, but “I must be at home at lunchtime to prepare lunch for the family, and I must be at home with my children before 4 pm”. Being at home makes my husband satisfied with my work outside home and gives him a positive impression about my work”.

Compounding her struggle is the fact that she lives in a conservative area of Homs “where women are helpless but bear much more responsibility than men”. She says women “experience psychological, physical and sexual violence and suffer when they move outside the home”. Although she appreciates the opportunity to work, she believes that the best thing would be for women to have productive work in the home so that they never have to go outside. She has to continue working so her children receive an education and have a better standard of living.

²⁷ The ratio has risen to 22.4 percent in 2018, according to a report from the Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy

²⁸ For example, in the southern province of Deraa, monthly income for households headed by a woman is between 15 percent and 32 percent lower than it is for households headed by a man.

²⁹ Interview in Homs on 13 June 2017 with a woman member of local community in a household headed by a man.

INDICATIONS OF LOW PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING AMONGST MEN AND WOMEN

The devastating effect of the crisis on the psychological well-being of interviewees and members of their households, including children, cannot be overstated. The health, emotional and psychological consequences of the crisis appeared to be so devastating in some households that adults were unable to continue being productive, with an ensuing decline in household income. Interviewees referred to physical injuries they or their family members had suffered. Psychological effects on themselves or their children included hopelessness, grief, anxiety, depression, nightmares and trouble sleeping, constant fear and personality changes. Interviewees also indicated increased health expenditures and more care responsibilities.

I cannot express enough what we have been through during the last few years. We have moved repeatedly and lost all our relationships. I have lost my job and my children their educational opportunities. I am speechless at the kind of grief my family has been through. (A 38-year-old man from Aleppo returning to his home)

'I still suffer from extreme horror because of the war. During the hard times in Aleppo, during clashes at night, I used to wake up crying and wake up my daughter not knowing where to go in case our house was destroyed.' (A 36-year-old divorced woman from Aleppo)

Men interviewees referred to increasing psychological pressure to feel responsible for protecting the family and the burden of fulfilling the "breadwinner" role in the context of high poverty and limited employment opportunities. One man expressed that his wife had little understanding of the stress that he faced while others referred to "de-professionalization" and no longer being able to provide for their families.

My health and psychological health have suffered, which has affected my relationships with my family. It is also hard for my wife to understand the pressure that I am under ... It is my responsibility to provide for my family; before the crisis I only had to worry about myself. Now I must worry about everyone in my family. (A 45-year-old married man from Homs)

As a man, I face lots of stresses. The most important is the psychological stress because I fear all the time for my kids and my wife. One of the hardest situations that I have encountered is when my wife called and informed me about a clash happening close to my house. I put myself at risk to get my family out. We all were about to die. (A 48-year-old married man and an IDP from eastern Aleppo)

In Aleppo, the uncertainty in their lives and in their circumstances meant that interviewees were often struggling to know how to deal with their changed circumstances or struggling to take practical steps to do so. Most women and men interviewees referred to how they felt unable to plan, but only lived day to day.

I do not think about the future because I do not want to be disappointed when wishing for things that are not going to happen. Now I live with my family and we are safe, thanks be to God. (A 39-year-old woman IDP from Homs in Aleppo)

When I was a little girl I wanted to become a tailor, but did not achieve that dream. Now I even lost my desire to learn [tailoring]. (A 45-year-old widowed woman and an IDP displaced from a city)

I lack any aspiration for the future - I am still sad about my husband's death. I live day by day without thinking of the future. (A 30-year-old woman from Homs)

Life has no meaning, especially since my husband died - life has become nonsense. I do not feel there is a future. (A 46-year-old widow from Lattakia)

Virtually all interviewees, whether members of host communities, returnees or IDPs, connected their own well-being with that of their children. Many interviewees described the same problems that adults suffered regarding children, along with behavioural problems and aggression, and changes in educational performance. Interviewees said their most important aspirations were regarding their children's future prosperity, the prosperity of children that had grown up, and enhancing their potential by keeping them healthy and getting them educated. But they also said these concerns were a major source of stress and emotional upset.

There is no horizon for thinking or improving the situation, we live without hope, we live day by day. The future is unknown and I do not see any job opportunities. My only concern is to ensure that my children complete their studies and have job opportunities. (A 55-year-old married man from Homs)

PERCEIVED CHANGES IN ENGAGEMENT IN PRODUCTIVE LABOUR BY WOMEN AND MEN

The livelihoods strategies of interviewees consisted primarily of productive labour and reproductive labour, the latter predominantly performed by women. There were no discernible differences in livelihoods pursuits or skills across IDPs and host communities although differences were apparent between women of rural and urban origin. Women of rural origin stated that they were involved in family farming or livestock production before the crisis. In contrast, some women from cities had been formally employed as teachers or as civil servants

while others referred to their low level of education and the fact that they had never generated income. Other livelihoods strategies mentioned by interviewees relate to family splitting, migration (in the two cases identified it was the husband that had migrated) and remittances, informal credit arrangements especially with local shops, social security (pensions), begging and borrowing from neighbours and family members. As is typical in urban life, there is a high level of commoditization. For example, only a few respondents (all in Lattakia) indicated that their households were engaged to some extent in food production with one household selling all the produce rather than consuming it. Otherwise, households were paying for most of their consumer goods, with interviewees also referring to the importance of food assistance.

Respondents also indicated the shift in the gendered division of productive labour that is occurring in many host community and IDP households because of the crisis. Death or injury of husbands and sons or their absence meant that income from male family members has been lost or reduced. In addition, many interviewee households have lost income-generating assets or access to agricultural holdings because of displacement. Financial assets and consumer durables (housing, domestic equipment and jewellery) were depleted.

As a result, women who had not generated income before the crisis were now doing so. Many women engaged in income generation had not worked outside the home before the crisis.

My role has significantly changed. I was a housewife who did not contribute at all to earning income and depended fully on my husband. Now I am the main source of income in the house [...]. I depend on my elder daughter to look after her siblings and help them in their studies. I depend on my husband to do some cleaning duties and take care of the house in my absence. In this way, I can have cleaning job opportunities through relatives and neighbours. This is the main income for my family. (A 42-year-old married woman and an IDP from Aleppo)

Pressures have increased during the crisis; we have to meet household needs but our income is insufficient, and I bear most of the responsibility. My wife [...] has decided to learn a new profession as a hairdresser. No matter where she might work, inside home or outside, I will not prevent her from working. We have lost our family. We have lost our acquaintances, friends and anyone who can help us. (A 54-year-old married man and an IDP)

All working women had children under 18 years to support. The decision to work was not often an easy one.

The decision to work in addition to [managing] my domestic responsibilities was difficult. I had to explain to my children that I must leave them sometimes to go make more money... I must work a lot to satisfy our basic needs. (A 44-year-old woman and an IDP in Homs)

When I started searching for work to help my husband, my children were younger and needed me all the time which made it hard, but I had no alternative. (A 41-year-old married woman from Lattakia)

Although women were engaging more in income generation, socio-cultural norms meant that women and men respondents were generally confined to certain types of employment and sources of income.

All the things that men do can be done by women, except work that requires physical strength and jobs that women cannot do because of cultural norms and traditions, such as carpentry, painting, mechanics, barbering. Our society does not accept women working in these jobs. Women who work in these jobs are subject to ridicule and humiliation - people look at these women with pity. (A 32-year-old divorced woman from Homs)

A man cannot do a job like mine— cleaning up in the charity. Men weren't created to clean up and wipe offices. They can clean and sweep streets. Cleaning offices is a woman's job. These are the norms of the community. (A 43-year-old married woman in Lattakia and a rural IDP)

The constraints are caused by the community's culture of shame and its view towards men and women. A woman can do all a man's jobs except for those which need a lot of muscular effort, or some other jobs like bus or taxi driver, maintaining mobile phones or laptops, barber, blacksmith, carpenter or mechanic. (A 36-year-old married woman from the local community in Homs)

A woman cannot work in closed places with strange men because our community is afraid that a woman could be harassed or abused. From the point of view of men in our community, this will bring shame on the family. (A 40-year-old married woman and a rural IDP in Homs)

Such beliefs are reflected in the income-generating work that interviewees performed. Women interviewees were engaged in formal employment, as civil servants, as an administrator and as a guard, as cleaners in work premises or in people's homes or in home-based work —tutoring and food preparation. For one woman, home-based food preparation enabled her to manage her child care and domestic responsibilities. Another woman stated that at her husband's insistence, she had given up her work as a teacher when she married.

Because they needed money, her husband now allowed her to work as a tutor, but only in the home.

In contrast, all men respondents were engaged in some form of income generation, displaying a wider range of occupations, in the public sector and in the army, farming, administrative and hotel work, mobile telephone trading, taxi driving and operating industrial machinery.

Precarious and irregular labour was a common theme with women and men interviewees (whether in formal or informal employment) referring to income fluctuations, insecure employment, limited employment opportunities and decreasing wage rates. Realising a steady flow of income was a primary concern and interviewee households had developed various strategies for extra income generation. For instance, some interviewees indicated that their households had increased the number of their members in paid work reflected by the fact that more women were engaging in productive work than before the crisis. Although a sensitive issue, interviewees also reported that their children had been withdrawn from school to work.³⁰

Another strategy for working men was increased working hours and diversification. Some men reported having more than one livelihood.

Women respondents perceived themselves as having more limited livelihood opportunities, particularly formal employment, because of their low competitive strength compared to men. Women referred to their low levels of education and their lack of literacy, experience and confidence.

As a woman, I was obliged to get married at a very early age (14-years-old). I did not pursue my studies, and I was a simple housewife in my husband's home. I was only responsible for the household in addition to looking after children and cooking. ... I wish I could work, but as a woman I did not go to school or learn any skills. Women who are not educated or skilled in any job face many difficulties, which means the war affects us extremely badly. Without my son, I would be homeless by now. (A 46-year-old widowed woman and an IDP from Aleppo)

Jobs require certificates and I only have the elementary certificate which does not qualify me to work in accountancy or administration, for example. A man can work and get 1500 pounds as a daily wage for a freelance job, but a woman must be satisfied with only 700 pounds. (A 44-year-old woman whose husband was missing and an IDP in Lattakia)

In Lattakia, however, men respondents suggested that there was gender-based discrimination, indicating that it is easier for women to find employment, including in the public sector, compared to men. Men linked increasing female

employment with worsening and exploitative conditions in the formal labour market. One male respondent, for example, stated that factories now employ only women because they are willing to accept lower wages. Findings indicated that men may be less tolerant of lower wages compared to women: some men had given up previous occupations because of low wages.

The most frequently cited barriers to women's employment were cultural, societal or familial pressures. Women from cities who were already married and working before the crisis continued to work. There was variation in married women's engagement in income-earning work, which was correlated with household composition. This especially related to whether working mothers, in households headed by either men or women, could mobilise additional reproductive labour from within the household. Working women with children emphasised the importance of older relatives and in-laws, who provided reproductive labour, including childcare, enabling them to work. In other households, eldest children (one boy; one girl) had been withdrawn from school to look after their younger siblings so that their mother could work.

All non-working mothers who were interviewed were married with a working spouse, although one relied on begging. In some cases women had worked before marriage and had reluctantly given up their work at the insistence of their husbands whereas others did not believe that it was appropriate for married women to work because their efforts should be in the home.

Nearly all men and women reported that they had not learned new skills after engaging in new or different livelihoods. Nevertheless, while the crisis had clearly added to women's burdens, for some the possibility of working was in its small way empowering. Some women reflected positively on the fact that earning an income gave them more active roles in household decision-making and that they retained control over how their own income was spent. Women also reflected positively on the fact that working had built their confidence, especially when dealing with other people. Being able to leave the house and meet other people was also important.

I can say that the crisis gave me a chance to work, get experience in dealing with people, and enhance my self-confidence. (A 43-year-old married woman in Lattakia and a rural IDP)

My job cleaning houses and hotels does not require a specific skill. However, I have acquired some skills in life and in dealing with others. My self-confidence has increased and I am now able to look for and try hard to get what I want. (A 42-year-old married woman in Aleppo and an IDP from Aleppo)

³⁰ Sex of children and nature of work not specified in transcripts.

I have not learned a skill, but in the crisis and through my work in a charity I have become more confident and better able to speak up. In the past I was very shy and found it hard to talk to strangers. Now I can talk to all people confidently and politely. I would now like to learn to read and write. (A 36-year-old divorced woman and an IDP from Aleppo)

DESPITE WOMEN'S INCREASING ENGAGEMENT IN PRODUCTIVE LABOUR, DEEPLY EMBEDDED SOCIAL NORMS AND VALUES CONSTRAIN BOTH WOMEN AND MEN

In the study, the unequal division of labour at the household level between women and men was confirmed through gender activity profiling, which was used to establish the engagement of men and women in reproductive roles. As to be expected, the results found gender inequality in role allocation with most reproductive labour performed by women.

Respondents were asked to outline their beliefs regarding appropriate roles and responsibilities in the home and regarding men and women who work. Although women were doing more productive labour, the answers from women and men respondents indicate that beliefs and attitudes regarding women's and men's roles in the home are not changing. Although men and women interviewees held mixed opinions regarding whether women should work, all respondents believed that there are certain reproductive roles that men should not perform, or are less able to perform than women. Longstanding gender ideologies about what is appropriate work for men and women contribute to such beliefs. These centre on the role of men as "breadwinners", earning the money for the family and therefore responsible for far less unpaid labour. Women are designated "homemakers" and given the jobs of housework and childcare.

I do not know how to cook so I do not help my wife in cooking. I do not help my wife in cleaning because I do not know how to do that... and also, maybe because of our social traditions. My wife used to take care of the children and sometimes I used to help her... I do the maintenance work as it needs skill and strength and my wife cannot do it alone, although she sometimes tries to help me. (A 47-year-old married man from Lattakia)

Many men believed that "the duty of a wife is to raise the children" and to take care of the home. Their wives did not undertake paid work. In other cases, men were open to the idea of women working. Nevertheless, some of these men still appeared unwilling to support with childcare.

I am not convinced about [my wife's] work as she would be so exhausted with her work at home but we are obliged that she work as we need extra income [...] I do not oppose her working inside or outside the home if the work is close by so that she can come back and look after our daughter. (A 54-year-old married man and an IDP in Lattakia)

My wife bears the burden of looking after little children but she has no restrictions with regards to working. Her sister can help her look after the children if she finds a job. (A 49-year-old married man and an IDP in Lattakia)

I believe that the duty of men is to earn money and that of women is to raise the children and cook. Men are meant to work outside the home and women inside it as they take care of the household affairs and look after children, not to mention the fact that women cannot tolerate the tiredness and pressure of working... I do not mind if my wife finds a job, but she cannot find the time for that since looking after children and cleaning are tasks that men cannot tolerate. (A 40-year-old married man in Aleppo)

There were instances where men were not conforming to perceived culturally and socially defined roles and who performed household chores regularly. Some men referred to the fact they were now involved more with their children, in particular their education, because they had missed out on their schooling.

As a man, I do not mind doing household chores if I must. This is because I lived separated from my family for four years because of the crisis [so I got used to it]. Studying with the kids takes the longest time because my kids studied in Kurdish schools and their mother tongue is Arabic In addition, they did not go to school for a long time. (A 48-year-old married man, an IDP in Aleppo and a lawyer whose wife works for the government (and did so before the crisis))

With a few exceptions, women and men women believed that men did not have the skills to take proper care of children and that women are unable to do "physical" livelihoods work ranging from the police force to construction and maintenance work. Even among women who are newly working and who reflected positively on the fact, the perception is that women ideally should continue to work inside the home to meet the demands and expectations of their husbands and children and to properly fulfil their family responsibilities. Although some men indicated the increasing social acceptability of women working outside the home, cultural norms mean that women suffer stigma, especially if they engage in certain jobs, particularly night work or working around men. One woman observed that a working wife brought shame on her husband by

³¹ Respondents mentioned only risks that women faced.

making it generally known that he could not provide for his family. Working women who challenge traditional roles can be targets for slander and abuse, which limits their agency.

I do not accept that my husband do any domestic jobs, apart from maintenance work. (A 52-year-old married woman and an IDP in Lattakia who works as a civil servant)

Some household duties are hard for a man to do, like cleaning or taking care of children, but he can do the home maintenance or the shopping. (A 41-year-old married woman in Lattakia)

Some women have taken up jobs that they would never have considered before, such as street cleaning, but they do this while covering their faces because of how society looks down on them. (A 35-year-old married man in Homs)

Because of their increasing productive workloads and because men were often not taking on domestic and care roles in the home, many women respondents were shouldering a “double burden”. Almost all women across the three cities invoked their heavy responsibilities and described how their care roles had also increased significantly. This partly related to the fact that both IDPs and host communities had fewer family members nearby to call upon. A significant number of women were looking after elderly relatives or husbands or children with disabilities.

In Aleppo, women indicated that their reproductive roles were made much more difficult by the severe shortcomings in the provision of basic services. Collecting water, queuing to buy or receive food and other necessities took considerable time and effort.

The major change is the increase in my household duties such as carrying water and providing fuel because of our current situation. I must get water from a well which is a very exhausting job and does not suit a woman because of the weight and the long way between my home and the well.... When I want to replace my gas bottle, I must stand in a long queue for more than four hours. These jobs badly affect my [ability to undertake other] household duties like taking care of my mother. They also badly affect my [paid] job as I am always asking for time off. (A 36-year-old divorced woman and an IDP in Aleppo)

Almost all women wanted to return to the status quo ante and give up working outside the home.

I want to go back to my village. The village is better for me - it is a livelier place and it is better than the city. We felt healthier in the village - even water is better than the city water. I hope to return to my village because all factors of relaxation and livelihood are

there. At the village, there is social and economic solidarity. (A 43-year-old married woman in Lattakia and a rural IDP)

There were a few exceptions to this. One woman noted the greater freedom she had because of family separation and displacement.

In Idlib before the crisis there were restrictions over women’s movement, which the community does not tolerate, [thus] imposing restrictions on women’s clothing and work. My husband did not allow me to work and we agreed I should leave my job when we got married. I used to have to consult my husband to go outside home for my social visits. In Lattakia, the situation is different. I can move around freely and I can go where I want... I do not contact my husband’s parents in Idlib, and I do not intend to go back there because of the customs and traditions which I think are inappropriate for me and my son. I also want the best for my son here in Lattakia. I did not have this freedom before the crisis..... I want to stay in this new place. (A 44-year-old married woman whose husband was missing and an IDP in Lattakia)

SINGLE WOMEN, WIDOWS AND CHILDREN IN HOUSEHOLDS HEADED BY A WOMAN FACE HEIGHTENED RISKS AND CONSTRAINTS.

Interviewees thought that women who lived without the day-to-day presence of a man in the household, unmarried women, divorcees, and widows, faced higher pressures when they are forced to financially provide for themselves and their children compared to their counterparts in households headed by a man. This reflects the discrimination against women in the labour market as well as the widespread patriarchal traditions in Syrian society. Interviewees perceived that these women are particularly vulnerable to exploitation as they lack the protection of a male family member who can represent them and negotiate on their behalf³¹.

A woman in our community faces extortion and harassment especially when she is the breadwinner of the family or when she has lost her husband or her family. (A 55-year-old married man from Homs)

Women heads of households or women living in households headed by a woman referred to the difficulties of not having a man in the home.

As a divorcee, I shoulder the burdens on my own. I am having major difficulties working because I have a daughter who is in a constant state of fear and terror which I am trying to take her out of...Women are increasingly being taken advantage of because they are now more likely to ask for support and help in their husbands’ absence.... The way society looks at vulnerable women has changed - they are seen by

³² Supplementary interview with WFP staff in Lattakia

dishonest people as a good catch to be taken advantage of. (A 32-year-old divorced woman from Homs)

One of the main challenges faced by a woman on her own is finding and securing a home. We move every six months. It is difficult for a woman to deal and negotiate with men. I am worried that they take advantage of my weakness. Taking advantage of women is so common now. (A 44-year-old woman and an urban IDP in Homs)

There are a lot of daily difficulties and challenges. For example, when I need to have something fixed, it is very difficult to find a worker. Workers do not respect me as a woman.... They exploit my ignorance to overcharge me. If my husband was here they could not do that. (A 36-year-old divorced woman and an IDP in Aleppo)

For one woman, (re)marriage was the best option to achieve some security, but this may also leave women open to abuse. The interviewees also felt that single women are more likely to have to contend with sexual harassment and GBV. This included prostitution, sexual exploitation and forced marriage.

My current priorities are to have my [29-year-old] daughter marry and to get married again myself. This would support my family and reduce my expenses... I am afraid that my daughter will also suffer exploitation [without a husband]. I want her to marry so that she has protection and care. I also want to get married again to find protection and safety. (A 36-year-old divorced woman and an IDP from Aleppo)

PERCEPTIONS OF RISKS FACED BY WOMEN, MEN AND CHILDREN AND CONSTRAINTS ON THEIR FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

The crisis has directly affected household incomes and support networks with the death and injury of family members. Many interviewees had experienced the death of male family members. Several women reported that male family members had left home on some routine errand to never return. In addition to the grief this caused, these women referred to the loss of a major source of household income.

For IDPs, forced displacement has affected access to livelihoods and livelihood assets as well as services and support networks. For almost all interviewees in Aleppo and Homs and IDPs in Lattakia, critical livelihoods assets such as houses, land and livestock had been destroyed. Because of limitations on movement resulting from the volatile ground situation, most IDPs, whether from cities or rural areas, were unable to access their homes and land on a regular basis. IDPs had also spent all their savings and sold their remaining mobile assets.

The interviewees also indicated that women, men and children experience different protection issues when engaging in livelihoods or otherwise. Women and men generally feared kidnapping and moving around or working at night.

I do not feel safe in our neighbourhood. I have heard [of four girls] kidnapped here in addition to a boy. [...]. We stay at home and do not visit anybody. (A 44-year-old widowed woman from Lattakia)

Safety and security are major concerns. Because we fear being kidnapped, travel must take place at certain times and with certain people for safety. (A 44-year-old woman and an urban IDP in Homs)

Just moving around, especially in Aleppo and Homs, also presented risks for men and women:

When I left work one day, the transportation network had stopped, which meant I had to walk home... In [one] neighbourhood an armed group opened fire on a bus killing everyone... I became trapped and I couldn't get out.... I had my mobile phone, so I called a friend who helped me escape, but he lost his life while saving me. (A 32-year-old divorced woman from Homs)

One day I was on my way to work when a bus exploded and I was a few meters far from it. I got a splinter in my leg, I couldn't hear because of the strong sound, and I couldn't see anything because of the explosion dust. Thanks to Allah I recovered. (A 36-year-old married woman from Homs)

Men indicated that there are high security risks associated with reinvesting in assets, such as tools from their workshops or vehicles, that had been lost or stolen. At the same time, virtually all interviewees indicated that they did not wish to borrow money to restart livelihoods because of their inability to repay loans.

Men generally feared abduction, and some women interviewees also mentioned that their families did not allow sons to work for this reason. Men also were more likely to fear attacks on or theft of livelihood assets, such as vehicles and tools, compared to women. Being a taxi driver was linked to increased risk of extortion, including by armed actors such as police and soldiers.

It is not safe to move because of the military reserve service. I work as a peddler, but I pretend to be an old man and I choose the areas very carefully. [...]. Frankly, we depend on my wife. I am very careful about my mobility as I fear being taken into the military. My wife can move easily and my sister accompanies her in some journeys when necessary. (A 40-year-old married man from Aleppo)

Respondents perceived that women faced different protection risks when working outside the home, including harassment and sexual harassment (for example, cleaners in hotels or people's homes),

exploitation by employers (particularly lower wages compared to men) and exploitation by shopkeepers.

Seeking work elsewhere [outside my neighbourhood], such as in the industrial area, is undesirable because of childcare responsibilities and the difficulties we face in terms of safety. It is difficult to have access to jobs there because of my pregnancy and my husband's concern over my safety. I know an old woman who worked in a factory there where the work environment was unbearable - she had to work unceasingly from 6am to 10pm with no breaks. There is unfair treatment and no respect for workers' rights. (A 24-year-old married woman and an IDP in Lattakia)

Interviewees also perceived that women are increasingly engaged in transactional sex to obtain an income to survive. In one supplementary interview, it was suggested that the growing presence of foreigners in Syria was increasing the demand for transactional sex³².

We [women] face risks like interacting with others and people's reactions, especially strangers. We also risk exploitation and extortion. Poverty and unemployment are forcing many people to carry out theft, robbery, banditry, kidnapping, and even murder. For men, there is a fear of moving around [because of kidnapping]. [Women] are affected differently - men are more affected by dangers relating to safety and security. However, women are more affected by sexual harassment. Women are obliged to take immoral jobs like prostitution. (A 36-year-old married woman from Homs)

My husband prevents me from working in house-cleaning services because women face harassment by the house owner. (A 25-year-old married woman and an urban IDP in Lattakia)

9pm is the latest time we can be outside the house and we shouldn't go out before 7am. Women find it difficult to leave their homes and to move around because of the crisis, even around the neighbourhood, because they fear being attacked. In some cases, women are coerced into providing sexual favours in exchange for help. (A 32-year-old divorced woman from Homs)

How interviewees responded to these risks depended on the options available to them. Men and women typically tried to limit their working hours to daytime and limited their travel to districts in cities perceived as safe. Both women and men preferred not to travel outside their cities of residence. Strategies that minimised threats to safety often have negative consequences on livelihoods and vice versa. Where GBV occurred, it was unlikely to be spoken about because of shame or stigmatisation from family members or the community and because women were desperate to keep their jobs.

Women suffer sexual and other forms of harassment, mistreatment and low wages at work. Some neighbourhood women work on lands far away from other inhabitants and community gathering points, and so they put themselves in danger of sexual harassment and mistreatment. As they are the family breadwinners they are forced to keep silent to maintain their income and live on.' (A 36-year-old married man and an urban IDP)

Insecurity was often given as a reason families restricted women's mobility. Most women referred to the greater freedom they had had before the crisis. Nevertheless, the persistence of patriarchal values and traditional gender stereotypes mean that women face many of the same mobility constraints they had before the crisis, limiting the hours they can work and the nature of work they can do. Many respondents required permission from their husband or other relative to leave or work outside the home.

Before marriage, I had more space and freedom to move around ... In comparison, after marriage my movement has been restricted as I cannot move around without my husband's consent. I see no risks in moving around in Lattakia - for me the security situation is safe. (A 25-year-old married woman and an IDP in Lattakia)

I want to work to not have to seek help from anyone and to increase household income. However, I am married now which means consulting my husband first in regards to the decisions I make. Sometimes I can express myself and other times I cannot, depending on the situation. The freedom of mobility has decreased since the crisis. This is partly because of my husband's orders and cultural practices. This has psychologically affected me. I feel now that there are restrictions imposed on me. Working outside the house is forbidden as my family and husband worry about my safety. (A 24-year-old married woman and an IDP in Lattakia)

Supplementary interviews and data from the semi-structured interviews highlight that children were also facing protection risks. Information from the desk review and supplementary interviews suggest not only that children are dropping out of school to work and generate income for their families, but that children end up living on the street and are at risk of being recruited by armed groups or engaged by organised groups for begging, prostitution and other exploitative practices. The findings indicate that the care burdens in families negatively affect girls' and boys' access to school.

Several women mentioned that marriage traditions, particularly regarding early marriage, are changing. Although before the crisis, marriage before 18 years of age was common among rural families; now, girls as young as 13 and 14 are being married,

sometimes to much older men, ostensibly for protection and to safeguard their "honour".

We have noticed that the norms and traditions of getting married have changed. Our neighbours keep telling us we should marry off [our] daughters, as when they marry they will be no longer dependent on us but on their husbands. There is also a new trend of marrying girls to men in neighbouring counties (Arab and European) without the bride and groom seeing each other. (A 44-year-old woman and an urban IDP in Homs)

One interviewee in Homs complained that IDPs were introducing child marriage traditions in his neighbourhood and that most marriages were being performed by community leaders because couples were underage.

Ninety percent of the neighbourhood's residents are IDPs who have different traditions. ... Those who have a daughter want to get her married any way possible to rest from her expenses, and most marriages are performed by the Sheikh because the couple are underage. (A 36-year-old married man and an urban IDP in Homs)

SECURING AN INCOME GAVE SOME WOMEN MORE SAY IN HOUSEHOLD DECISION-MAKING ABOUT SPENDING, ALTHOUGH MEN CONTINUED TO HAVE THE FINAL SAY ON MAJOR DECISIONS

Discrimination in families is also limiting women's ability to generate income, with many women denied the right to make basic decisions about their own lives. Although women's involvement in decision-making was greater if they generated income, men continued to dominate. Women interviewees noted that countering their husbands or male relatives if they disagreed with a decision was not worth the trouble.

Of course, when I decided to work I had to get my mother's and uncle's consent. In our traditions, the woman must be committed to the superior's decision. If he refuses, then the idea is cancelled. I will never behave contrary to that. (A 24-year-old single woman from Aleppo)

I cannot do anything against my husband's will, and if I did, there would be negative consequences for the family. This could involve increasing problems and family interventions resulting in divorce. (A 36-year-old married woman from Homs)

The one who earns the income makes decisions and in my family, I make decisions, since I earn the income. (A 36-year-old married man and an urban IDP in Homs)

I control the home expenses as I am more experienced than my wife. She is emotional with our children which makes her spend more. I decide about

the basic household needs as I am more capable to control spending. I make the big financial decisions as I have a previous experience in car trading and so I know how to make decisions better than my wife. I do not think there are reasons other than my experience and our traditions are not conservative. I make the decisions about buying bigger assets because I have more experience than my wife in such matters. (A 47-year-old married man from Lattakia)

Traditionally women's decision-making power is limited to decisions over food and what to cook and division of household chores in the household. Although women said that they were involved in discussions regarding their engagement in productive work or taking on debt, purchase or sale of major assets, they also described their lower status compared to their husbands in decision-making, with men having the final say. Most women, however, preferred to avoid borrowing-related decisions because they felt they did not have the skills and experience for such matters or because they wanted to avoid responsibility and problems.

SOCIAL NETWORKS ARE DIVERSE BUT THERE ARE LIMITS TO THE EXTENT AND DURATION OF THE HELP PEOPLE CAN RECEIVE.

Reflecting the persistence of social norms which assign primary responsibility for care roles to women, men and women interviewees noted that women are more directly affected when children or other family members are in poor health, or when children are unable to go to school, as they shoulder the burden of care in the home. However, because of the care burdens in families, as well as the breakdown in social networks, women's access to social and leisure opportunities also were negatively affected. Several women referred to feelings of isolation and the loss of emotional as well as practical support they used to receive from family members and friends. Some women also indicated that the lack of living space for them and their children also was leading to greater stress and more psychosocial issues.

Social networks between host community and IDP community members and with local charities were said to offer support and expand the range of livelihoods options. Social networks among interviewees were diverse and went beyond the family and immediate neighbourhood environment to include, for example, charitable or work-related networks. Networks were used as a source of information for work. They also were used for financial support, usually from relatives, employers through salary advances, local religious institutions or local shops through credit on purchases.

There is a store near our house whose owner was my father's friend. I borrow money from him and rely on him if I must buy something urgent, like expensive medicine or hospital care for my mother or daughter.

He often tolerates it if I cannot clear the debt because of his past friendship with my father. If I decide to start my own small trade, I would also rely on him to get a small loan. (A 36-year-old divorced woman and an IDP from Aleppo)

In Aleppo, social networks of all respondents appeared to be limited. Host community respondents expressed mistrust of their “new” [IDP] neighbours. In contrast in Lattakia, which has not suffered similar destruction and displacement of residents, host community interviewees’ social networks extended to friends and neighbours. This was unlike most IDP respondents in Lattakia, one of whom highlighted some of the struggles she faced in fitting into her new home.

Many students attend university on Friday but my husband disapproves of the open environment of the university. Moreover, I feel uncomfortable and rejected at the university because I wear a veil. The social conditions at the university and the community [here in Lattakia] are tremendously different from the one in Aleppo where I was born. I cannot adapt to this different situation. In addition, I have no friends to attend university with to feel safer in their company. Consequently, I have been compelled to withdraw from the university. (A 24-year-old married woman and an IDP in Lattakia)

Social capital appeared to be only a viable asset for a small section of interviewees, whether host community members or IDPs.

A new [work] opportunity came up, but it was a challenge for me. Because almost everyone has been hurt or affected by the crisis, we have all been driven to overcome the challenges by finding work and studying and building new networks. You need good connections to access such opportunities. (A 35-year-old married man from Homs)

There are no institutions or networks to support me... I do not know where I can get support to get a job. (A 54-year-old married man and an IDP in Lattakia)

Interviewees generally perceived that the crisis and displacement had resulted in social fragmentation and weaker social links as people had lost family or friends or had settled in locations where they did not know anyone. Women IDPs mentioned that they felt more isolated because of displacement.

I cannot leave my children home alone as I am worried for their safety and security [in my absence], and cannot depend on the neighbours as before. People used to help each other, but now the years of crisis have changed people and people do not help each other like before, no matter what type of help they need. (A 40-year-old married woman and a rural IDP in Homs)

When it comes to cultural pursuits, these are mainly restricted to those conducted by the cultural centres in the city, but there is barely any transportation especially after 3pm. These are among the things that my wife misses. (A 35-year-old married man from Homs)

Public services have become harder to reach than in the past because of the poor transportation and because of the lack of security and safety, the lack of fuel, and the high cost of transport. Also, socializing has become more expensive, and the human bonds among relatives and neighbours no longer exist as in the past. Each one has their own concerns. (A 36-year-old married woman from Homs)

Strong social networks are assumed to decrease vulnerability, but respondents indicated some of their negative consequences, such as excessive claims from friends or family. Several mentioned that it was no longer possible to ask family and neighbours for help as so many people are in need and people have nothing to give. For many interviewees, social networks, such as access to charities, served as short-term sources of help rather than a sustainable source of support.

I have one friend who says she will help me if I need – she says she will divide her money equally between us. However, I cannot put pressure on her as I know that she is also in need. (A single 24-year-old woman in Aleppo) ■





DISCUSSION: IMPLICATIONS OF
THE FINDINGS FOR
GENDER-RESPONSIVE
LIVELIHOOD INTERVENTIONS

5 Discussion: Implications of the findings for gender-responsive livelihood interventions

The findings indicate a range of constraints and risks for vulnerable people, especially women, when engaging in productive work. Table 1 provides a detailed mapping of how constraints and risks identified in the gender analysis merge with the sequence of empowerment outlined in Section 2. The table suggests a range of possibilities to promote safe, gender-responsive work (see also (Abril 2008; Abril, 2009; Njoku, Ilechukw and Ogakwu, 2013). Protection risks and some suggested mitigating actions are presented in Annex 2. Broad recommendations to guide the development and implementation of safe, gender-responsive urban livelihoods programmes in Syria are provided in section 6.

DEEPLY EMBEDDED GENDER-BIASED SOCIAL NORMS AND INSTITUTIONS CONTINUE TO CONSTRAIN THE ABILITY OF WOMEN TO ACCESS AND BENEFIT FROM PRODUCTIVE WORK.

One might assume that it is more acceptable for women in cities to access livelihoods opportunities because of more liberal urban attitudes. The findings of this study suggest that in Aleppo, Homs and Lattakia, food-insecure displaced and host community women in households headed either by women or men continue to be constrained by deeply embedded social norms and values that assign domestic and care responsibilities primarily to women and “breadwinning” to men in urban areas. Many women were prevented from working by their families or showed a low interest in pursuing livelihoods in part because of their roles and responsibilities in the home. Insecurity was often given as a reason for the increasing restrictions on women’s mobility by their families. Nevertheless, the persistence of patriarchal values and traditional gender stereotypes mean that women faced many of the same mobility constraints they had before the crisis, limiting the hours they can work and the work they can do. When women did work, gender stereotypes tended to restrict them to specific, low-productivity occupations. Men may also be stigmatised in some situations for challenging traditional roles.

Cultural norms also restrict women in other areas. For example, women in households headed by a man who was engaged in productive work continued to have limited say over major financial

decisions in the home, including taking on debt. Although not considered in depth in this study, women’s lack of financial independence and corresponding lack of confidence and experience in making financial decisions suggests a relationship with the more limited financial literacy of women and their lack of financial inclusion compared to men. This is supported by findings from the desk review.

Such factors together not only limit women’s ability to engage in productive work but also to realise its benefits. This suggests the need for livelihoods programmes that promote gender equality and women’s empowerment to incorporate participatory gender awareness-raising and social marketing about the benefits of livelihoods projects targeting women for women, men and their families.

Given women’s more limited financial decision-making power compared to men’s, consideration should also be given to raising awareness of the financial education of women, financial literacy training and training in financial management. There may be opportunities to promote women’s financial inclusion with banks and other financial institutions and their access to microcredit and grants to promote their income-generating opportunities.

In addition, humanitarian workers can be educated about the importance of engaging with men in communities. This is particularly important because in a patriarchal society such as Syria, where men are expected to be the primary financial provider in families, women empowerment activities that do not consider the issues that men face could further negative feelings about women working and in the longer-term, hinder the promotion of gender-transformative change.

The study highlights that there are instances where men do participate in household tasks and take responsibility for children’s education. There may be relatively simple opportunities to support such changes in broader communities, for example, using a male “champion of change” model³³ in addition to raising awareness.

³³Examples in other contexts include projects by Oxfam, for example, (Oxfam Novib, 2014; Channon and Ngulube, 2015) and Plan International (<https://plan-international.org/youth-activism/champions-change>) that work at community and national levels with male champions of women’s rights and gender issues, including ending violence against women and girls.

WOMEN WHO WORK ARE LIKELY TO FACE A CRITICAL DILEMMA BETWEEN PURSUING LIVELIHOODS AND MOTHERHOOD, FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES AND DOMESTIC WORK.

Because women bear primary responsibility for domestic work and childcare, women interviewees who worked faced a dilemma between working and their responsibilities in the home. The ability of women to access childcare support was crucial to their ability to generate income. Additionally, because men often did not take on domestic burdens in the home when women went to work, women ended up doing domestic work in addition to developing their productive capacities.

WFP and other actors largely consider improved livelihoods in terms of vulnerable individuals improving their ability to sustainably engage in productive work and improve related productive assets and capacities in a manner that strengthens resilience to shocks and stresses. The study findings suggest that there are opportunities to leverage women's increased roles in productive work outside the home to promote household self-reliance. However, it is important to recognise that household self-reliance does not rest simply on the ability of individual household members to maximise income-generating potential. Rather, it relates to the interconnected productive and reproductive roles performed by women and men in the private and public spheres (see (Field, Mookherjee, and Tiwari, 2017)). Acknowledging the value and contributions of domestic work, including for food and nutrition security, and their complementarity with the productive sphere, can encourage greater focus on the long-term and strategic needs of women and men and gender-transformational programming.

Therefore, in promoting livelihoods, it is important to advocate for the recognition of childcare and domestic work as crucial labour-related functions that contribute to the food and nutrition security of households. This can also support the successful transition for women from training to work and their ability to find and keep jobs. It is essential that at minimum livelihoods programmes provide good quality childcare for participants with children to support the equitable participation of women and men.

LOW PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING AND ABSENCE OF A SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT IN URBAN COMMUNITIES CONSTRAIN WOMEN AND MEN FROM ENGAGING IN PRODUCTIVE WORK.

Although it was beyond the scope of this study to assess psychosocial problems, such issues emerged strongly and spontaneously in the interviews, with most interviewees indicating that their own psychological well-being or that of family members and children had been severely affected during the crisis. Respondents mentioned hopelessness, grief, anxiety, depression, nightmares and trouble sleeping, constant fear and personality changes.

These issues were compounded by the fact that for IDPs especially, displacement often meant the absence of a supportive environment and lack of protective mechanisms (families and friends, home community and social networks). The various aspects of social cohesion — including, social interaction, social networks, trust and reciprocity among neighbours, perceived safety and sense of community — appeared to be weak for many women and men. The desk review (Section 3) indicates the tensions that exist across different religious and ethnic communities in cities and between IDP and host communities.

These factors, along with poverty and the potential for exploitation, harassment and sexual violence against women especially, and the fact that many IDP and host community women are coping on their own as mothers, present an extremely risky combination which undermines the ability of women and men to engage in and benefit from productive work. Such factors also may put women and their children especially in vulnerable positions. The absence of a supportive environment, especially for women in households headed by a woman, means that when mothers work children can also be put at risk or withdrawn from school to look after younger siblings. In addition, addressing psycho-social needs can significantly improve beneficiaries' attitudes towards goals and motivation and their aspirations for the future. (Feinstein International Center, 2012). Agencies providing livelihoods interventions should consider creating supportive mechanisms, including promoting social networks in and across IDP and host communities. In addition to gender awareness-raising and childcare, good practice examples elsewhere demonstrate that strong psychosocial support and life-skills training to complement livelihoods programmes are crucial to promoting self-reliance (Jaspars, O'Callaghan and Sites, 2007). Such a component may include psycho-social counselling to support of existing community or women's and parent's groups, peer-support, recreation and nutrition-sensitive, healthy lifestyle services provided by specialised protection agencies. These services also can support participants in strengthening social networks in and across IDP and host communities across religious lines and promote access to economic opportunities.

Although some actors such as WFP do not play a direct role in resolving protection issues, they have an obligation to ensure that people in need of protection assistance are treated professionally and with respect and to refer them to actors who can provide the appropriate support (IASC, 2015a). The development of referral mechanisms for protection issues, such as for adults and children who have experienced or are experiencing sexual, physical or emotional violence, is crucial to ensuring that vulnerable women, men, girls and boys can access available medical, psycho-social, justice and security support.

In Colombia, a CHF International programme provides a good practice example. The programme, which provided emergency short-term employment (community infrastructure [rehabilitation]), vocational training, job placement, small grants and technical support for micro entrepreneurs, saw some success. Intensive psychosocial and life-skills support was also an important component of the programme. The programme supported IDPs to establish livelihoods and contributed to improving their self-reliance, while at the same time countering stigmatisation and negative perceptions by including other vulnerable people. It was tailored to the existing market [conditions] and incorporated the public and private sectors (Mcloughlin, 2017).

NEITHER WOMEN NOR MEN FORM HOMOGENOUS GROUPS, AND GENDER MAY NOT BE THE ONLY DETERMINANT OF DIFFERENCE.

The interviews indicate that neither women nor men represent homogenous groups. They have different skills and capabilities depending on their life situations and their capabilities and assets. Some women referred to their limited education and literacy whereas others had been trained and had become experienced in a profession. Some women had no experience of working outside the home. Information from the desk review points to low literacy rates amongst rural women and urban women from low-income households.

It is important to ensure that participants in livelihood programmes are not treated as a homogenous group possessing similar skills and capabilities. Some participants may require training in enterprise development, whereas others may require training in a range of areas including basic literacy and numeracy. Feinstein International suggest that such diversity can be addressed by applying a sequenced “laddered” approach that enables individuals and communities to progressively improve their life conditions. With this approach, livelihoods interventions promoting wage employment, self-employment and increased productivity in the private sector and for people with existing businesses can be linked (Feinstein International Center, 2012).

WOMEN AND MEN FACE VARIOUS PROTECTION RISKS THAT CONSTRAIN THEIR ABILITY TO ENGAGE IN AND BENEFIT FROM LIVELIHOOD INTERVENTIONS.

Although it is not possible to ascertain the extent of protection issues for women, men, girls and boys from the data, the information points to wide-ranging threats. Women and men faced threats when just moving around outside the home, including from car bombs and being caught in crossfire and kidnapping or abduction. There was the potential for vulnerable women and men to be

exploited as they engaged in casual wage labour and for high levels of sexual abuse and harassment, especially for women. For example, interviewees highlighted threats of sexual harassment and exploitative wage-labour conditions (perceived to affect women more) and of violent theft or extortion because of possession of physical productive assets (perceived to affect men more). Reports also suggest that women are increasingly engaged in transactional sex for income to survive.

The interviews also highlight that protection risks are not only a detriment to well-being but they also undermine social interaction, trust among neighbours, perceived safety and sense of community and the willingness of women and men to invest in and engage in productive labour.

The fact that in some situations productive labour represents a protection risk for the individuals involved highlights the importance of ensuring that a protection lens is used to support safe livelihoods programme design. Applying a protection lens helps to maximise the protective benefit. For example, the engagement of women and men in livelihoods programmes may reduce the need for them to engage in riskier forms of income generation, as well as minimise the damage of livelihoods programmes. Humanitarian actors can also advocate with the government and partners, insisting that operations are safe and as far as possible free from protection risks to civilians.

Moreover, livelihoods interventions will not promote gender equality and women’s empowerment if vulnerable women and men are exploited or exposed to risks and sexual harassment. Therefore, livelihoods programmes should include mechanisms that ensure that training and work are provided under safe, dignified conditions and incorporate adequate monitoring mechanisms. Additionally, consideration should be given to the ways in which the private sector is engaged in livelihoods interventions to promote the empowerment of women, and to ensure that private sector partners provide decent working environments (see Table 1). In Syria, this may mean that livelihoods interventions observe sex-segregated training and working environments so that women (and their families) are comfortable with working. Additionally, livelihoods programmes should ensure accessible complaint and feedback mechanisms for participants.

The Women’s Refugee Commission provides an example of an organisation in Cairo that trains and places refugee women in Egyptian homes as domestic workers. The NGO records the name and contact details of the employer as well as the agreed payment rate, thereby letting the employer know that the woman has a backup support system and the NGO knows how and where to find the employer should there be problems (Buscher and Heller, 2010).

Another example is an approach developed by UNHCR and the Centre for Domestic Training and Development. Because their target group is often “invisible”, working with a local NGO the programme conducts its outreach door-to-door to obtain employers’ permission to train their domestic workers. The purpose of the training is to strengthen various technical skills (e.g. in cooking and cleaning) thereby serving the interest of the employer while also at the same time equipping employees with life skills and awareness of their rights (WRC, 2012).

WOMEN'S INCREASED PURSUIT OF LIVELIHOODS MAY LEAD TO PROTECTION RISKS FOR CHILDREN.

There were instances where women’s engagement in productive work outside the home led to child labour and less school attendance. This especially related to older children being withdrawn from school to take care of younger siblings so that mothers could engage in work outside the home. The interviews also suggest that many children are suffering psychosocial issues. At the same time, the desk review indicates that boys and girls may drop out of school and be exposed to protection issues because they are working or begging on the streets to support their families. Early marriage is increasing, especially affecting girls.

Such issues indicate a need to consider the effects on children of livelihoods programmes and the importance of applying a protection lens to their design. The findings emphasise the need for livelihoods programmes to provide high-quality childcare and ensure linkages with protection actors, particularly those protecting children. The findings also indicate potential protective effects of livelihoods interventions. For example, the engagement of women and men in livelihoods programmes may reduce economic hardship and hence the protection risks of children, for example, their need for children to work or beg, while also supporting families so that they can send their children to school, a major

concern for women and men interviewees with children.

THE EXPANSION OF WOMEN'S STRATEGIC CHOICES APPEARS EXTREMELY LIMITED GIVEN THE CRISIS CONTEXT.

For women interviewees especially, empowerment to make choices and decisions did not always appear to be a priority given the context of extreme poverty, psychosocial issues, need and insecurity. For example, many women were generating income to enable them and their families just to survive, and they had little interest in pursuing work in the longer term. Rather, most aspired to the *status quo ante* in terms of their roles and responsibilities in and outside the home.

The challenges of implementing developmental livelihoods approaches to achieve self-reliance in a crisis context, with ongoing risks to physical safety and freedom of movement, have been well described in various reports and studies (see Abril, 2009). As the originators of the sustainable livelihoods concept indicate, “security is a basic dimension of livelihood sustainability” (Chambers and Conway, 1991). Abril (2009) indicates that such factors suggest the importance of gradual and multipronged approaches to promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment where the first stage is to ensure a “do no harm” approach and to promote equitable, safe access to livelihoods.

Humanitarian agencies also should consider wider needs and rights beyond income generation. WFP and other actors have an important role in addressing some of the issues that restrict men and women to certain functions, through for example, work at the policy level. In the long run, a variety of approaches is required to ensure that vulnerable women and men can make strategic choices (*ibid*)



WFP/Hussam Al Saleh



Table 1: Mapping of key constraints and risks identified in the analysis of the sequence of empowerment

EMPOWERMENT SEQUENCE	POTENTIAL RISKS AND CONSTRAINTS ON ENGAGEMENT IN LIVELIHOODS
<p>Over-arching gender-related considerations brought about by the crisis and pre-existing gender inequalities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Deeply embedded social norms and values that assign primary responsibility for care and domestic responsibilities to women and “breadwinning” to men and that limit women’s decision-making power; ● Single-headed household; ● Low psychological well-being; ● Threats to physical safety and freedom of movement.
<p>Specific constraints on access to and control over tangible and intangible assets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Low levels of education and/or skills suited to city life, especially for women; ● Depleted household assets – affecting men and women in different ways; ● Depleted livelihood assets or inability to access livelihood assets; ● Limited access and/or aversion to taking loans; ● Low levels of social capital especially for women; ● Women’s more limited decision-making over livelihoods.
<p>Constraints on transforming tangible and intangible assets into economic opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mobility constraints because of safety issues (for both men and women); ● Opposition from husband and other family members affecting women; ● Harassment/backlash from community affecting women; Socio-cultural norms requiring sex-segregated work spaces for women constraining them in their ability to access culturally acceptable jobs including in non-traditional sectors; Double burden affecting women; Poor infrastructure and basic services increasing women’s double burden; Gender stereotypes that restrict women and men to specific jobs; Low education/ illiteracy restricting women to low-pay and exploitative jobs; No money/materials to (re)start livelihood; and ● Other constraints arising from the crisis context: high unemployment; limited investment; poor infrastructure.
<p>Constraints on benefiting from livelihood pursuits</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Growing informality; ● Low productivity jobs especially for women; ● Gender pay gap disadvantaging women; ● Exposure to sexual harassment and GBV particularly affecting women.
<p>Constraints on control over income</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Women’s limited decision-making power at the household level; ● Low level of education of women; ● Low self-esteem and confidence to make decisions; ● Low participation in society.

SAMPLE PREVENTION/MITIGATION STRATEGIES

- Gradual change of beliefs and attitudes of men and women through education and awareness raising with emphasis on gender equality and women's empowerment and sensitization to recognize the contribution of women in the crisis context;
- Male "champions of change" in communities;
- Family-friendly livelihoods programmes that allow women to pursue livelihoods, for example, childcare services; participatory analysis of target group use of time to identify the best times for programmes. Integrated livelihoods programmes that include links to psychosocial services and life-skills training;
- Build the capacities and sustainability of women's rights organisations and women's groups as agents of change in communities.

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- Gender-responsive labour-market assessment to inform project design and ongoing quality control of livelihoods trainings and projects;
 - Implement a ladder approach – conduct baseline learning assessment and target trainings to participants' levels; consider selecting women with low literacy levels;
 - Formation of women's groups in parallel with livelihoods projects to provide peer support;
 - Sensitisation workshops and seminars to reinforce self-confidence in women;
 - Gender-responsive infrastructural development projects in cities.

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- Provision of transport to livelihoods projects;
 - Ensure livelihoods projects are provided during daytime;
 - Ensure ongoing involvement of husband and other family members in livelihoods projects through workshops and information sessions;
 - Conduct social marketing in communities about the benefits of livelihoods projects for women and in the communities;
 - Conduct baseline learning assessment and target trainings to participants' levels;
 - Consider options for women working in better-paid sectors traditionally reserved for men (for example, construction, bakeries);
 - Consider options for micro-credit and/or start-up grants;
 - Consider options for paid apprenticeships; Engage women-focused organisations as advisers to livelihoods projects and for mentoring.

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- Advocacy for gender-responsive government policies and laws including labour law;
 - Gender and ethics training/information sessions among private sector employers;
 - Code of conduct for private sector partners;
 - Business and financial training and ongoing business technical assistance for beneficiaries after training has finished;
 - Continued mentoring by women's organisations;
 - In the case of projects supporting self-employment and home-based work, peer education from other self-

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- Involve husbands in information sessions about livelihoods projects;
 - Raise awareness about financial education of women, financial literacy training and training in financial management; Provide interventions that promote women's financial inclusion;
 - Use livelihoods interventions to promote women's greater decision-making power and women in leadership positions;
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A woman wearing a headscarf and a dark jacket is riding a bicycle through a narrow, cluttered urban alleyway. The ground is dirt and littered with debris. In the background, there are makeshift structures made of corrugated metal and wood, some of which appear to be damaged or in ruins. A man is visible in the background, walking away from the camera. The entire image has a reddish-pink tint.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GENDER-RESPONSIVE URBAN LIVELIHOODS PROJECT DESIGN

6 Recommendations for gender-responsive urban livelihoods project design

This section offers the main recommendations for project design. They are directed primarily towards WFP but can be applied more generally by other actors.

It is not appropriate to simply aim for the equal participation of women and men in pursuing livelihoods. Women need additional support if they are to be empowered and achieve gender equality.

1. IN LINE WITH BEST PRACTICE, ENSURE A PARTICIPATORY APPROACH TO THE DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF LIVELIHOODS INTERVENTIONS THAT INCORPORATES GENDER AND AGE AND PROTECTION RISK ANALYSES. ESTABLISH A BUDGET FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMMING AND DEVELOP THE CAPACITY OF HUMANITARIAN WORKERS IN GENDER AND PROTECTION MAINSTREAMING.

- Design of livelihoods programmes should be participatory and establish how interventions will fulfil women's strategic as well as practical gender needs to build household self-reliance. Engaging with different gender groups in IDP and host communities with the support of local organisations will help identify and implement gender-transformative programmes that include both IDP and host community men and women. There may be opportunities to collaborate with gender-aware NGOs and INGOs as well as UN agencies such as UNFPA, the International Labour Organization, UNICEF, UNDP and UNHCR.
- Undertake gender-responsive monitoring and evaluation (M&E). This requires formulating gender equality and women's empowerment indicators to measure change in individual women's, men's, girls' and boys' lives and disaggregating data by sex and age and conducting gender and age analysis.
- Ensure that M&E of livelihoods interventions incorporate relevant quantitative or qualitative indicators that track protection-related issues. For example, risks when accessing projects, effects of pursuing livelihoods in caregiving, children engaged in labour and early marriage.
- Develop the capacity of humanitarian workers on gender and the vulnerabilities of Syrian women

and men, where required, to ensure the necessary engagement in communities and to better support participants.

- Establish a budget for livelihoods programming that promotes gender equality and women's empowerment, including with CPs.

2. ENSURE THAT URBAN LIVELIHOODS STRATEGIES OFFSET WOMEN'S DOUBLE BURDEN AND CHILDCARE RESPONSIBILITIES.

- Provide childcare services to women and men participants in livelihoods projects. Childcare is one of the most important enablers of women's economic empowerment and can have a positive impact on children's learning and well-being. In addition, childcare can create salaried employment and training opportunities for women and support nutrition-sensitive programming. There may be various options, for example, direct delivery of childcare services by training service providers or vouchers for private service providers. Consider targeted support through partnerships for training childcare workers and for community-based informal childcare initiatives that also promote women's social networks in and across communities.
- Select assets in household and community asset creation programmes that are especially beneficial for women. Through participatory design, prioritise women's preferences for household and community asset rehabilitation and creation. The quality of and access to services, including basic utilities such as water and electricity, may be especially beneficial for women because women do most domestic work. Improved access to electricity and tap water can free up their time.
- Consider opportunities to promote the efficiency and productivity of household tasks. Initiatives that help reduce the time constraints of paid work and unpaid care work can be central to promoting livelihoods. Examples might include labour-saving initiatives such as battery packs or other mechanisms to ensure continuity of electric power, or supporting communal day-care arrangements.

³⁴Although loss of documentation was not considered in this study, sources indicate that this is a major issue in Syria.

Personal documentation is critical for movement and for access to employment, land, markets, services and aid entitlements and usually involve issues relevant to people's livelihoods, including property and housing problems, access to rural land or discrimination in labour or education. Women are often most affected when it comes to re-accessing property. For this reason, protection agencies such as Norwegian Refugee Council in Syria operate programmes to assist populations in accessing personal documentation or to navigate the complicated bureaucracy involved in obtaining documentation.

3. USE AN INTEGRATED PROGRAMME APPROACH IN WHICH LIVELIHOODS PROJECTS INCORPORATE GENDER AWARENESS RAISING, PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT, FINANCIAL LITERACY, LIFE SKILLS AND SOCIAL EMPOWERMENT SUPPORT TO HELP ADDRESS THE PSYCHOSOCIAL ISSUES AND OTHER CONSTRAINTS THAT VULNERABLE WOMEN AND MEN FACE.

- Seek partnerships with protection-mandated agencies and pair livelihoods programmes with protection interventions³⁴. For example, psychosocial assistance can be linked to livelihoods initiatives. Individual and group counselling as part of psychosocial assistance, like other capacity development initiatives, can support collective action, help participants to look forward and have the confidence to engage in income generation. These are key elements to promoting empowerment and agency.
- Provide support services to strengthen and complement women's and men's economic empowerment. The objective of such services is to socially empower women especially. They can help increase self-esteem and promote informal support structures for women and men and their social capital. The creation of women's groups and peer-support mechanisms is a fundamental element. These can support the delivery of nutrition-sensitive trainings as well as help make available other services, such as psychosocial counselling, life skills and gender awareness.

4. SUPPORT WOMEN TO ENGAGE IN BETTER-PAID AND HIGHER-PRODUCTIVITY SECTORS THROUGH A LADDERED APPROACH TO LIVELIHOODS PROGRAMMING. PROMOTE WOMEN'S FINANCIAL INCLUSION.

- Consider initiatives to increase women's participation in the labour market that include training for unskilled and semi-skilled women. Low educational levels among women of rural origin in Syria suggest a need for strategies that are sensitive to such constraints. There may be opportunities for capacity-development programs in basic literacy and numeracy, financial literacy, vocational education, enterprise development, financial management, organizing and psychological support. Such programmes may positively influence women's self-confidence. They may also help to build social networks. At

the same time, it is important to support women in branching out into higher-paid work in productive sectors. Individuals with different skill-sets, constraints and opportunities will require different types of interventions. Income generation, employment and skills programmes should be based on regularly updated gender-responsive employment and labour market assessments so that they are market-oriented and build on the existing skills of participants.

- Promote women to work in non-traditional, better-paid sectors. For example, there is the opportunity to target better-paid construction and technical jobs in asset creation and public works programmes to women. Asset rehabilitation often involves works projects that provide jobs in construction, principally for men. These projects may provide the opportunity to promote women moving into jobs traditionally dominated by men.
- Support women-run bakeries as part of a gender-responsive Bread Strategy. With bread being an important staple in Syria, public and private bakeries remain central infrastructure. Many bakeries have been heavily damaged and WFP is involved in the rehabilitation of bakeries in urban areas. The local government in Aleppo may already be opening women-run bakeries (cf. UN Women's work in other countries in MENA; IOM in Iraq).
- Support mixed and women's cooperatives building linkages with other programming areas. In the case of WFP this might be with programmes such as school feeding through a Healthy Kitchens model.

5. IDENTIFY LIVELIHOODS INTERVENTIONS THAT TARGET WOMEN AND INTEGRATE OPTIONS TO COMBAT OR MITIGATE HARASSMENT AND SEXUAL ABUSE.

- Analyse opportunities to provide support to home-based work. Home-based work may provide a pragmatic solution for many vulnerable and food-insecure women and men in challenging and risky livelihoods environments. Although it may not always be women's preference and does not address the underlying obstacles related to social norms to women's engagement in productive work, it should be considered in project design.

³⁵Supplementary interview with WFP field staff in Aleppo.

³⁶WFP's "Healthy Kitchens" employ Syrian women to prepare healthy school lunches for Syrian children in schools, providing livelihood opportunities for vulnerable women, as well as educational and nutritional support to children. The initiative is part of WFP's 'Grow' programming, which seek to provide innovative and expanded nutrition support for children, sustainable livelihood opportunities for families. Beyond direct support to women and students, the Healthy Kitchens project increases impact by engaging with local supply chains for commodity procurement, strengthening local food production, processing, transport, and distribution while stimulating local economic growth (see WFP, 2016c).

³⁷Productive employment and decent work are key elements to achieving a fair globalization and poverty reduction. The ILO has developed an agenda for the community of work looking at job creation, rights at work, social protection and social dialogue, with gender equality as a crosscutting objective (see http://www.ilo.org/integration/themes/dw_mainstreaming/lang-en/index.htm).

- Investigate the home-based work that women and men might perform and consider opportunities for feasible, lucrative home-based work across different urban areas that can be supported. Consider the challenges: how to market when mobility is restricted? How to manage expenses when women may have only basic literacy and numeracy and no experience keeping books or managing finances? How to support start-up assets especially in a risky environment?
- Consider opportunities to promote the Decent Work Agenda in relation to domestic work, in partnership with relevant agencies. Domestic work in the home of others is perhaps a common form of work for women from vulnerable and food-insecure households. Findings also indicate that vulnerable women and men may be exploited when engaging in wage labour.

6. BUILD PROTECTIVE ELEMENTS INTO PROJECTS. RAISE AWARENESS AMONG EMPLOYERS, COMMUNITIES AND VULNERABLE WOMEN AND MEN REGARDING THEIR RIGHTS, INCLUDING THEIR LABOUR RIGHTS.

- Require codes of conduct for private sector partners, conduct social marketing and sensitisation campaigns with participants' families and communities, create linkages with local women's leadership and political groups, and engage men both from the IDP community and the host community, as required. Additionally, ensure accessible complaint and feedback mechanisms for participants.
- Ensure field staff are trained in identification and referral mechanisms for protection issues. For example, for adults and children who have experienced or are experiencing sexual, physical or emotional violence, so that vulnerable women, men, girls and boys can access medical, psycho-social, justice and security support.

7. ENSURE THAT URBAN LIVELIHOODS STRATEGIES INCORPORATE OUTREACH PLANS AND CAMPAIGNS TO ADDRESS CONSTRAINTS AND RISKS THAT WOMEN FACE WHEN ENGAGING IN INCOME GENERATION.

- Develop strategies to inform host and IDP community members of project objectives and interventions and to get their buy-in to avoid suspicion and prevent community backlash. There should be continuous involvement with communities throughout the life of the project. Consider using a male "champion of change" model.
- Place special emphasis on ensuring the participation of husbands and/or other family members in projects targeting women, along with women themselves.

8. BUILD THE CAPACITIES AND SUSTAINABILITY OF GENDER-AWARE LOCAL ORGANISATIONS TO ENHANCE GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT.

- Investigate opportunities to support women's rights organisations and women's groups as agents of change in communities. Promote these as leaders in establishing mechanisms for women's protection, participation and leadership in livelihoods projects.
- Explore opportunities to work with local charitable organisations and other community-based organisations to create awareness, conduct needs assessment, market surveys, and provide training (see Women's Refugee Commission, 2013, p. 9). At the same time, given the limited technical capacity of many of these organisations, there may be opportunities to initiate more effective ways to strengthen the role of local actors, including in relation to gender equality and women's empowerment.

9. IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES TO INFLUENCE HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTIONS AND RECOVERY TO PROVIDE AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR WOMEN'S ENGAGEMENT IN PRODUCTIVE WORK.

- While these recommendations aim to promote a local-level enabling environment for women's engagement in productive labour, it is necessary to ensure the convergence and synergy of humanitarian and other actors at the local and national levels. For WFP, establish a shared gender approach in the Food Security and Livelihoods Sector, and more broadly with the government and among humanitarian actors, promote an enabling environment for women. Promote a balance between women's reproductive and productive work; women's access to information, training and credit or grants; women's increased participation in productive sectors and women's increased decision-making power in the public and private spheres.
- Support women's rights organisations and women's groups as agents of change in communities and identifying opportunities to promote social cohesion. For example, through peer support groups, life skills and gender awareness.
- As co-chair of the Gender Working Group, WFP can promote cooperation and work across the Gender Working Group and GBV Working Group. Build on current engagement with the Protection Working Group to support inter-agency child protection and GBV referral systems and ensure support for women, girls, men and boys affected by GBV or who require psychosocial support.

10. ENSURE THAT GENDER CONSIDERATIONS ARE MAINSTREAMED INTO TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND POLICY ENGAGEMENT WITH THE GOVERNMENT, INCLUDING IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL POLICIES AIMED AT LINKING SAFETY NETS AND HUMANITARIAN SUPPORT AND LONGER-TERM SOCIAL PROTECTION³⁸. PROMOTE EQUAL RIGHTS AND ENSURE THAT THE DIFFERENT NEEDS AND LIFE SITUATIONS OF WOMEN, MEN, GIRLS AND BOYS ARE CONSIDERED.

- Ensure that gender considerations and women's empowerment are mainstreamed into support provided at both a policy and technical level to the government, including in interventions aimed at linking safety nets and humanitarian and longer-term social protection that supports livelihoods and resilience building. This means carrying out gender analyses to assess the implications for women, men, girls and boys of any planned action, including new legislation and policies.

- Advocate with all levels of government from the local level to the national level, and where applicable other governing authorities, to strengthen women's engagement in decision-making processes. Increasing women's role in decision-making and engagement in the public sphere can help ensure that women's strategic needs are addressed.
- Support implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325³⁹ and policy dialogue and advocacy efforts by other United Nations agencies on developing Syria's legal framework. For example, in relation to rights in the workplace, non-discriminatory employment practices and the CEDAW. WFP can leverage its position as co-chair of the Gender Theme Group to provide support in this regard. Ensure that data is shared among humanitarian actors to support these efforts, including data relating to violations or abuse that affect people's livelihoods and gender equality and women's empowerment ■



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³⁸ The terms “safety nets”, “social transfers” and “social assistance” refer to non-contributory transfers and are often used interchangeably. However, safety nets are only one component of broader social protection systems. Safety nets are “formal or informal non-contributory transfers provided to people vulnerable to or living in poverty, malnutrition and other forms of deprivation”. Social protection “also includes labour and insurance-related interventions — such as health insurance, pensions and various labour policies — and the provision of social services as part of sectoral policies for the education, nutrition, health and other sectors”. (WFP, 2012)

³⁹ The resolution reaffirms the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peace-building, peacekeeping, humanitarian response and in post-conflict reconstruction and stresses their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts to maintain and promote peace and security. Resolution 1325 urges all actors to increase the participation of women and incorporate gender perspectives in all United Nations peace and security efforts. It also calls on all parties to conflict to take special measures to protect women and girls from GBV, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, in situations of armed conflict.

Acronyms

CP	Cooperating partner
GA	Gender Analysis
GAF	Gender Analysis Framework
GBV	Gender Based Violence
HHH	Head of Household
HHM	Head of Household by a Man
HHW	Head of Household by a Woman
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluating
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
SSI	Semi-Structured Interview
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
WFP	World Food Programme

ANNEX 1: Glossary ⁴⁰

Gender is the range of characteristics that a society defines as being masculine or feminine. Gender describes the state of being a woman, man, girl or boy in a particular culture at a particular point in time. Gender is connected to roles, behaviours, opportunities, the exercise of human rights, power, the valuing of contributions of women and men, and access to and control of resources.

Gender division of labour refers to the allocation of certain tasks, work and functions to women and to men according to what is considered acceptable for women and for men (based on understandings of masculinity and femininity). As well as prescribing acceptable labour for women and men, the gender division of labour prohibits, or restricts, women and men from performing certain tasks, jobs and roles.

Reproductive role refers to childbearing and childrearing responsibilities and domestic tasks performed by women that are required to guarantee the maintenance and reproduction of the labour force. It includes not only biological reproduction but also the care and maintenance of the work force (male partner and working children) and the future work force (infants and school children) (Moser, 1989).

Productive role refers to work by men and women for pay or in kind. It includes both market production with an exchange-value and subsistence/home production with actual use-value, and potential exchange-value. For women in agricultural production, this includes work as independent farmers, peasant wives and wage workers (Moser, 1989).

Gender roles are the behaviours, tasks and responsibilities that are assigned to, and considered socially acceptable for, women (and girls) and men (and boys), based on socio-culturally determined concepts of femininity and masculinity.

Gender-based violence is “an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person’s will and that is based on socially ascribed (gender) differences between men and women. It includes acts that inflict physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion, and other deprivations of liberty. These acts can occur in public or in private.” (Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2015, [Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action: Reducing Risk, Promoting Resilience and Aiding Recovery](#), p. 5.)

Gender equality refers to the equal exercise by women and men, girls and boys, of rights, opportunities, resources and rewards. Equality does not mean that women and men, girls and boys, are the same; but that their exercise of rights, opportunities and life chances are not governed, or limited, by whether they were born female or male. Rights, responsibilities, opportunities and the command of power are not dependent upon being female or male.

Gender equity refers to situations or acts in which women and men, girls and boys are treated fairly, acknowledging that treatment may be different so as to meet specific needs and interests that contribute to reducing inequalities. Equity leads to equality.

Gender mainstreaming approach is a strategy for achieving gender equality. Gender mainstreaming “is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not

perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.” ([ECOSOC Agreed Conclusions, 1997/2](#))

Gender-sensitive approach describes an intervention — policy, programme, project — that considers and addresses the specific needs, interests, capacities and contexts for women, men, girls and boys, but does not address gender relations or the distribution of power between women and men, and girls and boys.

Gender-responsive approach is a policy or programme that fulfils two basic criteria: (1) gender norms, roles and relations are considered; and (2) measures are taken to reduce the harmful effects of gender norms, roles and relations, including gender inequality (FAO, 2014).

Gender-transformative approach leads to a gender-responsive policy, and considers gender norms, roles and relations for women and men, and how these affect access to and control over resources. It accounts for the specific needs of women and men and it addresses the causes of gender-based inequities. It includes ways to transform harmful gender norms, roles and relations and strategies to foster progressive changes in power relationships between women and men (FAO, 2014).

Patriarchy (rule of the father) refers to a system (community, society, government) in which women (and girls) are subordinate to (or dominated by) men (and boys) in power, status and rights.

Protection refers to “all activities aimed at obtaining full respect for the intrinsic rights of all individuals in accordance with international law — international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law — considering differences in age, gender, minority or other background.” (IASC, 2015b)

Protection mainstreaming is the process by which humanitarian actors ensure that a protection lens is used to include minimum requirements in their operations. It is a way of designing and implementing programmes to ensure that protection risks are considered.

Practical needs are material needs related to survival; what must exist for a person to live a decent life. Examples include potable water, food, shelter and income. Practical needs are typically of an immediate or short-term nature that can be addressed through the provision of goods or services, such as water, food, housing and employment.

Psychosocial denotes the inter-connection between psychological and social processes and the fact that each continually interacts with and influences the other. [...] the composite term mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) is used to describe any type of local or outside support that aims to protect or promote psychosocial well-being and/or prevent or treat mental disorder.” (IASC, 2010)

Strategic interests are related to the position that a person occupies in his or her society. Strategic interests are typically of long-standing duration because they relate to roles, power and control. Examples include access to higher education, ending domestic violence, equal wages, the ability to inherit property and control of one’s own body.

Women’s empowerment is the process through which women obtain and exercise agency in their lives and have equal access with men to resources, opportunities and power. Women’s empowerment involves awareness-raising, building self-confidence, expanding choices, increasing access to and control of resources and reforming institutions and structures so that they contribute to gender equality rather than perpetuate discrimination and oppression.

⁴⁰ Unless otherwise referenced, definitions are based on WFP’s Gender Toolkit. <http://gender.manuals.wfp.org/en/gender-toolkit/gender-concepts-and-frameworks/>

ANNEX 2: Semi-structured interview respondent profiles

CITY	AGE	SEX	DISPLACEMENT STATUS	YEARS OF DISPLACEMENT	MARTIAL STATUS	REALATIONSHIP TO HOUSLHOD	HOUSEHOLD HEADED BY A MAN/ WOMAN (HHM/HHW)
Aleppo	39	F	IDP	6	Married	Spouse of HHH	HHM
Aleppo	24	F	Returnee	6	Single	Sister of female HHH	HHW
Aleppo	24	F	Local community	N/A	Single	HHH	HHW
Aleppo	44	M	IDP	5	Married	HHH	HHM
Aleppo	45	F	IDP	5	Widow	HHH	HHW
Aleppo	42	F	IDP - displaced from within Aleppo	5+	Married	Spouse of HHH	HHM
Aleppo	30	F	Local community	N/A	Widowed	HHH	HHW
Aleppo	40	M	Returnee	5	Married	HHH	HHM
Aleppo	46	F	IDP	6	Widowed	HHH	HHW
Aleppo	45	M	Local community	N/A	Married	HHH	HHM
Aleppo	48	M	IDP	4	Married	HHH	HHM
Aleppo	36	F	Local community	N/A	Divorced	HHH	HHW
Homs	40	F	IDP	5	Married	Spouse of HHH	HHM
Homs	44	M	Local community	N/A	Single	Son of HHH	HHM
Homs	44	F	IDP	4		HHH	HHW
Homs	35	M	Local community	N/A	Married	HHH	HHM
Homs	32	F	Local community	N/A	Divorced	HHH	HHW

CITY	AGE	SEX	DISPLACEMENT STATUS	YEARS OF DISPLACEMENT	MARITAL STATUS	RELATIONSHIP TO HOUSLHOD	HOUSEHOLD HEADED BY A MAN/WOMAN (HHM/HHW)
Homs	36	F	Local community	N/A	Married	Wife of HHH	HHM
Homs	43	F	IDP	5	Married	HHH	HHM
Homs	36	F	IDP	5	Married	HHH	HHM
Homs	55	M	Local community	N/A	Married	HHH	HHM
Lattakia	25	F	IDP	3+	Married	Daughter of HH	HHM
Lattakia	24	F	IDP	6	Married	Sister of HHH	HHM
Lattakia	43	F	IDP	5	Married	Spouse of HHH	HHM
Lattakia	44	M	IDP	6	Married	HHH	HHW
Lattakia	54	F	IDP	6	Married	HHH	HHM
Lattakia	49	M	Local community	N/A	Married	HHH	HHM
Lattakia	52	M	IDP	6	Married	Wife of HHH	HHM
Lattakia	46	F	Local community	N/A	Widow	Daughter of HH	HHM
Lattakia	84	F	Local community	N/A	Widow	HHH	HHW
Lattakia	41	M	Local community	N/A	Married	Spouse of HHH	HHM
Lattakia	47	F	Local community	N/A	Married	HHH	HHM
Lattakia	49	M	IDP	5	Married	HHH	MHH

Annex 3: Protection risks and prevention or mitigation strategies

ISSUE/RISK	PREVENTION/MITIGATION STRATEGY
<p>Opposition from husband and other family member (and potential community backlash)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve husbands and other family members through a project committee, and/or workshops, and/or information sessions. • Provide sex-segregated training and working environments. • Conduct social marketing in communities about the benefits of the project for women and the communities. • Offer counselling and life-skills training for project participants. • Enlist male “champions of change” • Invest small percent of project budget in communities (for example, soft infrastructure).
<p>Safety problems going to and from livelihoods project sites including sexual harassment, violence such as armed robberies especially at night, kidnappings especially at night.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyse target group find the best time for livelihoods programming to take place, considering security aspects. • Consider opportunities for promoting home-based work. • Provide sex-segregated training and working environments. • Provide transportation to and from project sites. • Set up project sites in safe places • Offer services and training during daytime only. • Conduct social marketing in communities about the importance of livelihoods projects for women and for the community.
<p>Low self-esteem/poor psychological well-being/emotional distress/lack of motivation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer counselling, including psychological counselling and services. • Create women’s groups with project participants in parallel to the project to provide peer-support and leisure options.
<p>Childcare considerations and risk that children might be left alone or withdrawn from school to assume domestic responsibilities of participant</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide high-quality childcare services to women and men participants in livelihood projects. • Analyse target group use of time and find the best moment for the training considering school and working arrangements.
<p>Sexual harassment in working environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer gender and ethics training/information sessions among private-sector partners. • Seek out women run businesses. • Establish code of conduct or certification plans for employers.



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