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Livelihoods Programming and its Potential to Reduce Gender-based Violence (GBV) for Refugee and Displaced Women and Girls: Lessons Learned from the Iraq/Syria Crises

Report

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I. List of Acronyms

3RPs	Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FRC	French Red Cross
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GDG	Gender Discussion Groups
HBE	Home-Based Enterprise
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
ILO	International Labour Organisation
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
IRC	International Rescue Committee
KII	Key Informant Interviews
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PSS	Psychosocial Support
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SGBV	Sexual Based Violence
MSMEs	Medium Small and Micro-Enterprises
VSLA	Village Saving and Lending Association
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNFPA	United Nations Family and Population Agency
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WGSS	Women and Girls Safe Spaces
WFP	World Food Programme

II. Background

In crisis-affected settings, the prevalence of Gender-based Violence (GBV) often increases and impacts negatively on the every-day life of individuals and their communities. Adolescent girls in conflict zones, for example, are 90 percent more likely to be out of school when compared to girls in other, conflict-free, countries. Girls are often kept out of school due to concerns about safety[1]. Some studies indicate an increase in sexual violence following disasters[2]. In Haiti, for example, 70 percent of respondents were more worried about sexual violence after the earthquake than before[3].

Development and humanitarian actors involved in recovery programming are increasingly taking into account the many ways in which GBV is thwarting their activities and results. They are also undertaking analyses to identify the aspects of programming that could put their beneficiaries at risk of GBV and apply a "do no harm" approach to their activities. However, a GBV lens is far from being systematic in most of the interventions. Beneficiaries -particularly women and girls- are still vulnerable to GBV in certain cases and opprotunities are lost to plant the seeds for interventions that can positively transform gender norms and power relations.

The main purpose of this paper is to present some findings and recommendations about how to bring about a more systematic -and hopefully transformative- GBV lens into the programming that civil society and UN agencies are carrying out in support of the livelihoods of the most affected by crises, whether a conflict or a natural disaster. The study focuses on the refugees and host communities affected by the Syrian crisis in Iraq, Lebanon and Jordan **with the intent that these findings and recommendations will be useful in other crises and contexts.** This paper has been commissioned and will inform a UNDP global project on GBV and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), funded by the Republic of Korea.

Significant interventions have occurred in Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq to support the enhancement of economic livelihoods for refugees, internally displaced people and returnees. But while livelihoods programming has increased in scope and type of intervention, within the humanitarian contexts it faces several challenges. Programmes developed in crisis and post crisis settings are often launched without a thorough mapping of the local political, economic, and social landscape, and therefore are not designed with context-specific barriers or opportunities in mind. Also, livelihood initiatives are often not subject to sufficient impact evaluation. To date, monitoring efforts have focused on how well programmes meet targets (such as the number of beneficiaries served) rather than their impact on the quality of the lives of refugees. These shortcomings apply particularly to any programming designed to support displaced and refugee women; little analysis has been done on the social impact of such programming and whether it can help reduce levels of GBV and/or mitigate risks of GBV as well as whether it can provide a platform for both behavioural and institutional transformation.

The available evidence is mixed in terms of livelihoods/economic autonomy interventions for women as a GBV prevention approach. Research shows that increased access to credits and assets can either increase or decrease the woman's risk of intimate partner violence depending on the context in which

[1] Plan International, *A time of transition: Adolescents in humanitarian settings*, 2016, p. 67. Available from https://plan-international.org/publications/time-transition-adolescents-humanitarian-settings#download-options.

[2] International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, *Unseen, unheard: Gender-based violence in disasters Global study*, 2015. Available from http://www.ifrc.org/Global/Documents/Secretariat/201511/1297700_GBV_in_Disasters_EN_LR2.pdf.

[3] Arend, Elizabeth, "IFIs & Gender Based Violence Case Study: Haiti," Gender Action, March 2012. Available from http://genderaction.org/program/gbv/case/HAITIGBV.pdf.

women live.[4] But the evidence that exists is from "stable" development settings and premised on household dynamics in these settings. The dynamics may be very different in humanitarian settings where options for economic autonomy for women and men are limited and the dynamic for broader attitudinal transformations will be very different.

With this background, UNDP commissioned a reseach to gather, analyse and understand available data on livelihoods programming -carried out both by UN agencies and international non-governmental organizations (INGOs)- in Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq amongst refugee and displaced women in order to establish what impact such programming is having on the lives of women as well as what might be done to improve such programming to mitigate GBV in future.

This report presents the findings of this research which was carried out in Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq (Erbil) during February to April 2018. The report covers both UN and civil society programming and is divided into five main sections, the first provides an overview of the methodology used for the research; section two provides an overview of the findings based on a literature review and field data collection with special attention to the opportunities and challenges present in the operating environment of each of the three countries under study; section three presents the perceptions of women interviewed in the three countries; section four provides an interpretation and analysis of the data; and section five provides recommendations to inform the development of future livelihood programmes carried out by the UN and international non-governmental organizationsaimed at enhancing capacities of vulnerable populations to secure sustainable livelihoods whilst influencing change which can address drivers of GBV.

III. Research Methodology

3.1 Data Collection Methods

This research project was predominantly qualitative. It could be considered a strategic mapping of key livelihoods interventions aiming to identify the evidence of what works and why The research aimed to understand the opportunities and challenges in the operating environment in each of the three countries as well as identify the main actors engaged in livelihoods.

The research process commenced with a rigorous review of literature to collect available information about livelihoods programming and GBV programming in Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq. It also included a review of available global evidence and best practices as relevant to livelihoods and GBV (Annex 1 includes a list of documents consulted).

Following the initial literature review, the research questions were refined and target stakeholders in each of the three countries were identified. Field data collection included conducting focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs) with livelihoods beneficiaries, meetings with UNDP country

[4] Andrew Gibbs and James Lang. "Reducing Gender-based Violence and Enhancing Economic Autonomy for Women and Marginalized Communities: Building on Synergies to Achieve the SDGs." Background Paper for the Global Expert Meeting on "Reducing Gender-based Violence to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals" 2-4 March, Seoul, Korea

offices, meetings and KIIs with international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), UN agencies and local NGOs involved in the response.

3.2 Key Research Questions

The initial research questions encompassed two streams. The first focused on identifying the different livelihoods programmes available to host and displaced populations in the three countries under study. The second stream sought to identify the types of GBV that women and girls encounter within their communities and in what ways do livelihoods programming affect (positively or negatively) their situation and experience of violence.

Following the review of literature, it was decided that the research will focus on identifying the different livelihoods interventions being implemented in the context of displacement, their impact and whether they integrate GBV considerations in programmatic design and implementation. It was agreed that respondents would not be asked directly about the types of violence that they had been exposed to. It is worth pointing out that in some cases information about experiences of violence was offered spontaneously by participants in focus groups discussions (FGD).

Table 1 below provides an overview of the key research questions per target respondent.

Table 1: Key Research Questions per Target Respondent

	TARGET		
Research Questions	**UN agencies and INGOs**	**NGOs**	**Beneficiaries**
	• What types of livelihoods programmes are supported? • How are they evaluated? • What has been their outcomes to date? • What types of coordination mechanism exist and how effective are they? • What are the linkages between livelihoods & GBV programming? • What are the lessons learned from livelihoods programming to date?	• What are the lessons and challenges regarding livelihoods in your country/context? • Are there linkages between livelihoods & GBV in this context? • What are the main types of GBV in this community?	• How did livelihood programs affect you and your family? • What are the key challenges that you encounter in your context? • Did improvement in economic conditions affect gender relations at the household level?

3.3 Overview of Field Data Collection

Field data collection for this research project was conducted in March and April 2018. Two field visits were carried out to Jordan, and one to Lebanon and Iraq (Erbil). Table 2 below provides an overview of

meetings, focus group discussions (FGD) and key informant interviews (KII) held in each of the three countries. (Annex 2 provides further details about FGDs and KIIs profile of respondents)

Jordan			
UN agencies and INGOs	NGOs	FGDs	KIIs
UNDP Jordan UN Women UNFPA UNHCR Regional Office UNHCR Country Office CARE International International Rescue Committee Danish Refugee Council	Jordan River Foundation Micro-Fund For Women	2 FGDs with UNDP beneficiaries (one women one men) Location: Ramtha	3 (6 participants) KIIs with UNDP beneficiaries Location: Ramtha
Lebanon			
UNDP Lebanon ESCWA Danish Refugee Council	KAFA Makhzoumi Foundation Lebanon Environmental agency NABAD ABAAD	5 FGDs (women) 2 groups GBV at risk - KAFA 1 UNDP beneficiaries 1 Makhzoumi Beneficiaries 1 NABAD beneficiaries (Vocational training) Locations: Beqaa	
Iraq			
UNDP Erbil UNDP Community Center OXFAM French Red Cross	REACH IMPACT Support to Victims of Violence	3 FGDs – (1 GBV survivors – 1 GBV at risk – 1 women from Mosul) Locations: Erbil – Sulaymaniyah – Duhok	8 KIIs (10 participants) - women implementing small projects

3.4 Research Limitations and Ethical Consideration

The research focus is on livelihoods interventions carried out both by UN agencies and international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), impact and documented outcomes. This research does not claim to identify the various types of violence that women experience or are at risk of within the context of displacement.

This is not a formal impact assessment or an evaluation of sort. It is considered a strategic mapping of livelihoods interventions in Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq targeting areas affected by the Syrian crisis. It documents best practices and lessons learned as recounted by implementing parties and independent evaluations previously conducted.

All efforts were exerted to meet a wide range of stakeholders in each of the countries under study. Each stakeholder was emailed at least twice (sometimes more). However, participation was voluntary and to compensate for a few missing face-to-face interviews, available published data on websites was also considered.

The main purpose of conducting focus groups dicussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs) with displaced and host communities was to capture the voices of beneficiaries and understand how livelihoods programs in the different countries affected their lives. Discussion of violence was never initiated by the researcher.However, when it was brought up by the beneficiaries, further issues were discussed.

International data collection methods were followed, these include ensuring the consent of the participants for participating in the focus groups as research studies. This was done by reading a consent form to the participants at the beginning of the meetings and ensuring their approval to participating. Confidentiality and anonymity of the data will be ensured. Participants were only asked to state their first name, nationality and place of residence and number/ages of their children. No other personal information was collected during the study. In the case of known survivors of GBV interviewed, no personal data (including first names) was recorded.

As much as possible the selected setting for the focus group and KIIs was safe, confidential and considered a neutral setting to reduce bias in data collection. As much as possible, cultural sensitivity principles were applied (gender and nationality were taken in consideration in the set-up of some groups).

IV. Main Findings

4.1 Types of Livelihoods Programming in the Context of Displacement

There are two main types of livelihoods programmes carried out both by UN agencies and international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) in the context of displacement that could be found in Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq. These are cash-based programming or labour-intensive programming and interventions aiming at job creation (vocational training, vocational training linked to job placement, vocational training linked to access to credit, skills training, job placement).

Cash-Based Interventions

Labour-intensive programmes aim to create short term employment for those affected by the crisis. In Jordan, for example, the model is implemented by UNDP through a more rigorous approach called the "3x6 approach"[5]. In Jordan, the 3x6 approach encompasses several components that strive to increase active citizenship, saving and ultimately new business creation. It also works on increasing social cohesion by engaging 3x6 participants in activities that can reduce the burden of the crisis on some municipalities.

[5] For more information on the 3x6 approach: http://earlyrecovery.global/documents/undp-global-toolkit-3x6-approach-building-resilience-through-jobs-and-livelihoods

It targets mainly Jordanians with some interventions focusing on Syrian and other refugees residing in Jordan.

With the same joint goals in mind; namely creating emergency short-term employment and strengthening social cohesion, UNDP and INGOs in Lebanon also engage in labour intensive programmes that aim to address the immediate needs of displaced and vulnerable host communities while supporting the local municipalities deal with the increased numbers of population as a result of the influx of refugees.

UNDP Iraq uses the labour-intensive model to implement more than 1,200 projects through the Funding Facility for Stabilization. In Mosul for example, more than 360 projects were completed or underway, employing 10,000 people and providing needed income for their families.[6]

While cash-transfer programming has proven extremely effective in helping recipients meet their immediate needs, INGOs and UN agencies involved in designing and delivering this type of livelihood intervention recognize that on its own it is capable only of providing short-term relief of the effects of the crisis as it has limited impact on sustainable economic self-reliance.[7] It is also important to stress that most of the organizations implementing labour-intensive programmes have only focused on assessing the short-term outcome of these interventions.

According to the 2017 Annual Report of the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) – a joint inititative between the UN and governemental and cicil society partners to promote protection, humanitarian assistance and strengthen resilience across the humanitarian and development interventions aiming at addressing the current Syrian crisis[8]-, the livelihoods and social cohesion sector received 36% of the required funding a major increase from the 16% received in 2016.[9] Cash-based programming is based on vulnerability criteria and targets both women and men. Available numbers and statistics are not compiled by sex. The 2017 3RP indicates that 30,337 individuals employed or self-employed– including short assisted through cash-for-work and seasonal work.

Labour intensive schemes are also designed to support social cohesion and resilience between refugees and host communities. Participants in labour intensive scheme in Jordan and Lebanon explained that the opportunity provided more than just access to cash. “The 3x6 activities was the first time I move out of the house and see people and get to know the community. I felt that I exist” explained a Syrian woman in Jordan.

Following the implementation of a cash-for-work programme in Iraq where women were engaged in rehabilitating one school, Oxfam undertook focus groups with 47 women across the targeted communities. These revealed the following:

[6] UNDP continues to expand stabilization support for Iraqi Government to help families return home, including minority communities. Posted 19 October 2017. http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/news-centre/news/2017/UNDP-continues-to-expand-stabilization-support-for-Iraqi-government-to-help-families-return-home.html

[7] Finding Economic Opportunities in the City: Lessons from IRC’s Cash and Livelihoods Programmes in Cities within Lebanon and Jordan. International rescue Committee: August 2016.

[8] For more information on 3RP: http://www.3rpsyriacrisis.org/

[9] http://www.3rpsyriacrisis.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/3RP-2017-Annual-Report-01-May-2018-compressed.pdf

"• The vast majority of women said that doing the work and being able to earn some money for their families gave them a sense of pride and self-worth.

• Women also stated that they appreciated the work being indoors and not too far from their homes, as this was acceptable to others in their community.

• The women who undertook the painting of the school said they were excited to learn a new skill, while those who did cooking and cleaning said they appreciated the familiarity of the tasks.

• All of the women said that designating a few women to care for others' small children facilitated participation. Some women commented that despite this support, the timings of the activities were not always ideal because they had to collect older children from school.

• It was generally felt that consulting with women in communities before a similar project took place again was a good idea, and all women said they would happily take part in such cash-for-work activities in future.

• No women faced difficulties from male villagers or others in the community as a result of their involvement in the project, and the few women who had spouses said they were supportive of their participation.[10]

Job Creation

The second type of livelihoods interventions encompasses a wide range of activities that focuses on improving the capacities of vulnerable populations (both displaced and host); increasing their employability potential.

A wide range of programmes exist in Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq. Some partner with local financial institutions to provide micro-grants for trainees to start their own business, others focus on job placement and skills matching between job seekers and private sectors.

Most of these programmes prioritize when possible female headed households and aim to promote their self-reliance and increase their ability to meet their basic needs. INGOs and UN agencies use a variety of approaches including vocational training, internships, job placement, microcredit, business development services to Medium, Small and Micro-Enterprise (MSMEs), soft skills training, Village Saving and Loans Associations (VSLA).

According to the 3RP 2017 Annual Plan, policy changes in 2017 promoted and supported by the different 3RP participants -including UNDP- led to improved outcomes on the job creation scheme in the region. In Lebanon, policies allowing for the waiver of the annual residency fees for certain Syrian refugees facilitated better access to livelihoods, in Jordan the cabinet approved a 6th extension of the grace period for Syrian refugees' work permits leading to the issuance of 46,000 work permits to Syrian refugees. However, it is worth pointing out the beneficiaries of these work permits are predominantly men due to the sectors where refugees are allowed to work namely commercial agriculture, construction and manufacturing. These sectors are traditionally male-dominated and socio-cultural norms discourage, if not thwart, women's participation. To this effect, some INGOs have attempted to partner with the private

[10] OXFAM 2016. INCLUDING WOMEN IN LIVELIHOODS PROGRAMMING IN IRAQ Influencing communities and other agencies in a fragile context.

sector to create “satellite factories”. GAP and CARE International have introduced the model in Jordan: the sustainability and profitability of the model remains to be seen.

Some organizations adopt a holistic approach by merging interventions to achieve the highest possible benefit. For example, the International Rescue Committee s (IRC) livelihoods centres in Lebanon aim to provide multiple services to beneficiaries including career counselling. Box 1 provides an overview of the activities in the center.

Box 1: Internacional Rescue Committee (IRC) Livelihoods Center

IRC operates centres in Akkar (a more peri-urban area) and Mount Lebanon (in a location near and accessible to central Beirut). At the centres, job-seekers are able to take advantage of intensive counselling services, with some also receiving training in marketable skills and opportunities for on-the-job learning/apprenticeships and short-term cash-for-work projects.

Employers can access accurate labour market information and receive technical assistance aimed at removing obstacles to expanding job opportunities. Budding entrepreneurs, meanwhile, can get support to develop their ideas, create business plans and receive small start-up grants. Clients meeting certain vulnerability criteria are referred to cash assistance of various kinds (including multi-purpose grants under the Lebanese Cash Consortium, or emergency cash assistance).

Through the range of services available at livelihoods centres, the IRC provides targeted assistance to build household income, mitigate negative coping strategies and develop skills that will be useful in the local employment market, in the household and in rebuilding Syria.

Protection principles are mainstreamed through the work of the livelihoods centres to ensure that clients receive services that provide them with safe, dignified, opportunities relevant to their skills and to the needs of the labour market.

Source: **Finding Economic Opportunities in the City: Lessons from IRC’s Cash and Livelihoods Programmes in Cities within Lebanon and Jordan. International rescue Committee: August 2016.**

It is worth pointing out that primary health care and GBV related services such as protection services, referrals to other agencies, emergency cash, psychosocial support, art therapy and others are also offered within the livelihood center through the development of safe spaces for women and girls. Project and programme evaluations implemented by several INGOs conducted in the region suggest that beneficiaries of these services (protection and GBV services) feel empowered and supported by the presence of organisations offering specialised services. Projects’ beneficiaries usually report a sense of empowerment and new-found confidence as a result of attending psychosocial support services (PSS) or through the provision of legal aid that some organisations provide in some countries. Beneficiaries often mention that the psychosocial sessions **benefited the whole family**, as relationships have been improved. They report treating their children in a positive way as they gained new techniques for parenting and avoiding violence. Being familiar with the different services that they could access in the case of violence also helped them assess their options and resort to positive coping mechanisms.

There are also some models that have attempted to integrate the cash-for-work scheme with vocational training and employment creation. This has been the case in Zaatari and Azraq refugee camps in Jordan. The UN Women/WFP "Oasis" model has attempted to create a revolving cash-for-work scheme where women are employed for a specific duration (up to six months) and taught sewing. Women are then allowed to use the sewing machines for their own business development after the six-months employment.

Box 2: UN Women "Oasis" Model

the '**Oasis'** safe space for women and girls receive approximately 5,000 visitors per month. Funded by the governments of Finland and Italy, this safe space is the site of the *Eid bi Eid* programme (hand in hand in Arabic), that promotes vulnerable female refugees' capacity to support themselves and their families and help meet their basic food needs and diversify their diets and nutritional intake. In addition to helping families meet their basic needs, the UN Women and WFP programme empowers women and girls in Za'atari camp to play a greater role in local decision making through UN Women's female camp committees. The *Eid bi Eid* builds the confidence and abilities of these women and girls through life skills training including literacy and computer classes and recycling and handicraft workshops while offering on-site child day care. The center also provides protection referral services and engages men and boys in the prevention of sexual and gender based violence1.

UN Women constructed the Oasis within Azraq in 2017 as a center serving to build refugee women's resilience and empowerment through access to multi-sectoral services. Currently providing over 100 daily cash for work positions for women, minimizing the lack of work opportunities for women within the camp. The activities are all designed to contribute to the camp and non-camp economy, the production of the baby kits within the tailoring center are distributed through field hospitals to the more than 400 babies born in camp every month.

Source: UN Women Website *http://jordan.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2018/april/french-delegation-visit*

The vulnerability of women in the context of displacement make all interventions worthy and highly relevant to improving their circumstances. All interviewed women during FGDs and KIIs expressed the importance of livelihood programmes (irrespective of type) on improving their psychological well-being; giving them voice and power and enabling them to meet the basic needs of their families.

GBV survivors interviewed in Iraq explained that the impact of livelihoods goes beyond income generation as it helps them forget what they have been through. "It has been four years already and many of my family members are still missing. Having this shop helps me believe that I can have a normal future" explained one Yezidi woman. "We lived in fear for our lives, for the lives of our children and those of our husbands. Being able to go out and work gave me a sense of normalcy after losing my father and brother to ISIL" explained a woman from Mosul. "During the 10 days I was happy. I had a place to go and meet with people and talk to them. I felt that I went back to school and using my skills. This helped me forget about my problems here" stated a Syrian refugee residing in an urban setting in Lebanon.

Interviewed women made linkages between financial stability and sense of safety and security. Interviewed women in Jordan and Lebanon identified safety and security with the ability to meet basic needs "the ability to be independent and not seek any assistance from anyone." Fewer women spoke about "safety" in terms of absence of fighting, shelling and bombings. Interviewed women from Mosul and Yezidi women identified "safety" with absence of fighting. Whereas GBV survivors inside one shelter identified "safety" in terms of the violence they had been subjected to previously. They also stated that they continue to fear retaliation from their families in case they leave the shelter. (9 women).

4.2 TYPES OF GBV SERVICES AVAILABLE

In Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq multiple GBV services are available and run by government, NGOs and INGOs alike for local population whereas NGOs and INGOs provide services for refugees who are survivors of GBV. These facilities, whether safe spaces of shelters, follow international standards which include holistic case management including psychosocial support, medical and legal aid depending on the needs of each case. Some organisations also run shelters for GBV survivors to provide them with protection and safety. It is worth pointing out that in some cases where the government s managing these shelters, some of these "safe spaces" become prison-like where the women are either not allowed to go out or are too scared to leave. GBV survivors interviewed inside one such shelter in Erbil, Iraq explained that they have no place to go other than the shelter, where they are not allowed to leave, and strongly believe that if they go back to their families they will be killed.

Prevention programmes use a wide range of approaches, including group training, social communication, community mobilisation, and livelihood strategies. Most interventions use more than one approach, and many target underlying risk factors for violence, such as poverty, women's economic dependence on men, low education, and inequitable norms for male and female behaviour. Whereas women and girls were originally their focus, programmes now also target men and boys or both men and women. Programmes are moving from trying to achieve change in groups of individuals to trying to achieve change at a community level.[11]

Service provision for GBV survivors and those at risk has adequate guidelines and standard operating procedures within camp set-ups (in the three countries). However, the difficulties of working with urban displaced populations make GBV management more difficult. It is also worth pointing out that not all women are aware of the existence of services for GBV within the urban set-up. Interviewed women during the course of this study residing in informal settlements and refugee women in urban settings seemed less aware of the existence of GBV services compared to interviewed women residing in camp settings in Iraq for example. Similarly, Jordanian women were less aware of GBV services compared to Syrian women residing in urban settings in Jordan.

Whereas, due to the closed nature of refugee and IDP camps, women and men are more likely to be aware of the GBV and other services available in the camp. For example, in Zaatari camp in Jordan, organisations

[11] Mary Ellsberg, Diana J Arango, Matthew Morton, Floriza Gennari, Sveinung Kiplesund, Manuel Contreras, Charlotte Watts. *Prevention of violence against women and girls: what does the evidence say?* (Published online November 21, 2014 http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(14)61703-7)

who provide holistic services run awareness raising and outreach campaigns to inform camp residents of the various services including GBV services in the camp.

Interviewed Syrian women residing in informal settlements in Beqaa Valley, Lebanon recounted many incidences of violence that they or their family members were exposed to and they did not know where to go for support. This could be attributed to limited services and information within informal settlments and urban areas in general.

The women in the informal settlement explained that if a girl or woman experiences violence she can only talk to her mother about it. “Women can’t complain. It would lead to more problems with her husband” explained one woman. Older women in the group (3 out of 12 participants) were of the opinion that women should tolerate violence because it is part of the culture of society and they have to find ways to diffuse the anger of their husbands.[12] Interviewed women in urban settings in general were less aware of the organisations and services available to GBV survivors. This applies to both refugees and members of host communities who are engaged in limited community activities offered by INGOs.

4.3 Do Livelihoods programmes reduce incidences of GBV?

As discussed above, livelihoods programmes addressing the Syrian refugee crisis and the economic conditions of the host communities often focus on meeting the basic needs of the vulnerable population with limited attention to measuring the sustainability of positive impacts over time or other key development indicators including indicators relevant to gender equality.

Although livelihoods interventions often prioritize women and girls, this usually does not go beyond a numerical representation and is not part of an overall strategy to reduce gender inequalities or promote transformational gender approaches. A recent World Bank study reviewed the evidence from livelihoods and cash-based transfers and their impacts on GBV for the forcibly displaced and concluded that the global evidence suggests that there are conflicting results on impact of transfers and livelihood interventions on GBV and violence against women.[13]

There are some cases where INGOs have tried to bridge the existing gap between livelihoods/economic empowerment and GBV by providing livelihoods services to GBV survivors as a means to promote self-reliance. IRC pairs cash transfers referred through GBV case management with psychosocial support (PSS) and, when possible, with gender-focused activities through structured gender discussion groups (GDGs) with the male and female heads of the household. Through the GDGs, participants acquire new skills and strategies which promote equal decision-making on the use and allocation of economic resources within the household. This combination of services has been shown to reduce protection risks for women receiving cash by reducing tensions, pressure, and exposure to intimate partner violence, while enabling families to manage the money according to its needs, rather than driven by power dynamics among

[12] The FGD was facilitated by KAFA NGO; a Lebanese organization focusing on providing awareness and support to GBV survivors. The FGD was held following an introductory session about the work of KAFA and their services. This could explain why the women were not aware of any organization that can provide support and help in the case of violence.

[13] Lucia Hamner. Evidence Review of Livelihoods & Cash Transfer Interventions and their Impacts on GVB among FDPs. UNDP Regional Workshop. Amman 9-10 May 2018.

household members.[14] However, this remains an individual initiative that is not guided or supported by integrated strategies that bring together the different development and humanitarian stakeholders on the ground with a view to complement, combine and reinforce interventions.

Economic empowerment programmes and protection programmes including GBV prevention activities often work in silos with little synergies and interaction between the two programmes even when present or offered within the same organization. This absence of synergy and/or coordination is both at the inter-agency coordination level as well as at the implementation level. The organisation and coordination mechanism of humanitarian response irrespective of the setting focuses on building linkages amongst agencies working within the same sector and not between different sectors.. Each sector possesses its tools, approaches, data bases and key stakeholders. The management of emergency aid (in the form of clusters and working groups) continues to operate with no inter-sector coordination except for minimal referral for services. For example, there is no joint-strategy or collaboration between GBV prevention and response cluster and economic empowerment (aka livelihoods and resilience) cluster work.

The activities focusing on livelihoods and self-reliance during emergencies would benefit from wider coordination among stakeholders/sectors and also from a longer-term perspective to bridge the gap between the humanitarian response and the longer-term development work.

IRC recognises that cash can present potential risks by challenging entrenched gender roles (and inequalities) in a context where these roles have already been affected by exile, loss, and the challenges of surviving as refugees.[15] IRC thus recommends that to mitigate the risks of GBV, programs must be "*grounded in a comprehensive gender analysis, tightening the sequencing of cash and Gender Discussion Groups and case management, strengthening the referral process, and simplifying the targeting criteria and monitoring systems to suit the program's purpose. Lastly, to capture the sustained outcomes of both Women Protection and Empowerment and Economic Recovery and Development services, and assessment indicators should be clearly linked to the factors which make women and girls vulnerable. One major challenge to this has been the program siloes across two program units. As cash is a tool to strengthen protection of women and girls as a temporary measure, the development and management of the criteria and monitoring should continue to be heavily informed by specialized women's protection staff*."[16]

The World Bank study concluded that reducing GBV in low and medium income countries requires the development of integrated programs that combine community mobilization, with empowerment training for women and girls or women and men, and economic empowerment with gender equality training.[17]

A recent UNHCR evaluation of the implementation of 2005 Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Guidelines for Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Settings in the Syria Crisis Response did not examine how GBV is mainstreamed in livelihoods and economic empowerment programmes. Rather the evaluation examined health, shelter and WASH. And concluded that the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Guidelines for Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Settings were not

[14] http://www.syrialearning.org/system/files/content/resource/files/main/Mainstreaming-GBV-Considerations-in-CBIs-Jordan.pdf

[1515] Integrating Cash Transfers into Gender-based Violence Programs in Jordan: Benefits, Risks and Challenges November 2015 (IRC)

[16] Ibid.

[17] Lucia Hamner. Evidence Review of Livelihoods & Cash Transfer Interventions and their Impacts on GVB among FDPs. UNDP Regional Workshop. Amman 9-10 May 2018.

well known nor being used in programmatic practice, and while there have been 'high level' statements that prevention and response efforts require involvement at many levels and types of actors, there is lack of practical guidance about how to incorporate GBV prevention programming across diverse humanitarian sectors, such as health, water and sanitation, education, and livelihood programs.[18]

The IASC guidelines have been revised and relaunched in 2015 with roll-out plans that have taken place in several places in the world including the Middle East. It is worth pointing out that the roll-out training workshops for 2018 focused only on the following sectors Child Protection, Education, Health, Protection, Shelter.[19]

During a discussion with UNFPA representatives during the course of this study, it was noted that the new guidelines are still being rolled out. At the moment of this study there was no no monitoring system in place to ensure the adequate implementation of the different sector-specific guidelines. There is no information on how often and to what effect the guidelines have been used in the livelihoods sector or in any other sector within the humanitarian response.

Some women in Lebanon had mixed views regarding the potential of livelihoods in decreasing incidences of GBV. "I force my 14-year-old daughter to go work in agriculture because otherwise the *Shaweesh* (land tenant) will kick us out. We have no choice and I don't know where to go for support" explained a Syrian woman residing in an informal settlement in Beqaa valley. The women in one focus group in Lebanon (all residing in an informal settlement) believed increased financial autonomy of women could lead to increased incidences of violence. "He might beat her or uses sexual violence to take the money she has gained and maybe spend it on cigarettes or other things" explained one woman. "Some men may even beat his wife if she refuses to go to work not because the family needs money but because he himself wants money to spend on cigarettes of alcohol or other things" continued a second woman in the group.

The women recognised that a woman who has some money may be in a stronger position vis a vis her husband, but it could lead to more tension at home. "Money with a woman is a good thing but if she refuses to give it to her husband, he will beat her" explained one woman. Another woman stated that she knows of a friend whose husband forces her to work and takes the money, a third recounted a story of a colleague who refused to work despite repeated beatings from her husband and threatened to leave him and return to Syria if he continues to force her to work.

UN agencies, INGOs and NGOs interviewed during this study explained that the linkages between livelihoods and GBV is seldom considered. NGOs self-evaluation focused on the nature of the livelihoods interventions that are short-term and not focused on transformational gender roles. All interviewed INGOs and NGOs expressed their continued adherence to strict community norms by predominantly engaging women in culturally-accepted professions or contexts (home based businesses, cooking sewing, knitting…etc.)

[18] The evaluation of the humanitarian system's response to GBV within the context of the Syrian crisis. 2015. Accessed: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Evaluation%20of%20implementation%20of%202005%20iASC%20GuidelineS%20Gender-based%20violence.pdf

[19] https://gbvguidelines.org/en/home/

However, several NGOs and INGOs explained that they are starting to consider the linkages that could be built between livelihoods and the reduction of GBV. Some NGOs who provide services to GBV survivors and/or those at risk have explained that they have started to consider livelihoods referrals for some survivors to ensure sustainability and improvement in their economic conditions. While other NGOs explained that it is difficult for them to refer cases to livelihoods support because of confidentiality issues making it very difficult for them to find lasting solutions for some GBV survivors.

4.4 Challenges of Livelihoods Programming in the Context of Displacement

Refugee response in general and livelihoods programming in particular encounter a variety of challenges that could be divided into two distinct categories. The first relates to the operating environment in terms of availability and types of funding, legal barriers to employment and job creation for refugees, and the mandates of INGOs, UN agencies and local NGOs. The second set of challenges is more directly related to the challenges of women economic empowerment in general.

4.4.1 Challenges in the operating environment

Livelihoods in the context of displacement encounter a number of challenges that reduces its effectiveness. On the one hand most of the funding available within the context of displacement is emergency funding of no longer than 12 months at best. This key challenge makes it very difficult for INGOs and NGOs to develop sustainable livelihoods interventions that are well designed and geared towards bringing people out of poverty. Rather most livelihoods programmes, whether targeting the displaced or the host communities, focus on supporting populations meet their basic needs for a specific duration. According to an IRC evaluation, the provision of cash assistance in the first phase of an emergency should be complemented from the outset by programming that helps recipients to establish and maintain economic self-reliance in the mid- and longer term. However, the evaluation concludes that this seems to be a "neglected aspect' of the Syrian response in general.[20]

Discussion about self-sustaining activities and resilience is often hindered by government restrictions on the types of activities that displaced populations can be engaged in. Legal and policy environments in urban settings often present serious barriers to economic self-reliance for refugees. Frequently, they face exclusion from the formal labour market, for example. Hostility, discrimination or even violent conflict can flow from public perceptions that increased competition for employment has exacerbated unemployment for host populations or pushed wages down. In Jordan, Syrians can only work in specific sectors and the government has recently placed some restrictions on Syrian home-based business start-ups. In Lebanon, Syrians are not allowed to work formally whereas in Iraq because Syrian refuges are predominantly Kurds with a right to work in Kurdistan, and Iraqi IDPs have formal rights to work there seems to be a more enabling environment for refugees and IDPs in general, although other linguistic, socio-economic and cultural barriers continue to exist.

Refugee livelihood programming faces other challenges. Many programmes are often launched without a thorough mapping of the local political and economic landscape, and therefore are not designed with

[20] Finding Economic Opportunities in the City: Lessons from IRC's Cash and Livelihoods Programmes in Cities within Lebanon and Jordan. International rescue Committee: August 2016.

context-specific barriers or opportunities in mind. Vocational training programmes are not always developed with market needs assessments or marketing skills for trainees.

Second, livelihood initiatives are not subject to sufficient evaluation of impact. Third, there is a lack of coordination between international agencies, NGOs, and local actors that engage in refugee support and livelihood development, with few international efforts aiming to complement existing local livelihood initiatives.[21]

Furthermore, livelihoods actors are not always well trained in safe identification and referral procedures despite one-to-one interactions concerning job placement or employment counselling. At the same time, protection staff often lack awareness of the livelihoods opportunities that can increase economic security, creating a more protective environment for beneficiaries. "Thus, when seeking to integrate protection into livelihoods initiatives in urban settings, increasing the rate and quality of referrals is a primary task."[22]

4.4.2 Challenges faced by Women

Cultural norms surrounding women's work combined with caregiving responsibilities have created a context where home-based enterprises (HBEs) are seen as the most viable option for women to generate income. While the flexibility and informality of such enterprises benefit women's needs, the work remains without legal protections and can perpetuate the social marginalisation of women.

The Jordanian government is currently in discussions to amend a dated law governing handicrafts that would provide protections for HBEs, responding to advocacy for the formalisation and legitimisation of women's work. Such issues are not limited to Jordan. Globally, there is a continued need to consider alternative and flexible income- generating schemes that address the caregiving responsibilities of displaced women. At the same time, efforts must be made to integrate women into safe and decent work opportunities that offer greater promise for advancement and societal participation.[23]

The effects of displacement are often different for women, men, girls, and boys – each face unique protection risks within an urban humanitarian context. Cultural norms and societal expectations can restrict the mobility of females, inhibiting their ability to engage in the labour market, perpetuating social exclusion. In a nationwide survey carried out in Jordan, 20 per cent of Syrian women indicated they were working, but only 2 per cent had obtained formal work permits. Childcare and household chores were the predominant rationale for not engaging in paid employment (UN Women/REACH, 2016).

Syrian women refugees typically engage in individual, piecemeal work with few initiatives involving groups of refugees, or more than a very limited number of refugees. These initiatives have limited opportunities to scale up due to concern over detection by the authorities. Local intimidation as well as their own inexperience and poor finances present further challenges for women wishing to work, both inside and outside of the house. Special legal allowances should be provided to allow longer-term refugees some

[21] Karen Jacobsen and Susan Fratzke. *Building Livelihood Opportunities for Refugee Populations: Lessons from Past Practice.* Migration Policy Institute: September 2016.

[22] Bermudez, LG (2017) Integrating livelihoods and protection for displaced persons in urban humanitarian response. Guidance note for Humanitarian Practitioners. IIED, London.

[23] Bermudez, LG (2017) Integrating livelihoods and protection for displaced persons in urban humanitarian response. Guidance note for Humanitarian Practitioners. IIED, London.

'rights of association'. The development of social structures may allow refugees to collaborate and permit the development of economies of scale in joint enterprise.[24]

The challenges faced by women and documented in studies and assessments have been reiterated by women during FGDs and KIIs. The challenges expressed by women in Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq are almost the same. Cultural norms and types of employment was the first challenge listed by interviewed women in the three countries. In Jordan, women engaged in UNDP 3x6 scheme explained that the community (including husbands and male relatives) will not accept the work of a woman in situations where it is likely that they will have contact with unknown men, e.g. the service sector such as restaurants and hotels. During a KII with three women who have started their own business in the catering sector in Jordan, all three explained that their families only allowed them to start their own business because it is a catering service that does not require them to deal directly with men.

Women from Lebanon also spoke about cultural norms as a key impediment to women's work coupled with the absence of adequate transportation, fear of harassment and low wages offered to women. Syrian women in both Jordan and Lebanon explained that the main challenge they encounter is lack of child care for their children and the legal environment that make it difficult for them to access formal employment.

Interviewed women in Iraq added that besides the cultural norms and traditions, security and safety is an additional impediment to women's work. Many women in FGDs and KIIs explained that husband approval and trust is the factor that determines whether women can work or no. "Women fear their husbands, if he says no to an activity, she cannot go against him. Her family will tell her to obey. Even if they starve" explained an Iraqi IDP in Erbil.

Family approval also plays a big role in women's ability to engage in economic activities. Interviewed women who have started their own business in retail in Dohuk explained that male relatives help them run their business. "My father is the one who goes to buy merchandise from the other cities and I just tend the shop" explained one Yezidi woman who was supported to start her retail business through a UNDP funded project implemented by the French Red Cross. "My brothers check on me in the market almost daily to make sure that I am not talking to men and also to show the community that if someone bothers me they will defend me" explained a second woman supported by the same project. Despite the micro-management/protection provided by male relatives, interviewed women reported an increased sense of self-confidence. "I am motivated to help my family. It is good to be out of the house and work, it helps me forget the trauma of the journey out of Sindjar" explained one of the interviewed women. "I have more self-confidence, I feel that I have a purpose. I have two brothers who are disabled. Being able to help my family makes me feel better about myself and our future" continued a second interviewed woman.

All interviewed women in the three countries explained that their male relatives were supportive of their engagement in livelihoods activities. Some of the women interviewed in Iraq explained that at the beginning, their husbands or brothers didn't believe in their abilities. However, after going out and earning some money, the men believed that the women can work and can provide for the family which helped change male perceptions regarding their female relatives.

[24] Researching livelihoods and services affected by conflict Uncertain livelihoods in refugee environments Between risk and tradition for Syrian refugee women in Jordan Report 15 Holly A Ritchie February 2017

In addition to the traditional impediments to women's work, answers to some of the questions during the FGDs and KIIs indicate that in some instances understanding the value of work and its impact on women's ability to take decisions maybe another underlying cause for low female labour market participation in general. Asked whether they would work if they did not have financial needs, the majority of interviewed women (almost 85%) in Jordan and Lebanon said that they would not work if they had enough money. Whereas interviewed women in Iraq explained that they are likely to continue work even if they did not need the money. The difference in perceptions about the value of work for women could be attributed to the fact that interviewed women in Iraq were generally more educated than those interviewed in the other two countries.[25] Moreover, many of the women interviewed in Iraq were either GBV survivors or women at risk of GBV who have attended psychosocial sessions and various training which could explain why their perception about the value of work and how it affects their autonomy may be substantially different than women interviewed in Jordan and Lebanon. "When a woman has her own money, she is strong, and she can take her own decisions. Before I started working I would ask my husband for money. Sometimes he would give me and sometimes he wouldn't. Now he asks me for money. It feels good" explained a Syrian refugee woman who started a hair-salon business in partnership with an Iraqi woman in Sulaymaniyah, Iraq.[26]

4.5 Programmes Challenging Gender Norms

Engaging women in economic activities has multiple positive effects. However, while most vocational training and apprenticeship programmes are effective as they provide women with access to cash/credit, but they seldom attempt (or claim to) change the status of women (same professions beauty; sewing; cooking). Many of the existing livelihoods programmes in Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq do not necessarily empower women, or bring them out of poverty.

Nonetheless, these programmes help diffuse tensions within households over finances and improves women psychological wellbeing and self-worth. Some women even report that as a direct result of improved psychological state their relationship with their husbands or children also improves.

Livelihoods can be used as a strategic entry point for more gender responsive/transformative programming to influence long-standing cultural and structural barriers towards women's participation and role in the economic space. This can be done through developing the agency of women as individuals and groups; supporting women's organizations; strengthening and consolidating women's voices, influencing the cultural discourse, perception, and behaviour about the role of women and its longstanding attributes (close to the house, low economic value, etc.). Integrating women's voices can also help expose and challenge legal barriers facing women. Livelihoods could also serve as an entry point in pushing the boundaries from economic participation towards political participation and giving women a voice in rebuilding Syria.[27] Livelihood programming can evolve to/be linked to women's full

[25] It is recognized that education standards in Iraq are largely lower than in Syria. However, the profile of the women interviewed in Iraq was higher than those interviewed in Lebanon and Jordan perhaps because they originally came from rural areas within Syria whereas Iraqis interviewed in Iraq were mostly urban residents.
[26] This project was a saving and lending project implemented by REACH NGO and funded by UNDP, GIZ and OXFAM.
[27] Women, Work & War: Syrian women and the struggle to survive five years of conflict. CARE International (March 2016)

empowerment, including tackling major risks and issues affecting Syrian women and girls, including early marriage and gender-based violence in general.[28]

During data collection for this research project, the researcher came across a number of programmes implemented by UNDP country offices and/or in partnership with local organizations in Lebanon and Iraq that have planted initial seeds for gender transformative interventions. It is worth pointing out that gender considerations within these programmes went beyond a narrow numerical equal representation to engaging communities in discussions about gender norms and images.

In Lebanon, UNDP partnered with a Lebanese environment protection NGO to promote forestation and increase the number of tree-planting activities in the Beqaa Valley. The project insisted on involving women. The project targeted the employment of women equally with men (50/50 ratio). It was noted by the project management that at the beginning of the project men refused the participation of women in the project as it was seen that tree-planting is a "manly" work. However, the project created innovative approaches to integrate women in following up on the installation of the trees, the management of the greenhouses and other female-friendly activities. In addition, women were also engaged in tree planting and supervising men.

According to the project managers, engaging women was not an easy process. Several community sensitization sessions were held and upon insisting that a 50/50 ratio of men and women be present some communities pulled out of the project. Whereas other communities initially sent young brothers or male relatives to chaperon the working girls and women and ultimately stopped after a few days as they felt that the environment was safe enough for women.

> ***"As a result of my work my relationship with my husband improved. I am happy that I don't have to ask him for many things and my girls can ask me to buy things for them."***
>
> ***An IDP from Mosul***

Two examples from Iraq in which REACH NGO through funding from CARE managed to engage women in labour-intensive work supervising the work of men in Mosul city after liberation and a second project managed by IMPACT NGO in partnership with the private sector focused on training women on being electricians, so they can fix electric supply in factories employing women.

Both examples offered women the opportunity to engage in non-traditional roles such as supervising men workers in Mosul and working as electricians in Erbil, Iraq. Interviewed beneficiaries (six women in total) from the two projects explained that the opportunity helped them feel empowered and capable of achieving anything they want. All six women explained that the main reason for engaging in these projects was the need for money (five out of six women are married). Women further explained that not all families accept the work of women. One of the women in Mosul explained that the biggest problem facing her

[28] Ibid

work was her mother in law and not the male relatives in the family. All married women agreed that the acceptance of the husband of the work of his wife is the main determinant of whether a woman would be allowed to work.

> ***We supervised men! They respect us now. Our role is not only to stay at home and care for the children.***
> *Woman from Mosul*

Interviewed women in the tree-planting project and in Iraq (both projects) believed that the most important value added of their engagement in the labour market was a new developed confidence. "I feel that I can go out and talk to people and show them what I have done" explained one woman in Beqaa Valley, Lebanon.

The key lessons learned from the programmes that attempt to push the gender norms a bit higher are multifaceted. On the one hand, the projects were small scale either in time, budget or reach. This allowed project managers to build a solid and strong relationship with the wider community thus allowing the project to engage and involve women. "We were always present and on the ground during the Mosul project. That is why when a problem arose with one woman or a husband refused to let her come to work we could intervene immediately to solve the problem and bring her back to work" explained the Mosul cash-for-work project manager. Developing long-term commitment to communities through a variety of means including holistic approaches, multiple interventions, piloting projects would facilitate the scaling up of successful interventions.

Building a relationship with the community is a critical lesson learned that allows INGOs and NGOs to work with women and attempt to improve their socio-economic conditions. "We held awareness sessions with the community and explained that they must provide 50% women and 50% men if we were to implement the project in their community. We told them send your sons or male relatives with the girls but if you do not provide equal number of women we will not work here. They trusted us and hence we could work and engage women" explained the manager of the Tree-Planting project in Lebanon.

The second distinct feature of these projects is the integration of men and women. The projects were not designed to be female-friendly or women-only projects. The design of all three projects involved men and women and tried to widen community support for women's work through community information sessions and insistence on the participation of women in all activities. This helped women develop self-confidence as well as gain the trust of their male relatives which is a prerequisite for continued engagement in the labour market. "My husband would trust me now because I proved I can work and take care of myself. He will not object to me working anywhere" explained a woman from Mosul.

4.6 Lessons learned from existing models

In determining what would constitute a lesson learned from existing programmes and interventions, the research focused on identifying interventions that aim to empower women through training and awareness raising, as well as provide support for income generation activities. Other criteria used for selection was the availability of multiple-services (employment and protection; cash-for work and education …etc.); ability to engage the community and men and not only women. The research identified

a number of interventions in Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq. These are IRC livelihoods center in Lebanon, UN Women Oasis model in Jordan refugee camps, UNDP supported Community Center in Erbil, Iraq.[29]

Many UN agencies and INGO advocate and implement Women and Girls Safe Spaces (WGSS). Evaluations globally and in Syria show that WGSS are not stigmatizing and are safe place where women are allowed to go in conservative environments because it is a woman only space and there they can access different activities. This research is not suggesting that WGSS are not effective and/or useful, rather it suggests that WGSS is an excellent opportunity for women to access traditional and conventional women-only activities. The reality is that long lasting economic empowerment of women and girls need the involvement of men and their engagement which cannot take place within women-only centers and activities. It is recognised that within the context of displacement many organisations focus on being culturally-sensitive by abiding by the exigencies of what is perceived to be the norm or tradition. However, if international agencies wish to create lasting change to improve the status of women on different levels, gender-transformative approaches need to be taken on board which should include the engagement of men and promotion of equality.

What makes the models presented stand out is their engagement of the community as a whole to increase awareness regarding women's rights, economic empowerment and attempts to reduce GBV in general. Some of the mentioned models include areas (floors in the case of IRC) that work on GBV and women protection under the umbrella of the livelihoods center making it easier to refer cases between sectors and ensure additional levels of support to the women.

Both in the case of IRC centres and UNDP supported Community center in Iraq, counselling is also offered to men and women through various methods to help diffuse tension and increase family reconciliation and reduction in incidences of violence.

The value added of the multi-service community center or one-stop shop (irrespective of the name) is that it allows staff and employees to develop personal relationships with beneficiaries allowing NGOs to address various socio-economic problems (including GBV/SGBV) in a privacy and if needed anonymity. It also enables the identification of protection cases and provision of necessary services which is a challenging activity in urban settings.

The availability of multiple services to both men and women allows for building community trust which is a pre-requisite for engaging women in various activities which go beyond the traditional vocational and income generation type of trainings. In some cases, these centers also serve as an employment opportunity for women (Oasis Center – Erbil Community Center – IMPACT activities in Erbil Shelter). These centers, except for Oasis which is a camp-based model, engage the displaced and the host community allowing for improved social cohesion in the context of displacement.

The multi-service center models provide services and approaches that are consistent with the recommendations of some assessment and research studies conducted and published by NGOs.

[29] This is by no means a comprehensive list and does not claim to include all interventions carried out by INGOs, UN agencies and local NGOs in the three countries. Neither does this selection undermines the women and girls' safe spaces promoted by UN Women and UNFPA. Rather, this should only serve as a guideline for other possible interventions that aim to change the situation of women and not abide by the strict traditional norms of society.

CARE International research study on women, work and war recommended that livelihoods could be used as a strategic entry point for more gender responsive/transformative programming. The study recommends that livelihood programming could challenge traditional concepts around "suitable" tasks for women. Such measures need to be carefully designed, "in consultation with community members, and well-tested, to avoid negative impact on women.They must also as far as possible address the concerns and priorities of men (including husbands, other male family members and other men in their community settings) to ensure a gender-sensitive approach to women's economic empowerment.[30] In Jordan, CARE international programes engages both men and women through a variety of awareness raising and campaigns to promote equality and inclusion.

IRC study[31] on the outcomes of cash and livelihoods programming in Jordan and Lebanon recommends that it is important to ensure that livelihoods programmes in urban areas consist of diverse approaches to achieving economic self-reliance. Livelihoods programming should be coordinated with and supportive of work being done to achieve outcomes besides just economic wellbeing. Offering bundled service provision through a livelihoods center model: "*IRC's Livelihoods Centre Model is used in Mt. Lebanon and Akkar, offering clients a range of services from employment assistance to legal counselling to skills training to financial management, while also offering mediation for housing disputes and guidance on residency permits, all in one location. Host community business owners and entrepreneurs can access capacity-building services, mentorship opportunities, and start-up support. Protection is mainstreamed within centre activities, such as the employment assistance programme, where all job matching is undertaken after potential employers are vetted. Jobseekers are advised on their rights as workers and on the working conditions they should expect. Continued monitoring of employers assures clients that there is someone looking out for their dignity and well-being*."[32]

The challenges facing women in general and in the context of displacement are numerous. While recognizing the importance of Women and Girls Safe Spaces(WGSS) as a mean for protection, the promising models have added additional services for women and have attempted to engage men and the community in discussions about the importance of women's work and inclusion to improve the overall wellbeing of the entire family. It is important to recognise not only the value but also the limitations of WGSS and support the importance of engaging communities and men in efforts to promote women empowerment and integration in labour markets. The multi-service centres provide multiple services in the same place and offer many opportunities that could be built upon to advocate for women's rights.

Addressing livelihoods and GBV in the context of urban refugee settings is complex and complicated. Unlike camp set-ups where services tend to be centralised and well known to camp populations, services in urban settings are scattered and require great outreach efforts. Furthermore, women economic empowerment is hindered by both operating environment challenges (types of funding, legal requirements or restrictions) as well as by the traditional norms and culture that engulfs women's work in the Middle East in general. The context of displacement adds an additional layer of burden on women

[30] Women, Work &War: Syrian women and the struggle to survive five years of conflict. CARE International (March 2016)

[31] Finding Economic Opportunities in the City: Lessons from IRC's Cash and Livelihoods Programmes in Cities within Lebanon and Jordan. International rescue Committee: August 2016.

[32] Bermudez, LG (2017) Integrating livelihoods and protection for displaced persons in urban humanitarian response. Guidance note for Humanitarian Practitioners. IIED, London.

who often find themselves with no social support network thus making it even harder for them to access the labour market in the absence of child-care facilities and increased sense of vulnerability and insecurity due to economic hardships.

V. Summary of Findings & Recommendations

The evidence from the work being carried by both UN agencies and International NGOs to respond to the Syria/Iraq crisis is an opportunity to learn how to improve livelihoods programming to have a transformative impact, including to reduce gender based violence. Below are some key findings and recommendations from this research for implications in other protracted crises and post crises context.

1. Gender-responsive livelihood interventions in crisis-affected settings have the potential - when coupled with other interventions- to effectively prevent GBV and empower women

- The vulnerability of women in the context of displacement make all interventions worthy and highly relevant to improving their circumstances. There is a clear linkage between financial stability and a sense of safety and security. Gender-responsive livelihood programmes (irrespective of type) improve psychological well-being of participants, giving women voice and power and enabling them to meet the basic needs of their families.
- Some models such as the multi-service community centres -paired with additional elements such as referral pathways have the potential to increase women participation because they involve the entire community and not only women, thus enabling a better synthetization of the community and the gradual alteration of traditional discriminatory gender norms

2. Gender analysis and "do no harm" approaches are key during programme design and implementation phases

- Within the context of displacement and refugee settings, it is important to ensure that traditional gender analyses are focused on upholding a "no-harm" approach with attention to drivers and mitigation approaches to GBV.
- Programme design needs to consider the different elements of power relations within the community and focus on transformational approaches to empower women and engage men in the process.

3. GBV-responsive livelihood programming must go beyond numbers

- Although livelihoods interventions often prioritize women and girls, this usually does not go beyond a numerical representation and is not part of an overall strategy to reduce gender inequalities or promote transformational gender approaches.
- A number of programmes implemented by UNDP country offices and/or in partnership with local organizations have already planted initial seeds for gender transformative interventions. It is worth pointing out that gender considerations within these programmes went beyond a narrow numerical equal representation to engaging communities in discussions about gender norms and images.

4. The operating environment and timeframe matter and should be addressed in programming

- GBV-responsive interventions are often hindered by legal or government restrictions affecting displaced populations and policy and programme timeframes.
- Interventions should cover the operating environment in terms of availability and types of funding, legal barriers to employment and job creation for refugees, and the mandates of INGOs, UN agencies and local NGOs
- Advocating with host governments for special quotas for women would serve as a means to promote women economic participation as well as challenge the existing norms about the role of women.
- It is recommended that further efforts be exerted through a systematic advocacy approaches with donors to allow for minimal project duration of 12 months and extending to 18 months if possible. This will allow organisations to look beyond the emergency needs of the refugee and host populations and develop interventions that could have lasting impact.

5. Break the silos and improve coordination to enhance results on addressing and preventing GBV

- Economic empowerment programmes and protection programmes including GBV prevention activities often work in silos with little synergies and interaction between the two programmes even when present or offered within the same organization.
- The development of a cluster and/or working group focused on mainstreaming GBV considerations within livelihoods or examining the impact of livelihoods in GBV would serve to bridge this gap in practice. This working group could start at the UN inter-agency level through the emergency and recovery response plans and ultimately serve as a role model that could be replicated within agencies implementing both types of interventions.
- It is important to bridge the existing gap between livelihoods/economic empowerment and GBV by providing livelihoods services to GBV survivors as a way to promote self-reliance. And we need to go beyond by bringing together the different development and humanitarian stakeholders on the ground with a view to complement, combine and reinforce interventions.
- Providing services to GBV survivors and/or those at risk and consider livelihoods referrals for them can ensure sustainability and improvement in their economic conditions
- While recognizing the importance of Women and Girls Safe Spaces(WGSS) as a mean for protection, the promising models have added additional services for women and have attempted to engage men and the community in discussions about the importance of women's work and inclusion to improve the overall wellbeing of the entire family.

6. Bring a development approach from the outset

- The provision of cash assistance in the first phase of an emergency should be complemented from the outset by programming that helps recipients to establish and maintain economic self-reliance in the mid- and longer term. UNDP's '3x6 approach' is promising in this regard.

7. Improve measurement of impact and self-reliance

- Measuring the sustainability of positive impacts over time together with strong indicators to capture changes in gender equality and women's empowerment brings evidence about how to tweak interventions and design new ones.
- A focus on how interventions lead to self-reliance or better social cohesion requires an initial definition of these terms and the development of qualitative as well as quantitative indicators to measure them.

8. Challenge the social norms

- Cultural norms can be a key impediment to women's work. They are often coupled with the absence of adequate social and physical infrastructure, e.g. adequate transportation, fear of harassment, etc. Family approval also plays a big role in women's ability to engage in economic activities.
- Livelihoods can be used as a strategic entry point for more gender responsive/transformative programming to influence long-standing cultural and structural barriers towards women's participation and role in the economic space.
- Livelihoods could also serve as an entry point in pushing the boundaries from economic participation towards political participation and giving women a voice. Livelihood programming can evolve to/be linked to women's full empowerment, including tackling major risks and issues affecting women and girls such as early marriage and gender-based violence in general.
- Livelihood programming could challenge traditional concepts around "suitable" tasks for women. Such measures need to be carefully designed, in consultation with community members, and well-tested, to avoid negative impact on women.They must also as far as possible address the concerns and priorities of men (including husbands, other male family members and other men in their community settings) to ensure a gender-sensitive approach to women's economic empowerment.

9. Engage men and boys from the oustet

- Long lasting economic empowerment of women and girls need the involvement of men and their engagement which cannot take place within women-only centers and activities. It is recognised that within the context of displacement many organisations focus on being culturally-sensitive by abiding by the exigencies of what is perceived to be the norm or tradition. However, if international agencies wish to create lasting change to improve the status of women on different levels, gender-transformative approaches need to be taken on board which should include the engagement of men and promotion of equality.
- The engagement of men in women's economic empowerment is a key determinant of the sustainability of interventions. There is an obvious need to capitalize on this opportunity through an in-depth study and analysis on how masculine identifies shift in crisis settings and how best to address the changes in gender roles that occur within displacement. This will inform the risk matrixes of gender analysis during displacement and in preparation for recovery and return programmes in countries of origin.
- Engaging men and women in psychosocial services and community initiatives will support the reduction in acceptance of violence as well as improve the overall situation of women. Women and girls' safe spaces serve as a good starting point to provide women and girls with access to services and counseling in emergency settings. However, within the recovery settings these

centers alone are not sufficient to ensure lasting impact and reduction of incidences of violence. Safe spaces need to be complimented by multi-service centers as a stepping stone to engaging men. Once services are offered to men, they can then be recruited as champions and community leaders to engage other men in supporting gender equality.