



GENDER-BASED ANALYSIS OF THE SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS: A BENEFICIARY –BASED STUDY

By: Dr. Nida Abu Awwad



“Institutionalization of a National Gender- Responsive Budget” Program

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Prepared by:

Research Team Leader: Dr. Nida Abu Awwad

Survey Coordinator: Ayman Abdul Majid

MIFTAH staff:

Democracy and Good Governance Department Director: Bisan Abu Ruqti

Projects Manager: Lamis Shu'aibi-Hantouli

Translation and Editing:

Jumana Kayyali

Final Editing:

Julie Holm, MIFTAH

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Foreword

The Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy-MIFTAH completed in 2012 a series of analytical studies of the service sectors. In cooperation with the Ministry of Social Affairs and the directorates in the northern governorates, this fourth study analyzing from a gender-perspective the services of the Ministry of Social Affairs according to the beneficiaries' points of view, is published. These publications are part of MIFTAH's program « Institutionalization of a Gender-Responsive Budget», through which MIFTAH aims at adopting a fair and equitable public financial policy in expenditures and distribution of revenues among various social groups.

This study shed light on gender gaps in the Ministry's social care and protection programs, based on a political and economic analysis of the general Palestinian context. The study aims at opening the door ahead for the Ministry's officials to consider wider and more comprehensive gender issues and identifying the main points of entry to initiate a process of gender mainstreaming of the Ministry's policies and functions.

Through these publications, MIFTAH aims at contributing to setting the grounds for a dialogue with decision and policy makers at official institutions, through submitting recommendations on adopting policies that establish the institutionalization of social justice and the development of a clear and committed policy towards gender issues within the framework of social protection policies. Hence, gender becomes a main consideration upon developing visions and strategies, designing plans, programs and projects, as well as preparing budgets and developing the necessary structures and mechanisms to ensure gender mainstreaming of all aspects and levels of the institutions' functions.

We express our appreciation to all the staff and officials at the Ministry of Social Affairs for their cooperation and positive interaction which facilitated the work of the researchers, and to all administrations for providing the necessary data for the satisfactory completion of this study.

Lily Feidi
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
MIFTAH



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Executive summary

This study is part of a series of studies conducted by MIFTAH within the framework of “Institutionalization of a Gender-Responsive Budget” program. This study comprises a gender-perspective diagnosis and analysis of the services provided by the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA) in the social care and services sector, including the financial policy and its impact on the delivered services and programs, since MOSA is one of the most important service-delivery ministries in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and has direct interaction with families and different groups of women. Initially, the study provides a general overview of the gender reality and issues in MOSA programs and services, examining the extent to which its budget is gender-responsive. Then, the study presents a gender-perspective of the beneficiaries’ points of view and assessment of MOSA services. Finally, the study provides conclusions and recommendations on the gender gap, addressed to policy and decision-makers at MOSA and other stakeholders in the social care and protection sector.

In its analysis, the study relied on the literature, reports and statistics of the Ministry and the Central Bureau of Palestinian Statistics (PCBS). A field survey was also conducted for a sample of regular MOSA female and male customers. Several in-depth interviews were held with senior MOSA staff, in addition to a focus group with a group of directors of MOSA directorates in the West Bank. Two focus-group sessions were also held with beneficiaries.

First, the study confirmed that it is not possible to understand or analyze the reality of the social protection sector, particularly MOSA services, in isolation from the general political and economic context, characterized by the continuous domination of Israeli occupation over the Palestinian Territories, and the resulting policies of continuous impoverishment of the Palestinian people, and consequently the increase in the numbers of Palestinians in need of MOSA services. Although the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) constitutes a primary funder of the social protection sector, however this sector does not constitute a priority compared to other sectors, such as the security sector. This had an adverse impact on MOSA capacities and ability to provide services. The situation worsened amid PNA limited and unstable financial resources, subject to the political will of international and foreign donor agencies.

Generally, the study revealed progress in the level of MOSA services, in terms of the diversity in programs and services and the numbers and categories of beneficiaries. A significant increase in the rate of women beneficiaries from poor and marginalized groups was observed, because of the increasing needs of women, rather than being a result of an engendered and holistic vision adopted by MOSA. Several important gender issues may be concluded. At the policy level within MOSA, the transformation from the policy of cash services to the social protection program had a positive impact on women, despite the weak political commitment of MOSA senior leadership towards gender issues, as MOSA mission, vision and strategies are not yet engendered.

The study also indicated that women constitute the majority of MOSA staff, yet their number slightly decreases in senior positions. More significantly, the transformation of the General Administration for Women into a department within the General Administration for Family Care and Protection and reducing its staff to one female employee at MOSA headquarters, coupled with poor staff awareness towards



gender issues at various MOSA departments and even rejection of the gender concept by some MOSA employees, adversely affected the follow-up of gender issues in various MOSA functions. For example, it was noted that the few available gender-related courses were mostly restricted to women and employees at low to intermediate grades, with limited impact on policy and decision-making. While men who resist gender mainstreaming are actually those who mostly need the training, yet even when men participated in the training, it was not used to develop their tasks. Despite the expansion in MOSA programs and services, a review of MOSA data revealed severe deficiency in meeting the needs of poor and marginalized groups, which increased because of Israeli policies of control, siege and settlement activity against Palestinians. The deficiency in services was manifested in several areas, including the low value of cash transfers to poor families, the lack of health insurance to those who requested it, the poor quality of health services (although the provision of free health insurance is a PNA responsibility through the Ministry of Health), the limited number of youth rehabilitation centers, and the limited number of care homes for persons with disabilities and the elderly, etc. Analysis of MOSA programs revealed a continuous gender gap in favor of men in various services, especially in the vocational rehabilitation centers, services for persons with disabilities and the economic empowerment program. The partial analysis of MOSA budget indicated that it was not committed to developing a gender-responsive budget, although a special training program on gender-responsive budgets had been implemented, and despite a Council of Ministers decision adopting this approach for the entire government. Finally, the study revealed that MOSA lacked gender disaggregated statistics and data, which hindered the identification of gender gaps in some aspects of MOSA work.

At another level, the field survey indicated that the median age groups, particularly women, demanded MOSA services the most. The low level of education was also an important factor in the vulnerability of households and their members to poverty and destitution. The data indicated that those with primary education were the most vulnerable, especially women, who constituted 60% of all female MOSA customers, while the rate of men with primary education constituted 45%. The size of household also played a role in poverty. Larger households (5-7 members) constituted a higher proportion of those registered for MOSA assistance. However, this does not mean that smaller households do not need assistance. Single women and women with absent husbands were also among those exposed to poverty and destitution, unlike men. Over 50% of interviewed women were either widow, single, divorced or separated, while around 85% of interviewed men were married. The table revealed qualitative differences in the causes of poverty for women and men. While 73.3% of poor women registered for assistance were primarily housewives, i.e. outside the labor market (illiterate women in particular), 31.9% of registered men seeking MOSA services were either ill or suffered from disability. 31.1% of registered men had part-time jobs and 16% were unemployed, indicating their failure to find suitable jobs that provide decent living.

On the other hand, the survey revealed the dire living conditions of these households. As indicated in the table (1), 40% of households said that their average monthly income did not exceed 500 NIS, and that more than two-thirds of households lived under the deep poverty line. The situation is worse for households with more than 5 members, who constituted more than two-thirds of all registered households.

The survey revealed high demand on the cash transfers program and supplementary aid, which includes food, health insurance, and emergency aid, comprising more than half total demand, compared to other programs. While demand was higher among women for cash transfers and supplementary aid, demand was higher among men on the program for the care and empowerment of persons with disabilities and health services. The data also revealed discrepancies in the obstacles and difficulties the beneficiaries faced as they sought services, such as the unavailability of information on services, financial difficulties and the lack of services. Furthermore, the beneficiaries of directorates, particularly males, complained about slow transactions, as they had to visit the offices several times before getting services. For example, women complained about the far distance to directorates.

The analysis of the questionnaire indicated general satisfaction with the environment and procedures of service-delivery at MOSA directorates in the different governorates, especially the male and female customer satisfaction with the treatment they received from MOSA employees - the administrative staff in particular. Dissatisfaction was more related to the lack of services, the failure of services to meet customers' needs, the insufficient number of employees and the short time allotted to customers. This is attributed to MOSA limited resources, its small share of PNA general budget and the increasing demand on its services.



1. INTRODUCTION



Introduction

The Ministry of Social Affairs is one of the most important service-delivery ministries in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. It directly interacts with the problems of the society and the increasing marginalized groups, amid the continuous control of the Israeli colonial occupation, and its policies and procedures in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, especially following the second Intifada. The continuous land confiscation, the construction of settlements and the Apartheid Wall, in addition to prevention of Palestinian workers from access to their jobs in the settlements or the Israeli labor market, aggravated unemployment and deepened poverty to unprecedented rates. Israeli occupation policies had a grave adverse impact on thousands of Palestinian families, necessitating an expansion in MOSA services that are expected to influence the Palestinian society, particularly women, since several studies indicate that women play an important role in securing the needs of their families, especially during wars, conflicts and crises (Kuttab, 2006; Mitchell, 2009; Abu Awwad, 2012). On the other hand, studies also indicate that men and women face different forms of social difficulties and marginalization. Discrimination against women and gender inequality deepen the gender gap in various aspects of life, including social services (Kabeer 2008; Kuttab, 2006; Mitchell, 2009; Abu Awwad, 2012). Moreover, studies assert that providing women – rather than men – with some services may improve the living conditions of all household members, especially girls.

Hence, the importance of studying MOSA programs and services from a gender-perspective, which is **“the analysis of power relations between men and women in the society and the analysis of their roles, needs, and the resources they can access and control”** (Abu Nahleh, 2003). The aim is to identify areas of inequality between men and women, reduce the dependence of women on men to increase their agency (Kabeer, 2008). The study includes monitoring and examining gender-related obstacles that contribute to the poor and ineffective benefit of women from MOSA services, including the obstacles that impede access to MOSA directorates, MOSA resources and services (such as cash transfers and food aid) and control over these resources. Finally, the study also examines how these resources affect the roles of men and women in their households and communities.

A gender-perspective requires the use of a gender lens, in addition to other lenses, such as class, region, and age. It starts at the very beginning with developing policies, programs, projects and plans, their implementation and their monitoring and evaluation. In general, the gender-perspective contributes to increasing the effectiveness of social protection and care programs in alleviating hunger and ending the succession of poverty from one generation to another, which leads to more equity among different social groups and classes (Kabeer, 2008).

This study diagnoses and analyzes the reality of MOSA and its services in the social care and protection sector from a gender perspective. It identifies gender gaps and proposes means for bridging them to decision-makers and other stakeholders in the social care and protection sector, as well as to other parties concerned with gender issues in general and gender-responsive budgets in particular. This study is one in a series of studies and training courses conducted by MIFTAH within the framework of the “Institutionalization of a Gender-Responsive Budget” program, which had successfully lobbied with the Council of Ministers to adopt a gender-responsive budget approach in its decision (no. 01/05/13/M.W.S.F), issued in 2009.



The study has several goals: First, to read and analyze MOSA's strategies, policies, programs, and projects, and examine the extent of gender mainstreaming at all levels and stages, starting by planning until evaluation. Second, to analyze and diagnose MOSA's reality and services and identify gender gaps in the social care and protection sector, in terms of availability and fair distribution of services in the different stages of the family life cycle and among marginalized groups from a gender-perspective. Third, to examine MOSA's organizational structure and human resources and identify the level of fair distribution of tasks and responsibilities in various administrations. Furthermore, the study examines MOSA's budget to identify how responsive it is to gender, in terms of fair distribution among men and women of resources and services, including cash transfers, assistance to persons with disabilities and economic empowerment services, and whether there are specific budget allocations to address women issues. Fourth, to analyze from a gender-perspective the findings of the field survey about the level of satisfaction of beneficiaries of MOSA offices, directorates and centers with the delivered services, and finally to present a summary of the major gender gaps in the different aspects of MOSA work and propose means to bridge these gaps.

Several previous studies focused on the social sector in general, such as (Hilal, Johnson and Musa) study on allocating and managing public revenues and resources to meet social needs, while other studies addressed the significance of a social security law and the potential for enforcement, such as Muwaten's "An Initiative for a Social Security Law in Palestine" (2010), while yet other studies addressed the reality of marginalized groups, including the elderly and the persons with disabilities, such as the reports of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS). However these studies lacked an in-depth analysis of MOSA's role in providing care to these groups. MIFTAH's sectoral study entitled "Towards a Gender-Responsive Budget: Sectoral Studies" (2008) constituted an introduction to MOSA programs and the extent to which they adopt gender-responsive budgets. The current study comprises a comprehensive gender-perspective review of MOSA, including a significant quantitative analysis and some qualitative analysis of the beneficiaries' satisfaction with the delivered services, particularly from a gender perspective. This study complements MIFTAH's efforts to develop gender-responsive policies and budgets in the service sector in general, including the social care sector.

This study shall hopefully constitute a resource to concerned governmental and non-governmental organizations as well as to individuals, in their pursuit to engender development policies and programs of successive Palestinian governments, especially those related to program budgets and allocations. The conclusions and recommendations may have an impact on the efforts for financial and administrative reform and on reviewing MOSA's proposed budget to make it more gender balanced and responsive. The conclusions of the study provide preliminary information to MOSA decision-makers, enabling them to improve service-delivery to beneficiaries. To achieve the above-mentioned goals, the study adopted a gender-perspective descriptive analytical research approach, describing the perception of men and women towards their relations with the social service offices, and analyzing MOSA services from the beneficiaries' point of view. The methodology adopted several research methods. First, the review of the literature and data related to MOSA policies and goals including its mission, vision, strategy and the social protection strategy, as well as the analysis of statistics, data and studies about MOSA services, activities, plans, programs and projects, to acquire knowledge about these services and activities. Second, conduct a gender-perspective examination of the administrative

system and organizational structure of MOSA and various directorates, and highlight issues related to the budget and its gender- responsiveness. Third, conduct in-depth interviews with the Minister, deputy-ministers, general directors of MOSA main administrations and directors of the complaints and women units, in addition to a focus group with several directors of directorates in the northern governorates. These interviews identified the reality of MOSA services to male and female beneficiaries, the interviewees' points of view towards these services in terms of gender needs and roles, their future vision for developing these services and the nature of their relationships with the beneficiaries. Finally, a questionnaire was filled by a random sample of 548 male and female beneficiaries from the families receiving MOSA services in 13 different places at MOSA directorates and headquarters. Because of the occupation and difficulty in communication between the northern and southern governorates, the study shall focus on the West Bank alone. Moreover, two focus groups were held with a number of MOSA beneficiaries.¹

¹ Further details on the sample selection and criteria appear in Chapter Three.



2. OVERVIEW OF GENDER REALITY AND ISSUES IN THE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS IN PALESTINE



Overview of gender reality and issues in the programs and services of the Ministry of Social Affairs in Palestine

As mentioned earlier, the aim of this study, as identified by MIFTAH, is a gender-perspective evaluation of the services delivered by MOSA and their impact from the points of view of the beneficiaries of MOSA directorates in the West Bank. This comes within the framework of the “Institutionalization of a Gender-Responsive Budget” program, funded by the NGO Development Center (NDC). To understand the respondents’ perceptions and opinions, it is necessary to understand the surrounding environment that influences and shapes these perceptions, and present a gender-perspective overview of the reality of MOSA.

2.1 The Ministry of Social Affairs, social protection and gender issues

Since PNA took the responsibility for social affairs in 1994, it sought to provide services for its citizens, especially the marginalized groups, the poor, the needy, widows, persons with disabilities, the elderly, and orphans. Poverty was the basic eligibility criterion for individuals or families, without considering or addressing the causes of the poverty. MOSA had no clear and long-term policies to address poverty and ensure that the poor overcome the poverty threshold (Hilal, Johnson, and Musa, 2003). Recently, MOSA developed a national strategy for the social protection sector 2011-2013, in coordination with several stakeholders and institutions involved in the care and protection sector², and in line with the new international policies that aim at integrating social security and poverty-alleviation issues in one framework (Kabeer, 2008). MOSA may be considered a link in the chain of the social protection sector, or rather its leader, as it addresses the problems of deprivation and marginalization of the poorest of the poor, and provides safety to families during economic crises and risks of the life cycle.

Social protection programs are rarely gender-neutral, but may rather be discriminatory in some aspects. For example, the social insurance scheme protects workers in the formal labor market, and excludes workers in the informal labor market, which means that most women are deprived from the social insurance scheme, because of their low participation rate in the formal labor market and their concentration in the informal labor market (Hilal, Kafri, and Kuttub, 2008). Although some protection programs target housewives in particular, gender is rarely a major component of the program planning and design processes. Disregarding the gender concept as an important tool to analyze the existing differences between the vulnerability of men and women and the risks and marginalization they face, and to design social protection policies using this analysis, contributes to weakening gender planning and increases gender inequality in the social protection sector (Lettrell and Moser, 2004).

² These institutions include: PNA ministries, including: The Ministry of Health, Education and Higher Education, Women Affairs, Youth and Sports, Housing, Endowments and Religious Affairs, Prisoners’ Affairs, in addition to The Martyrs and Wounded Families Foundations. It also includes Palestinian NGOs that contribute to enriching the services of the protection sector such as: The Zakat Committees, Charities, The Palestinian Red Crescent Society and lending Institutions. Finally it includes international agencies: UNRWA, The European Union, The World Food Program, The Food and Agriculture Organization, The World Bank, The United Nations agencies and International development and cooperation agencies.



Globally, men and women face different constraints and obstacles that may limit opportunities for women and girls. Some constraints and obstacles are gender-specific, such as social customs and practices imposed on men and women because of their gender. Other obstacles are gender-intensified, meaning disparities between family members reflecting the impact of social standards and norms on food distribution, health care, access to property, etc. The final form of constraints and obstacles are gender-imposed such as the forms of gender deprivation that reflect discrimination in the public domain (Kabeer, 2008).

The reality of Palestinian women does not differ much from other women in the world, despite the specificity of the Palestinian people, who have been living under colonization for several decades, a situation that affected women and caused their impoverishment. In Palestine, men and women face common obstacles and risks that stem from the continuous structural hegemony of Israeli colonialism on the Palestinian Territories and economy, depriving them from independence and national sovereignty over their national soils and causing the systematic destruction of the economy, especially in agriculture and industry, and consequently depriving them from achieving development and the well-being of the population. During the past years, the policies of closure and blockade imposed by the Israeli occupation on Palestinians, the accelerated processes of land confiscation, the construction of settlements and the Apartheid Wall, and the constraints imposed on the freedom of movement of Palestinians between different regions, preventing workers from access to their workplaces inside the Green Line and Jerusalem, have led to further deterioration in the socio-economic and political conditions, and raised poverty and unemployment to unprecedented rates³. This has deprived hundreds of thousands of Palestinian households from their major, and possibly only source of livelihood and consequently pushed them into poverty, which has also reached unprecedented levels according to estimates of international agencies, especially in Gaza Strip and some areas in the north and south West bank.

Surveys of standards of living and levels of consumption, in addition to the poverty survey in Palestine conducted by PCBS in 2009-2010 and based on patterns of consumption and income⁴, revealed that despite the slight decrease in poverty levels in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, the poverty rate of individuals reached 25.7% in 2010, while the incomes of 48.6% of Palestinians were below the national poverty line, although poverty was more severe in Gaza because of the strict Israeli blockade. 14.1% of Palestinians suffered from deep poverty according to the households monthly consumption patterns: 8.8% in the West Bank, 23.0% in Gaza, and the income of 37.6% of Palestinians was below the deep poverty line (24.6% in the West Bank and 59.2% in Gaza) (PCBS, 2011: 17).

Although large families are more vulnerable to poverty (45.1% of families consisted of 10 or more members in 2010), one-member families (mainly elders) are also

³ Unemployment rate peaked in 2001, reaching 33% among males and around 17% among females. Throughout the years, unemployment rates shifted in favor of men; the rate declined to 19.2% among men, but increased to 28.4% among women. Despite the decrease in the general unemployment rate in Palestine, it is still considered high according to international standards, especially in Gaza (PCBS (A), 2012).

⁴ To show the fluctuation in standards of living because of the variation in returns, and limited or no income, and the families resorting to borrowing, aid, or use their savings to cover the costs of living and maintain a certain level of consumption. (Different coping strategies adopted by Palestinian households to cope with lack of income or limited income" (PCBS, 2011: p 17)).

vulnerable to poverty (PCBS, 2011: 18). The poverty gap aggravates with the increase in the number of children in a family. Unlike the situation in 2009, families headed by women are poorer (29.8%) than families headed by men (25.5%) according to the household monthly consumption patterns (PCBS, 2011: 18), which reflects the global phenomenon of feminization of poverty. The participation of family members in the labor force may constitute protection from poverty, but not in all cases. According to the monthly consumption patterns, the poverty rate among family members whose providers do not participate in the labor force reached 32.0%, while it dropped to 24.6% among family members whose providers participate in the labor force (PCBS, 2011: 19). This means that women are more vulnerable to poverty because of their low participation in the labor market. The report revealed that workers in the agricultural sector are poorer (32.0%) than family members depending on external aid and transfers (30.4%). Similarly, family members depending on income from the private sector (30.1%) are poorer than those depending on income from the public sector (19.2%) (PCBS 2011: 20). Again, women are most adversely affected because they mainly work in agriculture and the informal sector. The special and fragile situation of women confirms the importance of this gender-perspective study of MOSA.

Nevertheless, another PCBS report indicated that social aid provided to families contributed to reducing poverty rates according to the monthly consumption patterns, from 30.9% to 25.7%, while it also contributed to reducing the deep poverty rate by around a quarter, from 19.2% to 14.1% (PCBS 2011:22). The question is, to what extent did the government social services sector contribute to fulfilling the needs of different groups? And more relevant to this study, to what extent did MOSA fulfill these needs from a gender-perspective, especially that indicators assert the special needs of women?

Women also face different obstacles and risks than men, because of gender issues. Some obstacles stem from the nature of their relation with the labor market, age, life cycle, the risks and burdens linked to their reproductive role and other constraints and risks. The low participation rate of women in the labor market may constitute one of the most important risks women face and which exposes them to poverty, especially amid the absence of a social security scheme. During the past decades, women participation in the labor market did not exceed 18% of all women at working age, for political, economic, social, and cultural reasons. Major reasons include the limited job opportunities available for women, because of the conditions of the global economy, the Palestinian economic and employment market economy policies, and more importantly, the Israeli occupation policies that have been systemically seeking the destruction of the whole Palestinian economy for several decades. On the other hand, the participation of women in the labor market is affected by gender division and discrimination in favor of men in the labor market, leaving around two-thirds of women working in the informal sector, which lacks any social or legal protection, or even a healthy working environment or decent wages. Women working in the formal sector are concentrated in jobs with lower wages, rights and even social status compared to men, in addition to the social and cultural pressures women face, as the high fertility rates in the West Bank and Gaza Strip preclude the participation of many women in the labor market because they are burdened with providing care for big families. Culture may also constitute an obstacle that impedes women participation the labor market especially that paid labor is not attractive to most women, because of low wages compared to the social and financial costs of working, including transportation costs, day-care and kindergarten fees and absence from family

and children. However, it is noted that the role of this social and cultural factor has receded under economic pressure.



The economic conditions of women worsen during certain family conditions, such as divorce, separation or the death of the husbands. Women are more vulnerable when they have children. Older women face different risks than men, because their life expectancy is higher, which puts them at the risk of outliving their husbands or providers. Furthermore, women are more likely to develop illnesses related to their reproductive roles (pregnancy and childbirth), such as osteoporosis or anemia, which require continuous health care. In general, girls and women with special needs suffer more than men with special needs, because of the social constraints imposed on them on the pretext of protection from sexual harassment, or because of a feeling of shame. Finally, women, unlike most men, are highly exposed to domestic violence, which requires social care and protection organizations to protect these women and empower them to face their circumstances. The continuous Israeli colonial domination over the Palestinian Territories contributes to complicating and perpetuating the gender gap, as women are often compelled to cope with discrimination because of the difficult economic, social, and political conditions imposed by occupation, which impedes opportunities to challenge the imbalance in the gender power relations and dictates giving priority to solidarity among women and men facing occupation.

At another level, women may be more exposed to exclusion or deprivation from services than men because of the prevailing assumptions among developmental institutions in general and service-delivery institutions in particular, about the nature of living conditions of families, used as a tool for analyzing the conditions of the poor and identifying methods of providing them with assistance and services. Families are often perceived as unified nuclear units headed by men. In fact, a family is not necessarily a unified unit, and providing the father with financial aid does not necessarily mean that all family members benefit from the aid or that cash or in-kind resources are fairly distributed among family members. World literature and local studies indicate that the distribution of resources within a family is related to gender and age, whereby several men take bigger shares of the families' resources (Kuttab, 2006; Delphy, 1995; Whitehead, 1995; Abu Awwad, 2012). For example, most men are not willing to quit smoking, at the expense of household necessities, while other men spend part of the family's income at coffee shops or on alcohol (no accurate studies are available about the rate of alcohol or drug dependence in the Palestinian society; although it is expected that many families are affected, but speaking explicitly is a source of shame in a religious community that prohibits alcohol). Some women try to avoid speaking about these problems, such as one woman who said that her husband spent a large portion of aid on cigarettes, and that during his illness she told him that the Ministry wanted him to authorize her instead. Currently, she receives the aid money and does not tell her husband about it until she buys all the household needs; otherwise he would take the money. Several directors at MOSA said that if a man is proven incompetent or unfit to care for his family, the resources are given to the woman in the family, but there are only few cases, and require complicated and time consuming procedures.

Nevertheless, MOSA employees are aware that many families are headed by women, hence part of the services have been directed to women heads of households. However, there is still a need to verify whether all women heads of households have access to MOSA offices, especially that women are subject to social constraints that impede their movement more than men, and women lack the

necessary financial resources to reach MOSA offices. The interviews revealed an awareness of the different family models that exist in the Palestinian society besides the nuclear family. Priority and attention must be given to some family models or structures that particularly affect women. First, women are more exposed to living alone than men, either because of not getting married or the death of their husbands, especially since women's life expectancy is longer. Second, polygamy threatens the first wife of falling into poverty, even if the marital relation with the husband lasts, because the first wife and her children are often deprived of the father's resources. Third, the marriage of young women to much older men puts them at the risk of poverty because these husbands lose their financial resources because of old age, while the family is still in the formation stage and needs provision.

Hence the importance of adopting a gender-perspective in developing policies, plans, programs, and projects that empower and develop women and the society. However, gender mainstreaming should start at the early stages of considering a project or program, throughout all stages until implementation and evaluation. Moreover, the level of gender mainstreaming in any institution is measured at several levels. First, reviewing and analyzing the institutions documents, including its vision, mission, policies and the extent to which these are engendered: Second, examining the extent to which these visions and policies are reflected in the institution's programs, projects, and activities: Third, examining whether the necessary human and financial resources are allocated to these plans and programs: Fourth, verifying that implementation on the ground does not overlook or drop gender issues, and finally conducting a gender-perspective monitoring and evaluation of these plans and programs. Success indicators for gender mainstreaming of the Ministry comprise the level of success in meeting the practical and strategic needs of women within the social protection program, contribution to changing the traditional roles of women and reducing the gender gap in resource allocation. However, the core question is whether gender constitutes a major component in MOSA strategies, policies, and programs.

2.2 A gender-perspective of the philosophy, vision, strategies and policies of the Ministry of Social Affairs

As mentioned earlier, MOSA developed a national strategy for the social protection sector (2011-2013) in coordination with stakeholders, according to MOSA's documents. As MOSA officials are conscious of the continuous Israeli occupation, the Ministry asserts that the philosophy and essence of its work are based on providing aid and supporting the steadfastness of citizens to advance and empower the Palestinian society to continue its national struggle and achieve independence, social development and equality. MOSA vision is to provide:

A decent living for Palestinians through achieving sustainable humanitarian development in the Palestinian state based on rights and justice without discrimination.



The Ministry of Social Affairs, the leader of the social protection sector, in partnership and coordination with the ministries, government institutions, civil society organizations, the private sector and international organizations, aims to provide Palestinian citizens with social protection through the protection, care, prevention, empowerment, and awareness programs, in a rights-based approach, ensuring transparency and justice, to support the steadfastness of the citizens and maintain social cohesion and solidarity.

MOSA has adopted new, simple and modest changes in its methods, to shift from relief and short-term aid for poverty-alleviation, to long-term empowerment and development services that seek to achieve social justice and support the steadfastness of the Palestinian society. This constituted a crucial transformation in the Ministry. MOSA has also taken a step forward in developing a national strategy for social protection, cooperating and adopting a participatory approach with several parties, including governmental, non-governmental and international organizations concerned with social protection issues, addressing specific issues (social insurance, social security laws and persons with special needs), and in coordination with various administrations within MOSA. Individual meetings were held with various administrations to collect information on the sectors targeted by MOSA services (MOSA, 2011: 7). The strategy was presented to several internal and external stakeholders for comments, such as the Higher Planning Council, which consists of MOSA officials, as well as the General Union of Charitable Associations, the Zakat Committees, the Ministry of Prisoners' Affairs, the Families of the Martyrs and the Wounded Foundation, and the Ministry of Planning. The strategy relied mainly on PCBS data, and several references including the Thirteenth Cabinet Program, the Reform and Development Plan (2008-2010), and other documents from MOSA, UNRWA and other partners (MOSA, 2011: 7). However, participation was restricted to official and popular institutions, with no involvement of the community. MOSA needs to improve its methodology in developing its strategies and plans and engage the community, including women, in developing programs and plans that reflect the actual needs and interests of marginalized groups.

MOSA strategies, policies, programs and projects are expected to have an impact on the gender gap and the nature of services provided to both men and women. This study aims at conducting a gender-perspective review of MOSA's approach, taking into consideration that women's issues are structurally connected with general social issues. Reviewing MOSA documents revealed some general relevant achievements. However, other aspects still require further effort. MOSA general strategies and policies target the poor in general, and seek shifting from relief to development. However, these efforts are still in their early stages, according to several directors within MOSA, whose first strategic goal is "to reduce and alleviate poverty among Palestinians". This statement seems general and gender-neutral, but such neutrality is particularly gender-biased, since it ignores the needs of women, which are different from the needs of men, and which stem from the reproductive role of women and from the society's discrimination against them. Women's share of MOSA services is significant, because of the increasing demand of women on those services, and not because of an identified gender gap. Several MOSA senior officials acknowledge some gender-related issues, but this is not reflected in MOSA programs or activities. The strategy lacks clear provisions that indicate the gender gap and confirm the specificity of women needs and their difference from those of men.

MOSA strategic goals are (1) to reduce and alleviate poverty of Palestinians by rationalizing cash assistance to the Palestinians in need, focusing on families living below the deep poverty line and increasing coverage; ensure food security and basic services to needy families; empower and build the capacities of the poor until they become self-reliant. (2) To enhance protection, care, and empowerment of marginalized and vulnerable groups, especially the elderly, persons with disabilities, prisoners and children and women victims of violence, through policies and laws that guarantee their rights, providing them with cash and in-kind aid, improved shelter and developing educational and vocational training programs for the relevant groups. (3) To enhance the social security scheme and expand its scope, increasing the number of participants in pension and health insurance schemes and expanding the coverage of labor insurance. (4) To develop the legislative and institutional frameworks and partnerships to achieve social protection.

2.3 The protection and care programs at the Ministry of Social Affairs

MOSA has changed the organization of its programs. It used to implement six major programs: (1) the cash transfers and supplementary aid program, which aims to alleviate poverty of families and individuals through securing the basic needs and improving the health care of poor families and marginalized groups; improve the level of food security and provide households' basic needs of food and other items. This is a major MOSA program that takes the largest share of the budget, amid the deteriorating living conditions of the population because of the continuous Israeli sieges and closures in the Palestinian Territories and the fragility of other protection and care programs, such as social security; (2) the program for the protection, care and rehabilitation of women and children, which protects and rehabilitates women victims of violence and women in hardships, protects and cares for children, and provides orphans with care and solidarity; (3) the program for empowering poor and deprived families, which helps poor families and enables them to exit the poverty cycle and become self-reliant; (4) the social care and defense program, which protects and provides shelter to the elderly, builds the capacities of the youth and develop their productive skills, protects and rehabilitates juveniles (from various social ailments) and works on drug prevention; (5) the program for the care and empowerment of persons with disabilities, which rehabilitates, cares, protects and provides shelter to persons with disabilities, integrating them into society, facilitating their lives and movement, and helping them to achieve self-reliance in their daily lives (motor skills), and (6) the program of partnerships with charitable associations, which regulates and supports the work of charitable associations, enhances their ability to provide integrated services and strengthens the local community's participation in identifying the needs and priorities at the governorate level.

These programs were later integrated into three major programs: (1) The program for care and protection of marginalized and vulnerable groups, which consists of the protection and rehabilitation of the elderly, persons with disabilities, children, women and youth; (2) the program for institution and capacity building, and (3) the program to combat poverty. All these programs fall under the social protection sector. This section of the study sheds the light on several aspects of MOSA programs and services, and identifies gender gaps based on MOSA data.

2.3.1. Combating poverty



This program consists of several sub-programs, including cash transfers and supplementary aid program, emergency aid and the program for economic empowerment of poor families and marginalized groups.

2.3.1.1. The cash transfers and supplementary aid program

In 2010, MOSA worked on uniting its cash assistance programs into a single program (The cash transfers program)⁵, funded by the European Union, the World Bank and PNA. MOSA documents indicate that a targeting formula was developed (Proxy Means Testing Formula PMTF)⁶ to achieve a higher level of justice and transparency, upon the World Bank's recommendation. The formula aims to minimize error in targeting the poorest of the poor in the Palestinian society and to identify eligible families for MOSA cash assistance, especially that previous reports had pointed out errors in aid distribution in the West Bank and Gaza in general. A PCBS report entitled "Poverty in the Palestinian Territory: Main Findings Report 2009-2010", pointed out an increase in the rate of errors in identifying the categories in need of aid. The report confirmed that around two-thirds (65.7%) of the families that received aid were not poor according to the national poverty line⁷ (leakage), while 42.6% of needy families were excluded and deprived from receiving any aid, especially in the West Bank (lack of coverage) (PCBS, 2011: 23).

Formula to identify people below poverty line

The MOSA staff gave positive evaluation of the formula, as it limited human intervention in determining eligibility and manipulation that resulted in providing aid to ineligible households. The formula used in the system excludes all households that receive scores above the deep poverty line, households whose standards of living are above the general average for poor Palestinian households, and are consequently classified as not poor and ineligible. Moreover, MOSA documents

⁵ Two cash assistance programs, the EU funded hardship cases, and the World Bank funded program of the reform of social safety networks were merged into one program (MOSA, 2011: 14).

⁶ It targets families through a special targeting model, consisting of several variables that take into consideration the characteristics of poor families in the Palestinian Territories. Data is entered into the database of the national social protection program. These variables are transformed into figures using a special standards of living formula (PMTF). The formula is applied on the families whose data had been collected; scores are added, and at a specific separating point (the deep poverty line), the family is considered eligible for cash assistance. The family is visited again using an auditing form to ensure accuracy of submitted information and correct errors. Corrections are entered into the program's system, and the formula is applied again. If the family falls below the deep poverty line, it becomes a beneficiary of the program; otherwise it does not (MOSA, 2011: 15).

⁷ In 2010, the poverty line was re-established based on international recommendations. The size of the sample was increased to provide comprehensive data about the consumption patterns of Palestinian households, represent the changes that occurred in the size of household, which decreased from 6 to 5 members, and to calculate price fluctuations in different regions. The monthly consumption rate was taken into account instead of the monthly income rate to determine the poverty line in the Palestinian Territories, because consumption better reflects needs, especially that households with similar income levels may have different levels of welfare.

According to PCBS, there are two poverty lines in the Palestinian Territories:

The deep poverty line: reflects the basic needs from the budget for food, clothing, and housing. The deep poverty line for a typical family of 5 members (two adults and three children) reached 1783 NIS in 2010 (around 478 USD).

The poverty line: It was programmed to reflect the budget for the basic household needs in addition to other needs such as health care, education, transportation, communication, personal care, pots, furniture and other house needs. The two poverty lines may vary according to the nature of household composition. The poverty line for a typical family of 5 members (two adults and three children) reached 2237 NIS in 2010 (around 609 USD) (PCBS, 2011).

indicated that the Ministry's services might be stopped during field work, particularly if the directorate was fully convinced of the need to stop aid, for reasons the formula might not detect, called the "error of inclusion." These reasons included the family or a family member receiving financial compensations from a specific party or from selling land or property, or the discovery of other incomes that were not accounted for during the processing of the household data.

Table (1) reveals that 18,094 families were excluded from receiving aid using the formula, of which around one-third were families headed by women. 19,277 families were excluded because of field work, of which 29% were families headed by women.

Table (1): Number of families excluded from the social protection program according to the type of exclusion and sex of family provider for 2011

Sex of family provider	The Type of exclusion		Total
	Formula	Field work	
Male	12,440	14,693	27,133
Female	5654	5584	11,238
Total	18,094	19,277	37,371
Percentage of Females %	31.3	29.0	30.1

This large number of excluded households using the formula or field work may be explained by two opposing methods. It may indicate inaccuracy in the submitted data for determining eligibility for aid, and favoritism in determining the targeted families during the stages preceding the use of the formula and the process of updating information. However, it may also indicate that MOSA has raised its eligibility requirements, either because of increasing demand on these services resulting from the escalating Israeli domination and the deteriorating economic conditions, or because of the pressures MOSA faces from international agencies to reduce aid. This in itself may be considered a negative indication of the decrease of MOSA services vis-a-vis the increase in demand.

It should be noted that the registration of an application in the female's name as the head of household does not necessarily mean the absence of a husband or a male adult, but is done to facilitate receiving aid, exploiting the prevailing patriarchal values that perceive women to be weak and in need of help. On the other hand, a deeper examination of the main causes and factors that led to excluding more women than men from aid is required to check whether those factors were similar or there were special factors for women.

The practical application of this system also shows an inaccuracy in identifying the poorest of the poor in the society, as it sometimes excludes families from marginalized groups, such as the elderly, persons with disabilities and widows because of their small households. The formula gives priority to larger, rather than smaller families. Although MOSA developed a new targeting mechanism for special groups such as the elderly, persons with disabilities and orphans to assist them through direct aid approved by the Minister, however its accuracy in targeting all marginalized groups, especially women requires further scrutiny. The available data does not reveal potential discrepancies in targeting men and women, or the possibility of exclusion or inclusion of each, especially the most vulnerable elderly and single women who



live alone without a provider. At the same time, other groups of women, particularly the illiterates are expected to benefit from the formula, since low education levels increase the opportunity for receiving aid.

Table (2) reveals an increase in the number of households receiving regular cash assistance between the first installment and the fourth installment to an almost double. The number of recipient households increased from 51,513 in the first installment to 93,946 in the fourth installment. Despite such expansion, MOSA services were still limited and only targeted families living under the deep poverty line. Although families headed by women constituted 9.3% of all Palestinian families in 2010, these families constituted 43% of all families which received aid in the fourth installment in 2011. This may be attributed to the fact that some men refuse to register for aid to maintain their dignity, but accept aid requested by their wives. As mentioned earlier, some families might have applied in the name of women because they believed that women were more likely to receive these services. Families exploited the traditional social perception of women, as weak and in need of assistance and protection. The table below shows clear differences between men and women in the value of cash aid, which will be addressed in detail in the section on MOSA budget.

Table (2): Distribution of families receiving regular cash transfers according to sex of family provider, installment and amount in 2011

Sex of the family provider	First Installment		Second Installment		Third Installment		Fourth Installment	
	No. of families	Total aid	No. of families	Total aid	No. of families	Total aid	No. of families	Total aid
Male	30,242	30,837,006	26,737	27,200,883	29,540	30,497,052	53,572	61,317,984
Female	21,271	17,333,508	19,209	15,491,643	21,203	17,835,981	40,374	38,558,448
Total	51,513	48,170,514	45,964	42,692,526	50,743	48,333,033	93,946	99,876,432
Percentage of females %	41.3	36.0	41.3	36.3	41.9	36.9	43.0	38.6

* All amounts in US\$

The limited number of families benefitting from MOSA services because of high demand, is coupled with the low value of aid. The monthly cash aid to families is 250 NIS, paid once every 3 months only. In some rare cases, it may reach 600 NIS monthly. MOSA strategy is to expand targeting rather than deepen and develop it, to reach out to the largest possible number of beneficiaries, because of the dire economic conditions. This undermines the possibility of transforming these services from relief and charity-like aid, to empowerment and developmental aid. MOSA aims to compensate for the low value of cash transfers by providing supplementary aid packages as will be discussed in the next section. However, this aid package failed to exit families from deep poverty, as determined by PCBS.

Supplementary aid

Supplementary aid includes health insurance and regular food aid. Table (3) below indicates that around 66,000 families benefit from health insurance services and 45,000 families benefit from regular food aid, taking into consideration that some families are eligible to more than one form of assistance. Despite the importance of these services, there is an indication that not all eligible groups are receiving health insurance services, and not all marginalized and poor groups in the Palestinian society are receiving their nutritional needs.

Table (3): Distribution of families benefitting from cash transfers and non-cash aid according to type of aid and amount in 2011

The type of aid	Total number of families	Total value of aid
Regular cash transfers	95,908	99,876,432
Health insurance	66,000	9,240,000
Regular food aid	45,000	\$36,000,000
Emergency aid	3374	8930350

* All amounts in US\$

Table (4), which summarizes orphan care, student exemptions from tuition fees and accommodation expenses for different poor and marginalized categories, reveals slight differences between men and women in benefitting from these services in favor of girls and women compared to boys and men. 1316 girls benefitted from orphans services compared to 1278 boys, constituting 50.7% of orphans and receiving 50.5% of the aid. Girls exempted from tuition fees constituted 51.4% of all students and received 51.4% of student aid.

Table (4): Gender distribution of individual beneficiaries from cash and non-cash transfers/aid according to type of aid in 2011

Type of aid	Gender and total value of aid				Total number of beneficiaries	Total value of aid
	Males	Total Value	Females	Total Value		
Orphan care	1278	1,089,584	1316	1,111,697	2,594	2,201,281
Exemptions from tuition fees	137,157	5,486,280	145,308	5,812,320	282,465	11,298,600
Housing and transportation expenses for shelter inhabitants	-	-	-	-	555	23,342,750

* All amounts in US\$

2.3.1.2 Emergency aid

In addition to its regular services, MOSA is responsible for providing services and support to several families and groups that do not fall into the category that needs regular assistance, but face emergencies that require MOSA intervention and support, such as the sudden death or illness in the family, which may require covering travel expenses and treatment abroad. MOSA also helps families harmed by the Israeli occupation's practices, such as home demolitions and land confiscation, and helps families that are victims of disasters. A committee that reports directly to the Minister supervises this type of assistance, coordinating with various competent ministries such as the Ministry of Health for cases of referral abroad for treatment, or the Ministry of Public Works and Housing in cases of renovations of houses of the poor and the accommodation of houses to suit persons with disabilities.

Table (5): Distribution of families benefitting from emergency assistance program according to type of aid in 2011

Type of Emergency Aid	Region				Total	Cost
	West Bank		Gaza Strip			
	Number	Value	Number	Value		
Poverty	1274	28,82,739	1723	3,022,200	2997	5,904,939
House renovations	185	2,376,500	2	37,700	187	2,414,200
House accommodation	5	20,500	0	0	5	88,652
Treatment expenses (Travel costs)	37	87,152	1	1500	38	88,652
Medical equipment	98	356,059	0	0	98	356,059
Damages of occupation	49	146,000	0	0	49	146,000
Total	1648	5,868,950	1726	3,061,400	3374	8,930,350

* All amounts in US\$

The table above reveals that only 3374 families received emergency aid, although Palestinians live in continuous conflict with the Israeli occupation and in a political, economic, and social environment that leads to double these numbers. It is globally known that demand on the second and third types of aid increases in emergencies and disasters. In Palestine, Israeli occupation destructive policies and measures, the negative impact of PNA neo-liberal and free market policies, and the resulting rapid increase in the food price index and cost of living in addition to the global increases, have transformed the Palestinian context into continuous disasters and emergencies. MOSA does not have gender disaggregated data of heads of households; hence it is difficult to verify whether there is fair distribution between men and women, or whether the different needs of men and women are taken into consideration.

2.3.1.3. The program of economic empowerment of poor families and marginalized groups

This program consists of:

A) Deprived Families Economic Empowerment Program (DEEP), funded by the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) and other Arab funds. This program is implemented by the United Nations for Development Program/Program of Assistance to the Palestinian people (UNDP/PAPP) for the benefit of PNA (ministries of Social Affairs, Planning and Labor). It is not yet clear how this program shall address different gender needs of various beneficiaries. MOSA documents indicate that DEEP targets families that fall between the deep poverty line and the national poverty line as a priority, taking into account several factors in selection, including equitable geographic distribution, the size of the governorate and the poverty rate in that governorate, in addition to the presence or absence of a family member capable of working, but with no reference to gender. The program has a development and empowerment dimension that aims to transform families from dependence on MOSA to self-reliance. During Phase 1 of the program, MOSA focused on project staff capacity-building, through a training program for 20 male and female employees, addressing methods of selecting and working with families, in coordination with the UNDP. Later, the conditions of the families targeted by the cash transfers program were diagnosed

and 7796 families were targeted. Recently, MOSA decided to increase the number of targeted families from 12,000 families to 16,000 in Phase 2, with a capital amounting to US\$90 million. This program may effect crucial change in the lives of the poor, especially women, if it adopts a participatory approach and takes into consideration the collective dimension of empowerment, helps beneficiaries organize and raises their awareness of their rights; the gender perspective must be adopted throughout all the phases of the project.

B) The fund for the rehabilitation of persons with disabilities

This fund provides persons with disabilities with repayable, interest-free loans for small enterprises. The Emirates Red Crescent Society funds the project with US\$1,006,200. 108 persons with disabilities benefited from this fund, of whom 28 (26%) were women, receiving 26% of loans too. The figures reveal lack of gender justice in the distribution of loans, since the rates of disabilities are relatively close between women and men, yet the fund favors men, whose numbers are larger than women (For further details, refer to the section about care for persons with disabilities).

Table (6): Distribution of the families of persons with disabilities and beneficiaries from rehabilitation according to the sex of the person with disabilities, type of enterprise and the value of loans in 2011 (in NIS)

Type of enterprise	Sex of the person with disabilities and value of loan				Number of Beneficiaries	Total value of loans
	No. of males	Value of loans	No. of females	Value of loans		
Agricultural enterprises (plant, livestock)	49	245.000	19	95.000	68	340.000
Commercial enterprises	31	155.000	9	45.000	40	200.000
Other enterprises	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	80	400.000	28	140.000	108	540.000

* All amounts in US\$

There are differences in the types of enterprises between men and women; women constituted 22.5% of loan recipients for commercial enterprises and 28% of loan recipients for agricultural enterprises (plant or livestock), which reflects the traditional gender division of labor, in which agricultural work is an extension to domestic work for women, while chances for women to enter new fields of work are restricted.

2.3.2. The program for social care and social protection

This program covers several marginalized groups, including children under 18 years old, the elderly, persons with disabilities, and women victims of violence. MOSA seeks to protect children in cooperation with different stakeholders concerned with children issues, by developing a strategy for child protection and improving the type and quality of programs and services provided to abused children, juveniles and orphans, as well as the vocational rehabilitation of school truants (ages 12-16) to help



integrate them in the labor market. MOSA also supervises three juvenile rehabilitation and care centers for children in conflict with the law.⁸ (For more information, see the table in Annex (1)). It is worth noting that the number of female juveniles (33 girls) is much less than males (390 boys), probably because girls are less willing to defy the society and are subject to stricter constraints, which preclude the possibility of girls breaking the law or the norms. At the same time, MOSA and the local community try to avoid referring girls to juvenile centers because of the adverse impact on their future, amid a culture that incriminates such conduct by females. Nevertheless, it is not clear whether MOSA takes into account the specificities of girls during their stay at shelters and after they leave, since reintegrating these girls in their communities is the most important stage. The misdemeanors committed by youth vary, and include personal assault, sexual harassment, attempted murder, driving tickets and immoral actions. They also vary according to gender: boys tend to commit more violent misdemeanors than girls.

Youth rehabilitation centers provide their services to school truants from 12-16 age group, who drop out of school for social reasons. They amounted to 251 trainees in 2011, distributed over 13 centers in the West Bank and Gaza. These figures confirm that the scale of MOSA vocational rehabilitation services for truants from poor and marginalized families is limited. The existing centers are incapable of absorbing all students in need of services. Several women who participated in the focus groups mentioned that the vocational centers rejected their children because of their limited capacity. The shortage is explained by the high cost of setting up and operating such centers. This study cannot verify the content and quality of the training, nor the incentives provided to students to facilitate and encourage enrollment and retention. On the other hand, the table below indicates a gender gap in MOSA vocational rehabilitation activity. The rate of female beneficiaries does not exceed 20% of the total number of students at the centers. Moreover, MOSA provides wider options of vocational training to boys than girls: out of 10 disciplines, only 4 are available to girls. The rehabilitation centers are important because they build the capacities of the children of poor or marginalized families. Furthermore, they improve the opportunities of those young people to get jobs, especially if MOSA monitors them after graduation and helps them to get jobs.

Table (7): Gender distribution of beneficiaries of the youth rehabilitation centers according to type of aid in the West Bank in 2011

Discipline	Gender		Total
	Female	Male	
Carpentry	82	-	82
Blacksmith	41	-	41
Barber	9	-	9
Upholstery	14	-	14
Automobile Painting	24	-	24
Aluminum	19	-	19
Computer	-	12	12

⁸ The centers are: The Rabi'i Juvenile Center in Gaza Strip, Dar Al-Amal Rehabilitation Center in Ramallah, West Bank, and finally Dar Ri'aya for Girls, all of which provide shelter.

Beauty	-	24	24
Sewing	11	10	21
Photography	-	5	5
Total	200	51	251

The centers rehabilitate boys to work in carpentry, blacksmithing, sewing, upholstery, automobile painting and aluminum. Girls are trained in computers, beauty, photography, and sewing, and are concentrated in the beauty profession. There is a significant difference between the courses provided to girls and boys, reflecting the stereotypes of the social roles of males and females, such as beauty and sewing. While new courses were introduced for girls, such as photography, girls train for this profession only because of the growing demand on female photographers for unmixed weddings.

Elder care

MOSA approved the national strategy for elderly care in Palestine in cooperation with stakeholders, emphasizing the importance of “creating a legal and legislative environment that guarantees the provision and fulfillment of elderly rights, particularly their rights to autonomy, participation and decent living.” Moreover, a national committee for the elderly was established to monitor and implement the strategy. This is a significant step in regulating the elderly care. However, the strategy lacks any gender-perspective, neither in provisions nor in content. The strategy does not take into consideration the higher number of elderly women compared to elderly men, nor the different needs –especially the health needs - of men and women at this age. It also overlooks the fact that women severely lack resources to guarantee a decent living in comparison with men.

At another level, MOSA is currently developing a program of social transfers for the elderly, consisting of a monthly allowance of US\$35, in addition to monthly health insurance of US\$14 for each family with an elderly. MOSA is currently managing the “Elderly Home” in Jericho. Since the cost of establishing and operating such centers is high, MOSA is buying elderly care from existing centers (15 centers provide housing services and 9 centers provide day services). 27,456 elderly persons who live with their families received cash assistance in 2011, increasing from 12,177 in 2010. Females constituted 55% of the total number of beneficiaries from elderly assistance, while their share of total aid constituted 51%, which raises a question about fair distribution of resources among men and women.

Table (8): Gender distribution of elderly recipients of aid according to type and value in the West Bank in 2011

Type of aid	Gender and value of aid				Number of beneficiaries	Total value of aid
	Males	Value	Females	Value		
Helping families with elderly persons	12,387	12,736,788	15,069	13,090,488	27,456	25,827,243

* All amounts in US\$

From the perspective of this study, elderly services are far from addressing the gender gap. PCBS Statistics indicate that the elderly constitute 4.8% of the population in the



West Bank and 3.7% in Gaza Strip. Despite the low rate, the expected absolute increase in the number of elders in the Palestinian Territories in the future requires a clear strategy to address such an increase, taking into consideration the differences between men and women in the reality and needs. The different biological characteristics of women and their high life expectancy compared to men (around 3 more years in the Palestinian Territories) widened the gender gap. PCBS data indicate that the rate of men 60 years old or above reached 3.9% in 2012, compared to 4.9% among women (80.5 males for every 100 females). Moreover, 91.9% of elderly men are married compared to 45.2% of elderly women. The rate of widowed men reached 6.8% in comparison to 46.1% of women in the second quarter of 2012 (PCBS (b), 2012). These figures reveal a large number of elderly women who are vulnerable to poverty for several reasons, including the absence of a male provider and deprivation from pension allowances and social security, because of their low participation in the labor market during their lives compared to men, especially with the higher illiteracy rates compared to men and the limited opportunities of having secure jobs in the formal economy. The social security law constitutes the main source of protection to elderly men and women.

Protection of women victims of violence

The program for the protection of women victims of violence is one of MOSA's most important programs, as the only engendered program that takes into consideration the specificity of women and recognizes that violence against women stems from social discrimination. Some MOSA employees are not fully convinced of the importance of such services, as some employees insinuated that this was not a major issue in Palestine, but the service was dictated by international organizations. This may be true in some aspects, as it is easier to get funding for gender-related projects at the expense of other significant and crucial issues. Local and governmental institutions are often subject to international pressures, and accept the conditions of international donors to include gender issues in their programs to guarantee the sustainability and expansion of foreign funding. However, rejection of foreign intervention and dictates should not lead MOSA to give up its responsibility towards social discrimination against women or ignore the gender gap. Moreover, it is necessary to adopt policies and procedures that bridge gender gaps and address all aspects of differences between women and men in roles, status and needs, including violence against women, provided this is not done at the expense of other vital tenets of family life.

Table (9): Distribution of women victims of violence in protection shelters in the West Bank during the past 3 years

Center	2010		2011		2012*		Total number of women
	Women	Children	Women	Children	Women	Children	
Mihwar	60	91	44	12	26	9	130
The Safe House/ Nablus	Closed	Closed	59	9	43		103
Total	60	19	103	21	69	9	233
	51 Women and 8 Children until end of July 2011						

*Note: The number of women at the shelters until end of July 2012.

MOSA has two shelters for the protection of women victims of violence: the first (Mihwar) is in Bethlehem and provides services to 26 women and 9 of their children, and the second (The Safe House) is in Nablus and provides services to 43 women. MOSA is working on reintegrating these women with their families and their local communities. MOSA is also finding jobs for some women through its relations with local institutions. However, these services are modest, compared to the number of women victims of violence in the Palestinian society, because of MOSA's scarce resources, shortage in staff at the women's department (only one female employee), lack of women counselors, and lack of means of communication with women, such as mobile phones and computers in some directorates, in addition to lack of training. MOSA also lacks financial resources to complete the emergency center in Jericho, which needs an external fence. MOSA still needs to complete and approve the procedural manual of "Mihwar" center to begin receiving cases. Several courses on gender were held at the directorates, in addition to courses on psychological venting for social counselors. MOSA coordinated with close women organizations, such as the Women Center for Social and Legal Counseling (WCLAC) and the community to facilitate the work of the centers and to reintegrate women in their local communities. In general, the subject of violence against women and other groups should be discussed within the social, economic and political context of the Palestinian society and a vision should be developed to confront this issue.

The care and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities

According to PCBS data, there were 113, 000 persons with disabilities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 2011, constituting 2.7% of the population. The rate of disabilities among males (2.9%) is higher than females (2.5%). The rate of disabilities was equal between males and females in Gaza, while in the West Bank, the rate of disabilities among males was 3.1%, compared to 2.7% among females (PCBS).

According to the PCBS survey on disabilities, MOSA has been developing a national strategy for persons with disabilities in coordination with Diakonia Foundation. MOSA is responsible for providing care and rehabilitation to persons with disabilities in coordination with stakeholders including The General Union for Disabled Palestinians and the Ministry of Labor, to reintegrate them in the community. On the other hand, MOSA is embarking on issuing special cards for persons with disabilities, which will qualify them to receive free health insurance and free or reduced rates for rehabilitation services. MOSA's services to this group are extremely limited in comparison to services provided by NGOs and the scale of needed services to this large group. Moreover, these services are biased in favor of men, as indicated in the table below.

Table (10) : Gender distribution of persons with disabilities benefiting from MOSA assistance in the West Bank according to type and value of aid in 2011

Type of assistance	Gender and value of assistance				Total	
	Male	Value	Female	Value	Beneficiaries	Total value of assistance / loans
Customs exemptions	1213					
Loans	80	400.000	28	140.000	108	540.000
Care and rehabilitation	151	-	24	-	175	-
Shelter	47	-	19	-	66	
Equipment	This information is available in the table on emergency aid.					
Treatment						

* All amounts in US\$

For example, to facilitate their lives and movement, MOSA grants “persons with special needs” the privilege of buying duty-free cars which they or their family members may drive. These exemptions were in favor of males with disabilities, whereas women lack the financial resources to buy cars or even pay for driving lessons and a driver’s license. As mentioned earlier, 108 persons with disabilities between 18 and 60 years of age received loans from the Emirates program for persons with disabilities who have at least one family member able to work. Only 18 women received these loans and only 14% of women (24 females) benefitted from the program for care and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities. Meanwhile, 29% of beneficiaries from shelter services were women (19 females). These rates are not commensurate with the rate of women with disabilities in the Palestinian society. The gender gap and the differences between men and women are apparent in other areas related to persons with disabilities. MOSA is unable to provide shelters and rehabilitation centers for this group, even after purchasing this service from private, non-governmental and charitable organizations, such as the Ihsan Committee and the Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS), because of scarce financial resources. Consequently, an additional burden is placed on women with disabled family members. Both globally and in Palestine, women are responsible for care and service provision to elderly, sick and disabled family members, which have an adverse impact on women and their health. Having a family member with a disability requires women to allocate time for their care and limits job opportunities for women. Caring for family members with disabilities requires physical strength and effort that is often beyond women’s ability, and consequently puts women at risk of different illnesses including spinal injuries. PNA must provide such services, through providing human resources to assist these women, to be paid by the government.

Furthermore, the law for employing persons with disabilities has not been activated or implemented yet. Persons with disabilities still suffer from discrimination in the labor market, particularly the formal market, since the health reports of the Ministry of Health state that they are unfit to work. Discrimination against women with disabilities is further compounded by being women with disabilities.

Most of the above mentioned indicators are quantitative, revealing the current gender gap in services. However, these indicators do not reveal the impact of MOSA

services on gender roles and relations, the status of beneficiaries in their families and communities, or the actual depth and intensity of the gender gap, in favor of men or women. From a gender perspective, the effectiveness of the cash transfers and supplementary aid programs is measured by their ability to reduce the dependence of women on men and increase women agency. However, the low value of MOSA aid, even as a package and its policies seem to fall short of changing the existing power relations between men and women in their families and societies. The impact of this aid on families may vary according to several factors including: The value of aid compared to household consumption and income, the family size and lifestyle and the presence or absence of a male family provider. This requires an in-depth qualitative research that falls outside the scope of this study.

2.4. The program of capacity-building and enhancing partnership with the civil society and the private sector

To achieve its goals, MOSA works at the external and internal levels. Externally, MOSA seeks to strengthen its relations with concerned and partner institutions to provide services to various poor and marginalized groups including the elderly, children, persons with disabilities and women and children victims of violence. Furthermore, MOSA exerts relentless efforts to create an enabling legislative framework that facilitates its work. MOSA follows up the approval of various legislations relevant to its functions, such as the Social Security Law and the Law on the Regulation of Charitable Associations. For example, MOSA succeeded recently in obtaining the Cabinet's decision approving the system of shelters for the protection of women victims of violence (Number 12) in 2011. The issue of gender appears once again, first in the importance of representation of conscious women in coordination bodies with partner organizations to ensure follow up of gender issues and gender mainstreaming of various levels and aspects of work, and second in the gender perspective of the legislative framework and content of core MOSA functions. For example, the Social Security Law must include new social groups, especially women, and must address the problems related to women's reproductive role, and their low participation in the formal labor market which limits their prospects of benefiting from the Law. Another example is identifying means through which women with disabilities may benefit from the provisions of the Labor Law that stipulate allocating a proportion of jobs to persons with disabilities.

A gender-perspective of the organizational structure and staff of the Ministry

During the past few years, MOSA established new administrations, departments and units, and amended the organization of existing administrations and directorates. MOSA consists of 8 general administrations, of which three specialize in financial and administrative affairs, while the remaining five administrations follow up issues of social development and care, in addition to six support units. MOSA provides its services to poor families and marginalized groups through its field units which consist of 12 directorates and 10 offices in the governorates of the West Bank, 4 directorates and 6 offices in the Gaza Strip, in addition to several rehabilitation and training centers, protection centers, development centers, shelters and care and protection institutions that provide services to women, men and children. MOSA seeks to develop its infrastructure of shelters and vocational training centers and to build the capacities and develop human resources at the headquarters and various offices in the West Bank, in addition to the staff of the rehabilitation centers and shelters.



From a gender perspective, it should be noted that the General Administration for Women Development has been transformed into a department within the General Administration for Family Affairs, with only one director of the department, and other positions yet to be filled. At the same time, this step was not accompanied by the internal development of the General Administration of Family Affairs or other administrations, to make the Ministry more gender-responsive, or at least one assign person in each administration to be responsible for gender mainstreaming of various functions. The staff of the General Administration for Family Affairs in particular and in other administrations in general has not been adequately trained on gender issues, which deprived the women department's director from the required resources that would help her carry out her main task of monitoring gender mainstreaming of the different administrations. Review of the functions of the women department revealed some ambiguity, as these functions include following up on and monitoring gender gaps, gender mainstreaming of the Ministry, and suggesting relevant policies to bridge the gender gap, in addition to executive tasks related to awareness and counseling.

Regarding staff, The General Budget Law for 2010 report, issued by the General Budget Department at the Ministry of Finance, indicated that 1431 employees worked at MOSA during 2011, reaching 1448 employees in 2012 (Table (2) in the Annex). The table below indicates that the majority of employees are females, understandable as part of the pattern of traditional gender distribution of roles, whereby social work and care are perceived as traditionally women tasks, especially that women constitute the majority of MOSA customers. Nevertheless, men dominate most senior positions at the Ministry, except the position of Director-General and Minister, which is a political appointment. It is noted that women constitute the majority in the lower positions, such as head of division or section, and consequently have less impact on decision-making and in developing policies, plans and programs.

Table (11): Gender distribution of MOSA staff according to positions in 2012

Position	Gaza Strip		West Bank		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Deputy/Assistant Deputy	2	-	1	-	3
Director-General	1	3	1	1	5
Director	51	36	48	15	150
Head of division	70	123	13	7	213
Director of section	28	96	18	18	160
Unit	3	3	0	0	6
Career guidance officer	13	7	3	0	23
Office Manager	9	5	1	0	15
Adviser	3	3	0	0	6
Total	180	276	85	41	581

Discrepancy is obvious between Gaza and the West Bank. The rate of women employees at MOSA offices in Gaza is very low in junior and senior positions. It is not clear whether this situation is prior to the political division between the West Bank and Gaza Strip and results from the prevailing gender discriminatory culture there, or results from the discriminatory policies of Hamas government.

Table (12) reveals a high level of equal opportunities in promotions for males and females. It even reveals that promotions in the lower and intermediate positions are in favor of women, while promotions to senior positions are in favor of men in the West Bank and Gaza.

Table (12): Gender distribution of promotions at the Ministry in 2012

Promotion	Gaza Strip		West Bank		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Promotions to senior positions	1	0	1	0	2
Promotions to intermediate positions	18	24	26	5	73
Promotions within junior positions	3	6	0	0	9
Total	22	30	27	5	84

Although the Civil Service Law takes into consideration some aspects of the differences in the roles and responsibilities of men and women, by granting women maternal leaves and paid nursing hours, however the Ministry did not seek to develop its role in alleviating the burden of the reproductive role of women in caring for their children, such as providing child daycare for MOSA women employees.

The wide female representation at MOSA and the presence of some women in decision-making positions alone does not necessarily increase awareness and sensitivity towards gender issues. Awareness of women and men towards gender issues and the differences between men and women in the status in the society, the social expectations of the roles and responsibilities and access to and control of resources, constitute a step towards achieving justice. Hence, it is important to conduct gender training to both sexes and at all working levels within the Ministry, the directorates and the centers. Monitoring the implementation of the training in practice is equally important. Although no data is available on the number of trainees at MOSA or the quality of training, interviews with the general directors indicated that participation in these courses was limited and restricted to women. Increasing the number of women in decision-making positions and raising their gender awareness is of utmost importance. Furthermore, the existence of the political environment and will towards gender issues, as well as the necessary financial and human resources to implement gender-based projects and programs are of utmost importance.

2.5. The budget of the Ministry and gender-responsiveness



The nature of the social services sector's policies and services is relevant to the developmental, economic and political reality of Palestine. During the past few years, MOSA's meager allocations varied, because of the fluctuation in its share of the PNA budget, affected by several factors including PNA's priorities, the impact of the colonial Israeli occupation, the amount of financial aid and policies of foreign donors and demand on MOSA services. While this study shall not analyze PNA budget or issues, several relevant issues must be pointed out since access and control of resources are decisive factors in the power relations in different aspects. First, PNA financial policies are focused on increasing local revenues and decreasing expenditures to reduce the budget deficit, without an accurate analysis of the reality of the continuous struggle with the Israeli occupation, which contributes to the impoverishment of new groups in the Palestinian society. The 2012 budget items reflect financial policies that reveal that PNA is not serious about adopting a resistance approach against the structural and destructive hegemony of the Israeli occupation and its negative impact on the ability of Palestinians to adopt developmental policies that ensure the social welfare of the population. At the same time, the budget reveals that the social protection sector does not constitute a priority to PNA compared to other sectors, such as the security sector as the numbers below suggest⁹. This is evident in PNA neo-liberal policies, relinquishing its role of delivering free or subsidized services to citizens, and even privatizing these services. Although MOSA's share of the budget was not reduced in 2012 like other ministries, but that was only because of MOSA's pressure on the government, as explained during meetings with MOSA leadership committee. MOSA's share barely covered the increasing demand on services because of the deteriorating living conditions of the population. Consequently, effecting substantial change in the quality of MOSA services becomes extremely difficult.

Change in MOSA budget has gender consequences, since low allocations reduce or at least limit its role in providing services to men and women, and weakens MOSA's ability to meet the needs of women in particular, as is the case with women victims of violence. Furthermore, reducing services to some marginalized groups increases the burdens and responsibilities of women in providing care and services to their families, such as insufficient centers for persons with disabilities.

⁹ The 2012 General Budget Law reveals disparities in the distribution of financial resources among different sectors. The allocations of the security sector were as follows: The Ministry of Interior and Public Security US\$888,097; the Ministry of Interior – Central US\$18,816; the Financial Administration–Central US\$863,006; the Office for National Orientation US\$6,215, a total of US\$1,776,194. On the other hand, MOSA's allocations were as follows: MOSA US\$ 298,238; Social Affairs–Central US\$153,221; The Martyr's Families Foundation US\$145,016, a total of US\$ 596,475, and constituting one-third of the Security Sector's share (The Ministry of Finance, 2012). This reveals PNA's subjugation to the Israeli and the donors' dictates, whose priority is to guarantee the security of Israel by concentrating their support to the Palestinian security forces to ensure security control in the West Bank and Gaza Strip at the expense of other priorities for the Palestinian society.

Table (13): Main MOSA expenditure items 2010- 2011

Expenditures	2010		2011	
	Required budget	Actual budget	Required budget	Required budget
Salaries	53.739	51.470.2	50.288.718	50.289
Operational expenditures	11.005.4	10.097.9	12.105.523	10.247
Transfer expenditures	456.846	751.669.0	651.431.011	651.431
Total current expenditures	521.590.4	813.2371	713.825.252	711.967

The table above shows a decline in MOSA's actual budget, mainly in the transfer expenditures, despite matching the required budget to the actual budget, which means a decrease in the number of MOSA beneficiaries or a reduction in services, and women may be the first to suffer from this reduction. This concern could not be verified since MOSA's budget does not provide sufficient data to check gender equality in the distribution of resources. However, several tables presented earlier indicated the possibility of inequity in the distribution of MOSA services between men and women. For example, women beneficiaries of the fourth installment of cash transfers constituted around 43%, while their share constituted 38.6% only of the total amount of cash transfers. Again, it is not possible to verify whether this situation is the result of a gender discriminatory policy or because aid is determined according to the size of household— and households headed by women are often smaller than those headed by men – or if both reasons apply. Other examples that indicate gender discrimination include the lower rate of training opportunities given to young women compared to young men at the rehabilitation and training centers, reflecting gender inequality in the allocations to each, which in turn may mean that the reduction in MOSA's budget and the increase in the cost of establishing and constructing training programs and centers adversely affected the share of women rather than men.

It should be noted that during the past few years, several employees had been trained in preparing gender-responsive budgets in coordination with MIFTAH. However, this training has not been put into practice in the preparation of subsequent budgets. This experience must be evaluated to identify means of overcoming this gap. This study emphasizes the importance of overcoming the weaknesses related to sustainability in training and practice and the lack of post-training follow-up, which is a joint responsibility of trainer and the trainee institutions.



3. GENDER-PERSPECTIVE EVALUATION OF THE SOCIAL SERVICES AT THE MINISTRY'S DIRECTORATES FROM THE BENEFICIARIES' POINT OF VIEW



Gender-perspective evaluation of the social services at the Ministry's directorates from the beneficiaries' point of view

This section presents and analyzes the findings of the gender-perspective survey of the point of view of the beneficiaries of MOSA services. It includes the methodology of the study; the demographic, economic, and health attributes of the sample beneficiaries; an analysis of the evaluation indicators of the beneficiaries, including the purpose of their visits and the main programs targeted by the beneficiaries; how the beneficiaries knew about MOSA services; the obstacles that beneficiaries faced in their attempts to get services, such as the time needed to reach the offices and finally the level of satisfaction with these services.

3.1 Survey methodology

The study aims at examining the level of satisfaction of the beneficiaries (current and new applicants who have not received services yet) with MOSA services from a gender perspective, as identified by MIFTAH. The study identifies the differences in the evaluations and perceptions of men and women towards MOSA services, to check whether they consider MOSA policies and programs fair in the gender distribution of resources, treatment at the offices and in terms of equal opportunities. The methodology comprised a survey of a sample of MOSA customers in the West Bank. The survey was conducted at MOSA directorates because they constitute the liaison between the Ministry and the beneficiaries with whom they have direct contact, and implement MOSA policies, programs, and projects in the governorates. In general, MOSA offices, located in all the governorates in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, follow up social issues of the poorest of the poor in the Palestinian society, in addition to marginalized groups including the elderly, persons with disabilities, prisoners, and women and children victims of violence. MOSA offices also supervise the Ministry's social centers and institutions in the governorates. The sample was selected from 13 research points at MOSA directorates and the Headquarters. The survey sought equal representation of men and women in most governorates, although men rarely visit these offices. An attempt was made to represent all West Bank governorates as equally as possible, except for Hebron which has two offices of social services because of its large population and high poverty rates.

A number of female field researchers were trained for one day on the questionnaire before conducting the survey between 27 May and 8 June 2012. Data was collected for three days distributed over that week, and which varied in turnover at the offices. The sample consisted of 548 beneficiaries selected randomly at the offices to obtain their points of views and perceptions of the services they received and the services they desired. Second, in-depth interviews and two focus groups were held with a number of female and male beneficiaries; another focus group was held with the directors of MOSA offices in the West Bank governorates.

3.2. Overview of the attributes of beneficiaries of the Ministry

To identify the points of view and perceptions of both sexes of the quality of MOSA services, men and women were represented as equally as possible in the survey



sample. Field researchers noted and reported that the number of women who visited MOSA offices was higher than men in several governorates, including Nablus and Hebron, with few exceptions such as Ramallah and Salfet. Generally, 53.2% of respondents were women, compared to 46.8% of men. Generally, women seek MOSA assistance more than men, possibly because men are more present in the labor market and consider requesting financial and food assistance socially degrading.

The table below indicates that middle-aged persons seek MOSA services the most. From a gender perspective, it is noted that women below 30 and above 60 years of age seek MOSA services less than men of the same age group. This may be attributed to the social restrictions imposed on young women and the burdens of having to care for their children at this age, in addition to the fact that women in this age group are mostly married and have husbands to provide for them, which reduces their need for MOSA services. As for elderly women, it may be attributed to the difficulty in access to the Ministry and paying for transportation and to lack of information about the Ministry's services; a high illiteracy rate prevails among this group.

Education plays a role in protecting families from the need for MOSA services. The same table shows that the rate of holders of diploma and bachelor degrees does not exceed 2.9% and 2.7% respectively of the total number of beneficiaries. The table reveals discrepancies in the education levels between women and men beneficiaries. The rate of women with primary education or lower is 60% of all female beneficiaries, while the rate of men with primary education is 45% of all male beneficiaries. The rate declines for women with intermediate school education, unlike men, which indicates that unemployment, rather than the low education level, is the key factor for the need for assistance among men.

Table (14) : Demographic attributes of MOSA beneficiaries in West Bank governorates in 2012

	Male	Female	Total
Age			
15-22	5.8	2.1	3.8
23-30	7.8	6.8	7.3
31-40	19.8	21.2	20.6
41-50	25.7	32.5	29.3
51-60	24.1	24.7	24.4
60 and above	16.7	12.7	14.6
Education			
Illiterate	10.1	20.5	15.7
Can Read and Write	5.4	10.6	8.2
Primary	28.4	29.5	29.0
Intermediate	30.0	23.3	26.4
Secondary	20.6	10.3	15.1
Diploma	3.4	2.4	2.9
Bachelor's Degree	1.9	3.4	2.7

Marital status			
Single	9.3	15.1	12.4
Married	85.2	46.2	64.5
Divorced	1.9	10.6	6.6
Widowed	3.5	25.3	15.1
Separated + Other	0.0	2.7	1.4
Size of household			
1	-	-	5.3
2-4	-	-	25.2
5-7	-	-	37.5
8-10	-	-	23.1
11 or More	-	-	8.4
Has disability			
Yes	35.4	15.8	25
No	64.6	84.2	75

The size of household plays a role in aggravating poverty. Households consisting of 5-7 members constitute a high rate of MOSA beneficiaries; however this does not imply any underestimation of the needs of smaller households.

The marital status and the presence of a male provider are factors that protect women from poverty, unlike men. More than 50% of the women respondents were single (15.1%), divorced (10.6%), widowed (25.3%), or separated (2.7%), while 85% of the men respondents were married. It should be noted that the rate of widowed or divorced men is low in the Palestinian society compared to women, since men tend to remarry after divorce or the death of their wives, unlike women, who tend not to remarry, or perhaps face cultural pressures not to remarry, but rather focus on caring for their children.

The field survey reveals that 43.3% of the families of respondents do not have a member within working age, while 42.0% of the families have one member within working age. This does not mean that the household member is actually employed. 12.1% of households have two family members within working age, which indicates the high dependency ratio in these households, and indicates that their dependence on external income sources is attributed to the absence of a family provider or the inability of the provider to work, for several reasons including health conditions and the unavailability of full time jobs.

Catering for household chores (40.4%), the incapacity to work for health conditions (20.4%), and limited job opportunities and unemployment (part time 17.1% and unemployed 8.0%) are the major reasons for falling into poverty and consequently seeking MOSA services. The table below reveals the differences in the causes of poverty between men and women. Poverty among women is directly related to their status as housewives (73.3%) and their incapacity to work (10.3%). Poverty among men is related to illness and incapacity (31.9%), the main reason for seeking MOSA services, in addition to the inability to find suitable jobs to provide decent living (16% unemployment, 31.3% part-time employment). It is noted that disabilities



among women, particularly married women, do not necessarily lead to poverty, since their husbands are expected to provide for them. However, disabilities among men often lead to poverty because they are expected to provide for their families. Some reasons emphasize the role of the Israeli occupation in impoverishing Palestinians, since it controls the Palestinian economy and destroys its infrastructure, which reduces the job opportunities available for men and limits the participation of women in the labor market by weakening the Palestinian market's ability to motivate women to participate in the labor market.

On the other hand, the survey reveals the dire conditions of these families, as the table below indicates that 40% of families said that their monthly income did not exceed 500 NIS, while the monthly income of one fourth of these families was between 500-999 NIS; more than two-thirds of the families that receive MOSA assistance live under the deep poverty line. Households with more than five members constitute over two-thirds of the families seeking MOSA assistance. Although MOSA utilizes consumption rather than income as an indicator, and bearing in mind that the responses on income may often be inaccurate, this shows that the households' living conditions are generally dire, and reflects a high level of credibility in MOSA's selection of target groups as well as equitable distribution of resources.

Table (15): Economic indicators of MOSA beneficiaries in the West Bank governorates in 2012 according to gender

	Male	Female	Total
Relation to workforce			
Full-time	6.6	2.4	4.4
Part-time	31.1	4.8	17.1
Unemployed	16.0	1.0	8.0
Housewife/cares for house work	3.4	73.3	40.4
Student	4.3	1.4	2.7
Incapacitated (Old Age/Health Condition)	31.9	10.3	20.4
Unemployed/seeking Work	7.0	6.8	6.9
Average monthly income (excluding MOSA Aid)			
Less than 500			39.3
500-999			24.5
1000-1499			15.2
1500-1999			10.6
2000 or more			6.7
I do not know			3.7

3.3 Reasons for visiting the Ministry's directorates and the discrepancies between men and women needs

The survey data indicates that the highest demand among applicants for assistance is on cash transfers, supplementary aid, which includes health insurance, food and emergency aid, and the emergency aid program, amounting to 52%. This is followed by economic empowerment for poor and deprived families program and the care and social defense program (11.3% and 11.8% respectively). Table (16) below reveals gender differences in demand. Women registered for the cash transfers and supplementary aid program constituted 54.1% of the total number of women, compared to 50.6% of men. Men have higher demand on the care and empowerment of persons with disabilities program, which may be attributed to the high rate of disabilities among males in the West Bank in comparison to women, or to the gender bias in the local culture, which favors men and imposes severe constraints on the freedom of movement of women with disabilities, because of the shame attached to the appearance of women with certain disabilities in public.

Table (16): Gender distribution of MOSA beneficiaries in the governorates according to programs

Program	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Cash transfers and supplementary aid	50.6	54.1	52.5
Protection, care and rehabilitation of women and children	0.8	0.7	0.7
Empowerment of poor and deprived families	8.9	13.4	11.3
Social care and defense	10.1	13.4	11.8
Care and empowerment of persons with disabilities	12.8	4.5	8.4
Partnerships with charitable associations	0.0	0.3	0.2
Other	16.7	13.7	15.1
Total	100	100	100

Note: The programs are identified in accordance with 2011 MOSA documents.

An in-depth analysis of the differences between men and women reveals that women, for example, demand cash transfers and supplementary aid program, while men demand health assistance, particularly health insurance. 38.7% of female beneficiaries said they sought MOSA assistance through the poverty alleviation program to provide basic needs for their families, while only 34.1% of male beneficiaries gave this reason for seeking assistance. This also applied regarding demand on food and basic needs, with 25.8% of women and 22.3% of men. 43.2% of men and 41.4% of women demanded the program for health care of poor families and marginalized groups, which indicates that men are still unwilling to request cash assistance but are more accepting of assistance that does not necessarily indicate deep poverty and need. There was higher demand among women (14.4%) on the economic empowerment program than men (12.9%). This may be attributed to the



fact that men seek better jobs than those provided by the lending program, or they only seek MOSA services because they are incapacitated and cannot work, hence the lending program does not meet their needs or they are not eligible for receiving loans. While women demand on assistance for orphans and elders was higher, men's demand was higher on assistance related to child protection and custody, juveniles and persons with disabilities. The numbers of men and women who sought MOSA assistance for issues related to the protection and rehabilitation of women victims of violence and women in difficult domestic conditions were equal, which requires further scrutiny and investigation (For further information on the quality of programs and services, see Table (4)).

More than 50% of the visitors of MOSA directorates have been benefitting from its services for 3 years or less, while 13.7%, mostly men, have not received any services yet. Women are longer term beneficiaries of MOSA services than men. One-fourth of women have been receiving these services since 7 or more years, compared to 13.3% of men only. This is mostly attributed to the fact that most women beneficiaries are widows, single or divorced women, and MOSA is unable to provide them with the means for livelihood so that they would no more need MOSA services, or because these women rely on MOSA services because they care for their children and families and cannot go to work. 13% of respondents were new cases that had not received any type of until the date of interviews, reflecting a continuous increase in the demand on MOSA services (Table 17).

Table (17): Gender distribution of beneficiaries of MOSA directorates according to the duration for receiving services

Duration of service	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
The current year only	16.0	14.4	15.1
1-3 Years	40.2	36.0	38.0
4-6 Years	12.9	14.4	13.7
7 years or more	13.3	25.0	19.5
I have not received any services yet	17.6	10.3	13.7
Total	100	100	100

3.4. Obstacles and difficulties in access to services

MOSA beneficiaries face many obstacles and difficulties when seeking services. Knowledge of and access to services is one of the most important gender perspective issues, as women face difficulties and restrictions that differ from those that men face. The survey revealed that more than three-fourths of women and men respondents heard about MOSA services through personal connections, such as friends or relatives, while less than 5% heard about MOSA services through the media, which indicates the need for improving MOSA efforts to reach out to those who need these services, especially the groups who lack access, such as the elderly and the persons with disabilities, particularly women (See Table (5) in the Annexes). Table (18) below, shows that the main difficulty for the beneficiaries was financial according to 22.2% of respondents. The second difficulty was the lacking services, according to 16.0% of respondents.

Table (18): Gender distribution of MOSA beneficiaries according to obstacles in access to services in West Bank governorates in 2012

Obstacles and difficulties	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Difficulty in access to MOSA offices because of distant location	10.2	18.5	14.7
High transportation costs	5.3	11.5	8.6
Difficulty in access to offices because of the nature of the buildings	7.7	7.7	7.7
Long waiting hours	9.4	9.4	9.4
Lacking services	19.5	12.9	16.0
Unavailability of employees for assistance	4.1	3.8	3.9
Unavailability of the required services	5.3	6.3	5.8
Financial difficulties	25.6	19.2	22.2
Other (Specify)	13.0	10.5	11.7
Total	100	100	100

The table above reveals significant gender disparities. While both men and women agreed that financial difficulty was a primary obstacle that impeded receiving MOSA services (25.5% of men and 19.2% of women), women respondents indicated that high transportation cost (11.5%) and the distance between their places of residence and MOSA offices (18.5%) constituted obstacles, in comparison with 5.3% and 10.2% respectively of men. Women complained more about the unavailability of transportation at all times, which may be attributed to the social responsibilities and pressure resulting from caring for children and homes in comparison with men.

On the other hand, MOSA customers said that transactions were slow (filing a transaction does not mean registration of a new case); half the customers had incomplete or partially completed transactions until the time of the interviews. 23.0% said that they were visiting the offices for the fifth time to complete their transactions, while 12.2% had not yet completed their transactions. Some data indicated a relative gender gap in favor of women, as transactions of women were often completed quicker than men. While 24.1% of men completed their transactions in two visits and 23.7% in four visits, 17.8% of women completed their transactions in two visits and 22.3% in four visits. This may be attributed to solidarity of employees with women, and their realization of their family commitments, which compels them to expedite their transactions, or for cultural factors that do not favor women leaving their homes and commuting often, or because women are treated as a weak group that always needs protection, unlike men.

Table (19): Gender distribution of MOSA customers in West Bank governorates according to the number of visits required to complete transactions

Number of visits	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
One visit	25.3	36.6	31.3
Two visits	24.1	17.8	20.8
Three visits	14.0	11.6	12.8
Four visits	23.7	22.3	23.0
Transactions have not been completed yet	12.8	11.6	12.2
Total	100	100	100

3.5 Satisfaction and perceptions of the environment and procedures of service-delivery at the Ministry's directorates

The table below indicates a certain degree of customer satisfaction with the environment and procedures of service-delivery at MOSA directorates, particularly towards the working hours, organization, cleanliness of premises and appropriateness for waiting. However, customers expressed their dissatisfaction with some aspects related to procedures, level and lack of quality in delivered services. 17% of respondents said they were dissatisfied or extremely dissatisfied with the level of MOSA information and awareness publications about delivered services. The level of dissatisfaction was higher among women (19.2%) than men (15.3%). As mentioned earlier, around 15% of female and male beneficiaries only obtained information about MOSA services from the media and social counselors. Around 15% of female and male beneficiaries expressed their dissatisfaction with meeting their needs (15.5% of women and 14.4% of men). 14.4% of the female clients expressed their dissatisfaction with the insufficient time they were given to explain their issues, compared with 11.6% of men. Women also said that the orientation they received was not suitable to their issues. Despite the dissatisfaction with services, data indicated a higher rate of satisfaction with the treatment of the headquarters and directorates' employees, especially the administrative staff, although women were less satisfied than men, possibly because men are treated with more respect than women. Generally, dissatisfaction was higher towards the lack of services, the inability to meet customers' needs, the insufficient number of employees and the insufficient time allocated for individual customers.

The poor service-delivery indicated in the findings was also confirmed by the type of complaints filed at the Complaints Unit at the Ministry. Most complaints were about the lack of assistance, the insufficient time for discussion and follow-up of the customers' issues, in addition to some cases filed against the centers. Procedures were slow in the follow-up of service-delivery even in filing complaints. The Complaints Unit's report pointed out that some complaints had been submitted more than a year earlier, and have not been resolved yet, despite the Unit's efforts. This is partially attributed to MOSA scarce resources and its small share in PNA general budget, in addition to the increasing demand on its services. It is also attributed to the pressures of work on the employees in the directorates, who sometimes lack experience and training, in addition to bureaucratic procedures and lack of agreement on eligibility standards for the beneficiaries.

Table (20): Evaluation of the satisfaction with the environment and procedures of service-delivery at MOSA according to level of satisfaction and gender

	Gender	Satisfied	Partially satisfied	Dissatisfied
Working hours	Male	86.7	7.0	6.2
	Female	87.4	7.5	5.1
	Total	87.1	7.3	5.7
Organization	Male	79.7	13.2	7.0
	Female	84.2	11.0	3.7
	Total	82.7	12.0	5.2
Cleanliness	Male	84.4	12.9	2.7
	Female	88.7	9.6	1.7
	Total	86.7	11.1	2.2
Suitability of reception room	Male	80.5	12.1	7.7
	Female	79.0	16.2	4.8
	Total	79.8	14.3	6.0
Availability of counselors to help	Male	75.9	15.2	8.9
	Female	79.1	11.0	9.9
	Total	77.6	12.9	9.5
Giving sufficient time to explain issues	Male	72.0	16.3	11.6
	Female	74.6	11.0	14.4
	Total	73.3	13.5	13.2
Giving suitable orientation and information for each issue	Male	69.5	18.4	12.1
	Female	73.7	12.7	13.7
	Total	71.7	15.3	13.0
Availability of the relevant person for the service	Male	77.8	14.8	7.3
	Female	78.4	13.4	8.2
	Total	78.1	14.0	7.8
Simplicity of filling forms and meeting requirements	Male	69.5	21.9	8.6
	Female	73.4	15.2	11.4
	Total	71.6	18.3	10.1
Simplicity of access and entry to the building	Male	78.2	14.1	7.7
	Female	77.7	12.0	10.3
	Total	77.8	13.0	9.2
Adequacy of services and their responsiveness to your needs	Male	69.2	16.4	14.4
	Female	66.7	17.9	15.5
	Total	67.8	17.2	15.0



Treatment of officials	Male	77.4	12.8	9.7
	Female	76.4	14.0	9.6
	Total	76.8	13.5	9.6
Treatment of the orientation staff	Male	76.5	13.6	9.7
	Female	76.7	13.4	9.9
	Total	76.6	13.5	9.8
Treatment of administrative staff and others	Male	75.0	17.6	7.4
	Female	76.6	14.1	9.4
	Total	75.8	15.8	8.4
Availability of necessary information (awareness pamphlets about the programs)	Male	62.2	22.4	15.3
	Female	67.9	12.9	19.2
	Total	65.2	17.4	17.4

The data revealed differences in the responses of women and men towards the incompleteness of their transactions. While women preferred to file complaints at the directorates, men preferred to file complaints at the Headquarters, which raises again the issue of social and financial constraints imposed on women. The responsibilities and household burdens force women to stay close to home, in addition to the social culture which restricts the movement of women in public, including to the Ministry's Headquarters. MOSA data indicates that 170 complaints out of 521 complaints officially received by the Complaints Unit came from women.

The perceptions of the beneficiaries of MOSA directorates, which express their attitudes and evaluation of the quality of MOSA services, varied significantly, especially among first-time applicants. Table (21) indicated that 89% of respondents said that there was always someone to help them at MOSA offices; 86% said that MOSA aimed to provide a decent living to Palestinians through human development, and 83% said that the program for supporting persons with disabilities was available to everyone without discrimination. All these are positive indications about the Ministry. 79.6% said that MOSA provided services to all citizens without discrimination. On the other hand, 80% believed that the required procedures for registering for MOSA programs was simple and effortless; 69.7% said that the registration for the programs was uncomplicated and did not involve favoritism, and around 70.2% said that MOSA met all their needs. However, 60% said that there was a need for connections (favoritism) to receive services, which means that the customers did not believe that the Ministry treated all customers fairly. Only 70% believed that the Ministry's services were available and accessible for everyone, while 50% believed that dealing with MOSA was better than dealing with any other social organizations. More than 75% said that they were capable of filing a complaint when they faced a problem at the Ministry.

Table (21): Beneficiaries' perceptions of MOSA services, according to gender

	Gender	True	Some-what true	Not True	Not applicable
Receiving help from MOSA requires connections (favoritism)	Male	40.4	15.3	39.2	5.1
	Female	35.4	20.1	39.9	4.5
	Total	37.7	17.9	39.6	4.8
The staff treats men better than women	Male	22.4	14.8	58.0	4.8
	Female	22.2	14.0	57.7	6.1
	Total	22.3	14.4	57.8	5.5
Communicating about the service I need with other institutions is better than with MOSA	Male	32.1	18.7	48.0	1.2
	Female	28.4	19.1	51.1	1.4
	Total	30.1	18.9	49.6	1.3
MOSA services are available to everyone	Male	45.2	26.4	26.0	2.4
	Female	45.2	25.8	28.6	0.4
	Total	45.2	26.1	27.4	1.3
If I face a problem, I can file a complaint	Male	63.8	16.3	18.3	1.6
	Female	55.8	17.5	24.6	2.1
	Total	69.5	16.9	21.7	1.9
Registration for MOSA programs is simple and requires no connections	Male	50.8	18.8	27.3	3.1
	Female	50.1	19.7	27.3	2.8
	Total	50.4	19.3	27.3	2.9
The required procedures are simple and effortless	Male	58.6	20.7	19.1	1.6
	Female	50.7	24.8	21.4	3.1
	Total	54.4	22.9	20.3	2.4
Receiving and participating in the Program for Economic Development needs time	Male	68.3	20.5	10.0	1.2
	Female	68.4	17.9	12.3	1.4
	Total	68.4	19.1	11.2	1.3
I find someone to help me whenever I go to MOSA offices	Male	65.2	22.3	12.1	0.4
	Female	71.6	17.1	9.9	1.4
	Total	68.6	19.5	10.9	0.9
Programs for supporting persons with disabilities are available to everyone without favoritism	Male	53.7	28.9	14.5	2.9
	Female	58.9	24.2	15.0	1.8
	Total	56.5	26.4	14.8	2.3



MOSA provides efficient and effective programs and services (quantitatively and qualitatively) in the fields of protection, care and prevention	Male	52.1	33.3	12.6	2.0
	Female	55.0	30.6	14.4	0.0
	Total	53.7	31.9	13.5	1.0
MOSA aims to provide Palestinians with a decent living through human development	Male	58.9	25.5	15.7	0.0
	Female	61.1	26.9	13.4	0.4
	Total	60.0	26.2	13.4	0.4
MOSA services are available to all citizens fairly and without discrimination	Male	45.4	32.0	21.1	1.6
	Female	52.6	28.9	16.7	1.7
	Total	49.2	30.4	18.8	1.7
MOSA meets all my needs	Male	44.0	25.9	27.5	2.7
	Female	44.1	24.7	29.2	2.1
	Total	44.0	26.2	28.4	2.4

Some indicators reveal a gender gap in the treatment of women and men. 36.7% of respondents believed that the employees treated men better than women. Gender differences also appeared in the different perceptions of men and women towards some of the above-mentioned issues, despite general agreement over others, indicating a gender gap in treatment in favor of men.

For example, 37.2% of men believed that the employees treated men better than women, compared to 36.2% of women; 50.8% of men and 47.5% of women preferred to receive their services from organizations rather than MOSA. When they faced a problem, 80.1% of the men could file complaints compared to 73.3% of women only. 79.3% of men believed that the Ministry's procedures were easy and effortless, compared to 75.5% of women. 88.7% of women said that someone was available to help them At MOSA offices, compared to 87.5% of men. 83.1% of women believed that the program for the support of persons with disabilities did not require favoritism, compared to 82.6% of men. Women had a more positive perception of MOSA's general principles: 88% of women and 84.4% of men believed that MOSA aimed to provide a decent living to Palestinians through human development. Likewise, regarding equity, 81.5% of women and 77.4% of men believed that MOSA services were provided to all citizens without discrimination. 69.9% of men said that the Ministry met all their needs.

There was larger convergence between the perceptions of men and women on some issues. 55.7% of men felt that they needed connections (favoritism) to obtain services, compared to 55.5% of women. 69.6% of men and 69.8% of women believed that registration for MOSA programs was easy and did not require favoritism. 88.8% of men and 87.2% of women believed that receiving and participating in the Program for Economic Empowerment took a long time. 85.4% of men and 85.6% of women believed that MOSA provided efficient and effective programs and services, quantitatively and qualitatively, in the areas of protection, care and prevention.

3.6 A gender perspective of the Ministry's policies and procedures

The points of view of beneficiaries and their assessments of MOSA policies and procedures had a gender dimension too. The table below reveals relative differences in the perceptions of the men and women towards MOSA policies. Around 52% of women and 48.6% of men agreed that MOSA policies and procedures took into consideration the different needs of beneficiaries from a gender perspective.

Table (22): Beneficiaries' perceptions of MOSA policies and procedures according to gender

Policies and procedures	Response	Men	Women	Total
MOSA policies and procedures take into consideration the different needs of female and male customers	I agree	48.6	52.1	50.5
	I relatively agree	36.4	34.9	35.6
	I disagree	13.8	11.3	12.5
Policies and procedures promote equal opportunity between men and women.	I agree	51.6	51.9	51.8
	I relatively agree	38.2	35.0	36.5
	I disagree	8.7	10.6	9.7
Practices and regulations within the Ministry apply to men and women equally.	I agree	57.3	52.8	54.9
	I relatively agree	32.8	33.5	33.1
	I disagree	8.7	12.3	10.6
Information is equally available to female and male customers	I agree	53.1	57.2	55.2
	I relatively agree	33.6	31.7	32.6
	I disagree	13.3	11.0	12.1

Although women believed that their specificities were taken into consideration, 10.6% (and 8.7% of the men) disagreed with the statement that MOSA policies and procedures promote equal opportunities between men and women. Women also said that there was no gender equality in MOSA's treatment; 12.3% of women disagreed with the statement that practices and regulations within the Ministry apply to men and women equally, compared with only 8.7% of men. Regarding availability of information at MOSA offices, 57.2% of women and 53.1% of men said that there was gender equality.

3.7 Equal opportunity

There is a high rate of uncertainty among female and male respondents. Around 12% of respondents said *they did not know*, when asked about aspects related to equal opportunity. Generally, 56.7% of respondents believed that there was equality between men and women in receiving service. Nevertheless, deeper research of the level of equal opportunity in specific services revealed a decline in the rate agreement of respondents. Around 50% of respondents believed that the counselors were competent and professional. 46% of respondents believed there was equality



in training, capacity-building and in the ability to move around in the directorate's offices according to the personal circumstances. 44.6% believed that MOSA provided services that suited gender-specific needs separately. 41.8% of men and women believed there was equality in receiving aid. 40.2% tended to believe that there was equal opportunity in appointment, registration at the economic empowerment program and in the ability to file complaints and how they were addressed by officials. 39.9% believed that there was equality in benefitting from opportunities provided by the Ministry, while 39.3% believed that there was equality in the rehabilitation of men and women with disabilities. 38.5% of respondents believed that there was equality in access to and impact on decision-making centers.

A gender-perspective review indicated that the findings of the perceptions of male and female MOSA beneficiaries were unexpected. Data indicated discrepancies in the perceptions of women and men towards the afore-mentioned issues. However, the perceptions of women were surprising, as they reflected a higher level of belief, compared to men, in the existence of equal opportunities in several MOSA programs. The gender gap varied between different issues, as it amounted to 5% on the issue of equal opportunity, whereby 42.3% of women and 37.8% of men agreed on the relevant statement. Another gender gap appeared in the perception of the opportunity to register at the economic empowerment program, whereby only 37.6% of men agreed that there was equal opportunity. Similarly, there were disparities regarding the rehabilitation of men and women with disabilities: 41.8% of women said that there was a possibility of rehabilitating men and women with disabilities at MOSA programs. Regarding receiving aid the gender gap was smaller, with 43.3% of women and 40.0% of men. In two cases only, the rate of agreement among men was higher: in equality in receiving services (57.6% of men and 56.0% of women agreed), and in seeking gender-specific services (44.7% of men and 44.6% of women agreed).

Table (23): Perceptions of beneficiaries towards equal opportunity in different MOSA activities according to gender

Areas of equal opportunities		Male	Female	Total
Men and women receive equal services	I agree	57.6	56.0	56.7
	I relatively agree	27.6	36.6	32.4
	I disagree	9.7	4.9	7.2
Equal opportunities in training and capacity-building	I agree	45.9	47.7	46.8
	I relatively agree	25.6	28.5	27.2
	I disagree	16.1	12.3	14.1
Equal opportunities in participation in MOSA opportunities	I agree	38.4	41.2	39.9
	I relatively agree	31.2	30.3	30.7
	I disagree	17.7	16.8	17.2
Equal opportunity in registering at the economic empowerment program	I agree	37.6	42.6	40.2
	I relatively agree	38.8	41.5	40.2
	I disagree	19.2	13.8	16.4

Equal opportunity in receiving aid	I agree	40.0	43.3	41.8
	I relatively agree	39.2	38.1	38.6
	I disagree	18.0	16.5	17.2
There is equality in filing complaints and having them addressed by officials	I agree	39.9	40.7	40.3
	I relatively agree	36.8	36.8	36.8
	I disagree	17.0	17.5	17.3
Equal opportunity in access to and influence on decision-makers at the Ministry	I agree	37.7	39.2	38.5
	I relatively agree	34.1	33.9	34.0
	I disagree	18.7	18.7	18.7
Equal opportunity in ability to move around in the directorate in respect to personal circumstances	I agree	44.9	47.6	46.3
	I relatively agree	33.9	33.7	33.8
	I disagree	16.5	14.9	15.7
Possibility and equal opportunities to target men and women with disabilities through the Ministry's rehabilitation programs.	I agree	36.5	41.8	39.3
	I relatively agree	42.6	38.2	40.3
	I disagree	15.7	15.4	15.5
If I seek a women-specific service, I receive it	I agree	44.7	44.6	44.6
	I relatively agree	39.5	39.3	39.4
	I disagree	13.8	14.4	14.1

In conclusion, there are discrepancies between men and women applicants for MOSA services, such as their demographic and economic attributes and causes of poverty. The survey findings also reveal a gender gap in the priorities and needs of men and women, and the type of obstacles and constraints that restrict access to services. A difference also exists in the level of satisfaction with the environment and procedures of service-delivery and the extent of equal opportunity in services.



CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



Conclusions and recommendations

- It is only possible to analyze and understand the reality of the social services sector, particularly the Ministry of Social Affairs services, within the general political and economic context of the continuing domination of the Israeli occupation on the Palestinian Territories and the impact of its policies, which impoverishes Palestinians and increases the number of Palestinians who need the Ministry's services. Moreover, despite the growing interest of the government and PNA in supporting the social protection sector, yet it does not constitute a priority compared to other sectors, such as the security sector, an approach that stems from neo-liberal policies that push the state to withdraw from service-delivery roles. PNA has adopted a crisis-management approach rather than a resistance approach against the crisis caused by occupation. The scarce and unstable financial resources of the PNA, subject to the political will of international and foreign donor organizations aggravate the situation and adversely impact MOSA capacity and ability to provide services.
- MOSA's adoption of the care and social protection approach contributes to the expansion of its services quantitatively as in the cash transfers program, and qualitatively as in the economic empowerment program. However, this did not cause a change in the quality of life for the majority of the beneficiaries. The provided services, especially the cash transfers, did not lead to an exit from poverty, or even from deep poverty. Nevertheless, it is early to judge the success of the economic empowerment program in supporting and empowering poor families and achieving gender-based social justice.
- MOSA has the potential for promoting gender issues, but also suffers from some constraints that may have a negative impact. For example, approving several national committees, such as the Higher National committee for Childhood and the committee for the Elderly constitute significant steps towards representing the local community and the local protection networks. However, representation is still formal, with institutions such as charitable associations, and does not consider the people involved, except in the case of representation of persons with disabilities through the General Union for the Disabled. The quality and rate of women representation in the structures and leaderships of these committees, and women's contribution to developing their policies and programs remain unclear, which threatens of the possibility of not addressing the beneficiaries' needs from a gender perspective.
- MOSA leadership is conscious of the importance of gender mainstreaming. However, it does not have a clear political will to adopt gender as a core principle in policy and strategy development, and program and project design, or to develop a gender-responsive budget, although women constitute a high rate of the beneficiaries. This is accompanied by weak linkages between gender and social protection, although women constitute a large rate of persons in need of social protection and care programs.
- The change in MOSA's structure, transforming the Public Administration for Women into a department within the Public Administration for Family Affairs, with only one director, and the lack of sufficient awareness of and training on gender issues among the staff in various MOSA administrations and committees, contribute to the little interest in gender issues in most MOSA functions.



- There is an indication that distribution of services among citizens, particularly those who do not have access to MOSA directorates is still unfair, and that the current formula used in measuring poverty is contributing to the marginalization of some groups, especially women.

Recommendations

- Achieving social justice and eliminating poverty, including gender inequality, requires addressing the causes of poverty and social injustice to change the prevailing power relations. Resistance against Israeli colonial occupation of Palestine constitutes an initial and necessary step to change the Palestinian reality, restore Palestinian control over resources, impose sovereignty and achieve independence. Furthermore, it is necessary to change PNA neo-liberal policies, resist the dictates of foreign donors and change power relations that deepen poverty.
- The PNA institutions in general and the Ministry of Social Affairs in particular, need to adopt a clear and committed gender mainstreaming policy within the framework of social protection policies, so that all the Ministry's functions are engendered, including its vision, mission, strategy, as well as its plans, programs and projects, its budget, and the follow-up of implementation and evaluation.
- Developing the necessary structures and mechanisms to ensure and follow up gender mainstreaming of all aspects and levels of MOSA's work, by supporting the department of women, appointing the necessary staff to perform its functions at the Headquarters and in different directorates, granting it the powers to follow up gender mainstreaming of policies, plans and programs of the different administrations and ensure fair budgets allocations to various programs; each administration shall appoint one staff member to follow up on gender mainstreaming of its plans and programs.
- Raising gender awareness of MOSA staff - of both sexes- and at all working levels, including the directorates and the centers, through a clear program of lectures, seminars, awareness materials and training; more importantly, applying this awareness at work and during the performance of various tasks at the Ministry.
- Reviewing all MOSA statistical models and tables to become gender-disaggregated, for use in the processes of planning, follow-up and evaluation of various MOSA services. Examples include the statistical tables of the elderly, supplementary aid recipients, free of tax allowances, and budgets of programs and activities.
- Developing mechanisms that provide a higher level of justice in the selection of eligible poor families for MOSA assistance, ensuring reaching out to some marginalized groups and avoiding their exclusion, including persons with disabilities, the elderly and especially women. Some proposed mechanisms are: First, utilize the general census conducted by PCBS every ten years to monitor and develop a database of needy households and/or households that have no access to MOSA offices; second, exert effort to identify gaps in the formula for targeting the poor, which appear during practical implementation, and address

these gaps in cooperation with the harmed groups; third, develop the role of the community-based organizations concerned with social protection services, including women organizations and associations, to identify needy cases, and fourth, conduct home visits by field workers to poor, marginalized and remote areas to identify needy elderly persons and persons with disabilities, especially women. MOSA has an obligation to reach out to these people, rather than wait for them to come to MOSA directorates, although achieving social justice is difficult amid the continuous Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territories and PNA's neo-liberal policies that promote the free market economy at the expense of welfare policies, mostly harming women.

- Organizing and raising the awareness of women about gender issues to activate their participation in various social protection programs, which is the responsibility of the women department and the directorates in coordination with local and national women organizations.
- Designing and implementing programs targeting women, to meet their special needs and contribute to bridging the gender gap.
- Conducting special in-depth gender-perspective studies for each category of MOSA beneficiaries, since each category has different attributes and needs.
- Conducting a qualitative study to examine the impact of MOSA assistance on the living and health standards of families, and more importantly the impact of assistance on changing power relations and the status of women within their families. Such a study constitutes the only means to measure the level of gender equity in MOSA policies.
- Developing the institutional coordination and collaboration among various stakeholders in the social care sector. For example, develop relations with the institutions that provide services to persons with disabilities and to the elderly. Moreover, increase the Ministry of Health's role in providing free health insurance and improving the quality of the provided services.
- Reviewing and amending social protection legislations from a gender perspective, to ensure social justice and avoid marginalizing women or excluding them from benefitting from the these legislations; proposing mechanisms to prevent the possibility of gender discrimination in applying and implementing these legislations, and coordinating with concerned organizations that may lobby with the PNA to approve these legislations, particularly the Social Security Law.
- Using engendered language, with the feminine and the masculine in all MOSA documents may help as a constant reminder of gender issues.



ANNEXES



Table (1): Gender distribution of beneficiaries of the child care program according to type of aid in the West Bank in 2011

Type of aid	Gender		Total
	Female	Male	
Juvenile centers (9-18)	390	33	423
Child protection centers	19	38	57
Foster families	3	1	4
Social care centers			
Youth rehabilitation centers	200	51	251
Total	612	123	735

Table (2): Distribution of MOSA employees according to grade and job title

Director A	2010	2011	2012
Minister	1	1	1
Deputy-minister	1	1	1
Assistant Deputy-minister	0	1	2
Director-General	11	10	13
Director A	47	53	49
Director B	45	35	28
Director C	58	57	62
Grade 1 employee	15	16	24
Grade 2 employee	28	36	39
Grade 3 employee	74	187	174
Grade 4 employee	205	127	136
Grade 5 employee	376	429	448
Grade 6 employee	112	73	65
Grade 7 employee	76	91	91
Grade 8 employee	41	40	44
Grade 9 employee	91	78	72
Grade 10 employee	186	196	199
Total	1366	1431	1448

Source: The General Budget Law for 2012, the General Budget Department- Ministry of Finance – PNA, p 400.

Table (3): Gender distribution of MOSA employees according to category

Category	Gaza Strip		West Bank		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Senior category	3	2	2	0	7
First category	41	38	59	5	143
Second category	81	156	47	19	303
Third category	43	64	44	19	170
Fourth category	32	10	14	3	59
Fifth category	23	42	30	8	103
Total	223	312	196	54	778

Table (4): Gender distribution of the customers at MOSA directorates in the West Bank according to the purpose of visit in 2012

Purpose	Gender		Total
	Female	Male	
File a new application	32.8	28.5	30.5
Update information	50.4	49.8	50.1
File complaints	5.1	6.6	5.9
Check status of previous complaints	5.9	5.8	5.9
Follow up on the poverty alleviation program which provides basic needs for poor families and individuals	34.1	38.7	36.6
Improve the healthcare of poor families and marginalized groups	43.2	41.4	42.3
Improve food security and provide of food and other basic needs to families	22.3	25.8	24.1
Protect and rehabilitate women victims of violence and living in difficult conditions within households	5.1	5.2	5.1
Protect and care for children	3.9	3.1	3.5
Foster care and caring for orphans	3.1	6.5	4.9
Assist poor families to achieve self-reliance and exit poverty	12.9	14.4	13.7
Protect and care for the elderly	2.0	3.1	2.6
Build the capacities of youth and develop their productive skills	2.0	1.7	1.8
Protect, care and rehabilitate juveniles (from various social ailments) and drug prevention	3.1	2.7	2.9
Rehabilitate, care, protect, and provide shelter to persons with disabilities and help Integrate them in the community	7.0	6.2	6.6

Facilitate the movement and daily lives of persons with disabilities	7.4	5.5	6.4
Help persons with disabilities to achieve self-reliance in their daily lives (mobility guidance)	6.3	4.5	5.3
Customs exemption transactions	7.4	4.5	5.9
Regulate the work of charitable associations	3.5	2.7	3.1
Support charitable associations and promote integrated service-delivery	3.9	3.1	3.5
Enhance the participation of the local community in identifying the needs and priorities at the governorate level	3.5	4.5	4.0

Table (5): Gender distribution of the customers at MOSA directorates according to the means of knowing about the services in the West Bank governorates in 2012

Means of knowing about services	Gender		Total
	Female	Male	
Friends	28.7	31.8	30.4
Relatives	48.0	45.9	46.9
Advertisements	3.5	4.6	4.1
Field visits of counselors	12.6	10.6	11.5
Other	7.1	7.1	7.1
Total	100	100	100

Table (6): Obstacles to access MOSA directorates, according to the type of obstacle and gender

Obstacles to access MOSA directorates and centers	Gender		Total
	Female	Male	
Available and easy transportation	64.5	55.0	59.4
Easy but not always available	23.4	29.2	26.5
Difficult and not available	12.1	15.8	14.1
Total	100	100	100

Table (7): The time needed for the beneficiaries to reach MOSA directorates according to gender

	Gender		Total
	Female	Male	
Less than one hour	87.5	89.7	88.7
One-two hours	12.5	9.2	10.8
More than three hours	0.0	1.0	0.5
Total	100	100	100



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