



Project Information Document (PID)

Appraisal Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: 26-Apr-2022 | Report No: PIDA33079

**BASIC INFORMATION****A. Basic Project Data**

Country West Bank and Gaza	Project ID P177897	Project Name Gaza Emergency Support for Social Services.	Parent Project ID (if any)
Region MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA	Estimated Appraisal Date 09-Mar-2022	Estimated Board Date 07-Jun-2022	Practice Area (Lead) Other
Financing Instrument Investment Project Financing	Borrower(s) NGO Development Center	Implementing Agency NGO Development Center	

Proposed Development Objective(s)

to provide selected social services, short-term cash for services, and on-line self-employment opportunities to the most vulnerable population in Gaza

Components

Cash for Services to enhance psychosocial support provision in Gaza
Support to youth empowerment through e-work
Project Management and Monitoring

The processing of this project is applying the policy requirements exceptions for situations of urgent need of assistance or capacity constraints that are outlined in OP 10.00, paragraph 12.
Yes

PROJECT FINANCING DATA (US\$, Millions)**SUMMARY**

Total Project Cost	7.00
Total Financing	7.00
of which IBRD/IDA	0.00
Financing Gap	0.00

DETAILS**Non-World Bank Group Financing**



Trust Funds	7.00
Special Financing	7.00

Environmental and Social Risk Classification

Moderate

Decision

The review did authorize the team to appraise and negotiate

Other Decision (as needed)

B. Introduction and Context

Country Context

- The unemployment rate has remained stubbornly high in 2021, partially due to an increase in the labor participation rate.** After the breakout of COVID-19 in the Palestinian territories in March 2020, the unemployment rate started to increase given the restrictions on economic activity and the loss of Palestinian jobs in the Israeli market. The unemployment rate peaked at 28.3 percent in Q3 2020 until it slightly eased toward the end of the year, reaching 23.4 percent in Q4 2020. Even though the lockdowns were eased in 2021, the unemployment rate increased and reached 27.3 percent in Q3 2021 in the Palestinian territories. The increase could be explained by a 3-percentage point rise in the participation rate between Q4 2020 and Q3 2021 as a higher number of men and women were encouraged to join the labor market with the improvement in economic conditions. The overall rate masks a wide regional divergence whereby unemployment in the West Bank reached 14.7 percent in Q3 2021 while in Gaza it was 50.2 percent, reflecting the effect of the 11-day conflict compounded with worsening COVID-19 conditions and the ongoing movement and access restrictions.
- The conflict of May 2021 has also exacerbated an already alarming gender disparity in labor market outcomes between men and women.** RDNA finds that May 2021 escalations have impacted women's ability to participate in the labor market through: (i) negative impacts on health and education sectors where women tend to work; (ii) increased burden of care; and (iv) decreased mental and physical health that can impact women's ability to work. As a result, in the third quarter of 2021 the unemployment rate for women in Gaza stood at close to 70 percent (compared to 44.3 percent for men).¹
- Furthermore, even prior to COVID-19 pandemic and escalations of 2021 Gazan youth faced challenges in entering the labor market, with significantly worse outcomes for young women.** While there is no updated data on those not in employment, education, or training (NEET) or transitions into labor market the latest available data says that only 16 percent of Palestinian youth successfully completed the transition from education

¹ PCBS (2021), Labor Force Survey (July-September, 2021) Round (Q3/2021), Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics accessed at https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/portals/_pcbs/PressRelease/Press_En_8-11-2021-LF-en.pdf on 26 January 2022.



to the labor market and worked in stable jobs in 2015. Furthermore, only 4.3 percent of young women in Gaza successfully completed the transition from education to having a stable job, well below that for young men in Gaza (25 percent) and young women in the West Bank (9.6 percent).²

4. **Palestinians, particularly in Gaza, not only face a tighter labor market with few opportunities to get a job and avoid poverty, but they are also vulnerable to shocks.** In Gaza, unemployment and poverty indicators have deteriorated systematically. According to United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), 80 percent of the population in Gaza are vulnerable to shocks and dependent on international assistance.³ Aid and remittances are almost the only source of foreign exchange inflows that are driving consumption.

5. **These economic challenges will be further exacerbated by the West Bank and Gaza's increasing vulnerability to climate change.** The WB&G will be significantly affected by climate change, with climate models for the Eastern Mediterranean region showing mean temperature increases between 3 to 5°C by mid-century and mean annual rainfall reductions of 10 to 50 percent⁴. Climate variability is likely to compound existing challenges such as water scarcity, extreme heat, wildfires, and landslides. Power and water shortages coupled with rising temperatures and irregular rainfall could have a negative impact on agriculture and manufacturing.⁵ Climatic events have the potential to reduce yield, and alter value chains, making it more difficult for impoverished families to continue investing in their children's education.

6. **Lastly, both COVID-19 pandemic and May 2021 escalation have pushed an already precarious mental health situation in Gaza into further crisis that is impacting women and children disproportionately.** By the end of 2020 COVID-19 pandemic has contributed to an increase of 53 million cases of major depressive disorder and 76 million cases of anxiety disorders worldwide.⁶ The same study finds that the impact was higher for women and for children. Gaza was already experiencing a mental health crisis pre-pandemic with close to 40 percent of adults experiencing post-traumatic disorder (PTSD) in 2017.⁷ By 2020 another study found that about 50 percent of children in Gaza were suffering from PTSD as well.⁸ The conflict of May 2021 has exacerbated this situation further while also impacting access to mental health support. RDNA finds that women and children were disproportionately impacted.⁹

B. Sectoral and Institutional Context

8. **The May 2021 conflict had the most severe impact on social sectors worsening education, health, and basic services provision in Gaza.** According to the RDNA findings, the social sectors were hit the most, making up more than half of the total physical damage. The social sector has also incurred the biggest share of economic losses ranging between US\$60 to US\$80 million. Damage to 58 education facilities undermines children's access

² Avenues for economic and social inclusion of marginalized groups in WBG, 2018.

³ PCBS data shows gender implications to the disadvantage of female head of households, with average of 30 percent of individuals living in female headed households depending on cash assistance and 48 percent depending on social benefits and transfers (compared to 18 and 32 percent of individuals who live in male headed households, respectively).

⁴ <https://www.cyi.ac.cy/index.php/ewrc/ewrc-research-projects/climate-change-and-impact.html>

⁵ <https://www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/import/downloads/palestine.pdf>

⁶ Global prevalence and burden of depressive and anxiety disorders in 204 countries and territories in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic Santomauro, Damian F et al. The Lancet, Volume 398, Issue 10312, 1700 - 1712

⁷ <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2021/6/14/trauma-and-mental-health-in-gaza>

⁸ idem

⁹ Rapid Damage Needs Assessment (2021). <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/178021624889455367/pdf/Gaza-Rapid-Damage-and-Needs-Assessment.pdf>



to education whereby the Ministry of Education decided to terminate the school year for all grades except for general secondary/high school examinations. The health system, already overburdened by COVID-19, weak response capacity, and chronic drug shortages, sustained additional damages to six hospitals and 11 primary healthcare centers, including the only existing COVID-19 test laboratory. The conflict thus, further limited the system's overall capacity to provide key health services.

9. **The combination of disruption to education and health services and, most notably, the increased psychological strain that children experience due to the wars or armed conflict are likely to lead to further deterioration of Gaza's human capital, especially for future generations.** Palestine is a country with young population where the median age is 20.8 years, but children were particularly vulnerable to the shocks and devastation caused by the wars or armed conflicts, especially in Gaza. A 13-year-old child born and raised in Gaza has already witnessed 4 wars or armed conflicts: 2008-09, 2012, 2014 and 2021. First and foremost, the wars or armed conflicts had a dramatic impact on children's physical and psychological health. Studies have shown that exposure to sustained high levels of stress, also known as toxic stress, can disrupt young children's physical development and lead to chronic diseases and cognitive impairment. Exposed to high levels of hostilities and toxic stress, children in Gaza are in dire need of mental health and psychosocial support services (MHPSS). Psychological stress also is likely to lead to further deterioration of learning outcomes that has already been negatively impacted by COVID-19 pandemic. Parental unemployment is also a contributing factor to worsened mental and educational outcomes.¹⁰

10. **In addition to children, women are another group that is particularly vulnerable to cycles of conflict and poverty, with high rates of domestic violence that have likely increased during a time of lockdowns and quarantines.** Studies have shown that conflict and health crises can lead to increased threats and intentional use of violence, including violence against women and children.¹¹ Both internationally and within the Palestinian territories, there is evidence of increases in gender-based violence because of the job losses and business closures that have come during the pandemic. Women have become more vulnerable to domestic violence as confinement has fostered the tension and strain created by security, health, and income-related concerns, especially since women may now be contributing less to the household income, either through losing their jobs or experiencing foreclosures in women-owned small businesses. UN Women¹² shows that as more countries report infection and lockdown, more domestic violence helplines and shelters are reporting rising numbers of calls for help.¹³ In the Palestinian territories, more than 20 percent of women responding to the "CARE Palestine WB&G COVID-19 Rapid Gender Assessment" shared that they have experienced an increase in gender-based violence (GBV) security concerns, including intimate partner violence and domestic violence.¹⁴ The assessment showed that one in four surveyed indicated domestic violence has increased during quarantine and 71 percent expect it to further increase with the extension of the lockdown. Moreover, surveys by the PCBS and data from gender-based violence helplines point to high rates of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) against women: 24 percent

¹⁰ Rasslan et. al. 2021

¹¹ <https://www.cgdev.org/sites/default/files/pandemics-and-violence-against-women-and-girls.pdf>.

¹² <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/4/statement-ed-phumzile-violence-against-women-during-pandemic>.

¹³ For example, in Argentina, Canada, France, Germany, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States there are increasing reports of domestic violence during the crisis, and heightened demand for emergency shelter. Helplines in Singapore and Cyprus have registered an increase in calls by more than 30 per cent. In Australia, 40 per cent of frontline workers in a New South Wales survey reported increased requests for help with violence that was escalating in intensity.

¹⁴ Juzoor Health and Social Development, Gender-Based Violence During COVID-19 Pandemic Palestine - May 2020.



of women in West Bank and 38 percent of women in Gaza have been exposed to some form of IPV between 2018-2019.¹⁵

11. Gaza's healthcare system is struggling to respond to the large number of vulnerable populations with MHPSS needs due to chronic shortages of qualified healthcare workers. More than 321,000 children were estimated to need MHPSS according to UNICEF estimates from 2019. RDNA has further shown that May 2021 conflict exacerbated the need, with more children and their caregivers in need of MHPSS services to address psychosocial trauma. Yet, disrupted by the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak, and further weakened by extensive damages to key healthcare facilities and providers, Gaza's already-strained healthcare system is unable to meet this increased demand for MHPSS services.

12. Scaling up MHPSS services to children and women is an urgent and pressing need, and NGOs are well positioned play a significant role in responding to it. A scale-up in MHPSS services is required, not only to improve the well-being of children and women, but also to prevent mental disorders from proliferating to a wider scale. The need is for MHPSS to ratchet up efforts in several fronts: from psychological first aid to structured psychosocial support; from case management to clinical mental health services. NGOs currently play a critical role in provision of psychosocial support and mental health services in Gaza and will be a crucial partner to address the need of expanded MHPSS services.

13. Provision of MHPSS and other critical social services through NGOs can also address an important issue of unemployment, especially among women. Successful implementation of the Gaza Emergency Cash for Work (C4W) Self-Employment Support Project (P167726) shows that NGOs can fill in the vacuum in service provision complementing the efforts from the public sector. The C4W component of the project has surpassed the target number for unemployed youth provided with C4W opportunities by 11.5 percent, with close to 70 percent of beneficiaries being women. Midterm evaluation of the C4W Project also shows that in addition to employment the C4W provided was able to reduce beneficiary youth wariness level about the future and help them be productive members in their communities.¹⁶

14. E-work continues to be one of the few promising avenues for employment and private sector growth in Gaza. Although limited, there are some opportunities for private sector growth and job creation. For example, given restrictions on movement in and out of Gaza, and the increasing global outsourcing of tasks facilitated by digital technologies, internet-enabled self-employment/online freelancing (e-work) is a very promising opportunity for young people in Gaza, particularly women. C4W Project has shown this to be a successful direction in terms of providing youth and especially women with employment opportunities.

15. The project proposes to address two critical issues at once: provision of MHPSS and employment, through tested yet innovative design. NGO led provision of MHPSS and other relevant social services to children and women allows the project to address a critical gap in mental health services. Strengthening ability of NGOs to deliver MHPSS through tailored capacity building increases quality of MHPSS provided. Support to NGOs short-term staffing needs through utilization of cash-for-service (C4S) modality for currently unemployed allows

¹⁵ PCBS, Preliminary Results of the Violence Survey in the Palestinian Society 2019. Different forms of intimate partner violence surveyed include economic, social, psychological, sexual, and physical. In this case, the intimate partner referred to by the survey is 'husband.'

¹⁶ NGO Development Center. "Gaza Emergency Cash for Work and Self-Employment Support Project. Midterm Review Report of the Project." December 2021.



provides NGOs with necessary staff and targeted population with employment. Lastly, an e-work component allows to further solidify gains in both mental health and employment especially for women.

C. Proposed Development Objective(s)

Development Objective(s) (From PAD)

To provide selected social services, short-term cash for services, and online employment opportunities to the most vulnerable population in Gaza.

Key Results

Indicator 1: Number of individuals that are provided MHPSS or relevant health services through the Project (including 50 % women).

Indicator 2: Percentage of recipients of MHPSS or relevant health services through the project satisfied with the quality of services received.

Indicator 3: Number of beneficiaries receiving Cash for Services from the Project, disaggregated by gender.

Indicator 4: Number of beneficiaries receiving e-work support that have performed at least one paid freelancing job during the support period or six months after that, disaggregated by gender.



D. Project Description

Component 1: Cash for Services to enhance psychosocial support provision in Gaza

Component 2: Support to Youth Empowerment through e-work

Component 3: Project Management and Monitoring

Component 4: Contingent Emergency Response Component

Component 1: Cash for Services to enhance psychosocial support provision in Gaza. This component will provide tailored training and sub-grants to selected NGOs to implement Cash for Service (C4S) sub-projects aimed to provide MHPSS and other relevant health services to communities affected by the recurrent outbreaks of violence in Gaza, including the recent May 2021 conflict. Services will include mental health and psychosocial support through either direct interventions or prevention activities. Services provided will be mostly targeted towards women and children.

Component 2: Support to youth empowerment through e-work (e-work). Replicating the approach taken by the Gaza Emergency Cash for Work and Self-Employment Support Project (P167726) this component will finance support for target youth to become e-workers/online freelancers and will aim to ensure significant reach to women beneficiaries to address existing gender gaps in the labor market and disproportionate impact of crisis on women. The type of e-work to be supported by the project includes both complex and simple tasks (e.g. software development, graphic design, media production, content development, website design, animations, e-marketing, translation, voice over, virtual assistance, labelling photos or videos, describing products, transcribing scanned documents, data gathering, answering calls). These tasks are linked to larger projects through online networks and platforms at the regional and global levels. Online freelancers can work on their own or as part of local freelancing companies

Component 3: Project Management and Monitoring. This component will strengthen the NGO Development Center's (NDC's) capacity for Project management, monitoring, and evaluation through financing of office equipment, consultants' services, including audit, training, and incremental operating.

Legal Operational Policies

	Triggered?
Projects on International Waterways OP 7.50	No
Projects in Disputed Areas OP 7.60	No

Summary of Assessment of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts

E. Implementation

Institutional and Implementation Arrangements



The NGO Development Center will be both the recipient and the implementing agency for the purposes of this grant.

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APPROVAL

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